

American Medical Missionary Activities in Basra in the Late Ottoman Period: Lansing Memorial Hospital

Emine Şahin*

Osmanlı Son Dönemi'nde Basra'daki Amerikan Tıbbi Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri: Lansing Memorial Hastanesi

Öz ■ Osmanlı'nın doğu sınırındaki Irak'ın önemli şehirlerinden birini uluslararası ticaretin etkin olduğu ve Hindistan'a açılan bir kapı olarak da değerlendirilebilecek olan Basra vilayeti oluşturmaktadır. Ayrıca Basra, Doğu'nun ticaret merkezi olarak görülüp Güney Asya pazarına açılan kapı olmasından ve komşusu olan Huzistân Eyaleti'nde petrolün bulunmasından ötürü Amerika Birleşik Devletleri için de büyük önem taşıyordu. Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun 19. yüzyıldan itibaren bölgede güç kaybetmesiyle oluşan boşlukta kendisine bir hakimiyet alanı oluşturmak isteyen Amerika, burada faaliyetlerde bulunmuştur. Buna bağlı olarak 19. yüzyılın sonunda Amerikalı Protestan misyonerler tarafından oluşturulan Arap Misyonu, sağlık ve eğitim faaliyetleri için ilk hedef olarak belirlediği Basra'da bir istasyon kurmuştur. 1911 yılında ise Basra'da Lansing Memorial adıyla bir hastane açılmış ve Arap Misyonu'na bağlı Protestan doktor ve hemşireler burada hizmet vermeye başlamıştır. Bu çalışma Arap Misyonu'nun 19. yüzyılın sonundan itibaren Basra'daki faaliyetlerine odaklanmaktadır. Araştırmanın birincil kaynaklarını Osmanlı Arşivi belgeleri ve Arap Misyonu yayınları oluştururken, Arap Misyonu ile ilgili literatürden de yararlanılmıştır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Basra, Misyoner, Protestan, Hastane, Arap Misyonu.

Introduction

The first relations between the Ottoman Empire and the United States of America officially began when the American ship George Washington arrived in Istanbul on 9 November 1800 and the American delegation met with the

* Düzce Üniversitesi.

Sultan.¹ Following the beginning of relations between the two states, the first activities of North American missionaries in the Ottoman Empire took place under the control of a Protestant organisation called *The American Board of Commission for Foreign Mission*. In 1820, two Protestant missionaries, Pliny Fisk and Levi Parsons, were sent to Ottoman lands.² By 1830, Ottoman-American relations had been established on an official basis, commercial activities had begun between the two countries, and Ottoman lands were opened to American investors and missionaries. Subsequently, American missionary activities in the Ottoman lands gained momentum as of the second quarter of the 19th century. By 1831, American missionaries had continued their activities by travelling first to Istanbul and then to various parts of the empire. William Goodell conducted his activities as the first American missionary in the Ottoman capital. It is observed that American missionaries established strong forms of organisation in the Ottoman territories in the 19th century and carried out their activities through institutions such as schools, hospitals and printing presses.³

-
- 1 Uygur Kocabaşoğlu, “Doğu Sorunu Çerçevesinde Amerikan Misyoner Faaliyetleri”, *Tarihi Gelişmeler İçinde Türkiye’nin Sorunları Sempozyumu’ndan Ayır Basım* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1992), p. 68.
 - 2 Tahsin Fendoğlu, *Modernleşme Bağlamında Osmanlı-Amerika İlişkileri 1786-1929: Kamu Hukuku Açısından Karşılaştırmalı Bir İnceleme* (İstanbul: Beyan Yayınları, 2002), pp. 221-222; Cemal Yetkiner, “After Merchants, Before Ambassadors: Protestant Missionaries and Early American Experience in the Ottoman Empire, 1820-1860”, *American Turkish Encounters Politics and Culture, 1830-1989*, eds. Nur Bilge Criss and others (UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), p. 14. From 1810 onwards, American evangelicals established more than 20 societies and continued their activities. Except the American Board, the Home and Foreign Mission Society, the General Missionary Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States for Foreign Missions, the American Education Society and the American Bible Society are some of these. These organizations aimed to spread both evangelism and the Bible throughout the world. For further information, see Mehmet Ali Doğan, “From New England into New Lands: The Beginning of a Long Story”, *American Missionaries and the Middle East Foundational Encounters*, eds. Mehmet Ali Doğan and Heather J. Sharkey (Utah: University of Utah Press, 2011), pp. 3-30.
 - 3 Seçil Akgün, “Kendi Kaynaklarından Amerikalı Misyonerlerin Türk Sosyal Yaşamına Etkisi (1820-1914)”, *X. Türk Tarih Kongresi: Ankara 22-26 Eylül 1986 Kongreye Sunulan Bildiriler* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1994), p. 2123; Bayard Dodge, “American Educational and Missionary Efforts in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries”, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, America and The Middle East*, 401 (1972), p. 16.

By the 19th century, American missionaries had established mission stations in Anatolia and the Arab provinces within the Ottoman Empire. The effects of the Ottoman financial crisis in the 19th century had caused deficiencies in the field of health. The missionaries found that there were many health problems in the Ottoman territories and the state was incapable of directly intervening.⁴ Therefore, missionaries turned to the field of health in order to overcome this deficiency and to communicate directly with the people. Based on the Christian belief that Jesus Christ sometimes used his divine power to heal people and relieve their suffering, medical assistance became the most important part of missionary activities.⁵ Since these people, known as medical missionaries, were in close contact with the people, it was easy for them to carry out religious indoctrination. In places where health services were provided, it was among the duties of missionaries to carry out evangelisation activities on patients who had survived death or were in the grip of a disease. Since medical activities were known to have an impact on people because of their ability to heal and cure, missionaries who had close contact with them were able to carry out their religious propaganda more easily.⁶

Throughout the first half of the 19th century, Protestant missionaries embedded themselves in Ottoman lands with small-scale health services as travelling physicians and dispensaries. The missionaries mostly provided travelling services,

4 Akgün, “Amerikalı Misyonerler”, p. 2139.

5 Meral Kuzgun and Ebru Güher, “Amerikalı Misyonerlerin Anadolu’da Yardım Faaliyetleri Çerçevesinde Sağlık Misyonu”, *Turkish Studies*, X/9 (2015), p. 515; Faruk Taşkın, “Amerikan Board Misyonerlerinin Türkiye’deki Sağlık Faaliyetleri (1833-1923)”, *AVİD: Journal of Eurasian Studies*, VI/2 (2017), p. 153. Medical missionaries, trained in theology and medicine, traveled to the Near East and established mission hospitals there. In these hospitals, Muslims who would otherwise have had no contact with the missionaries benefited from medical services. Edward Mead Earle, “American Missions in the Near East”, *Foreign Affairs*, VII/3 (1929), p. 402.

6 Kuzgun and Güher, “Amerikalı Misyonerler”, p. 515. In order for medical missionaries to be effective in the Ottoman Empire, missionary physicians were sent to the empire. In 1833, Asa Dodge travelled to Beirut and became one of the first missionary physicians in the Ottoman Empire. In the following years, names such as Cornelius Van Alen Van Dyck, Azariah Smith Root and Asahel Grant worked as travelling physicians and had direct contact with the people in various parts of the empire. These physicians sent to the Ottoman territories were both equipped with medical knowledge and trained as missionaries. Their duties included providing medical services in their areas of operation as well as carrying out missionary work. See İdris Yücel, *Anadolu’da Amerikan Misyonerliği ve Misyon Hastaneleri (1880-1934)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2017), pp. 89-90.

getting to know the region and trying to earn the sympathy of the people by intervening on the spot. By the 1880s, there began an increase in medical missionary work in the Ottoman Empire and hospitals began to be established. In this period, the empire's general poverty and specific inadequacies in the field of health prompted missionaries to bring medical personnel and services from America and to further establish their work institutionally in the Ottoman Empire. The especially harsh climatic conditions in the eastern provinces of Ottoman lands caused significant health problems.⁷ It was in this context that the mission hospitals were established in Ottoman lands. In these hospitals, missionaries not only cared for non-Muslim patients, but also Muslim patients, demonstrating a dedication to the provision of services regardless of the religious differences.⁸

The momentum gained by the medical missionary activities in the Ottoman lands in the last quarter of the 19th century brought about some relief for the Ottoman Empire in the field of health. At the same time, however, they were followed with concern by the government, being carried out as they were under the umbrella of these foreign, Protestant missionaries. Until the late 19th century, missionaries organised mostly in Anatolia within the framework of the *American Board* organisation, but after this date, they began also to operate in the Arab provinces, especially in the framework of different organisations established back in America. The founders of the Arabian Mission, which was focused on the Arabian Peninsula, belonged to the Dutch Reformed Church in the North America. Having noted the neglect of the eastern lands, the Arabian Mission began to work on these regions, especially in the fields of health and education.

This study will focus on the Arabian Mission's medical activities in the Ottoman territories from the last quarter of the 19th century until the end of World War I, with the Lansing Memorial Hospital in Basra as its main center. In addition to its medical activities, it will be shown how the society tried to spread Protestantism in Basra through its well-educated members who learned Arabic and adopted elements of the local culture. It also examines the effects of American and Protestant influence in the region via the medical missionary activities, at a time

7 Akgün, "Kendi Kaynaklarından Amerikalı Misyonerler", p. 2139; Uygur Kocabaşoğlu, *Anadolu'daki Amerika: Kendi Belgeleriyle 19. Yüzyılda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'ndaki Amerikan Misyoner Okulları* (İstanbul: Arba Araştırma Basım Yayın, 1989), p. 128.

8 Emin Özdemir, "Osmanlı Devleti'nde Sağlık Alanında Yapılan Misyonerlik Faaliyetlerine Bir Örnek: Amerikan Board'un Konya Tıbbî Misyonu", *History Studies: International Journal of History*, V/1 (2013), pp. 316-317; Kocabaşoğlu, *Anadolu'daki Amerika*, p. 127.

when Ottoman Iraq was also considered a gateway to India and the Persian Gulf by the Americans and Europeans.⁹

1. Establishment of the Arabian Mission and its Activities in Basra

The idea of an Arabian Mission originated with a group within Dutch Reformed Church in America. The Church, one of the main streams within the Protestant denomination, operated as a branch of the Dutch Reformed Church in North America between the 17th and 19th centuries. It was the Rev. Dr. John G. Lansing, Professor of Old Testament Language and Exegesis at the Reformed seminary in New Brunswick, who came up with the idea of the Arabian Mission. Dr. John Lansing, was born in Damascus and had spent time in Egypt from an early age, where he learned Arabic and thus developed close ties with the east. He felt it was necessary to bring the Gospel to the east, which he had long characterized as a neglected land.¹⁰ In addition to feeling a personal affinity for the land

9 After the opening of the Suez Canal, Ottoman Iraq became more connected to international networks and its strategic importance increased. The Persian Gulf, with the most important port in the east of Ottoman Empire, became the region's gateway to the world. For more detailed information, see Ebubekir Ceylan, *Modern Irak'ın Osmanlı Kökenleri*, çev. Kenan Koçak (İstanbul: Vakıfbank Kültür Yayınları, 2022).

10 *Neglected Arabia*, nr. 68, (January-March 1909), p. 6; Alfred DeWitt Mason and Frederick J. Barny, *History of The Arabian Mission* (New York: Reformed Church in America, 1926), pp. 57-59. James L. Burton notes that the independently established Arabian Mission was recognized by the Reformed Church in America in 1894. James L. Burton, *Daybreak in Turkey* (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1908), p. 133. John Lansing was born in Damascus on November 27, 1851. He was the son of the Reverend Dr. Gulian Lansing, who was a foreign missionary of the United Presbyterian Church. His father was active for a time in Egypt under the auspices of the church, and so John Lansing lived in the East for some time. When he was ten years old, he was brought to America upon the death of his mother and entered Monmouth College, where he completed the first two years of his college education. The rest of his years were spent at Union, from which he graduated in 1875. In 1877 he was ordained a minister in Mohawk, New York State. After a five-year pastorate in West Troy, in 1884 he was elected by the General Synod to the newly created Gardner A. Sage Professorship of Old Testament Languages and Exegesis at the University of New Brunswick. He took a leave of absence from 1890-91 due to ill health and was forced to resign in 1898. He lived the rest of his life in Denver. On September 3, 1906, he died in Denver, Colorado, from an illness from which he had suffered for many years. *Neglected Arabia*, nr. 59, (October-December 1906), pp. 13-14; Jerzy Zdanowski, "Rev. John G. Lansing (1851-1906) on Preaching the Gospel to Muslims", *The Muslim World*, 109/3 (2019), pp. 450-465.

of his birth and upbringing, he saw Arabia as one of the most difficult places for missionaries but wanted to engage with this great challenge. Thus, Lansing envisioned an Arabian Mission project for missionary work in Arabia. The general consensus in Protestant circles was that without Lansing, the Arabian Mission would not have happened, as “it was his dream, his spiritual child”.¹¹

In 1888, three young priests, James Cantine, Philip Phelps and Samuel M. Zwemer, all students of Dr. Lansing at the seminary, held a special meeting with Dr. Lansing and decided to launch the mission. Dr. Lansing and his students took action, saying that they had decided to dedicate their lives to the liberation of Arabia, which they considered to be a holy and neglected land. The Arabian Mission was founded in 1888 and began as an independent project, as it was thought that it would not be accepted by the churches. However, it became closely linked to the Dutch Reformed Church and became a full member of the church in 1894. The main organization of the church in America had only partial control over the Arabian Mission in Arabia. The relationship between the two was decentralized, so that the Arabian Mission ran its day-to-day affairs independently and only looked to the main organization for funds and personnel.¹²

The Arabian Mission chose South Arabia and the neighboring coasts of Africa as its mission territory to carry out mission work in an Arabic-speaking country, especially among Muslims. Its main objective and first targeted region was the Arabian peninsula. Due to lack of personnel, however, the primary target was limited to the Arabian Gulf region. Accordingly, the Arabian Mission operated in five locations: Basra, Amara, Bahrain, Kuwait and Muscat.¹³ The city of Basra was chosen as the first place to launch the mission.¹⁴ Indeed, Basra was the region in Iraq where Ottoman rule was least felt in the 19th century. Compared to the province of Baghdad, it was easier for missionaries to operate in Basra, where foreign influence was predominant and there was less governmental

11 Zdanowski, “John G. Lansing”, p. 461.

12 Abdal-Malik Khalat Tamm, “The Arabian Mission: A Case Study of Christian Missionary Work in the Arabian Gulf Region” (doctoral dissertation), Durham University, 1978, p. 41.

13 Zdanowski, “John G. Lansing”, p. 463. An advisory committee for the Arabian Mission was elected and it was agreed that no one other than the missionaries would be paid. *Neglected Arabia*, nr. 68 (January-March 1909), p. 7.

14 In 1895, a Mission station was established in Amara and in 1897 in Nasiriyah. In 1910, these two centers were merged with Basra to form a single station. *Neglected Arabia*, nr. 86 (July-September 1913), p. 5.

control. Accordingly, the Arabian Mission could not pursue an active policy in the province of Baghdad, where the Ottoman administration was effective, with the province administratively more connected to the Ottoman administrative center than Basra.¹⁵

The choice of Basra as the main activity center – that is, the first station – was not a coincidence, but rather because it was a region of strategic importance due to its location. The American government established a consulate in this region, located at the head of the Arabian Gulf and the Persian Gulf, and worked to ensure a comfortable working environment for the missionaries.¹⁶ In the following years, the Basra station became the center and base of operations in the Arabian Gulf region. It was first decided within the Arabian Mission to send Fr. James Cantine and S.M. Zwemer to Basra. Sent to the Ottoman Empire in 1889, the two priests established the station in 1891 and began their activities. A report on Samuel Zwemer from the governor of Basra was sent to the Ministry of the Interior (Dahiliye Nezareti) in February 1889. In the report, it was stated that Zwemer, whose reason for traveling was clear, had come to the region two years ago and had deceived about 50 children and taken them to America, and this time Zwemer asked for permission to visit Muscat and the Najid coast.¹⁷ The missionaries sent to the region were required to undergo a two-year training period to learn Arabic and Islam. This was one of the most important conditions for direct communication with the people; to be able to speak and understand Arabic in order to explain and spread Protestant doctrine.¹⁸

The population of Basra included Sunni and Shiite Muslims, as well as Armenians, Protestants, Greek Orthodox, Catholics, Assyrians and Chaldeans. While

15 For a more detailed study on the position of Basra province in Ottoman Iraq and its weak centralization compared to Baghdad, see Burcu Kurt, *Osmanlı Basra'sında Devlet ve Toplum 1908-1914* (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2015).

16 Tamm, "The Arabian Mission", p. 47. The importance of Basra for the Arabian Mission is seen in a report in *The Michigan Daily* as follows: "Basra Is About to Wake Up: Arabia's Strategic Point Comes to Its Senses", it was stated that Basra was of primary strategic importance, that it was located at the crossroads of Baghdad and all the caravan routes, that thousands of pilgrims left Basra every year for Mecca, and that thousands of pilgrims first stopped in Basra to go to the shrines in Karbala and Najaf", *The Michigan Daily*, nr. 21/139, April 23, 1911, p. 4

17 Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA), Dahiliye Nezareti Şifre Kalemî (DH.ŞFR.) 231/89, 5 Şubat 1899.

18 Mason and Barny, *History of The Arabian Mission*, p. 109.

most of the non-Muslims lived in the center, Catholics and Jews resided in other regions. Muslims, however, were the majority in the province.¹⁹ Therefore, it is seen that Protestant missionaries in Basra not only propagandized for the Protestant mission, but also conveyed the teachings of Christianity to the majority Muslim population of the region.

From last decade of the 19th century, the Arabian Mission faced many problems at the station in Basra. Foremost among them was the fact that people were not sure of the mission's intentions and were therefore hesitant to accept the services the mission wanted to offer.²⁰ In addition, during this period, the administration of Abdulhamid II resisted and opposed the organization of missionaries in the region. Thus, the Ottoman government did not allow the American missionaries to obtain the buildings they needed for their work, while the governorate in Basra closely monitored their activities.²¹ In 1892, the Ottoman governor's office in Basra informed the center that two men, one of whom was a priest and the other a doctor without a diploma, had come to Basra and tried to convert the population to Protestantism and requested the protection of the British Consulate.²²

It was also reported by the governor's office that these missionaries had opened a library and a lecture hall in the bazaar of the city and were engaged in missionary activities there. According to the governorate, the American missionaries tried to attract young people who went to the bazaar by giving them money or other things that might attract them. Other officials in Basra also had reports about the missionaries. In a telegram sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Hariciye Nezareti) in October 1892, Emin Bey, Commander of the Basra Navy,

19 Since there was no complete census during the Ottoman period, it is necessary to approach the data with caution and consider them as a possibility. According to the 1881-1883 Ottoman census, Basra province had 10,853 inhabitants. In the 1906-1907 censuses, this number was given as 10,270. In 1908, Basra province, including Najid and Kuwait, was estimated to be around 1,150,000. Ayrıntılı bilgi için bkz. Justin McCarthy, "The Population of Ottoman Syria and Iraq, 1878-1914", *Asian and African Studies*, 15/1 (1981), pp. 38-39; Kemal H. Karpat, *Osmanlı Nüfusu (1830-1914)* (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2010), pp. 314-315, 400-401.

20 Tamm, "The Arabian Mission", p. 83.

21 Tamm, "The Arabian Mission", p. 48.

22 In 1892, American missionaries were involved in another incident in Basra that was the subject of a complaint. According to the Basra governorate, the missionaries had tried to bury the body of a deceased Ottoman citizen in a Christian cemetery. BOA, Hariciye Nezareti, Tahrirat Kalemi (HR.TH.) 120/96, 12 Temmuz 1892.

stated that the books in the hands of the missionaries were taken by the *rüşumat administration* (tax office), that copies were sent to the Ministry of Education and that they were likely to be among the *kütub-ı muzırrâ*. Therefore, both the governorship of Basra and the Naval Command informed Istanbul that the American missionaries should be expelled from Basra because they were engaged in activities aimed at corrupting the beliefs of children and young people.²³

In 1892, Dr. C. R. Riggs was sent to Basra to carry out medical missionary work as part of the Arabian Mission.²⁴ Emma Worrall and her husband, Dr. H. R. Lankford Worrall, arrived in Basra in 1895 as experienced medical personnel and missionaries, and opened a dispensary for women and children in the city and began to provide health services.²⁵ On the one hand, the doctors took care of the patients who came to the dispensary, while on the other hand, they also provided mobile medical services. Despite the pressures and distrust from the Ottoman administration, the period between 1895 and 1900 was considered a period of growth and development for the Arabian Mission. As permitted by the Ottoman central administration, the society organized frequent medical missionary tours along the coast and in the interior of Basra. S. J. Thoms, one of the priests in Basra, mentions that on a trip to Amara, Dr. Worrall accompanied him with the necessary instruments to treat sickness.²⁶ It is recorded that 760 Muslim and 200 Christian patients were treated on this trip and a total of 150 eye surgeries were performed.²⁷ During these tours, missionary doctors had close contact with the

23 BOA, HR.TH. 125/44, 26 Ekim 1892; Bab-ı Ali Evrak Odası (BEO.) 194/14500, 6 Mayıs 1893; Dahiliye Nezareti, Mektubi Kalemi Evrakı (DH.MKT.) 16/28, 17 Haziran 1893.

24 Dr. Riggs treated 550 patients in the region in one month. Mason and Barny, *The Arabian Mission*, p. 73.

25 In 1902, the dispensary center in Basra was relocated due to high rent increases. The new location was in the city center and was a one-story, five-room building with a kitchen, a bathroom and a large extra room that could be used for storage or other purposes if desired. *Neglected Arabia*, nr. 43 (July-September 1902), p. 10. Although Dr. Lankford Worrall received permission from the Ottoman administration to practice medicine inside the empire, his assistant Emma Worrall did not. Israa Alhassani, "Basra's High Hope: An American Missionary School in Iraq During The World War Era" (master thesis), James Madison University, 2014, p. 48.

26 *Neglected Arabia*, nr. 43 (July-September 1902), p. 5. In an encoded telegram sent from Basra to the Ministry of the Interior in 1898, it was stated that there were two American Protestant missionaries, one of whom was a doctor, in the provincial center. BOA. DH.ŞFR. 227/149, 13 Ekim 1898.

27 Alhassani, "Basra's High Hope", p. 47.

people and tried to explain the teachings of Protestantism while treating the sick. In 1904, Emma Worrall was specially assigned to take care of women patients at the medical mission station established in Basra. The ground floor of a building belonging to the Arabian Mission was allocated for this purpose and health services were provided for women.²⁸ Mrs. Lutton and Mrs. Scardefield were transferred from Bahrain to Basra to assist Dr. Worrall in the dispensary.²⁹ Dr. Worrall reports that the health services had a significant impact on the people. There were many doctors in his company, and he was very satisfied with the treatment. It is also understood that Dr. Worrall conducted missionary activities while treating women at the dispensary. According to him, a missionary named Miller, who came to Basra in 1903, gave religious speeches and taught some prayers to the Muslim women who came to the dispensary. Indeed, along with their health services, the missionaries aimed to invite people to their faith based on the healing power of Christianity.³⁰

Arthur Bennett was one of the leading figures in the development of the Arabian Mission in Basra, especially in the field of health.³¹ Having joined the Arabian Mission in 1904, Bennett, after graduating from the University of Michigan, studied French in order to become a doctor in the Ottoman Empire, and then

28 *Neglected Arabia*, nr. 90 (July-September 1914), p. 16-18. In 1904, while the health services continued, the missionaries of the Arabian Mission organized services in the city on Sundays. According to the society's sources, these services, which were conducted in English, were well attended. *Neglected Arabia*, nr. 50, (April-June 1904), p. 14.

29 It was a necessity for missionaries assigned to Basra to speak Arabic. Indeed, Mrs. Lutton is reported to have spent all her time learning the language after arriving in the region. Also, after living with the missionaries in Bahrain for a few years, Mrs. Scardefield was able to learn enough of the language to pass the first test and go to Basra. *Neglected Arabia*, nr. 50, (April-June 1904), p. 13.

30 Qasim Ajaj Kurdi, "Irak'ta Hıristiyan Misyonerliğinin Tarihi (1856-1914)" (master thesis), Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, 2015, p. 55, 60-61.

31 Arthur Bennett was born in Watkins Glen, New York in 1881, the son of Dr Matthew Bennitt. He graduated from the University of Michigan Medical School in 1904. For a while he specialised at the University of Liverpool under the supervision of Ronald Ross. He then studied at the Sorbonne in order to pass the French exam in Istanbul. After passing the exam, he was awarded a diploma and travelled to the Persian Gulf in 1906 to carry out medical missionary work. After returning to the United States from Basra, he took graduate studies at Harvard and then went to Marquette University. He worked at this university until his retirement. During his time at Marquette, he continued to support missionary activities. For detailed information, see *Marquette Mining Journal*, (13 September 1966); *The Michigan Daily*, nr. 21/139 (23 April 1911), p. 4.

went to Basra in 1906.³² As soon as Bennett was assigned to Basra, he embarked on a tour of the region, working in the countryside to care for patients who could not come to the city center. He traveled along the Tigris River, stopping in towns where he came into close contact with the people, mostly tribesmen, in need of medicine and treatment. He reported to *Neglected Arabia* that the people he met on this journey were kind to him and helped to break down some prejudices. Bennett stated that he treated a total of 457 patients during his trip and that he came into contact with many people in a short time.³³ It is clear that Bennett's aim in providing medical services among the tribes north and east of Basra was to establish a mission center there.³⁴ In fact, the members of the Arabian Mission realized that the tribal leaders had a great influence on the people of Basra and contacted them in order to ensure the security of their communities and to establish close relations.

After Arthur Bennett, Christine Iverson was sent to improve health care in Basra, especially among women. Born in Denmark, Iverson studied medicine at the University of Michigan. In 1907, Iverson completed her studies and in 1909 was approved to go to Arabia under the auspices of the university's Christian Association. In 1911, she married Arthur Bennett in India and then joined him in Basra to take charge of women's medical affairs.³⁵ The Bennetts served as the most important representatives of the Arabian Mission in Basra for nearly a decade.

32 *Neglected Arabia*, nr. 50 (April-June 1904), p. 15. The Ottoman commission called *Cemiyet-i Tıbbiye-i Mülkiye* was in charge of examining medical personnel such as physicians, pharmacists and vaccinators who studied in foreign countries and wanted to work in the Ottoman Empire. Those who passed the exam could work in the empire. For detailed information, see İsmail Yaşayanlar, "Salgınlar Çağında Osmanlı'da Hekim Olmak", *Prof. Dr. Mustafa Öztürk Onuruna Tarih Yazıları I*, eds. Işıl Işık Bostancı, Ayşe Gül Hüseyinlikoğlu, Ayşe Değerli, Orhan Kılıç (İstanbul: İdeal Kültür Yayıncılık, 2021), p. 703.

33 *Neglected Arabia*, nr. 59 (October-December 1906), p. 9.

34 Tamm, "The Arabian Mission", p. 91.

35 Penelope Tuson, *Playing the Game: The Story of Western Women in Arabia* (London-New York: I.B. Tauris 2003), p. 121; Tamm, "The Arabian Mission", p. 286. Anna Kristine Iversen was born in 1881 near the village of Slagballe on the Jutland peninsula in Denmark. She was the eldest child of Stine and Peter Iversen. Anna Christine was twelve years old when the Iversen family left Denmark to settle in South Dakota. In 1903 she entered the University of Michigan. After graduating from the University of Michigan in 1907, she worked in the women's department of the state mental hospital in Kalamazoo, Michigan. She then joined the Arabian Mission and in 1910 travelled through Italy to Bahrain, from where she went to Basra. In February 1910, she became engaged to Arthur Bennett. There

2. Establishment and Activities of Lansing Memorial Hospital

After Arthur Bennett was sent to Basra in 1906, medical missionary activities increased in the region. The Protestant missionaries, led by Bennett, took action to build a hospital in Basra, where health services were provided through various means such as mobile medicine and dispensaries. The mission first rented a house and started to provide dispensary services, but it was thought that a large plot of land should be purchased and a hospital should be built on it, where surgeries could also be performed. The high cost of land in Basra meant that this would be difficult. However, in 1908, an anonymous donor gave the Arabian Mission \$6000, which provided a substantial part of the financial support for the construction of the hospital.³⁶ In order to obtain permission for the construction of the hospital, the American missionaries tried to convince the Ottoman central government by mentioning the inadequacy of the health conditions in Basra and the difficulties of the central administration in meeting the needs of the people.

During the period when the Arabian Mission was in contact with the Ottoman government for the hospital in Basra, the 31 March incident occurred in Istanbul. As a result of this incident, Abdulhamid II was deposed on April 27, 1909, ending his absolute rule. With the dethronement of Abdülhamid II, The Committee of Union and Progress (*İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*) began to implement new reforms with the power of parliament.³⁷ The Unionists had opposed Abdulhamid II's foreign policy and declared that they would follow a new path as soon as they came to power. In particular, the committee wanted to review the concessions granted to the Baghdad Railway and to protect the Ottoman Empire

are different claims that the two met in Bahrain or while attending medical school in Michigan. Considering the timing of the engagement, the latter is more likely to be true. Indeed, Arthur Bennett may have met Christine Iverson on a trip from Basra to Bahrain. In 1911, Christine worked at Lansing Memorial Hospital in Busah and died of typhoid fever in 1916 at the age of 35. For more information, see Jim Iversen, "Christine: The Life and Death of a Danish American Medical Missionary in the Middle East", *The Bridge*, 28/1 (2005), pp. 9-29; *Neglected Arabia*, nr. 97 (April-June 1916), pp. 8-9.

³⁶ Tamm, "The Arabian Mission", p. 49. During the the Second Constitutional Era period, it is observed that Americans tried to establish a company to purchase land in Baghdad and Basra and to carry out sales transactions in the region by appointing a proxy. BOA, Dahiliye Nezareti, İdare Evrakı (DH.İD.) 45/10, Lef 2, 25 Temmuz 1911; Şura-yı Devlet Evrakı (ŞD.) 2204/7, 29 Nisan 1913.

³⁷ Sina Akşin, *Jön Türkler ve İttihat ve Terakki* (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 2017), pp. 214-215.

from foreign interference.³⁸ The Unionists, who wanted to prevent Germany's intervention in Ottoman Iraq, also thought it would be right to develop good relations with America. Seeing this opening, the American missionaries in Basra mobilized to get permission from the new government to build a hospital.

The Arabian Mission had made a request to the governorate of Basra for the construction of the hospital in 1909. Thereupon, in May 1909, the then deputy governor of Basra, Şevket Bey, sent a report on the subject to the Ministry of the Interior. In this report, it was stated that an American Protestant physician requested permission for the construction of a one-storey hospital in Basra's Sâi neighborhood on a "two and a half *jarib nahlistan* (date palm)"³⁹ – approximately 250 acres of land. The deputy governor of Basra informed the Ministry of the Interior that there was a municipality affiliated Gureba Hospital in the city, but considering the population of the city and the surrounding regions, this institution was inadequate and that it would be beneficial to increase the number of hospitals in order to protect health and well-being, and that he had a positive opinion for the construction of the hospital for which permission was requested.⁴⁰ Arif Bey, who was subsequently appointed governor of Basra, likewise notified the Ministry of the Interior of the Protestant community's request and asked for the decision to be communicated to them.⁴¹ This application from Basra was referred by the Ministry of the Interior to both in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Council of State (*Şura-yı Devlet*).⁴² In June 1909, the Council of State decided to launch an investigation into the type of land on which the hospital was to be built, how much it was worth, and whether there were any disadvantages to building such a facility in that area.⁴³

38 Kurt, *Osmanlı Basra'sı*, p. 36, 79-80.

39 The word *jarib* means "valley" and was used for a piece of land of a certain size. The plural of *jarib* was *ecirib* and *cürbân*, and in the Ottoman Empire, 10,000 cubic metres of land was called *jarib* or hectare, and one *jarib* consisted of 100 acres. For detailed information, see Mustafa Fayda, "Cerib", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (DİA), 1993, VII, 402.

40 BOA, DH.MKT. 2808/56, 5 Mayıs 1909. For the construction of a new hospital in Basra, the Ministry of Interior conveyed its favourable opinion to the Sadaret as follows: "Although there is a municipal hospital in Basra, it is inadequate in comparison to the existing population, and the construction of new hospitals would be of great benefit in terms of preserving health...". DH.MKT. 2808/56, Lef 2, 11 Mayıs 1909.

41 BOA, DH.MKT. 2828/54, Lef 3, 2 Haziran 1909.

42 BOA, İrade, Hariciye Evrakı (İ.HR.) 420/13, Lef 4, 11 Mayıs 1909.

43 BOA, ŞD. 2786/15, 7 Haziran 1909; İ.HR. 420/13, Lef 4, 11 Mayıs 1909.

In response to the Council of State's investigation, the governorate of Basra informed Istanbul that the land for the hospital consisted of a 10-acre *atik* date palm and was worth 75 thousand kurush; that the hospital expenses would cost approximately 1500 liras, which would be covered by the American charity society; and that there was no objection to its construction since there were no Muslim neighborhoods in and around the land.⁴⁴ In addition, the governor's office informed the Council of State that no excise tax was levied on this large plot of land, so that if a hospital was to be built, it was necessary to first determine how much tax would be levied on the land and to then grant a license for its construction. It was necessary to determine how much space the hospital and its outbuildings would occupy with a map and then take action accordingly.⁴⁵ Therefore, the governorate of Basra was determined that the land required for the construction of the hospital should be provided with a tithe for the remainder after deducting it from the general land acreage.⁴⁶ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also intervened for the hospital and informed the Council of State that the American ambassador to Istanbul had made a request and that a decision should be made as soon as possible, mentioning that the construction of a hospital for the province was quite feasible.⁴⁷

As a result of lengthy negotiations between the American mission delegation and the Ottoman central administration, and a special trip to Istanbul by Arthur Bennett to explain the importance of the hospital and its prospective benefits to the region, permission for construction was granted in 1909. The Council of State decided that there was no objection to granting a license for the hospital's construction. Following all of this, with the sultan's will (Mehmed V.), permission for the hospital to be built was granted in November 1909. The Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were assigned to carry out the necessary procedures before the construction of the hospital, and the Ministry of Property Records (Defter-i Hakani Nezareti) was assigned procedural duties for

44 BOA, İ.HR. 420/13, Lef 7, 7 Ağustos 1909. At the time the hospital was being built, *Neglected Arabia* reported that the churches, communities and individuals contributing to the Arabian Mission were not limited to the Reformed Church. Regular gifts and special donations were also solicited from anyone interested in mission work in Arabia. It was also stated that regular contributors would be sent annual reports without recourse. *Neglected Arabia*, nr. 76 (January-March 1911), p. 20; nr. 81 (April-June 1912), p. 23.

45 BOA, İ.HR. 420/13, Lef 8-10, 10 Ağustos 1909-27 Ekim 1909.

46 BOA, İ.HR. 420/13, Lef 11, 9 Ekim 1909.

47 BOA, İ.HR. 420/13, Lef 13, 1 Kasım 1909.

the land. Then, in order to maintain the name of Dr. John Lansing, known as the founder and spiritual advisor of the Arabian Mission, action was taken to build a hospital named Lansing Memorial Hospital in Basra.⁴⁸

One of the biggest supporters of Lansing Memorial Hospital was Susan Lansing, the wife of John Lansing, who donated \$6000.⁴⁹ After providing financial support and completing the legal procedures, the foundation of the building was approved. On March 3, 1910, a foundation groundbreaking ceremony was held in the garden of the hospital in Basra. Prior to the ceremony, invitations were distributed in English and Arabic to foreigners in Basra and in Turkish to the city's civil officials and religious notables. Since the ceremony was held with the permission of the governor of Basra, it had an official character. The Ottoman band and civil, military and religious officials were present. On the platform prepared for the speakers were the governor of Basra, the commander of the army, the commander of the navy and Abdulvahab Pasha, one of the Basra parliamentarians. The governor was the first to speak at the ceremony and expressed his satisfaction with the construction of the hospital. He declared his appreciation for the work of the doctors and his hope for the hospital's success. The official interpreter then read the Arabic translation of the speech. Arthur Bennett then made a speech in which he thanked the governor for his kindness, promising that the hospital was set to heal many patients and alleviate the pressures of health service provision in the region.⁵⁰

48 Mason and Barny, *The Arabian Mission*, pp. 119-120.

49 *Neglected Arabia*, nr. 86 (July-September 1913), pp. 10-13; Mason and Barny, *The Arabian Mission*, p. 147. Sources mention two different donations of \$6000 for the hospital. While it is not specified who made the first donation, it is mentioned that the second donation was made by Susan Lansing. However, it is possible that these separate donations were one and made by Lansing.

50 Mason and Barny, *The Arabian Mission*, p. 148; Iversen, "Christine: The Life and Death", pp. 16-17. *Neglected Arabia* has this to say about this event: "A goal was about to be realized which the early missionaries had not dared even to hope for, a goal made possible -in this freer age- by the generous present of a friend and the receipt of the imperial will from Constantinople". According to Pennings, who was in Basra as part of the Arabian Mission, the Naqib, the supreme religious leader of Basra, some of the ulema, scholars, government officials and wealthy landowners were among those who attended the groundbreaking ceremony for the hospital. Pennings expressed his delight at this development, noting that many of those present were actually opposed to the Protestants and were there out of curiosity, but nonetheless that 20 years ago they could not have imagined that the governor of the province would lay the cornerstone of an Arabian Mission hospital in the presence of the city's elite and influential men. *Neglected Arabia*, nr. 73 (April-June 1910), pp. 7-9.

The construction of the Basra mission hospital was completed a year later and opened for service in the region.⁵¹ For medical work in Basra, a budget of about \$500 was allocated for the hospital each year, taking into account medicines and other expenses. Beds and other equipment were also brought from Bombay for use in the hospital.⁵² There was an enormous workload for Dr. Arthur and Christine Bennett, Dr. Van Vlack and the other medical staff. With no other medical center in the area, the hospital had to care for a huge number of patients. According to missionary sources, 18,000 patients sought treatment at the Lansing hospital in one year.⁵³ Emma Worrall tells the story of a patient as follows: "A woman named Hatice, who lived in Nasiriyah, came to Basra with her mother and asked to be operated on at Lansing with the money they had raised. However, no money was taken from them because they looked very poor, and after a minor operation,

51 In Basra, the Arabian Mission Society also opened an educational institution in the same years. John Van Ess and his wife Dorothy Van Ess, two American Protestant missionaries and experts in Arabic, opened a school for boys and girls called High Hope in 1912. At the time, it was the first and only school in Basra to use Arabic as the official language of instruction. From 1912 until 1968, High Hope School played an important role in the Iraqi education system. Through this school, the American Protestant organization tried to spread its mission in the region. The school also became one of the most effective instruments of American influence in and around Basra. After the closure of the Lansing Hospital after World War I, the High Hope school moved to that building. The old building was used as an elementary school and dormitory. John Van Ess, who was instrumental in founding the school, was an important representative of the mission. A graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary, Van Ess traveled to Basra in 1902 to replace a missionary who had died of smallpox. Unlike previous missionaries, Van Ess excelled in Arabic and developed close relationships with the sheikhs and tribal chiefs of the region. He also traveled to the rural areas close to Basra to establish close contact with the people. For detailed information see, Alhassani, "Basra's High Hope"; Mason and Barny, *The Arabian Mission*, pp. 186-187. For detailed information on John Van Ess, see Hermas J. Bergman, "The Diplomatic Missionary John Van Ess in Iraq", *The Muslim World*, 72/3-4 (1982), pp. 180-196. For the document indicating that the Ottoman government granted permission for the school in Basra, see BOA, BEO. 3712/278379, 3 Mart 1910, ŞD. 229/29, 30 Eylül 1913.

52 It is mentioned in the sources that there were 26 inpatients within a month of the hospital's opening. *Neglected Arabia*, nr. 90 (July-September 1914), pp. 16-18.

53 These figures quoted by missionary sources should be viewed with skepticism. As a matter of fact, there is no document on the exact enrollment of the patients. Alhassani, "Basra's High Hope", p. 53. The year the hospital opened, Basra was hit by a cholera epidemic and the missionary doctors had a difficult time treating the area. *Neglected Arabia*, nr. 90 (July-September 1914), pp. 16-18.

they recovered and returned home.” At the same time, Protestantization activities were also taking place in the hospital. Worrall says also that a missionary named Jasmine first recited prayers from her religion to Hatice when she arrived at the hospital. It is clear that the hospital continued to promote and spread Christianity to the people.⁵⁴ However, it is not possible to say that the Mission was successful in its Protestantization activities in Basra, where the Muslim population was predominantly Muslim.

After the Basra mission hospital became operational in 1911, the Ottoman central administration raised the issue of whether or not to tax the institution. The American mission delegation made a tax exemption application for the hospital to the Ottoman central government, hoping for a similar status to that of French subjects operating medical clinics and hospices in the empire. In response, the Ministry of Finance launched an investigation in 1912 to see if a tax amnesty could be granted for the Lansing Hospital.⁵⁵ In the end, however, the American Embassy’s request for exemption from both real estate and customs taxes was not met with a response and the Ottoman administration demanded that they pay taxes.⁵⁶

The matter was settled there though, and in 1913, the issue of tax exemption for the hospital was brought to the attention of the Council of State and a new investigation was conducted. According to this investigation, in the Ottoman Empire, the hospital could be exempt if it was run by monks and nuns living in a monastery. However, the staff of the Lansing Hospital did not belong to this group, and therefore exemption from taxation was not possible. In fact, this was the right granted to the French during this period, and churches or temples, as well as medical clinics and hospices for the poor and run by clergy were exempt from both real estate and customs taxes in exchange for providing services without charge. In 1901, an agreement had been signed between France and the Ottoman

54 *Neglected Arabia*, nr. 81 (April-June 1912), pp. 10-11.

55 BOA, Hariciye Nezareti, Hukuk Müşavirliği İstişare Odası (HR.HMŞ.İŞO.) 86/5, Lef 3-12, Şubat 1912-Nisan 1912. From the early years of the Arabian Mission in Basra until 1911, American consular representatives in the region repeatedly petitioned the Ottoman government to grant American missionaries special privileges similar to those enjoyed by other foreign institutions. Indeed, Catholic and Protestant missionaries in Baghdad had been granted customs privileges by the Ottoman authorities since 1864. Alhassani, “Basra’s High Hope”, p. 49.

56 BOA, HR.HMŞ.İŞO. 86/5, Lef 13, 11 Mayıs 1912.

Empire to exempt such clergy-owned institutions from taxation. However, it was found that the American mission hospital did not only serve the needy, but also examined the rich for a fee – although it did not charge the poor. Moreover, the staff working in the hospital did not only consist of monks or nuns who officially lived in monasteries. Taking these points into consideration, the Ministry of Finance decided to tax the Lansing Memorial Hospital and rejected the American Embassy's request.⁵⁷ Although the Ottoman administration did not stipulate that the hospital would be exempt from taxation when granting a license for its construction, it did not charge taxes on the delivery and provision of the goods needed for its construction.⁵⁸ As a result of all these factors, the request for tax amnesty for the Lansing Hospital was ultimately rejected accepted by the Ministry of Finance. However, there is no information on how much tax was collected from the hospital in the following period.

Aside from its general facilitation of healthcare, the Lansing Hospital's work with women was of particular significance. In time, Christine Bennett's medical work increased and women's private clinics were established in some parts of the hospital. A small room was even set up as an operating room, where women were operated on as well as men for a while.⁵⁹ Minnie Holzhauser, a nurse attached to the Arabian Mission, was sent from America to Basra in May 1913 to assist Bennett.⁶⁰ In addition, two Indian nurses trained in the city of Vellore, were assigned to the hospital solely to assist Mrs. Bennett. On some afternoons, Christine Bennett and the other medical staff visited women patients at home who were unable to come to the hospital. They took a close interest in patients suffering from fever, tuberculosis or other illnesses. During these home visits, they also read their Protestant texts to them. They noted that those of the middle classes in particular understood these texts better.⁶¹

57 BOA, ŞD. 2814/12, Lef 1-7, 15 Şubat 1912-18 Şubat 1913; BEO. 4149/311144, 25 Şubat 1913; ŞD. 2814/12, Lef 1-2, 18 Şubat 1913.

58 BOA, BEO. 4149/311144, Lef 2, 24 Şubat 1913.

59 *Neglected Arabia*, nr. 90 (July-September 1914), pp. 16-18.

60 Mason and Barny, *The Arabian Mission*, p. 147; *The Wolverine Press*, nr. 14/6 (10 July 1912), p. 1. Ms. Holzhauser left North Western University, where she had been working for nearly two years, to go to Basra for three years in exchange for a salary of \$ 600 a year. Holzhauser assumed the position of head nurse at Lansing Hospital. *The Michigan Daily*, nr. 23/138 (19 April 1913), p. 4; nr. 27/55 (5 December 1916), p. 1.

61 Christine Bennett was also known to have traveled with her husband Arthur Bennett to the surrounding villages to treat Bedouins. Iversen, "Christine: The Life and Death", pp. 17-18.

It is estimated that approximately 7,000 women were treated at Lansing Hospital in 1911, the year it opened. In line with the demographics of the province, the proportion of Muslims was higher than that of Christians and Jews. According to the Arabian Mission, Lansing Hospital was the only place in Basra province where women of different races, religions and classes could be found together. It was reported that even among Muslims, women of various classes, from a rich woman to a poor black woman, preferred to be examined at the mission hospital. Some of the patients came from the center of Basra, while many others came from Amara and Nasiriyah. In keeping with their mission, while the doctors and assistants of the hospital examined and treated the women, they also tried to introduce them to Christianity.⁶² According to Arthur Bennett, women in Basra generally had no value or importance in society, whereas at the mission hospital they were treated with special importance by the female doctors and were therefore attracted to the hospital and the Arabian Mission.⁶³

In a 1913 report sent from Basra to *Neglected Arabia*, the publication of the Arabian Mission, it was stated that the hospital had been operating intensively for two years, that around 5,000 patients had been treated between November 1912 and March 1913, that two days a week were devoted to surgery, that the hospital was beyond capacity and that trained personnel were therefore needed. Arthur Bennett mentioned that leprocy was among the most common diseases treated

In *Neglected Arabia*, under the title "House Visiting" the following is quoted: "Looking at it from an evangelistic point of view, there is more satisfaction in visiting the middle classes than the very rich or very poor. They are as a rule intelligent and seem willing to listen to one's message, while the rich, though they like a social call, are usually lazily indifferent to the preaching of the gospel. And yet I have seen the women in one of the wealthiest homes in Busrah listen with much interest to the parable of the sower as the Bible woman was telling it to them in her simple and attractive way. Many of the middle-class people work the large date plantations, and one can spend pleasant as well as profitable hours reading and talking with the women while visiting them in the date gardens. The poorer classes are so very ignorant that it is difficult to make them understand even the simplest gospel stories. But they are therefore all the more in need of our teaching". *Neglected Arabia*, nr. 86 (July-September 1913), pp. 8-9.

⁶² *Neglected Arabia*, nr. 86 (July-September 1913), pp. 6-7, 10-13.

⁶³ *Neglected Arabia*, nr. 86 (July-September 1913), pp. 6-7, 10-13. In the summer of 1914, Christine and Arthur Bennett were invited to Baghdad to operate on the daughter of the Naqib of Baghdad (Sayyid Abdurrahman). The two doctors went to the Naqib's summer house and operated on his daughter and were very well received. Iversen, "Christine: The Life and Death", p. 19.

at the hospital and that a study of lepers had been initiated in 1913, but that it was not easy to distinguish them in society and the public did not care until the disease reached its final stage. In order to avoid mixing lepers with other patients, they built a thatched hut in the hospital and cared for them there.⁶⁴

Another of the most common diseases of the time was malaria, owing to the swampy and reedy nature of the region. Patients with malaria in Basra, Bahrain and Muscat were treated by missionary physicians. Another common disease was tuberculosis, which mostly affected city residents, although it was also contracted by Bedouins living in the deserts. Pulmonary tuberculosis was also relatively common, but cases of tuberculosis of the bones, joints, skin and peritoneum were reported by hospital staff to be much rarer. Arthur Bennett noted that scabies and ringworm were also common in Basra, "due to some unhealthy habits" of the population. According to the doctor, however, it was not easy for the people to abandon such habits, and so it was unlikely that these diseases would disappear. Another common sickness was chronic rheumatism. Bennett cited that this disease stemmed from running barefoot in summer and winter and wearing four or five layers of clothing to cover themselves. Dr. Bennett stated that eye diseases also were very common in Basra, a region surrounded by deserts, and that cataracts and many other diseases, though especially cataracts, were widespread due to the damage caused to the eyes by the sun, wind and dust. He also noted that some eye conditions could be treated at Lansing Hospital but that many treatments were dependent on the availability of equipment.⁶⁵ As a result, Lansing Hospital continued to treat the population until the outbreak of World War I (1914), and worked to cure some diseases. After the outbreak of the war, all the balances in the region changed and the functioning of the hospital was reorganized according to the prevailing conditions.⁶⁶

64 *Neglected Arabia*, nr. 86 (July-September 1913), pp. 6-7, 10-13.

65 *Neglected Arabia*, nr. 88 (January-March 1914), pp. 10-12.

66 Before the outbreak of World War I, it was announced in the newspaper of the University of Michigan that the Arabian Mission needed \$4380 for its activities in Basra. It was announced that a fundraiser would be held in Michigan to continue the mission's activities. It was also stated in the newspaper that a total of five graduates of the University of Michigan, Arthur Bennett, Christine Bennett, H.G. Van Vlack and his wife Mrs. Vlack, Minnie Holzhauser, were active in Basra in 1914 with the support of the Arab mission. *The Michigan Daily*, nr. 24/133 (15 April 1914), p. 1. *Neglected Arabia* reported that this team was doing a great job, taking care of 500 inpatients and 15,000 outpatients a year on a budget of less than \$ 4000. *Neglected Arabia*, nr. 88 (January-March 1914), p. 10.

After the Ottoman Empire participated in World War I on the Alliance front, the agreements it made with Britain and France, which were among the Entente states, were considered null and void and canceled. Thereupon, Britain attacked the Ottoman lands. First of all, in order to protect both the road to India and Iranian oil in Iraq, British forces landed on the island of Fav in November 1914 and occupied Basra.⁶⁷ In Basra, which experienced the first impact of the war on Ottoman Iraq, clashes took place between the Ottoman forces and the forces of the Entente front. Meanwhile, America, which remained neutral, did not withdraw from Basra and the missionaries did not leave their posts. Immediately after the declaration of war, John Van Ess and Arthur Bennett went to the governor of Basra and offered to open hospital and school buildings for the use of the Ottoman relief organization Hilal-i Ahmer (Red Crescent),⁶⁸ and to provide aid. This offer was accepted by the governor's office and the next day the Lansing Hospital wore the Red Crescent flag and began to work. From mid-November onwards, the wounded were brought to the hospital and mostly Muslim Ottoman soldiers were treated.⁶⁹

Christine Bennett, who was still in charge of the Lansing women's section, tells of the war period events in the hospital in her diary. She mentions that there was a state of chaos in the city, that Christians especially sought refuge in the hospital, and that the Red Crescent provided a lot of equipment that was otherwise lacking. Her diary states that the condition of the Ottoman soldiers brought to the hospital wounded or dead from the fighting was quite dire and that in the last fighting, only 250 of an Ottoman battalion of 800 men were able to return. In the hospital, where even the corridors and offices were being used, the number

67 Peter Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq: Contriving King and Country* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), pp. 4-8; Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, *The Logistics and Politics of the British Campaigns in the Middle East 1914-22* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), pp. 43-47.

68 At the beginning of World War I, there was no *Hilal-i Ahmer* center or branch in Iraq. In December 1914, with the initiative of Mosul Governor Dr. Reşid Bey, it was decided to open a center. Notables and rich people were called to a meeting to establish the center and the administrative board of the society. First, a *Hilal-i Ahmer* center was established in Baghdad and money was collected on behalf of the society to solve the cash shortage. The most important task of *Hilal-i Ahmer* during the war was to support the army by treating wounded soldiers. For detailed information, see Halit Baş, *Birinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Irak-İran Cephesi İlaçe ve Sağlık Hizmetleri 1914-1918* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2022), pp. 262-266.

69 Iversen, "Christine: The Life and Death", pp. 20-25, and Arnold Talbot Wilson, *Loyalties: Mesopotamia 1914-1917: A Personal and Historical Record* (London: Oxford University Press 1930), p. 77.

of wounded was increasing day by day, and by the end of November, the Lansing Hospital, which had a maximum capacity of 45, had nearly 100 inpatients. According to Bennett, soldiers who were too sick to move were first taken to the public hospital and then brought to Lansing Hospital for specialized care.⁷⁰

For a while after the outbreak of the war, non-Muslims, fearing the chaos in the city, thought that the hospital was the safest place to be. One outcome of this was that local Christians applied to the hospital to serve as nurses and orderlies. The applicants were given brief training to be able to treat the wounded.⁷¹ Meanwhile, Arthur Bennett asked the governor of Basra for a security force to protect the hospital so that it could operate in safety, to which the the governor's office obliged by sending Ottoman soldiers to guard its gates.⁷² In 1915, with the British occupation of Basra and withdrawal of Ottoman troops, Lansing Hospital came under British control and was handed over to the Red Cross, which continued to care for the wounded. Ottoman soldiers and Arabs brought to the hospital were treated and then taken to India to be held captive with British ships. Although the missionaries could not preach to the patients, they wrote biblical texts on the appropriate walls of the hospital building and tried to carry out evangelical activities in this way.⁷³ In 1915, the government of British India presented the hospital with a gift of 10,000 rupees for its services in caring for wounded prisoners of war at in Basra. Some of this sum was actually collected from the Muslim community in Bombay. There was also an effort at the University of Michigan to raise money for the hospital. At the university, missionary groups organized meetings and launched a fundraising campaign, with a committee of about 300 men and women raised money among the students to support efforts in Basra.⁷⁴

70 Iversen, "Christine: The Life and Death", pp. 20-25.

71 *The Michigan Daily*, nr. 25/142 (22 April 1915), p. 3. Arthur Bennett considered this state of Christians as both comical and pathetic. *Neglected Arabia*, nr. 93 (April-June 1915), pp. 5-8.

72 Iversen, "Christine: The Life and Death", p. 20. According to Mason and Barny, scholars of missionary history, Lansing Hospital was the only place the Ottoman forces could count on during the war. Tuson, *Playing the Game*, p. 117. Working at the hospital during the war were Dr. Arthur Bennett, Christine Bennett, Dr. Van Vlack and nurse Holzhauser. *The Michigan Daily*, nr. 25/142 (22 April 1915), p. 3.

73 *Neglected Arabia*, nr. 93 (April-June 1915), p. 8; *The Michigan Daily*, nr. 25/130 (28 March 1915), p. 8.

74 At that time, 10,000 rupees was equivalent to \$3330. *The Michigan Daily*, nr. 26/136 (20 April 1916), p. 4; *Neglected Arabia*, nr. 94 (July-September 1915), p. 17; Tuson, *Playing the Game*, p. 122.

As World War I continued, British troops were advancing into Iraq and approaching Baghdad. Major battles were being fought between British forces and Ottoman troops. In January 1916, the entire staff of Lansing Hospital was infected with typhus, understood to have been contracted from wounded Ottoman soldiers.⁷⁵ The situation spiraled out of control when it was realized that the soldiers, who had been brought in as febrile cases, were infected with the infectious disease, and the entire medical staff, especially the doctors at the hospital, became infected rapidly. Of the infected Ottoman soldiers, 12 of them died from the disease. One of the nurses, Mrs. Holzhauser, was so severely infected that she was sent back to America, never to return to Basra. Both Arthur and Christine Bennett contracted the disease. Christine soon suffered a seizure; she was unable to recover from the disease and died on March 29, 1916. The British High Commissioner, Sir Percy Cox, commemorated Bennett's services in the region with a grand funeral.⁷⁶ Her husband, Arthur Bennett, and their three-year-old son, Matthew, returned to the United States after spending some time in Basra.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ During World War I, cholera, dysentery, spotted typhoid (typhus), plague, fickle fever (*humma-yı racia*), pulmonary tuberculosis, black fever, spotted fever, malaria, influenza, mumps, syphilis, smallpox and trachoma were common diseases in Iraq. Typhus, one of the most common diseases, was seen in other fronts and regions of the war, especially on the Caucasus Front. While this disease was not observed in a survey conducted in October 1915, typhus began to be encountered after the transfer of troops from Erzurum and Aleppo to other regions. This led to the possibility that the disease may have come from Erzurum and Aleppo. In 1916, a typhus vaccine was prepared under the leadership of Dr. Rıza and soldiers on the fronts were vaccinated. Indeed, the vaccine led to a reduction in typhus deaths in the following years. Baş, *Irak-İran Cephesi*, pp. 295-296.

⁷⁶ Wilson, *Loyalties*, pp. 77-78; Dorothy Van Ess, *The Pioneers in the Arab World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), p. 96; Alhassani, "Basra's High Hope", p. 81. *Neglected Arabia*, reported with great sadness the death of Christine Bennett. She was only 35 years old, was an important member of the mission team and was widely known for her optimism and cheerfulness. With Bennett's death, the society has lost a very valuable member. *Neglected Arabia*, nr. 97 (April-May 1916), p. 17. She also was the third of the Arabian Mission's medical missionaries in Basra to die. Before her, Arthur Bennett's first wife Jessie Vail Bennett had died in 1906 and Dr. J. S. Thoms in 1914. *The Michigan Daily*, nr. 26/131 (5 April 1916), p. 1. Among the members of the Arabian Mission, she was the 4th deceased. In 1901, Rev. Harry J. Wiersum had died in Basra. Mason and Barny, *The Arabian Mission*, p. 110.

⁷⁷ Mason and Barny, *The Arabian Mission*, pp. 186-187. In 1917, Bennett, and later Dr. Van Vlack, another doctor who worked at the hospital, returned to America. He even gave a lecture to mission supporters after his return. *The Michigan Daily*, nr. 27/138 (20 April 1917), p. 1; nr. 27/142 (25 April 1917), p. 2. Arthur Bennett died in September 1966 at the

During the war, Lansing Hospital continued to operate under the auspices of the Red Cross and under the supervision of British troops to treat prisoners of war and the wounded.⁷⁸ In 1917, with Arthur Bennett's return to the United States, some temporary doctors were sent to the region, but there were not enough staff and the mission hospital was soon closed for good. The building of the closed hospital was transferred to John Van Ess and Dorothy Van Ess's Arabian Mission school, *High Hope*, and continued to serve as a training station.⁷⁹

Conclusion

Founded in the last years of the 19th century, the Arabian Mission chose Basra as the central station between Basra, Amara, Bahrain, Kuwait and Muscat in the Arabian Gulf region. One of the main reasons for this was the strategic importance of Basra's location. Located at the beginning of the Arabian Gulf Basra was a cosmopolitan region due to its history of international trade. Health services in Basra were quite inadequate at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. Since there was only one hospital in the city and the surrounding areas, medical missionary activities were permitted by the Ottoman administration in order to protect the general health and well-being. Compared to Baghdad, which was considered the centre of Ottoman Iraq, Basra was far away from the Ottoman administration both administratively and psychologically, and therefore remained quite open to foreign influence. In addition, while the people of Basra were initially distant from the Arabian Mission, they took advantage of the dispensary and the hospital because of the paucity of other options for health treatment. Since the Ottoman government could not provide medical needs to all segments of the society due to certain inadequacies, it opted to allow the missionaries to operate.

age of 85 at St. Luke's Hospital in the United States, where he had been receiving treatment for some time. *Marquette Mining Journal*, 13 September 1966.

78 In 1917, while World War I was still raging, a fundraising campaign was launched for Lansing Hospital in Michigan. In this appeal, the medical missionaries in Basra were described as "Michigan men and women have given their time and energy to the mission, destroyed their health and endured all kinds of privations in Basra, where fever and plague are rampant - all for humanity. Michigan's little hospital there treated more than 11,000 cases last year". The hospital was in need of \$ 1500 and asked for support from all charitable organizations. *The Michigan Daily*, nr. 27/140 (22 April 1917), p. 4.

79 Alhassani, "Basra's High Hope", p. 81; Mason and Barny, *The Arabian Mission*, pp. 186-187.

In Basra, the American missionary doctors of the Arabian Mission not only provided health services, but also attempted to conduct religious indoctrination to the predominantly Muslim population, with Protestant missionaries attempting to carry out a multi-layered propaganda campaign tied to the treatments they provided. Therefore, it is seen that the missionaries not only attempted to Protestantize the region but also inculcated Christianity. However, while the Arabian Mission tried to operate in a Muslim region with “limited resources”, thus judged to be more receptive to their mission, it was not successful. For this reason, both Ottoman and the mission’s own sources do not mention the names of Protestant converts and do not provide any numerical data.

If such missionary activity had been attempted in or near the center of the empire, it would have been more likely that members of the Arabian Mission would have been deported by the Ottoman central administration. In Basra, however, mission members were active from the 1890s until the end of World War I, both in the city centre and in the countryside. At the end of the war, when Basra was occupied and the British took over the health services, the doctors of the Arabian Mission withdrew from the region.

American Medical Missionary Activities in Basra in the Late Ottoman Period: Lansing Memorial Hospital

Abstract ■ One of the most important cities of Iraq on the eastern border of the Ottoman Empire was the province of Basra, where international trade was active and which could also be considered as a gateway to India. Basra was also of high importance for the United States of America because it was the trade centre of the East and the gateway to the South Asian market, and because of the presence of oil in the neighbouring province of Khuzestan. In the vacuum created by the Ottoman Empire’s loss of power in the region in the 19th century, America, which wanted to create an area of dominance for itself, carried out activities here. Accordingly, the Arabian Mission, founded by American Protestant missionaries at the end of the 19th century, established a station in Basra, which was identified as its first target for education and health activities. In 1911, it opened a hospital in Basra under the name of Lansing Memorial, and Protestant doctors and nurses affiliated with the Arabian Mission started to serve there. This study focuses on the activities of the Arabian Mission in Basra starting from the end of the 19th century. The primary sources of this research are the documents of the Ottoman Archives and the publications of the Arabian Mission, while literature on the Arabian Mission has also been used.

Keywords: Basra, Missionary, Protestant, Hospital, Arabian Mission.

References

Archival Sources

Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA)

- Bab-ı Ali Evrak Odası (BEO.), 194/14500; 222/16582; 3712/278379; 4149/311144.
 Dahiliye Nezareti, İdare Evrakı (DH.İD.), 45/10.
 Dahiliye Nezareti, Mektubi Kalemî Evrakı (DH. MKT.), 16/28; 2808/56; 2828/54.
 Dahiliye Nezareti, Muhaberat-ı Umumiye İdaresi Evrakı, (DH.MUİ.) 38-1/37.
 Dahiliye Nezareti, Şifre Kalemî (DH.ŞFR.), 231/89; 227/149.
 Hariciye Nezareti, Hukuk Müşavirliği İstişare Odası (HR.HMŞ.İŞO.), 196/58.
 Hariciye Nezareti, Tahrirat Kalemî (HR.TH.), 120/96; 125/44.
 İrade, Hariciye Evrakı (İ.HR.), 420/13.
 Şura-yı Devlet Evrakı (ŞD.), 2202/18; 229/29; 2204/7, 2814/12; 2786/15; 2814/12.

Periodicals

- Marquette Mining Journal*
The Michigan Daily
Neglected Arabia
The Wolverine Press

Research Works

- Akgün, Seçil: “Kendi Kaynaklarından Amerikalı Misyonerlerin Türk Sosyal Yaşamına Etkisi (1820-1914)”, *X. Türk Tarih Kongresi: Ankara 22-26 Eylül 1986 Kongreye Sunulan Bildiriler*, V, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu 1994, pp. 2121-2145.
 Akşin, Sina: *Jön Türkler ve İttihat ve Terakki*, Ankara: İmge Kitabevi 2017.
 Alhassani, Israa: *Basra's High Hope: An American Missionary School in Iraq During the World War Era*, Master Thesis, James Madison University, 2014.
 Baş, Halit: *Birinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Irak-İran Cephesi İlahe ve Sağlık Hizmetleri 1914-1918*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu 2022.
 Bergman, Hermas J.: “The Diplomatic Missionary John Van Ess in Iraq”, *The Muslim World*, 72/3-4 (1982), pp. 180-196.
 Burton, James L.: *Daybreak in Turkey*, Boston: The Pilgrim Press 1908.
 Ceylan, Ebubekir: *Modern Irak'ın Osmanlı Kökenleri*, çev. Kenan Koçak, İstanbul: Vakıfbank Kültür Yayınları 2022.
 Dodge, Bayard: “American Educational and Missionary Efforts in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries”, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, America and the Middle East*, 401 (1972), pp. 15-22.

- Doğan, Mehmet Ali: "From New England into New Lands: The Beginning of a Long Story", *American Missionaries and the Middle East Foundational Encounters*, eds. Mehmet Ali Doğan and Heather J. Sharkey, Utah: University of Utah Press 2011, pp. 3-30.
- Earle, Edward Mead: "American Missions in the Near East", *Foreign Affairs*, 7/3 (1929), pp. 398-417.
- Fayda, Mustafa: "Cerib", *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi (DİA)*, VII, 1993, p. 402.
- Fendoğlu, Tahsin: *Modernleşme Bağlamında Osmanlı-Amerika İlişkileri 1786-1929: Kamu Hukuku Açısından Karşılaştırmalı Bir İnceleme*, İstanbul: Beyan Yayınları 2002.
- Iversen, Jim: "Christine: The Life and Death of a Danish American Medical Missionary in the Middle East", *The Bridge*, 28/1 (2005), pp. 9-29.
- Kocabaşoğlu, Uygur: *Anadolu'daki Amerika: Kendi Belgeleriyle 19. Yüzyılda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'ndaki Amerikan Misyoner Okulları*, İstanbul: Arba Araştırma Basım Yayın 1989.
-: "Doğu Sorunu Çerçevesinde Amerikan Misyoner Faaliyetleri", *Tarihi Gelişmeler İçinde Türkiye'nin Sorunları Sempozyumu'ndan Ayrı Basım*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu 1992, pp. 65-73.
- Karpat, Kemal H.: *Osmanlı Nüfusu (1830-1914)*, İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları 2010.
- Kurdi, Qasim Ajaj: *Irak'ta Hristiyan Misyonerliğinin Tarihi (1856-1914)*, Master Thesis, Çanakkale: Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, 2015.
- Kurt, Burcu: *Osmanlı Basra'sında Devlet ve Toplum 1908-1914*, İstanbul: Küre Yayınları 2015.
- Kuzgun, Meral and Ebru Güher: "Amerikalı Misyonerlerin Anadolu'da Yardım Faaliyetleri Çerçevesinde Sağlık Misyonu", *Turkish Studies: Türkoloji Araştırmaları*, 10/9 (2015), pp. 505-534.
- Mason, Alfred DeWitt and Frederick J. Barny: *History of The Arabian Mission*, New York: Reformed Church in America 1926.
- McCarthy, Justin: "The Population of Ottoman Syria and Iraq, 1878-1914", *Asian and African Studies*, 15/1 (1981), pp. 3-44.
- Özdemir, Emin: "Osmanlı Devleti'nde Sağlık Alanında Yapılan Misyonerlik Faaliyetlerine Bir Örnek: Amerikan Board'un Konya Tıbbi Misyonu", *History Studies: International Journal of History*, 5/1 (2013), pp. 311-323.
- Sluglett, Peter: *Britain in Iraq: Contriving King and Country*, London: I.B. Tauris 2007.
- Tamm, Abdal-Malik Khalat: *The Arabian Mission: A Case Study of Christian Missionary Work in the Arabian Gulf Region*, Doctoral Dissertation, Durham University, 1978.
- Taşkın, Faruk: "Amerikan Board Misyonerlerinin Türkiye'deki Sağlık Faaliyetleri (1833-1923)", *AVİD: Avrasya İncelemeleri Dergisi: Journal of Eurasian Studies*, 6/2 (2017), pp. 149-175.
- Tuson, Penelope: *Playing the Game: The Story of Western Women in Arabia*, London-New York: I.B. Tauris 2003.

- Ulrichsen, Kristian Coates: *The Logistics and Politics of the British Campaigns in the Middle East 1914-22*, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan 2011.
- Van Ess, Dorothy: *The Pioneers in the Arab World*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1974.
- Wilson, Arnold Talbot: *Loyalties: Mesopotamia 1914-1917: A Personal and Historical Record*, London: Oxford University Press 1930.
- Yaşayanlar, İsmail: “Salgınlar Çağında Osmanlı’da Hekim Olmak”, *Prof. Dr. Mustafa Öztürk Onuruna Tarih Yazıları I*, eds. Işıl Işık Bostancı, Ayşe Gül Hüseyinklioğlu, Ayşe Değerli, Orhan Kılıç, İstanbul: İdeal Kültür Yayıncılık 2021, pp. 699-708.
- Yetkiner, Cemal: “After Merchants, Before Ambassadors: Protestant Missionaries and Early American Experience in the Ottoman Empire, 1820-1860”, *American-Turkish Encounters: Politics and Culture, 1830-1989*, eds. Nur Bilge Criss, Selçuk Esenbel, Greenwood Tony, Louise Mazzari, Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2011, pp. 8-34.
- Yücel, İdris: *Anadolu’da Amerikan Misyonerliği ve Misyon Hastaneleri (1880-1934)*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu 2017.
- Zdanowski, Jerzy: “Rev. John G. Lansing (1851–1906) on Preaching The Gospel to Muslims”, *The Muslim World*, 109/3 (2019), pp. 450-465.

APPENDIX

Appendix-1: At the groundbreaking ceremony of the hospital, notables of Basra and Protestant missionaries (*Neglected Arabia*, nr. 73 (April-June 1910)).

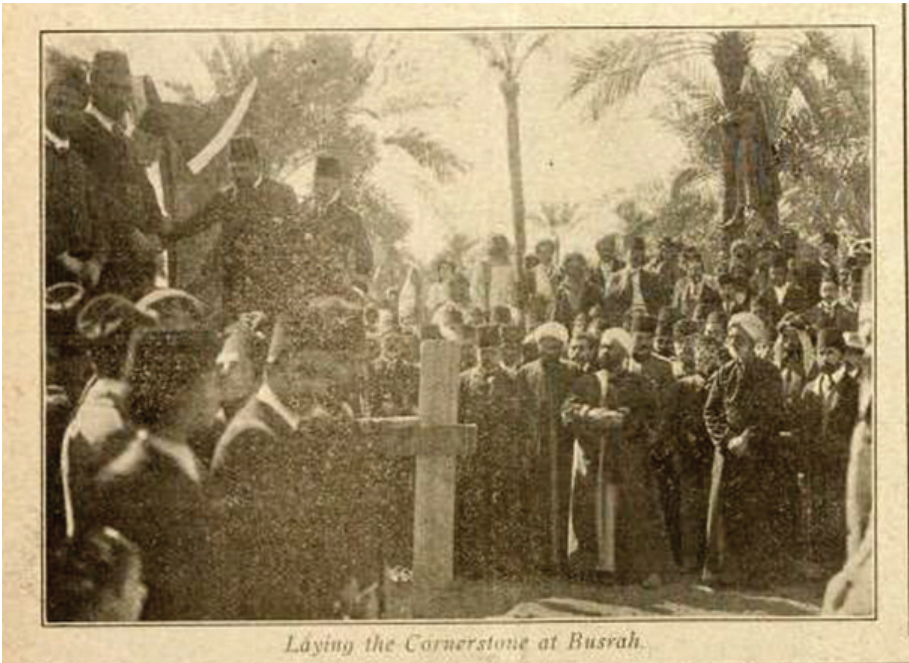


LANSING MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Appendix-2: Male patients waiting outside Lansing Memorial Hospital (*Neglected Arabia*, nr. 93 (April-June 1915)).

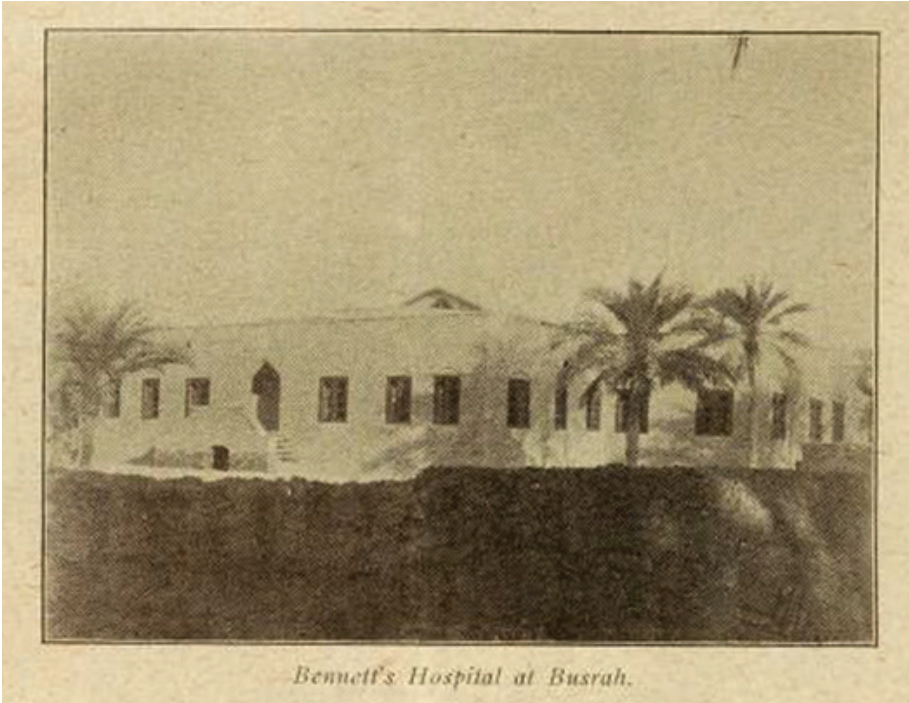


Appendix-3: Notables of Basra and community members gathered at the laying of the first foundation stone of Lansing Memorial Hospital (*Michigan Daily*, nr. 21/139 (23 April 1911)).



LANSING MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Appendix-4: Bennett's Hospital (Lansing Memorial Hospital) in Basra (*Michigan Daily*, nr. 21/139 (23 April 1911)).



Bennett's Hospital at Busrah.