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## “You Had the Alps, but We the Mount of Olives”: Mormon Missionary Travel in the Middle East (1884–1928)

*David P. Charles*

The Middle East was first opened for LDS missionary work when Elder Jacob Spori arrived in Constantinople on 31 December 1884.<sup>1</sup> Between 1884 and 1928, some five dozen elders and one sister were sent from the United States (virtually all of them from Utah or Idaho) to labor as missionaries in the Turkish or, as it was later called, the Armenian Mission.<sup>2</sup> Because of the contemporary means and conditions of transportation between Salt Lake City and the ports of destination in Ottoman, Turkey, travel to and from the mission field was a routinely hazardous, usually adventurous, and often amusing affair. Having arrived and disembarked onto firm ground, most missionaries continued traveling throughout the duration of their labors. Constant and difficult travel was, indeed, a central characteristic of missionary life in the Middle East during the period under investigation. From the missionaries' diaries and correspondence with Church periodicals (particularly the *Millennial Star*, the *Deseret Evening News*, and the *Deseret Weekly*), distinct patterns of travel experience can be discerned. These patterns will be examined in this article.

### **To and from the Mission Field**

Missionaries called to the Middle East generally began their journey traveling by train from Salt Lake City to New York City, via Kansas City and Chicago.<sup>3</sup> From New York City, a steamship was taken to Liverpool, the seat of the European Mission.<sup>4</sup> After visiting with fellow missionaries at the mis-

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DAVID P. CHARLES is a senior in Comparative Literature at Brigham Young University. He has lived and traveled widely in Europe and the Middle East. He intends to pursue graduate studies in the field of religion.

sion office and doing some sightseeing in London, the missionaries had three options available for the next leg of the journey—from Liverpool to Constantinople:<sup>5</sup> (1) travel by train through continental Europe to a port on the Mediterranean (such as Marseilles, Naples, or Brindisi) with steamer service to Constantinople or Port Said, Egypt<sup>6</sup> (2) travel by train the entire distance to Constantinople (usually via Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, and Sofia)<sup>7</sup> and (3) travel by steamship from Liverpool through the Strait of Gibraltar and eastward across the Mediterranean to Constantinople.<sup>8</sup>

Most missionaries were awed by the large, cosmopolitan European cities and their worldly inhabitants. Many, especially the younger ones, had never left the comfortable familiarity of their Rocky Mountain homes. One elder was struck by the “poverty and degradation” he witnessed in Liverpool, having been “born and reared among the . . . Mormons where such a thing is utterly unknown” and not having “seen in [his] whole life in Utah a near approach to it.” His impression of Paris was quite different—he called it “the most beautiful city of all the earth, I believe.” A visit to Saint Peter’s Cathedral in Rome led him to compare its impressive grandeur with a building more familiar to him: “If it were possible to take another temple like that of ours in Salt Lake and stand it on the angel Moroni’s head, the two could stand in S. Peters and would not touch the ceiling by four feet.”<sup>9</sup> The missionaries’ letters and diaries reveal that they were curious and observant travelers who were eager to see the cultural and architectural treasures of Europe.

Passage between New York City and Liverpool generally took ten or eleven days. One particular steamship company, the Guion Line, was preferred for the “excellent treatment” the Saints received.<sup>10</sup> Missionaries traveling to the Middle East were most often either alone or in the company of one or two fellow elders. Feelings of loneliness and isolation began on these long stretches of solitary, or near-solitary, travel and accompanied those who served in the Turkish Mission throughout their labors in that distant land. After visiting relatives and conducting other business in England, Elder Joseph Wilford Booth found himself, on 16 September 1898, sitting in London’s Liverpool Station. His journal entry for that day, characteristically sensitive and eloquent, contrasts the immensity of his unfamiliar surroundings with an inner longing and sense of isolation:

I am now left alone with no known and tried friend but God to guide me on my Journey across another Continent and another sea. So I now sit with my satchel for a stool and my knee for a writing desk in the great “Liverpool Station” one of the largest in London—there come crowding in upon my soul such mingled and speechless emotions as I have never known before. . . . Just now it is 8.10 PM and 20 minutes more will see me off and away to tell my story of love to another people far over

the sea and the land. Countless throngs of people are passing but no face is familiar and no hand has a clasp for me.<sup>11</sup>

Understandably, missionaries returning home from the isolation of the Turkish Mission enjoyed having the company of fellow Saints who were immigrating to Utah or were likewise returning from the mission field. Elder Janne M. Sjudahl, on his way home from Turkey in 1890, describes the scene on board, where the sea-sick passengers could at least comfort one another and receive priesthood blessings:

[Shortly after we left Liverpool,] the weather changed. . . . The ship rolled a little. . . . It need not be said that some of the Saints were very sea-sick. . . . The power of God was manifested in a remarkable degree, inasmuch as not one failure occurred whenever the sick were anointed and the diseases rebuked in the name of the Lord. . . . We have had our prayer meetings and services regularly. . . . It is remarkable that people who have never seen each other before, come together from different countries, and feel like brothers and sisters toward each other, as the Saints do. There are in this company eight different nationalities: Swedes, Danes, Norwegians, Germans, Swiss, Dutch, English, and Americans . . . among the nearly 300 souls that embarked with us at Liverpool. . . . Only one feeling prevails, that of entire satisfaction.<sup>12</sup>

Rough weather and seasickness were not the only sources of discomfort while missionaries crossed the Atlantic. Occasionally, a collision with another ship would occur, throwing the sleeping passengers from their beds.<sup>13</sup> Despite these hazards, one officer remarked—“much to the amusement of some passengers”—that “ships never went down with ‘Mormons’ on board.”<sup>14</sup> The missionaries often preached to their fellow travelers on ships and trains, where they encountered familiar anti-Mormon sentiment. For instance, while on his way to Turkey, Elder Charles Locander was asked in France “if strangers could pass in or out of the gates of Utah alive.”<sup>15</sup> Other missionaries learned, perhaps to their relief, that not everyone had heard of Utah. Elder Frederick Huish writes of conversing with “a number of gentlemen” aboard the S.S. *Ophir*, “an English vessel with about a thousand English passengers on their way to Australia. I was . . . asked where I was from, and when I answered that I was from Utah, one of the gentlemen . . . said: ‘Utah! Is that anywhere near the Peruvians?’” After showing them a “view of the Salt Lake Temple,” however, “the eyes of my auditors fairly stuck out with amazement, and they spoke in very high tones of praise and admiration of the massive structure.”<sup>16</sup>

### Arrival in the Mission Field

When arriving at Constantinople or other ports of the Ottoman Empire, the missionaries first passed through the customs house, where their pass-

ports and luggage were examined. Elder Charles Locander referred to this experience as “that initiation into Oriental life which usually awaits the unsuspecting missionary who ventures ashore in Turkey.”<sup>17</sup> After disembarking at the Syrian port of Alexandretta in 1898, Elder F. F. Hintze described his “initiation” in these words:

We were taken in hand by the custom officers, who first examined our passes, which they found all right, then the baggage was looked into. Here they showed indifference to everything except books. They asked for books and when told we had a few harmless arms of that kind they managed to wake up their sleepy vigilance and soon our books were marched off to the book prison, for Turks consider books dangerous. These were also indeed dangerous for they consisted of my Bible in English, a dictionary and grammar in Turkish, and Brother [Anthon] Lund’s Testament. They told us to rest undisturbed. The prisoners would be taken good care of, so we left.<sup>18</sup>

The Ottoman Empire was ruled by ethnic Turks who constantly feared a mass uprising by ethnic minorities such as the Armenians and the Kurds. Foreigners entering the Empire were suspected of assisting the minorities by importing and distributing political materials; hence, all printed materials were strictly examined and returned only once they were positively found not to be of a political nature. In fact, it appeared to many that “the government fear[ed] the importation of printed matter almost more than guns.”<sup>19</sup> The missionaries depended on their materials for teaching purposes and were greatly disturbed when, as happened in a few cases, “every book, pamphlet, memento, photograph-souvenir and scrap of printed matter” was confiscated.<sup>20</sup> Almost always the seized materials were returned, complete and undamaged, while “the Lord and cool blood, and a few piasters” helped the elders through the ordeal.<sup>21</sup> The Turkish paranoia of printed matter posed a more substantial problem when large numbers of tracts or Books of Mormon were sent to the mission. But here, too, patience, prayers, and piasters helped get the materials passed through customs and stamped as acceptable by the censor.<sup>22</sup>

Visitors to the Middle East quickly learned the importance of *bakhshish*—that is, a small amount of money given as gratuity for services provided or as alms to the sick and the elderly.<sup>23</sup> The word has “many different applications,” notes Karl Baedeker in his 1894 *Handbook for Travellers to Palestine and Syria*. “Thus with bakhshish the tardy operations of the custom-house officer are accelerated, bakhshish supplies the place of a passport, bakhshish is the alms bestowed on a beggar, bakhshish means black mail, and lastly a large proportion of the public officials of the country are said to live almost exclusively on bakhshish.”<sup>24</sup>

As Western visitors, Mormon missionaries could not escape the assumed image of a wealth-dispensing Croesus, even though the image was hardly an

accurate one in the case of elders who often arrived with little more than a few cents in their pockets.<sup>25</sup> Unprepared for (and unsettled by) the Oriental greeting of Western travelers, one LDS visitor captured his first impressions of disembarking on the Egyptian coast in a letter to the *Millennial Star*: “Swarms of natives in every color and shape of clothing . . . were impatiently awaiting the arrival

of the innocent tourist in order to pounce upon his baggage and exact heavy tribute from him.”<sup>26</sup> Elder Sjordahl, too, was confronted with the demand for bakshish, “the one Arabian word” that a tourist “very soon becomes familiar with traveling in this part of the world . . . provided he be not both blind and deaf.” It is, he continued, “constantly sounded in his ears, in every pitch of voice, from the deep bass of the old beggar to the piping tones of the little barefooted baby.” Elder Sjordahl learned a second much-loaded term,



Janne M. Sjordahl

Courtesy of LDS Church Historical Dept., Archives

*imschi*, “equivalent to the euphonious American term, ‘Skip, you little varmint!’” but this term did not fit the purpose of his travel to the Orient:

For my own part, . . . I did not care particularly to learn that word *imschi*, or rather, to use it much. I did not want those little fellows, or large ones either, to “skip.” I had not traveled all these thousands of miles, crossing waters and continents merely to tell the people out here to “skip.” On the contrary I had come to get the friendship of the people, if possible, and make them come, not go.<sup>27</sup>

Though Elder Sjordahl’s sympathetic, constructive attitude toward the natives served him well in his missionary labors, his patience was at times

tried by the notoriously obstinate bureaucrats and petty officials of the Empire. He noted one such experience in his diary, calling it a “furious storm in a washtub”:

Saturday, Nov. 9 [1889].—Left Jerusalem at 7 o'clock p.m., in one of the many stage-coaches that are daily running from Jerusalem to Jaffa. There were two passengers besides Brother Locander and myself. On our arrival at the place where the passports are usually examined, a soldier and a policeman stepped up to the coach and asked the driver who his passengers were. “Two Englishmen, a German and a gentleman from Jerusalem,” was the answer. The soldier then demanded our passports. I handed over my Turkish one. With the trophies thus gathered, the soldier retired into the watchroom. A few minutes later we were all ordered to descend from our seats in the coach and to appear before the judgment seat of the august representative of Turkish law. This rooster tried to look as if there was something awfully wrong somewhere. He held my passport in his hand, unopened, and glanced around as if to find somebody to sit down on.

“Whose is this passport?” he finally asked.

“It is mine, sir,” I replied with a little more emphasis, perhaps, than was actually necessary. “It is mine. What is the matter?”

“There is no *visa* on it,” he said.

“O, yes, there is. Can *you* not read?”

“What is your name?”

I gave it.

“That name,” he said, “is not in your passport.”

“Indeed! Look again.”

He looked.

“The name here is Yane.”

“Well, my full name is Janne Mattson Sjodahl. Will that suit you?”

“What is your father's name?”

I gave it. A pause followed, after which I insisted upon having my paper returned, and to be allowed to proceed on my journey.

“Oh!” the officer said, “that would not do. You will have to leave your passport here or with the Consul to have it fixed.”

“I will do no such thing,” I answered. “I want my paper right away. It belongs to me, and there is nothing wrong in it.”

Now the policeman turned to the driver. “Are you willing to be responsible for this man?” (pointing to me.)

The driver seemed frightened at the idea. “I do not know him,” he said.

I hastened to the relief of the driver, declaring: “I do not want either this driver or anybody else to be responsible for me. I am no criminal. My papers are in order. I want to be allowed to pass on.”

A lengthy and noisy consultation now ensued between the policeman, the soldier and the driver. It grew monotonous, although quite interesting for a little while. I interrupted the conference with: “What do you want me to do?”

“Well,” said the driver, “give the soldier a *beschlik*.” I did so, and the whole difficulty was settled, all parties concerned feeling happy and smiling.

A *beschlik* represents 15 cents. Just think of it! All this fuss for such a trifle! As my papers were in good shape in every particular, I can think of no other reason for the fuss than the 15 cents. Yet was a terrible fuss, although quite harmless. It was a

furious storm in a washtub, such as independent Oriental tourists are likely to meet with where government officials have a word to say.<sup>28</sup>

Throughout the course of LDS missionary work in the Middle East, *bakshish* proved a cultural obligation, the keeping of which furthered the work and facilitated everyday life.

### **Itinerant Approach to Preaching**

Missionaries commonly spent several months studying the languages of the region (primarily Armeno-Turkish and/or Arabic) before relocating to the interior of Asia Minor, where the majority of members resided and where missionary work was concentrated.<sup>29</sup> This focus on the interior of Asia Minor developed in the late 1880s, as Constantinople proved a disappointing field for missionary work. While in that city, Elder Hintze met an Armenian named Dekran Shahabian who, while on a visit to Constantinople, heard and believed Elder Hintze's testimony. Shahabian returned to his home in Sivas and soon thereafter sent Elder Hintze an invitation to visit him and teach him the gospel. Several other pressing matters occupied Elder Hintze (now president of the mission) for some time, but in August 1888, he set off on an extensive tour of Asia Minor, visiting Samsoun, Amasia, Tokat, Sivas, Gurun, Albistan, Marash, and Aintab. Among the Armenians who heard him preach during this long tour of over three thousand miles, he found a great interest in the gospel.<sup>30</sup> A few months later, in early 1889, President Hintze moved to Aintab to live and work among the Armenians of that area. He made arrangements for native guides to meet incoming elders at Alexandretta and escort them the 125 miles to Aintab.<sup>31</sup> During the next seven years, the Church gradually gained a foothold in Asia Minor. Because of political turmoil, the mission was closed from the beginning of 1896 until the fall of 1897. By the following year, there was a branch of "some sixty adult members" at Aintab, and it was again decided to make that city the base of missionary operations for the Middle East.<sup>32</sup> Increasing political troubles led to a move of the mission headquarters from Aintab to Aleppo in 1907.<sup>33</sup> The mission was again closed in 1909 and was not reopened until 1921.<sup>34</sup> The headquarters remained at Aleppo from 1921 until 1927 when they were moved to Haifa.<sup>35</sup>

The turbulent political climate kept the Turkish and Armenian Missions from beginning to end in a state of uncertainty. The elders monitored the situation closely—their daily contact with the Armenian population prevented them from being ignorant on political issues—and discussed the developments with Church leaders in England and Utah. The decision to close the mission was, of course, a difficult one to make; pulling out the

American elders inevitably erased much of the recent progress. In such cases, native priests and elders were put in charge of the members. The few books and tracts in local languages were not enough to sustain the branches. Members were isolated in the face of extreme poverty and persecution, and many fell away.<sup>36</sup> This persistent climate of external, political uncertainty in which the mission existed resembled the mission's internal conditions, which were likewise given to continual fluctuation. The methods of proselytizing practiced in the Turkish Mission may be characterized as components of an itinerant preaching style, one which reflected the peculiar circumstances of both the foreign elders and their local fields of labor.

The main reasons for this itinerant style of proselytizing are the following. First, missionaries were far too few—seldom were there more than a handful at any given time—and the region was far too vast for them to remain for an extended amount of time in one city or village. Second, the restored gospel had never been preached in this region before. Hence, the missionaries sought to cast the net widely, and wherever the message fell on sufficiently fertile ground, converts were baptized—regardless of the distance from other members or missionaries.<sup>37</sup> Third, legal restrictions and local Muslim customs prohibited door-to-door preaching.<sup>38</sup> Because the Church lacked government recognition—an elusive goal throughout the history of the mission—the elders were also barred from holding public meetings in a large hall or other public setting.<sup>39</sup> Instead, after arriving in a city or village, they simply rented a private room and invited the public to come to their room to hear the gospel. Fourth, since the missionaries worked almost exclusively among the Christian minority, they targeted areas of Christian concentration.

Elders were usually assigned by the mission president to take up labor in a particular city, where the number of members and level of interest in Mormonism warranted a missionary “station.” Establishing a missionary residence did not, however, imply an intended permanence. It appears that long-term rental contracts were signed only in the case of the mission headquarters. Elders taught the members and preached in private settings, besides visiting surrounding towns in search of other interested Christians. Occasionally, the base of operations was left for an extended tour. The elders followed this pattern until a change became necessary. With the arrivals and departures of the few who served in the mission at any one time, the unexpected illnesses and deaths, and the political unrest, changes were quite frequent.

The area in which the LDS missionaries generally operated was a narrow strip of land, roughly eighty miles wide and nearly six hundred miles long, running from Aleppo in the south to Samsoun, on the Black Sea, in





*Places in the Middle East visited by LDS missionaries, 1884-1928.*

*Map drawn by Mark Loertscher and David P. Charles*

the north. Occasional trips took them to Egypt, Greece, central Palestine, and Constantinople, but these were extraordinary visits, made for sightseeing, conducting mission business, or visiting isolated members and investigators. The missionaries spent most of their time in the principal cities along

this route: from the south, Aleppo, Killis, Aintab, Marash, Gurun, Sivas, Zara, Tokat, Mersivan, and Samsoun. Of these cities, only Zara and Mersivan lie just outside of the relatively direct Aleppo-Samsoun connection (Mersivan to the west, Zara to the east). To travel the entire distance from Aleppo to Samsoun was a journey of nearly thirty days, the equivalent of about three cross-Atlantic steamship voyages.

Missionary letters and diaries provide extensive commentary on the form of transient ministry practiced in this part of the world. Aside from the usual mission travel, the documents also record "mission tours"

that were conducted periodically by the mission president (who was sometimes accompanied by an American or native elder or, in the case of President Booth, by his wife Reba). These tours often lasted several months and spanned thousands of miles. The message of Mormonism was preached wherever listeners could be found.<sup>40</sup>

Typically, elders left their city of regular residence and traveled to a distant area in response to a request for their message. Such requests were usually expressed by letter and were sent either directly to the elders or via Church headquarters at Salt Lake City or Liverpool.<sup>41</sup> Because the distances were great, the missionaries stopped to preach in each of the cities on the way.<sup>42</sup> They knew neither the duration nor the exact route of the trip from



*Joseph Wilford Booth*

*He served three missions to the Turkish or Armenian Missions, and died during his third mission.*

*Courtesy of LDS Church Historical Dept., Archives*



*Rebecca (Reba) Moyle Booth*

*She was the only female missionary to serve in the Turkish or Armenian Missions, accompanying her husband on his second and third mission.*

*Courtesy of LDS Church Historical Dept., Archives*

the outset. Depending on how many elders were in the mission at the time, they traveled either alone or with a companion.

Upon arrival in a town, they found a room in a *khan* (also called caravanserai), which one elder described as follows: “[The] ‘khan’ (the Oriental hotel), [is] a large square court formed of a low building extending on either side, the lower portion being a stable for animals, the upper story partitioned off in single, unfinished, unfurnished rooms, with a porch on the inside extending the full length of the building. There is but one entrance to the court.”<sup>43</sup> Except for the inexpensive price, it was neither a desirable nor an attractive place to stay. In fact, Karl Baedeker wrote in his guidebooks that the *khan* “is generally suitable for the reception of the muleteers and horses only.”<sup>44</sup>

Regardless of its questionable suitability for Mormon missionaries, the *khan* was the preferred form of lodging throughout their stay in the Levant. They did, however, have to share it with animals, as Elder Hintze learned after a long day’s ride:

We made our way into Killis and found our night’s lodgings in the same inn with the donkeys and camels. The donkeys brayed with such force and melody that talking while they had the floor was out of the question. Still we were entertained, for the soldiers at their barracks practicing the calls on their bugles were responded to by the “jacks” in their basso tones. And then for a change the dogs on the market below would have a quarrel and then a battle, all of which helped to break the monotony of the occasion.<sup>45</sup>

Baedeker advised travelers that the *khan* “should never be resorted to, except in case of absolute necessity, as they swarm with fleas and other vermin.” Should the traveler disregard his advice and stay there, he should at least “see that the straw-matting which covers the floor is taken up and thoroughly beaten, and the whole place carefully swept and sprinkled with water. Every article of clothing and bedding belonging to the inmates should also be removed to another room.”<sup>46</sup> The Mormon elders rarely bothered following this advice, but even if they had, it would likely not have sufficed to guarantee a peaceful sleep. Elder Edgar Simmons and his companion, Elder W. H. Smart, had just arrived in the mission when they put up at a *khan* on their way from Alexandretta to Aintab. Their introduction to the “Oriental hotel” was fairly realistic, though less than ideal:

At dusk we came to a small khan, situated in a valley containing a lake and some marshy land. . . . We had been in bed only a short time when we were attacked and completely defeated by a tremendous band of bold, barbarous mosquitoes. The noise of the “advancing hosts” came faintly to the ear on the still night air, becoming more audible as they drew nearer, and presently swooped down upon us. They were really “hornets in disguise.” We wrapped ourselves in blankets, overcoats, etc., and still we were lanced most horribly! Without exaggeration, I had at least one hundred and fifty marks on each foot, to say nothing of my face, arms and hands. It is needless to add that I failed to obtain one moment’s sleep during the whole night.<sup>47</sup>

For the most part, these were relatively small cities in which the elders came and went, and word traveled quickly when a foreign missionary had been seen. The elders opened their room to whoever was interested (the vast majority of listeners were males). The elders then accepted invitations to preach in the natives’ homes or other private settings. Elder Fred Stauffer explains the typical procedure in a letter to the *Millennial Star*. “On account of the peculiarities of people and country, it is impossible for us to . . . preach as freely as missionaries in other countries, so we have to stay in one city, and talk whenever we get the chance, to those who may be desirous of hearing us. We are denied the right of holding public meetings, but by renting a room and inviting people there, we are allowed to talk upon any subject.” Generating interest was rarely a problem. “The people,” Elder Stauffer continues, “generally are anxious to hear what we have to say. . . . Considering the few missionaries that have labored here, the principles of the Gospel have spread exceedingly fast. It seems that in every village and city something is known of us.”<sup>48</sup> President Maycock remarked that “Orientals are nothing if not curious.” Wherever the elders were, a crowd soon gathered—as in Tokat, where Elder Stauffer “had so many callers” that he “scarcely had time for a meal until night.”<sup>49</sup> Entering a city or town often created a “great stir.” In Aintab, for example, Elder Hintze reported that “men of fifty years

of age say they have not in all their time seen the like. In every direction there is investigation. We have been called out night after night to speak upon the Gospel to crowds ranging all the way from twenty-five to one hundred.”<sup>50</sup> At least once, the elders were evicted from their room on account of the enormous number of callers they received.<sup>51</sup> Although “many came only to satisfy their curiosity, . . . others were diligent in investigating the principles of truth.”<sup>52</sup> Despite the often large number of investigators, however, relatively few were baptized. The reasons given by the missionaries include (aside from their own limited ranks and resources) the “natural weakness” or “instability” of the Armenian people, the lack of government recognition and its consequences, other political obstacles, and the extreme poverty of many Armenians.<sup>53</sup>

A great amount of courage was required to join the LDS faith in the face of these tremendous obstacles. Over time, Church membership in the Ottoman Empire came to consist mainly of a few large families, such as the Hindoians and the Ouzounians.<sup>54</sup> The immigration of some of the first Armenian LDS families to the U.S. made it even more difficult for new converts to weather the storms and become firm in their new Church membership.

### **Isolation and Loneliness**

As mentioned above, one of the major reasons for continuous travel was the small number of missionaries serving at any given time in the Turkish and Armenian Missions. At several points in the period discussed here, death, disease, and releases left but a single remaining elder in the mission.<sup>55</sup> Numerous letters sent to the Church magazines contained comments on the paucity of elders. “If I did not realize,” wrote Elder Lester Mangum, in a tone balanced between irony and forthright sympathy, “that there is a great scarcity of Elders, I might think we were neglected to be thus compelled to labor alone in such difficult fields.”<sup>56</sup> President Booth was likewise hesitant to pass judgment on the situation, despite his evident frustration: “I feel that for some wise purpose the Lord is holding back the Elders from this mission,” he wrote, “for I cannot think that one or two or three Elders a year cannot be found for us.”<sup>57</sup> The editors of these magazines periodically wrote encouragingly of the severe challenges faced by the mere handful of elders in Turkey. The *Millennial Star* printed an editorial of this kind in 1903, in which isolation accurately emerges as a factor that both compounds, and results from, other difficult circumstances:

Recent letters from our brethren in Turkey bring encouragement regarding the work that they are doing there. Their field is a difficult one. President Albert Herman is alone at Aleppo, Elder Holdaway, who has been in the field over three and a half

years, is alone in Aintab, and Elders Henry and Charles Teuscher are at Baalbek, or in that neighborhood between the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon mountains. President Herman speaks of his intention to make a journey to Zara. . . . It will be a ride of twenty-one days on horseback. . . . A number of Saints are found there. He speaks of the cholera that has been causing many deaths along the Syrian coast as well as in Tiberias and Jerusalem. Elder Holdaway says that the Saints in Aintab seem to have got the spirit of reformation and are doing better. . . . [He] has been ill with malaria but has now recovered.<sup>58</sup>

The correspondence between elders in the Turkish Mission and Church headquarters at Salt Lake City and Liverpool was appreciated by both sides. On the day of his arrival at Constantinople to open the Turkish Mission, Elder Spori wrote, "Very likely you cannot spend much time in writing letters to me, but please send the *Millennial Star* once in a while."<sup>59</sup> Elder Hintze, seeking words of encouragement for the elders serving under his leadership to counteract the mission's negative reputation, wrote in 1889 to the *Deseret Weekly* that "our friends in Zion can do a great work by writing kind letters."<sup>60</sup> Fortunately for contemporary readers and modern-day researchers, there were a number of gifted and prolific writers among the elders in Turkey. In 1905, President Booth received a letter from the associate editor of the *Star* expressing that journal's continued interest in letters and reports from the Turkish Mission:

Dear Brother Booth—Just a word to thank you for your interesting letter. . . . Don't make any apologies in your letters to President Grant about the length of your personal narratives and your doings around in your mission. It is just the kind of matter that we are looking for, and are delighted to get. . . . I hope you will send us letters from Jerusalem and the other places you reach. They will be welcome. Your account of that visit to Mars Hill made me feel like I could give anything to be there. I pray the Lord to be with you in your journeys.<sup>61</sup>

Shortly before his death, President Booth wrote to the *Millennial Star* and expressed his gratitude for those who, by writing letters, "so kindly remember us though we be so far away from them." Correspondence with friends and family members eased the burden of loneliness throughout the eighteen years he spent (over a thirty-year period) as a missionary in the Middle East. He acknowledged the importance of receiving letters by humbly conceding that

in all the years I have spent in this isolated mission, I feel I have little to boast of when I remember the story of Ammon and his brothers who spent fourteen years of actual missionary work among the Lamanites with possibly never a single missive from either the Church or from their parents in all that time. In these latter days, with such demands for laborers in the Lord's vast vineyard, it seems to me that one

who tires of his call and wants to leave the work to be neglected in this urgent age, would hardly make a common boot-black for the four valiant sons of King Mosiah.<sup>62</sup>

The records indicate that there were typically between three and eight elders in the mission.<sup>63</sup> When a mission conference was held in 1900, all five elders gathered to Aintab; “we seemed quite a crowd,” some of the elders joked. New assignments were distributed on this occasion, and the elders were, once again, soon dispersed.<sup>64</sup>

Feelings of isolation and loneliness—even of being forgotten—were frequently expressed. Franklin D. Harris was referring in part to Syria and Palestine when he spoke of having visited the Saints in “some of the remotest places of the earth.”<sup>65</sup> Especially on U.S. holidays and days of important Church conferences and commemorations, the elders were unwillingly reminded of their distance from home. Elder Hintze, for example, wrote that on 6 April 1898, he and his fellow elders “fancied ourselves sitting in our favorite places in the large Tabernacle, listening to the servants of God dispensing the word of God.”<sup>66</sup> Passing a July Fourth by himself, Elder Booth expended a great effort to celebrate the holiday despite the distance from his beloved homeland. He wrote a letter “with red ink on white paper along blue lines” and hung a home-made banner outside his door:

I am not without a reminder of our nation's birthday. I have only to turn my eyes a little upward and outside my door I behold, floating in the clear air of Syria, a banner which to-day is waving in proud response to a million salutations on the other side of the globe. A large piece of white bleach with just a little crimson dy to alternate in thirteen stripes, and still less indigo to make a blue sidereal field enclosing five and forty stars, are only trifles when they lie separately, but when those simple colors are arranged to make “Old Glory” then Raphael's brush can do no more.

But the loneliness proved insuperable: “Ten days ago,” he continued, “President Maycock's release came, and of course he had a ‘jubilee’ at my ‘solitary expense.’ Today I am having a ‘solitary jubilee’ without the expense. He left yesterday morning. . . . I think this is the most lonesome ‘Fourth’ I have ever passed, for the only companions I have at this writing are the unseen angels, and [the] spirit.” He then repeated the call often sent from the Turkish Mission, with growing and well-founded impatience: “There is a great work to be done among this people, but we can not make much headway with only three missionaries in all Turkey. ‘Come over and help us’ has been the cry for many months, but we can hear of no response yet. We will do all we can and patiently wait for more reapers.”<sup>67</sup>

President Booth repeatedly urged members of the European Mission presidency at Liverpool to visit the mission, hoping that such a visit would

both strengthen the local Saints as well as draw more attention to the difficult conditions there.<sup>68</sup> This attention, he thought, might in turn lead to greater support in the form of assigning more missionaries to Turkey and making the establishment of a Mormon colony in the Middle East a greater priority.<sup>69</sup> His joy was great when President Talmage at last came to visit the mission, but the occasion also reminded President Booth how rare such visits were. “The writer of these lines,” he noted, “has spent sixteen and one-half years as a missionary among the people of Turkey, Syria, Palestine and Greece; but in all that time he has met only two Presidents of the European Mission in this great field. . . . For six months we have been looking and longing for the appointed visit of President Talmage to this Mission. Now he has come!” At the time of President Talmage’s departure, “many, both Saints and friends, were sorely disappointed because they could not associate and talk with him more while he was near.”<sup>70</sup>

The chronic shortage of elders meant that their visits to any area were sporadic and brief. This factor alone made the establishment of a new, foreign religion a difficult task. To make matters worse, there were, for the first fifteen years of the Turkish Mission, virtually no Church materials available in the local languages. French, German, and English materials were used where possible. Finally, in 1899, “a few thousand tracts were published in the Turkish language and sent throughout northern Syria and Asia Minor.” They were eagerly received and “read by many people.” In addition to the tracts, selections of twenty-eight sections of the Doctrine and Covenants were translated by President Hintze for the Church members. The Book of Mormon had been translated into Turkish by this time but was not published and distributed until seven years later.<sup>71</sup>

The struggle to disseminate Church materials did not, however, cease with their translation and publication. At times it was “almost impossible to get [tracts] from city to city, without their being confiscated.”<sup>72</sup> Therefore, until the first members had been baptized and branches formed, investigators learned what they could during an elder’s brief visit and then had to wait until the next missionary came through that village—usually not until several months later. No published information could be left with the investigator; all he had was the oral testimony of the foreign missionary. The difficulty of this approach is apparent in the following comment by Elder Hintze, made after a tour of Asia Minor. “Of course, in my hurried trip,” his comments to the *Millennial Star* began, “I could not expect to reap much; yet I have the satisfaction of knowing that my testimony has been believed. At [Aintab] two persons demanded baptism, but I advised them to wait until my return in the spring. Many are investigating. We need more missionaries.”<sup>73</sup> Throughout the existence of the Turkish Mission, the elders lamented the



shortage of laborers to match the work at hand. They wanted to spread the influence of the gospel to “other cities in this district” where, they believed, the “work of the Lord would advance . . . if there were but sowers and harvesters to labor in the season thereof. We are all earnestly praying that God may give us some good laborers to assist in this great work.”<sup>74</sup>

### Dangers and Armed Escorts

Certain areas in the region were known to be unsafe, particularly those containing mountain passes, isolated deserts, or otherwise sparsely populated territory. Marauding Bedouins were the general suspects. The 1894 Baedeker guidebook warned that “predatory attacks are occasionally made on travellers by Beduins from remote districts, but only when the attacking party is the more powerful.”<sup>75</sup> On several occasions, groups containing missionaries were ambushed. One of the first elders to serve in the Turkish Mission, Elder Joseph M. Tanner (who was later a counselor in the General Sunday School superintendency), was attacked while traveling to Jaffa on his way home to Utah. But even this unpleasant incident did not spoil his stay in the region:



*Joseph M. Tanner*  
 Courtesy of LDS Church Historical Dept., Archives

At 4 o'clock [in] the morning . . . just before day-break . . . I was surprised by a band of eight Bedouins. The young man with me . . . whom I had the pleasure of baptizing last evening, and myself were robbed and treated rather roughly. God raised us up a friend in the band who not only returned some of my things, but by his strong

arm seized the ghastly looking lance that was aimed at me. We were thankful to get away alive . . . I feel like saying a lasting farewell to the land, still I must acknowledge that the happiest hours of my life have been spent here.<sup>76</sup>

Because of the perils of travel in the Ottoman Empire, the government provided armed Arab escorts to accompany foreigners on dangerous routes (guards could be hired for any distance upon request). Despite the government's general suspicion of foreigners, local officials tried to make their stay in Turkey safe—if not necessarily free from harassment. During his visit to the mission in 1898, Apostle Lund was grateful for the accompaniment of an armed escort while traveling “through a district which our guide-book said was subject to raids by the Bedouins.” Although the party did not request an escort, “the commander in the place where we had stayed over night sent a soldier with us.”<sup>77</sup> Failing to request an escort increased the probability of ambush, as President and Sister Booth learned during a mission tour in the summer of 1905. After being threatened with banishment by the Turkish police and ill-treated by an American reverend, the Booths continued on their way with a group of about a dozen other travelers and fifty animals. One evening, they “camped in the hills just about sunset.” A short while later,

shouts of men were heard from a distant hill. Wild excitement followed. . . . In five minutes there were nine robbers armed for their work before us, and our men wildly ordering them not to approach. They were from one to two hundred yards away when they began to fire. In our party there were only two guns and one pistol, and they of the oldest style—one a flintlock and the others cap and ball. . . . Whang, wh-r-r-r, whang, wh-r-r-r . . . went the explosions, and the song of the bullets was a new tune with a different meaning than we had ever heard before. The shooting kept up for about thirty minutes, and I think about forty shots were fired in all, when the thieves ran away into the darkness. Some of our men escaped and notified the people of a village about five miles away, and by midnight we were guarded by ten or twelve Kurds heavily armed. . . . Under such circumstances we could only put our trust in the Lord.<sup>78</sup>

The rest of the night passed peacefully, and guards were secured for the remainder of the journey.

### **Means and Methods of Travel**

Travel within the Turkish Mission was itself not easy. Short stretches of railway were built in the 1890s in Eastern Anatolia, Syria, and Palestine, but these lay well outside of the center of Mormon missionary activity.<sup>79</sup> Carriage roads, too, were only gradually developed during this time. “The traveller,” therefore, had “no alternative but to ride, in accordance with the

custom of the country.”<sup>80</sup> Thus, the missionaries traveled on horseback and in caravans of donkeys, horses, and camels throughout the interior of Asia Minor. Even for those elders (such as J. W. Booth) who came to Turkey with considerable experience in riding and caring for horses, travel by horseback was “at times very tedious and rough.” Some journeys required riding “from eleven to thirteen hours” a day.<sup>81</sup> Other LDS missionaries were not accustomed to riding long distances over difficult terrain. One elder remarked that “the ride on horseback, a long distance, with poor saddles and poor animals is very tiresome. Could we have been seen by our friends they would have smiled at our appearance. Stiff and limpy we . . . found our night’s lodgings.”<sup>82</sup> When Apostle Lund visited the mission in 1898, he too commented on the challenges of horseback travel. “Our travel from Jaffa [to Haifa] was accomplished on horseback,” he wrote in a letter to the *Millennial Star*. “Imagine my plight after having been two whole days in the saddle!”<sup>83</sup>

Travel by donkey was, of course, considerably slower than using horses, and it had other disadvantages as well. After visiting the oldest mosque in Egypt, Elder Sjordahl and his companion decided to take a pair of donkeys back to their hotel. Elder Sjordahl could barely contain himself at the sight of his companion, who, riding “on this miniature progenitor of the mule species, with his feet dangling about on the ground, looked so ridiculously funny, that I wanted to get off and throw stones at him.”<sup>84</sup> Aside from the dominant means of transportation—horse and donkey—missionaries also traveled, at various times and in various parts of the mission, on foot and by carriage, train, camel, automobile, and bicycle.<sup>85</sup>

### The Bicycle Tour

The Mormon elders’ experiences with the bicycle, because of its relative novelty in the region, is worth discussing in some detail. The first person to ride a bicycle in Palestine is believed to have been the Reverend Alexander A. Boddy, an English vicar and adventurer who published several works on his extensive travels.<sup>86</sup> His account of riding a bicycle in the Levant was published in 1900 in a work entitled *Days in Galilee: And Scenes in Judaea, Together with Some Account of a Solitary Cycling Journey in Southern Palestine*, the greater part of which records his experiences during an 1897 visit to the Holy Land.<sup>87</sup> Two years later, in the fall of 1899, he returned and brought with him a “strong ‘Humber’ bicycle.” He arrived in early November, rode from Jaffa up to Jerusalem, where he visited religious sites and called on a few friends, went south to Bethlehem, and then returned to Jerusalem.<sup>88</sup>

The sight of a bicycle aroused a good deal of curiosity and amusement among the native population.<sup>89</sup> “‘*Irkab, Irkab*’ (‘ride, ride’), was the cry everywhere whenever I dismounted. . . . Delighted [Arab] children scam-

pered across country to intercept me, and an old dame standing in a pool, washing clothes, laughed outright.”<sup>90</sup> The local animals were also unaccustomed to sharing the road with this “strange vehicle”:



Thomas P. Page  
*He was a member of the bicycle tour to Jerusalem.  
 Courtesy of LDS Church Historical Dept., Archives*

Strings of laden camels, asses, and mules, passed often. The camels quickened their pace, as with lack-lustre eye and woe-begone expression they glanced down upon the strange vehicle. They sometimes turned aside abruptly and threatened to jump into the dry ditch at the roadside. Arab horses reared and pirouetted round and round until in mercy I alighted or went very slowly.<sup>91</sup>

After approximately three weeks in the Holy Land, Boddy departed on 1 December. Heavy rain had recently fallen, making “all the roads impassible. So I was glad to put my cycle in the luggage van and ride down by the morning train to Jaffa.” There, too, he was

“pursued by mobs of boys and men to whom the cycle was evidently a noteworthy sight.” “In the Jaffa Market Place,” he added, “the clamoring crowd grew so large that the owners of stalls besought me to go away for fear they should have something stolen in the crush.” From Jaffa, Boddy took a steamer to Egypt.<sup>92</sup>

The bicycle tour conducted by three Mormon elders was considerably longer in duration, covered much more ground, and was also much more dangerous than the brief cycling adventure of Alexander Boddy. The participants were Albert Herman, of Montpelier, Idaho, president of the Turkish

Mission; Joseph Wilford Booth, who had arrived in the fall of 1898 from Alpine, Utah; and Thomas P. Page, a merchant from Riverton, Utah.<sup>93</sup> Originally, Elder J. Alma Holdaway, being the “next oldest in the field,” had been invited to join President Herman and Elder Booth, but Elder Page gave him a suit in exchange for the “privilege of taking his place.”<sup>94</sup> Two of the vehicles were ordered from the American Bicycle Company—along with extra tires, a pump, “rim cement,” and patches—in early April 1900, while the third was brought to Aintab by President Herman when he arrived earlier that year as the new mission president.<sup>95</sup> The two bicycles (or “wheels,” as Elder Booth most often called them) arrived from the United States on 11 October of the same year and were immediately put to use. Elder Booth noted in his journal: “Our Bicycles, sent for last April arrived early in the morning. And we took a ride out toward the [Protestant Central Turkey] college. The people were greatly astonished to see men going over the road at such speed on lifeless horses. They stared, yelled, and followed us as if we were from another world.”<sup>96</sup> The exact reasons for ordering the bicycles are not clear; it appears that the idea to undertake a bicycle tour of Palestine and Syria developed over time. The idea had been discussed but, according to Elder Booth’s journal, “not yet decided” as of 20 October. Presumably, the elders thought the bicycle would be a helpful and convenient way to move around the mission and would be more trustworthy (and comfortable) than the traditional modes of Levantine travel.

During the next few weeks, the elders took a number of short rides near Aintab, “to explore the road.” Their encounters with pack animals were similar to those recorded by Boddy:

Out on the road we frightened a donkey laden with a plow and a bag of grain. The animal fell and broke the pack saddle which cost me 100 para for damages, voluntarily given. . . . [Two days later,] in a little ride alone out on the main highway I suddenly rode up to a crowd of villagers coming into town with their animals laden with produce for the market. One of the donkies frightened and in his attempt to escape from the approach of the Bicycle, stumbled, fell, and the load went rolling in the dirt. It was melons & eggs and the sight was a mixture of unsavory proportions.<sup>97</sup>

On 31 October, the threesome set out on their adventurous “Journey to the Holy City,” a distance of “some 350 miles to the south, and west.” They first rode to Killis, a town 35 or 40 miles from Aintab, where they spent the night with Garooch Bezjian, an Armenian convert to the Church who had been imprisoned the previous week for entertaining Elders Holdaway and Mangum. Here the missionaries separated: President Herman remained a day in Killis before continuing on southward to Aleppo, and the two elders rode west to the port at Alexandretta to inquire about the logistics of ship-

ping rugs to Utah. They met again in Aleppo, where they held a special Church meeting with the local Saints—the last members they would see until Haifa. The party then headed southwest for Damascus, passing through Khan Taman, Maaret, Shekhun, Hama, Restan, Homs, Nebk, and El Kutefeh. Elder Booth remained at Damascus for a day to recuperate from injuries sustained en route, while President Herman and Elder Page traveled to the northwest to visit the ruins of Baalbek and the coastal city of Beirut. Elder Booth was soon feeling better and decided to follow after them; he found his companions as they were riding between Baalbek and Beirut. The threesome continued on together, riding down to Beirut and later returning to Damascus, from where they rode again in a southwestern direction to Banias. The next day was Sunday, 2 December, which was spent discussing the significance of the location. “As a Sunday exercise,” Booth noted in his journal, “we read the 16. and 17. chapters of Matt. in English and Turkish and talked on the events therein recorded as having occurred at this place and vicinity. How impressive that lesson seemed to day and especially as we walked about and thought and talked the more of it.”<sup>98</sup>

From Banias, they rode southward to the Sea of Galilee. Viewing this body of water for the first time fulfilled a long-held desire for Elder Booth. This was for him the high point of the journey:

I had long since yearned to gaze upon the sacred waves of Tibereas, waves that obeyed the voice of the world's Redeemer and fell motionless at the feet of the fisherman when their master said the words “Be still.” Since childhood I had wished to walk beside the Sea where the disciples had long ago cast their nets into the deep water of Ganesseret, and for many a year had I desired to bathe among the rolling billows that once reached the boats from which the Savior taught the multitudes as they stood upon the rocks near by shore, and now to see from the hights [sic] of Naphtalis hills this placid sea of Galilee filled my soul with such a flood of unspeakable thoughts that silent rejoicing was my only delight.<sup>99</sup>

The elders remained at the Sea of Galilee for a few days before heading west for Haifa. On the way there, they climbed Mt. Tabor and briefly stopped at Nazareth. On 11 December, the party arrived at Haifa and “were soon safely and snugly lodged with a family of saints.” Sore, out of money, and suffering from fevers, they decided to end their journey there. After resting for seventeen days at Haifa, President Herman and Elders Booth and Page boarded a steamer that took them, via Beirut, Tripoli, and Latakiah, up the shore back to Alexandretta. Elder Booth's journal entry for 4 January 1901 records the end of the journey and the welcome the elders received at Aintab:

Fri 4 It was a cold, foggy morning and the mud was awfully bad. On a light lunch of Bulgur we set out on our last days trip of the long Journey. A cold wind met us and a fine mist fell most of way. We arrived at Aintab about 2 p.m. and were warmly received into a comfortable room. . . . Elder Page went right to bed and after a few hours sitting and talking I took a chill and huddled up in a quilt in a corner. . . . It was a pleasure to get back to the old familiar scenes of Aintab and I was truly thankful after such varied experience of the past two months to once more hear the pleasant sound of “khosh gelden” [a local greeting meaning “you have come bringing joy”] from the Saints.<sup>100</sup>

Although the three tourists never arrived at Jerusalem, their intended destination, the trip was in every respect a memorable one. The attention they received was not always welcome; on two occasions, they were attacked by a “shower of stones, some of which struck [Elder Booth’s] companions with rather more than love tap force.” After unintentionally frightening another pack animal, “one wild man of the desert drew a revolver to stop Bro Page who came in last to the scene of action.” Fortunately, the incident “passed all away with no harm.” As a final example, early on in the course of the tour, Elder Booth’s appearance on the unfamiliar vehicle so distracted a funeral procession that “all were attracted with me and the wheel apparently [*sic*] forgetful of the sad errand on which they had come out.”<sup>101</sup>

The tourists were often subjected to poor lodging conditions, which Elder Booth on one occasion described, with characteristic understatement, as being “dirty throughout and not free from undesirable vermin.” At Hama, home of the famous water wheels, they “had a milk & honey breakfast in a little crowded dirty room more fit for fowls than even moneyless tourists.” The food, too, left much to be desired. Near Damascus, the group stopped for lunch at a village “where a number of women who seemed to lack every thing but food, filth and old age, had come down to the road to serve travelers. . . . For a few cents we dined at this unwallied and unupholstered eating stand and tasted of their savory dishes, one of which a smell was all sufficient—potato soup which Bro Herman declared was cooked last winter.”<sup>102</sup> Nor was the journey free from injury; as he hurried from Damascus to rejoin his companions, Elder Booth experienced one of a series of crashes, which, however, did not slow him down:

An hour’s ride would bring you to the rich fields of the Beka’a, but alas it did not bring me there, for in my descent the grade was too steep and smooth and my wheel seemed full of life to an unmanageable degree and in dismounting I was hurled to the ground, 2.40 [Elder Booth apparently paused here to glance at the time] striking my shoulder and left brow and eye, cutting a great wound into the eye ball socket from the lower side. My knee wound of last Monday was reopened and there was profuse bleeding from both cuts. I was compelled to walk down to the valley, tied up

my head with a handkerchief . . . and then sped over the fertile Valley. . . . I decided to visit Ba'albek so rode on . . . up the valley & over the stones till dusk.<sup>103</sup>

Because of their “very unministerial appearance,” they decided not to attend church services the following Sunday.

Throughout the trip, the three missionaries were perceptive and respectful travelers who were patient with the often-difficult circumstances they encountered. No situation was too bleak to be overcome by a little dry wit and professed fascination. Although they did hold several gospel conversations in the course of their journey, they above all simply enjoyed the thrill of wheeling through the Holy Land, and they returned to Aintab with memories never to be forgotten.<sup>104</sup>

### Reflections on the Holy Land

Even though the three bicyclists did not make it to the Holy City as they had planned, Elder Booth later visited Jerusalem, as did a number of other elders serving in the Turkish Mission. Reactions to the Holy Land and the Holy City varied according to personal experience but were consistently marked by ambivalence. On the one hand, the Mormon missionaries were highly critical of the “business of religion” being practiced there and were skeptical of the purported “genuineness of all these places and things.”<sup>105</sup> For gain, “a great deal of humbug is told, and visitors are stuffed with all sorts of tales,” Elder Hintze remarked during a visit to Jerusalem and the surrounding areas. Elder Tanner, too, lamented that “in this city everything conspires to destroy all feelings of sacredness. . . . One cannot help feeling that all these places which Christians hold sacred to the memory of our Lord have been converted into money traps.”<sup>106</sup> “Go where you will,” wrote another elder, “some ridiculous story is told of some miraculous find or of some place where some man of note had put his foot, as though God was pleased with our reverence of these places. Nevertheless here is business, a good deal of money is spent in and around Jerusalem.”<sup>107</sup> This distaste for fabricated sacredness runs throughout the elders’ letters. At Nazareth, Elder Sjordahl was shown a stone pillar claimed to be “a *real* remnant of the house of the parents of Jesus.” He commented:

The genuineness of all these places and things is, of course, supported only by tradition, which is by no means always supported by facts. On the contrary, some of the suppositions on which they rest are nothing but absurdities. Yet, as it always costs something to see all these things, a large business is maintained here, and, after all, modern religion and business are pretty good synonyms; so what is the difference?<sup>108</sup>

In Egypt, too, elders encountered questionable tales of authentically



sacred sites. While visiting the Cairo Citadel in 1886, Elder Tanner was told by the guide that it was the location of the Old Testament prison of Joseph. Elder Tanner dismissed the identification as “a very doubtful story,” but its purpose was a familiar one. “It helps the guide to enthuse the traveller,” he wrote, “and extract from him the accustomed backshish.”<sup>109</sup> In line with the other elders quoted here, President Booth (who called his 1905 visit to the Holy Land the “climax trip” of his life) advocated a healthy dose of skepticism when being shown supposedly authentic ancient religious sites:

Be thankful, as no doubt you will, for the privilege of visiting this sacred land, but don't shed tears of emotion because some one tells you that “Calvary is here,” the “tomb is there,” “here a drop of Christ's blood fell upon the skull of Adam,” . . . etc., etc. Have your Bible in your hand and your better judgment about you and with due reverence which all the holy precincts claim, hold yourself from kissing a “stone that came from Jordan” or “Sinai”, and don't get down in abominable idolatry at the feet of some image sparkling in pearls and diamonds and hearts of gold.<sup>110</sup>

On the other hand, however, LDS visitors to the Holy Land carried with them a thorough knowledge of and a sincere belief in events associated with the Bible. Their sense of attachment to the land, based on its Biblical past and future redemption, ran deep; it was not easily ruined by the false marketing of holiness. The Mormon elders expressed great satisfaction at being in a place of such significance. Elder Hintze's reaction to the Holy Land is representative: “This much has caused us to rejoice. We are on the land God promised to the House of Israel. We are here where the Son of God and many Prophets and Prophetesses have lived and done great wonders.”<sup>111</sup> This is not to say that the LDS visitors weren't surprised at the condition of the Holy Land, in general, and of Jerusalem, in particular. For most contemporary tourists, Mormons included, the sight before one's eyes was markedly different from one's mental image—nourished with elaborate artistic representations—of the City of God. Elder Tanner captured this discrepancy, and the desire to keep it as narrow as possible, when he wrote, “So this wretched place is the city of Jerusalem! . . . I was not disappointed, and yet my imagination had not painted it well. From a hundred points without and within the city is still to be viewed—after all *it is Jerusalem*.”<sup>112</sup>

## Conclusion

Travel was a central element of the LDS missionary experience in the Middle East between 1884 and 1928. Much patience was required in dealing with primitive lodging conditions, long distances, confiscations and other forms of harassment, anti-Mormon opposition, and Bedouin attacks. The elders faced further obstacles beyond their control by not having sufficient

laborers to meet the demand for their message. Nor were tracts available in the local languages for much of the early history of the mission. But the missionaries confronted these and other challenges with optimism and humor. They found comfort in their conviction that they were sowing seeds for a future harvest. The elders felt blessed to work in a promised land, rich in history and prophecy. Of all the various means of transportation used—horse, donkey, camel, train, bicycle, and automobile—the bicycle provided the rare experience of touring the Holy Land long before that vehicle was a common sight in the region. Many of the most memorable experiences of serving in the Turkish and Armenian Missions were associated with travel.

After completing a seven-month, four-thousand-mile tour of the mission in 1905, President J. W. Booth sent a report to the Liverpool-based president of the European Mission, Heber J. Grant. In his letter, Booth contrasted the slow, tedious travel required in the Turkish Mission with the “lightning speed trips” of his fellow Saints in Europe. President Booth was, the difference in speed notwithstanding, quite content with his own field of labor and with the kind of travel that field afforded him. “We had the advantage of you [in Europe] in some respects also.” He further wrote:

You, with the monotonous roar of the train, would be rushed through the fields and forests of Germany with only half a glance at the landscape, while we could sit and gaze for twelve hours a day from our saddles at the scenes and sights that seemed so loath to pass us by. Your bridges lead across the common streams of the Thames, the Rhine, and the Elbe; ours over the Nile, the Jordan, and the Orontes. . . . You had the Alps, but we the Mount of Olives; you the metropolis of the world, we the Holy City of which so many love to sing. Your trips, perhaps, have been a thousand times more beneficial to our fellowmen, but somehow I feel quite satisfied, even with all our far away trials and difficulties. We thank the Lord for His safe keeping.<sup>113</sup>

### Notes

1. The term *Middle East* was first used in 1902 and is today generally preferred over the earlier term *Near East*. The more modern term is used here throughout, even though part of the period covered precedes its coinage. See Bernard Lewis, *The Middle East and the West* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964), 9.

2. For the sake of brevity, this article does not always distinguish between the Turkish Mission (1884–1909, 1921–24) and its successor, the Armenian Mission (1924–28).

3. Elder Albert Herman, for example, notes having taken this route in 1891. See *Deseret Weekly* (hereafter DW) 44 (26 December 1891): 15.

4. The European Mission grew out of the British Mission, the headquarters of which were located at Liverpool from 1842 to 1929. See Andrew Jenson, *Encyclopedic History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1941), 94, 238. The *Millennial Star* (hereafter MS) was edited and published at Liverpool during this period.

5. A number of missionaries briefly interrupted their journey to visit relatives, either in the U.S. or in Europe. See, for example, DW 38 (2 March 1889): 313. After the early years of the Turkish Mission—that is, after the headquarters were moved from Constantinople to Aintab—missionaries traveling by boat often bypassed Constantinople, sailing to Alexandretta (the port closest to Aintab) instead, usually via Smyrna or another port in the eastern Mediterranean. The relocation of the mission's headquarters is discussed in more detail below.

6. DW 47 (5 August 1893): 208.

7. MS 48 (11 January 1886): 29.

8. DW 44 (26 December 1891): 15–16.

9. DW 47 (5 August 1893): 208.

10. MS 52 (14 July 1890): 442.

11. Joseph Wilford Booth, *Journals (1886–1928)*, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. Booth's original spelling is used throughout unless otherwise noted.

12. MS 52 (14 July 1890): 442–43.

13. MS 53 (21 September 1891): 603.

14. MS 52 (3 February 1890): 76.

15. DW 38 (2 March 1889): 313.

16. DW 47 (26 August 1893): 301.

17. DW 39 (7 September 1889): 321.

18. *Deseret Evening News* (hereafter DEN), 14 May 1898.

19. MS 64 (24 April 1902): 261.

20. DW 39 (24 August 1889): 283; see also DW 39 (7 September 1889): 321.

21. MS 47 (12 January 1885): 28.

22. MS 68 (22 November 1906): 750; and Booth, *Journal*, 7 and 9 October and 13 and 21 November 1906.

23. English spellings of this originally Persian word vary; they include *bakhshish*, *backsheesh*, *backshish* and *baksheesh*.

24. Karl Baedeker, ed., *Palestine and Syria: Handbook for Travellers*. 2nd ed. (Leipzig: Karl Baedeker, 1894), xxxiii. Baedeker cautions the Western traveler, regarded by “most Orientals . . . as a Croesus,” against uncontrolled distribution of *bakhshish*: “Poverty, [the Orientals] imagine, is unknown among us, whilst in reality we feel its privations far more keenly than they. That such erroneous views prevail, is to some extent the fault of travellers themselves. In a country where nature's requirements are few and simple, and money is scarce, a few piastres seem a fortune to many. Travellers are therefore often tempted to give for the sake of producing temporary pleasure at a trifling cost, forgetting that the seeds of insatiable cupidity are thereby sown, to the infinite annoyance of their successors and the demoralisation of the recipients themselves. As a rule, *bakhshish* should never be given except for services rendered, or to the sick and aged” (xxxii–xxxiii). Baedeker further advises that *bakhshish* “should of course not be offered too openly, or in presence of the superior officials” (xxxii). Disregarding this counsel landed an Armenian Mormon named Hagob Gagusian in trouble when, returning from a visit to Utah, he “offered a few piasters in *backshish*, which the police could not receive because he did it before the others, this making it an open bribe. Now, this was one of the few times in a man's history when a *backshish* is refused, but it happened, however, and poor Brother Hagob was marched off to the government and in a few minutes found himself detained.” He was soon released when a local lieutenant intervened on his behalf. See DEN, 14 May 18

25. Elder Locander, for instance, arrived at Antioch “on foot without a penny.” The

mission president, F. F. Hintze, “was compelled to assist him financially” but warned that “he will be obliged to leave should he not receive immediate help from home” DW 39 (28 September 1889): 418.

26. MS 64 (6 March 1902): 145.

27. DW 38 (9 March 1889): 343. In an earlier letter to the *Deseret Weekly*, Elder Sjordahl made similar comments: “It has been recommended by travelers to kick all this host of beggars away like dogs. But I have found that no unkindness is necessary. I can chat with them, or go as if I heard them not, or give a penny, just as I feel, and everybody seems to be pleased. They smile when they meet me, and call me ‘landsman,’ as if they had known me for a long time” DW 38 (2 March 1889): 318.

28. DW 40 (11 January 1890): 93. Western Europeans and Americans were required to obtain a visa from a Turkish embassy or consulate prior to entering Turkey. This visa was equally valid within all the Turkish provinces. In addition to the visa, a permit called a *tezkerah* was required (until around 1910) for travel from one province to another. See Baedeker, *Palestine and Syria*, xxx.

Elder Sjordahl’s experience is illustrative, as he himself calls it, of the challenges of dealing with the extensive Turkish bureaucratic administration, known collectively as the Sublime Porte. Minor bureaucrats often wielded (and misused) wide-ranging power, and foreigners were forced to pay to avoid harassment or even imprisonment. Elder Locander complained of poor treatment while traveling “inland” from Palestine (that is, toward Asia Minor), “fearlessly presenting our ‘Teskerah’ or special pass at every relay or visit we make to a city. More than that, to any and every greasy, hungry ‘baksheesh-’ loving representative of the leader of the faithful, who legally or not detained us on all manner of pretexts, the innermost of which would always turn out to be an innate hankering for a gift (*baksheesh*.)” DW 38 (18 May 1889): 644.

“A Turkish official,” another missionary wrote in frustration to the *Deseret Weekly*, “is one of the slowest and most dilatory of mortals, and it makes no difference how many rooms you run into, nor how excited you get, if you stub your toe or fall down he takes the world easy, and goes on with his meditations.” MS 48 (26 April 1886): 261. In dealing with such officials, a little bakshish could help “grease the wheels” of the establishment and advance the cause at hand. It should also be noted, however, that the LDS missionaries were careful to avoid paying illegal bribes. When Church meetings were stopped by order of the *vilay*, or governor, in 1900, “we could do nothing else but close, and refer the matter to [mission] President [Albert] Herman, as we have not been advised to give ‘bribes’, and that is what it means” MS 62 (13 December 1900): 7.

29. Elder Fred Stauffer, for example, remained some time in Constantinople to “study Turkish previous to going” to the interior. DW 39 (28 September 1889): 418–19. Even after resettling to Sivas, he “took up [his] abode with a family of Saints” and for five months focused on “acquir[ing] their language.” DW 44 (2 January 1892): 53. Elder Hintze pointed out that elders weren’t much use until they had learned the language: “The work,” he wrote after several missionaries had newly arrived, “will be practically at a standstill for a year until they have learned the language.” DW 39 (7 December 1889): 763. Elder Hintze himself took up quarters with an Armenian family in Constantinople and studied Turkish prior to engaging himself in active missionary work. DW 40 (15 March 1890): 406–7. Similarly, Elders Joseph Schoenfeld and Albert Herman remained in Constantinople from October until the following spring to study the language. MS 53 (14 December 1891): 799. Elders Robinson and John Clark stayed “at Beyrout studying the Arabic language.” MS 56 (23 July 1894): 475.

This should not imply, however, that a few months of intense study were sufficient to master any of the region’s languages. Elder Don Musser noted the difficulty elders faced

trying to communicate and be effective missionaries without any prior language training: "Another drawback in the Syrian part of the mission is the language," he wrote, "which, extremely difficult of itself, is made still more so by the many other languages a missionary is continually coming in contact with. The length of time spent in this mission is scarcely enough in which to master the language under existing circumstances, and when an Elder is released he is succeeded by some one totally inexperienced regarding the tongue and customs of this ancient and peculiar people." DW 47 (2 December 1893): 749. After studying both Arabic and Turkish, Elder Locander commented, "The Arabic is a beautiful and both rational and systematic language, although somewhat difficult; it very pleasantly resembles Hebrew. Turkish is easier and more adaptable to quick and immediate use. Like English, it has borrowed very copiously from all nations it has come into contact with. The alphabet is more intricate and fickle, however, than the English." DW 38 (6 April 1889): 479.

30. After completing this long journey, Elder Hintze wrote: "I have safely arrived at our home here in Constantinople, this extensive trip of over 3000 miles has been of great use to me. I have now a better understanding of the country and its peoples, and what they may need, and how to advise the Elders. I have found many people anxious to hear, and have borne my testimony to thousands, and feel encouraged that a work will yet be done here. Just how many may join is, of course, a secret; but I know that if we warn the people we do our duty, and God will draw His own and give us increase. . . . After these [newly arrived] Elders have labored here for a few years we shall be able to know if the people desire the Gospel or not." DW 39 (28 September 1889): 418; see also MS 51 (14 January 1889): 28.

31. See DW 38 (15 June 1889): 793; and DW 39 (14 September 1889): 368.

32. Apostle Lund wrote to the *Millennial Star* during his tour of the area, recommending the establishment of Aintab as mission headquarters. MS 60 (5 May 1898): 278.

33. See Rao H. Lindsay, "A History of the Missionary Activity of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Near East, 1884–1929," M.A. thesis, Department of History, Brigham Young University, 1958, 106.

34. MS 83 (20 October 1921): 668.

35. The Armenian Mission was closed in 1928 following the unexpected death of its president, J. W. Booth. It was reopened in 1933 as the Palestine-Syrian Mission; in 1935 the headquarters were moved to Beirut. Missionaries were again withdrawn in 1939, and did not return to the region until 1947. In 1950 the mission was renamed the Near East Mission; it was closed later that year. See Lindsay, "History of Missionary Activity," 175–84, 224–25.

36. When the mission was reopened in 1921 after being closed for eleven years, the local Saints were "in a very sad and lonely condition." They had "to live at times on grass and leaves, and in poor houses." The branch at Marash was feared to have been "entirely wiped out. Not a trace of a single member [could] be found." MS 83 (20 October 1921): 668.

37. By 1895, "branches of the Church had been established in Aleppo, Aintab and Zara, with baptized members scattered from Haifa to the Black Sea, and from Constantinople to the Tigris river. Over this vast area of territory, with the most inconvenient means of traveling, where weeks are required to reach from branch to branch, or from one family of Saints to another . . . the early Elders had a hard field." MS 66 (24 March 1904): 178.

38. "We cannot go from house to house as in Europe and America," President Booth wrote in 1904, "for the reason that men are not allowed to enter the homes of a large class of people here without first sending word, so that all the women may hide away. So we

have to trust largely to people coming to our home to talk with us. I could not consistently get into six homes, outside the Saints' homes, in six months while in Zara two years ago." MS 66 (25 February 1904): 125; see also MS 61 (23 March 1899): 190.

39. Government recognition was long sought but never fully achieved. Elder Hintze, laboring in Constantinople in 1889, described the importance of official recognition: "People here investigate, they find our doctrines are true, and they say: 'What shall we do to be saved?' We tell them, of course, as Peter did the Jews. Then the questions arise, 'Are you recognized by the government? Can you tell how we may be protected from the ravishes of wicked men? Where shall we bury our dead?' Many more similar questions are asked which we can only answer by saying, 'He that trusts in God will find deliverance.' Of course we have found some that so feel, and act accordingly, but they are few, and . . . will continue to be few, because the strain is very heavy. . . . All churches in the empire must be recognized by the government, otherwise they are put to endless inconvenience, even in the burying of a dead person, which is all done under church direction. If a man's church be not recognized he finds no 2 x 6 for his dead easily." DW 39 (7 December 1889): 763. Other aspects of the "endless inconvenience" experienced by the LDS missionaries include a ban on holding public meetings (including street meetings), the inability to print or distribute religious tracts and books, and restrictions on travel. Some of these prohibitions were eventually lifted or eased, at least for a time.

40. For reports of mission tours, see DW 39 (28 September 1889): 418–19; MS 63 (15 August 1901): 540; and MS 67 (9 February 1905): 93–94.

41. President Stauffer reported that after returning to Sivas at the end of a seven-week tour, he "received word from the First Presidency that [he] should either go or send an Elder to attend to some baptisms and ordinations there." MS 53 (14 December 1891): 798. Correspondence with investigators in Greece led to the first baptisms in that country. See MS 67 (21 September 1905): 605; MS 67 (26 October 1905): 678–79; MS 68 (22 February 1906): 114–17; MS 68 (1 March 1906): 129–33; and MS 68 (8 March 1906): 146–49.

42. While traveling from Aintab to Zara, Elder Hintze and a native member intended to "stop at a number of cities from which requests for missionaries have been received." MS 60 (18 August 1898): 522.

43. DW 39 (14 September 1889): 368.

44. Baedeker, *Palestine and Syria*, xxxv.

45. DEN, 21 May 1898.

46. Baedeker, *Palestine and Syria*, xxxv (1894 ed.); and xvii (1912 ed.).

47. DW 39 (14 September 1889): 368. For accounts of sleeping with fleas and other adventures associated with overnight accommodations, see DEN, 14 May 1898; MS 48 (31 May 1886): 350–51; MS 64 (24 April 1902): 260–63; and DW 38 (27 April 1889): 573.

48. MS 52 (10 March 1890): 157.

49. MS 61 (23 March 1899): 191, MS 52 (30 June 1890): 413.

50. DEN, 14 May 1898.

51. MS 52 (30 June 1890): 413.

52. MS 53 (14 December 1891): 797.

53. On the lack of "sowers and harvesters to labor" in Turkey, see for example MS 53 (16 February 1891): 108. The elders' estimation of the Armenian "character" is evident from the following quote: "Their characteristics point strongly to an infusion of the blood of Reuben, for they are, as was that prince of Israel, 'unstable as water'. They are apt and industrious, yet lack in capacity for leadership, sharp but shallow, shrewd but not sturdy." MS 66 (24 March 1904): 179; see also DW 41 (4 October 1890): 489. Because

of the lack of government recognition, baptism into the LDS Church required “a great deal of courage,” Elder Hintze wrote to the *Deseret Weekly*. “We have no rights, and one being baptized is liable to imprisonment and banishment indefinitely; taxes are also increased, besides the usual hatred and persecution.” DW 39 (28 September 1889): 418.

It is important to remember that the Armenians already suffered horrendous persecution by the hand of the government. Joining an unknown Western church only increased the level of opposition and harassment one had to endure. Armenians were justifiably paranoid of the government; elders reported that natives would sometimes hide when they rode into a village, as they were suspected of being government agents, such as tax collectors. Even those who became “convinced of the truth of the Gospel,” Elder Musser wrote, “fear the persecution that will be sure to fall to their lot if they ally themselves with so unpopular a people as the Latter-day Saints.” MS 56 (23 July 1894): 475.

Finally, poverty was on all fronts a hindrance to the elders’ efforts. Some investigators, the elders realized, desired to be baptized chiefly because they could “apply for assistance when in need.” MS 63 (15 August 1901): 540. At the same time, many members’ entire existence was consumed by the search for food and employment. See, for example, MS 62 (15 March 1900): 166; and Booth, *Journal*, 16 June 1899. Following the Protestants’ lead, humanitarian relief work became a major focus of LDS missionary activities in Asia Minor.

54. Efronia Woodbury Ouzounian, Oral History Interview, typescript, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah.

55. MS 53 (14 December 1891): 797–98.

56. MS 63 (12 December 1901): 813.

57. MS 67 (9 February 1905): 94.

58. MS 65 (23 April 1903): 265.

59. MS 47 (12 January 1885): 27.

60. See DW 39 (28 September 1889): 419; and DW 39 (6 July 1889): 50.

61. MS 68 (8 March 1906): 149.

62. MS 90 (20 December 1928): 811.

63. President Maycock wrote that in 1898, “Brother A. L. Larson and I were the only Elders working regularly in the mission: he in Aleppo, and I, the greater part of the time, in Aintab.” MS 61 (23 March 1899): 190. In the middle of 1899, there were “only three missionaries in all Turkey.” MS 61 (27 July 1899): 475. According to Elder Mangum, in the spring of 1901 there were four elders scattered throughout the mission. MS 63 (18 April 1901): 246. By 1904, that number had increased to six, three of whom, President Booth noted, “are learning the language, which leaves us with a small force.” MS 66 (25 February 1904): 125, and MS 66 (24 March 1904): 179. The mission started the year 1905 with the Booths and two elders, one of whom was about to leave for Utah. MS 67 (9 February 1905): 94. President Booth spent New Year’s Day, 1906, with “all the Missionaries from Zion—only five in all,” which included himself and his wife Reba. Booth, *Journal*, 1 January 1906. At the end of 1907, there were a total of ten missionaries, including the Booths. This was the “largest force that had ever been present at one time” since the beginning of the Turkish Mission. Lindsay, “History of Missionary Activity,” 106.

The only female missionary known to have served in the Turkish or Armenian Missions is Rebecca Moyle [Reba] Booth, wife of Elder (later President) J. W. Booth. She accompanied her husband during portions of his second and third missions and was with him in Aleppo when he died. Her presence was greatly appreciated by the native members. In 1905, as President and Sister Booth prepared to leave Zara after making a brief visit to the members there, the Saints were “sad to think of our leaving them so soon.

They think Sister Booth, the only woman they ever saw from Zion, ought to be with them a little longer." MS 67 (21 September 1905): 605. Around this time, President Booth also mentioned the benefits of his wife's presence for the work with investigators: "For the first time in the history of the mission we now have a lady missionary, and her presence is opening the door to a new class of people who, until this time, have been difficult to access." MS 66 (24 March 1904): 179. President Booth thought that "two competent lady missionaries" could "do a great deal of good" in the Turkish Mission. MS 62 (10 May 1900): 299. When Sister Booth visited the region in 1924, "many of the older Saints remembered [her] from her former mission among them; her coming at this time was a pleasant surprise to them." MS 86 (28 February 1924): 138.

64. The new assignments, as recorded by Elder Holdaway, reveal the challenges of covering a large area with a mere handful of elders: "Brothers Booth and Mangum were appointed to travel through the principal cities *en route* for Sivas or Zara, going first to Birajik, Urfah and Diarbekir, and around to Zara some time next summer. I was appointed to go alone first to Marash, then through the most favorable part of the country, and perhaps to Zara also. . . . I, with Brother Mangum, was left in charge of Brother Page's branch, Aintab, Aleppo and Iskanderun [Alexandretta], during [the absence of Elder Page and President Herman], which will probably take until after Christmas." MS 62 (13 December 1900): 796.

65. MS 89 (28 July 1927): 474.

66. DEN, 21 May 1898.

67. MS 61 (27 July 1899): 474–75.

68. The following examples are representative: "Nearly 100 people here will be ready for baptism in the near future, and I am thinking what a splendid thing it would be if you could be with us at that time. What a treat it would be to the poor saints in this isolated part of the world. Come, if possible; you will receive a royal welcome." MS 84 (23 February 1922): 122–23. "We believe . . . that a personal visit to this land of one of the Presidency of the European Mission would lead to a far better understanding of the conditions in this field of labor." MS 62 (10 May 1900): 299.

69. On President Booth's (and President Hintze's) desire to see a Mormon colony built for the Armenian Saints, see Rao H. Lindsay, "The Dream of a Mormon Colony in the Near East." *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 1 (Winter 1966): 50–67.

70. MS 89 (10 November 1927): 714–16. The members had prepared for the rare visit through an intense study of the Book of Mormon (the activities included creating a twenty-five-foot chart portraying the contents of the Book of Mormon) and by rehearsing a dramatic presentation. The other president of the European Mission to visit President Booth was David O. McKay, who traveled to Turkey in 1921 and 1924. On several occasions, he spoke with high praise of President and Sister Booth and their work among the Armenians. See, for example, MS 86 (28 February 1924): 136–38.

71. See MS 66 (24 March 1904): 179; MS 47 (21 September 1885): 605–6; and note 22 above.

72. MS 58 (19 March 1896): 191.

73. MS 51 (14 January 1889): 28.

74. MS 53 (16 February 1891): 108.

75. Baedeker, *Palestine and Syria*, xxxiv.

76. MS 49 (3 October 1887): 637.

77. MS 60 (5 May 1898): 279.

78. MS 67 (13 July 1905): 435.

79. Plans for constructing a railroad in Palestine existed from the 1830s onward, but the first functioning railroad was not completed until 1892. Its construction was long



anticipated and heralded by some Jews as “the forerunner for the Messiah” DW 38 (11 May 1889): 640. By 1896, a railroad also connected Damascus with Beirut and El Muzeirib. For a history of roads and railroad development in Palestine, see Ruth Kark, “Transportation in Nineteenth-Century Palestine: Reintroduction of the Wheel,” in Ruth Kark, ed., *The Land that Became Israel: Studies in Historical Geography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 57–76. A railroad also existed in Egypt, but the LDS missionaries traveled there mostly as tourists.

80. Baedeker, *Palestine and Syria*, xix.

81. MS 66 (6 October 1904): 636.

82. DEN, 21 May 1898.

83. MS 60 (10 March 1898): 153.

84. MS 48 (12 April 1886): 253.

85. Elder Locander writes of having traveled from Lebanon to Nazareth “chiefly on foot, yet an occasional ride upon a brass-lunged donkey was not disdained.” DW 39 (28 September 1889): 432. Rides in horse-drawn carriages were more common in Palestine than Turkey. While visiting the region in 1902, Apostle Francis M. Lyman and party were taken by carriage from Jaffa to Haifa and from there to the Sea of Galilee. The carriage they rode in for the first-named distance “happened to be the one used by the Emperor and Empress of Germany during their tour in 1898.” MS 64 (10 April 1902): 225–28. Train travel was not a common experience for LDS missionaries in the Middle East. It was, perhaps for this reason, an enjoyable mode of transportation. For an extensive report of a journey by train from Damascus to Beirut, see DEN 28 May 1898. For other incidents of travel by train, see MS 64 (3 April 1902): 209–13 and MS 48 (26 April 1886): 262. Elder Spori appreciated an occasional “ride on a camel’s back” from kind Arabs while preaching in Palestine in 1887. MS 49 (3 January 1887): 14. Automobile travel was, of course, the least used of these various modes of transportation and the last to arrive. Despite its obvious advantages, it too had its drawbacks. At the conclusion of James E. Talmage’s brief visit to the Armenian Mission in 1927, he traveled with President Booth by car from Aleppo to Beirut. “Tire trouble” prolonged the journey, which took seventeen hours. MS 89 (10 November 1927): 716.

86. Ruth Kark to David P. Charles, January 17, 2000. Letter in the possession of author.

87. Alexander A. Boddy, *Days in Galilee: And Scenes in Judaea, Together with Some Account of a Solitary Cycling Journey in Southern Palestine* (London: Gay & Bird, 1900).

88. *Ibid.*, 289. The account of the three-week bicycle trip is found on 289–338.

89. Boddy suggests that he may not have been the first to introduce the bicycle to Palestine. He writes: “The bicycle is still sufficiently rare to cause intense surprise.” *Ibid.*, 305. This implies that the bicycle was not entirely unheard of. Later, on his journey, Boddy was told that he “was the first traveller to bicycle up [to Jerusalem] *alone*, and it was thought not to be quite safe.” *Ibid.*, 314, emphasis in original. This, too, implies that he was not the first, but he may have been the first to publish an account of bicycling in Palestine.

90. *Ibid.*, 305–7.

91. *Ibid.*, 306.

92. *Ibid.*, 336–38.

93. Herman served from 1891–94 as an elder in the Turkish Mission and from 1900–4 as its president. See MS 53 (14 December 1891): 797–99; MS 56 (23 July 1894): 475; MS 62 (26 April 1900): 266; and MS 65 (15 October 1903): 667. Booth served three successive missions to the Middle East (the latter two as mission president). He died in 1928 while on his third mission and lies buried in a Christian cemetery in Aleppo, Syria.