

formas eclesiásticas ‘descenso’ y ‘Encarnación’ sobre las que versa la idea del viaje del alma de Jesús.

S. G. Vashalomidze «Hölle und Teufel im georgischen Märchen» (pp. 229-240) analiza el concepto de infierno y la aparición de demonios en los cuentos georgianos del s. XVII al s. XX. Estos cuentos, concluye la autora, están influenciados por las tres grandes religiones monoteístas, principalmente del cristianismo, aunque la mayoría de los conceptos y personajes que aparecen en ellos son propios del folclore georgiano y, en ocasiones, del folclore Europa central, en el que las brujas y otros seres fantásticos se unen al demonio como representantes del mal.

El trabajo de H. Waldmann, «Wie ich es schaffe, nicht in die Hölle zu kommen» (pp. 241-248), analiza la figura del Fausto de Goethe y la influencia de éste en la obra ‘Scivias’ de Hildegards.

S. Winkelmann cierra el volumen con su trabajo «Wovor flüchtet Gilgamesch? Betrachtungen zum frühen mesopotamischen Unterweltverständnis» (pp. 249- 269) en el que analiza el mundo de ultratumba en la mitología sumeria principalmente a través de la ‘Epopeya de Gilgamesh’ cuyo protagonista, en su viaje en busca de la inmortalidad, nos describe, entre otras cosas, el mundo de ultratumba.

Interesante compilación de trabajos, que nos aportan información muy relevante sobre el tema del infierno con un criterio diacrónico e inter-cultural, lo que permite al investigador tener una visión, al tiempo diversa y rica, de un concepto de tanta trascendencia en el medio religioso.

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WAGNER, Reinhold, *Protestantisch-westliche Mission und syrisch-orthodoxe Kirche in Kerala. Von den Anfängen bis 1840*. «Göttinger Orientforschungen» Syriaca, 39 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2011), 197 pp. ISBN 978-3-447-06427-9

This volume is the publication of a Ph.D. dissertation conducted at the University of Heidelberg some decades ago. The book concentrates on the contacts of the Protestant missions with the Thomas Christians of Kerala until the year 1840. Thus, it presents an excellent basis for further study. A preface which would explain in more detail the origin and background of this dissertation would have been helpful for a better understanding and assessment of present work.

More specifically, the monograph includes following main themes presented in synonymous chapters: The Church Missionary Society and the Syrian Christians. The beginnings of their collaboration. The Bible translation into Malayalam. The period of peaceful collaboration between 1816 and 1825. The arrival of Mar Athanasius from Antioch, his deportation and consequences. The time of crisis from 1833 and 1836. The consequences of the synod of Mavelikara.

The volume includes reproductions of a number of important documents and lists of all the sources (including manuscripts) as well as annual newsletters published by the missionaries. Accordingly, it presents an extensive and valuable collection of sources

Professor Martin Tamcke, the editor of the series, in which this book is published, remarks in his introduction that the study of the interactions between Dutch, Germans and Britons (missionaries) with the so-called Thomas-Christians in Indian Kerala has shown considerable progress in the last decades. As he further notes the interactions started when the first Lutheran missionaries, who were of Danish origin, reached India. In present times, these interactions concentrate on the ecumenical dialogue between the Syrian Thomas Christians and the Indian Lutherans.

The book presents the missionary efforts of Church Missionary Society, which was associated with the Anglican Church and was founded in 1799. According to the author this was the only missionary society which has a full collaboration with the orthodox Syrians in the south-western coast of India. This book presents the situation of the Syrian church of South India at the time, when the colonial powers attempted to establish their power in the country, as well as the first contact of the various protestant missionary groups with the local Christians. The book also discusses aspects of the contacts of the local Syrian churches with the Catholic Church. Moreover, it presents a brief history of the Portuguese colonisation and church politics in the region. Furthermore, the book recounts in much - and often tedious - detail the history of the region in the context of the financial interests of the colonial powers of the time, such as Holland and Great Britain. Thus, it explains at length the complex of the relation between colonial interests and church power and politics. Furthermore, the book offers interesting insights into the thoughts and impressions of the Western missionaries of indigenous Christianity and its local customs, liturgical rites and particular beliefs. The reports of the missionaries divulge the picture of an important and thriving church community with numerous pious faithful and a particularly rich religious tradition. These reports also offer first-hand information on issues regarding religious freedom of Christians in the midst of a dominant Hindu society. The monograph demonstrates aspects of the church politics and conflicts as well as the difficult times of the Syriac Christians during that time.

The book focusses on the activities of certain prominent British missionaries, such as their efforts for the translation of the Bible into the local language and the establishment of a theological college. The book dedicates an entire chapter and a very detailed description on the long and arduous procedure of the translation of the entire Bible. It describes in much detail the efforts of the missionaries to translate the Bible from the original Syriac language, which was used for centuries in the liturgy in the local churches (and it is actually still being used today in many

of the churches in Kerala), into the local Indian language, Malayalam. This was a strenuous and complicated endeavour that lasted for many decades and experienced a number of drawbacks.

The book also illuminates certain –at times very critical- views of the social and economic life of the local Christians according to the missionaries. These views are revealing for the cultural misunderstandings between the Indian Christians and the British missionaries, who accused the Indians of laziness, adultery, alcoholism, impiety, etc. Accordingly, even if unintentionally, the book communicates important aspects of the construction of the colonial discourse with respect to the Thomas Christians. Furthermore, the book refers to the troubled relations between the British missionaries and the Catholic Portuguese church officials of Goa. In addition, it provides information on the situation of the Jews of Kerala in Cochin. The book also recounts the efforts of the missionaries to attract attention and gather money in England for their missionary efforts in India.

The monograph is a very well researched and informative study on a topic which has been neglected for a long time. Incidentally, the list of secondary bibliography comprises of just one page, which reflects the state of scholarship on that topic at the time of the composition of the Ph.D. thesis.

The author has gathered and analysed a plethora of primary source material on the history of western Christian mission among the Thomas Christians of India. The –at times pedantic- account is mainly based on the correspondence of the missionaries. It presents a very useful compilation and summary of the primary source material. The reconstruction of the history of the missionary efforts is based at great extent on the faithful translation of original documents.

Thus, the book presents a very interesting and valuable review of the history of the Thomas Christians of India in the 19th century. The book is based almost exclusively on primary source material, which was little known –if at all. However, this book provides very little background information in the book and it is intended mainly for an academic audience, which is already well familiar with details about the history of Syriac Christianity and the Lutheran missionaries in India.

In summary, this is a useful and very detailed – albeit at times tedious- account of a theme and time period in the history of missiology as well as in the history of the Indian Syriac Church, which is otherwise little known and little studied.

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WELTECKE, Dorothea (ed.), *Geschichte, Theologie, Liturgie und Gegenwartslage der syrischen Kirchen*, «Syriaca» 40 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2012), IX + 149. ISBN: 978-3-447-06732-4

Doce trabajos componen esta obra de conjunto dedicada esencialmente a cuatro ámbitos de la producción textual de la iglesia siríaca oriental: la historia, la teología