

(Ghobrial, *The Secret Life of Elias of Babylon*, 2014). Moreover, the introduction connects Ḥannā to external sources, such as the manuscripts he owned.

In the afterword, Horta recognizes Ḥannā's distinctive contributions to the *Arabian Nights* collection. He examines the travel account through the lens of these stories told to Galland by Ḥannā. His analysis retrieves Ḥannā's place and stolen rights as the main player in the orphan tales, rather than Galland. Horta argues how the account of Ḥannā reveals the same characteristics of the stories he supplied to the *Arabian Nights*. Moreover, Horta evaluates what has been taken for granted in scholarship about the role of Galland in terms of developing the characters in the *Nights* and modernizing the stories and making them coherent. Comparing the *Nights* and the travel account, we can surmise that Ḥannā is more likely to have done what is usually attributed to Galland. Although Lucas had written a travel account that never mentions Hanna, the afterword sheds light on many parallels between the two accounts.

Readers will appreciate the map of the travels at the beginning of the two volumes. At the same time, they will miss an image of the manuscript to get a sense of it during discussion of its orthography and handwriting, or at least a clear reference to the Vatican website where digital photos are available. It would have been helpful to add subtitles to the edition, or at least to the translation, to distinguish the different sections of the account and the narratives. Overall, the work is significant and brings new insights into the life and travels of an early modern Aleppan Christian.

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Adam R. Gaiser: *Sectarianism in Islam: The Umma Divided* (Themes in Islamic History.) xii, 237 pp. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023. £70. ISBN 9781009325042.

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In popular accounts of the modern history of Islam, episodes of sectarian violence are invariably presented as the recrudescence of ancient, irrational hatreds that forever bedevil the region's inhabitants. Gaiser's fine monograph – which is emphatically *not* a book about modern sectarianism – is an intellectually responsible history of sectarian difference and of the emergence of a pentad of Muslim *fīraq*, around which the book is largely organised: viz., the Khawārij and Ibāḍiyya, the Shī'ā, the Murji'a and Mu'tazila, and the Sunnis (chapters 3–6, respectively). These parts of the book seek to complicate, while proving unable to fully transcend, the typologies and narratives of classical Muslim heresiography, a genre which first emerged in the Muslim *Mashriq* and drew upon longstanding Christian antecedents in the complex religious soup of late antiquity. Chapters 3–6 are bookended by chapters that theorize the notion of the “sect”, set the historical scene for the “core” of the book and reflect on the history of intra-Muslim relations (chapters 1, 2, and 8).

Identity is multifaceted and sectarian sentiments are not always salient; their “activation” takes place amid circumstances that are often highly localized (pp. 3, 180). Nor are sectarian identifications invariably “clear, exclusive or permanent” (p. 166). Sects are often misunderstood as having splintered from an original group, a tendentious misunderstanding that pervades Muslim heresiographical literature. In this vein, Gaiser opts (invoking Margaret Somers) to present Muslim sects as groups that coalesce around distinct narratives of salvation (the “narrative-identification” approach, p. 14): the narratives of the Shī‘a, e.g., privilege the imams of the Prophet’s family and humans’ responses to them (p. 87). While the Quran itself emerged in a profoundly sectarian milieu, it was not until the death of the Prophet and ramifying debates over the succession to his rule that difference first became manifest. The Umayyads came to emphasize the importance of adhering to the community (*luzūm al-jamā‘a*, p. 148), and once the Abbasids had largely shed their Shī‘ī tendencies, they too embraced this notion. The relative stability and prosperity of Abbasid rule, along with the relinquishing of caliphal pretensions to religious authority with the failure of the *miḥna*, were important contexts for the emergence of Sunnism, the last element of Gaiser’s pentad to crystallize (p. 187). Gaiser also highlights the importance of ritual, mosque attendance and social organization to the articulation of early sectarian identity, particularly given their relative visibility (p. 104).

Irjā’ is something of an exception among the trends analysed by Gaiser, as it is a sectarian story that lacks a founding narrative (p. 135), and Murji‘ī tendencies were largely adopted by emergent Sunnism. While the Mu‘tazila share various (probably unhistorical) origin myths, by contrast, like the Murji‘a they are more of a religio-philosophical grouping than a religio-political one, a reality made possible by the tabling of questions of communal leadership during the Abbasid period (p. 127). Among the Khawārij, one notices that while militant identities and narratives tended to solidify more quickly than quietist (not pacifist) ones, they proved less enduring (pp. 67–8). In this vein, the long subsequent development of the Ibāḍiyya leads Gaiser to distinguish them from other groups of Khawārij (a label they often rejected).

The simplicity of sectarian labels and typologies is belied by the complex history underlying intra-Muslim relations: the “extremist” (*ghālī*) Shī‘a seem to have interacted quite freely, in early Kufa, with their more moderate peers (including Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq himself, p. 168), and Abū Ḥanīfa and al-Shāfi‘ī both supported ostensibly Zaydī rebellions (p. 167). Even in contexts where sectarian identities were relatively salient and well-defined, they could still be de-prioritized in light of competing concerns, as in the case of ‘Alids joining Khārijī risings. Ultimately, there are simply too many variables to make it feasible to generalize about *longue durée* relations between sects, with the exception of the observation that widespread and long-term sectarian violence does not seem to have been the norm (p. 175). Even in the case of highly centralized confessional polities like the Ottomans, able to project their influence into the geographically remote and mountainous Levantine hinterland, heretical minorities such as the Nuṣayriyya were typically left to their own devices, as long as they paid their taxes (pp. 54, 171).

While it has not been possible to recount Gaiser’s deft narration of the emergence of various Muslim sects and their inter-relations in any depth here, the concision of the book makes it ideal introductory reading for graduate and undergraduate students. Gaiser’s creative synthesis of vast reams of existing scholarship also makes the work eminently useful for professional Islamicists. I do have a few minor reservations, however. The discussion of Sunnism is somewhat unsatisfactory, an inadequacy that reflects the state of the field more than it does Gaiser’s scholarship (which has mostly concerned the Khawārij and Ibāḍiyya). Sunnism “cannot be said to have existed before the third/ninth century (at the earliest)” (p. 10), while al-Ash‘arī (d. 324/936) “wrote before something called ‘Sunnism’ could be said to have existed” (p. 18) and “the first recognizably

Sunni figures were *ḥadīth* scholars from the late second/eighth century...” (p. 161). Gaiser suggests that the label *Ahl al-sunna wa-l-jamā‘a* postdates the activities of the *ahl al-ḥadīth* (p. 49) and seems to be unaware of the use of this term by early *mutakallimūn* including Ḍirār b. ‘Amr (d. c. 200/815). Given that Ḍirār’s *Kitāb al-Taḥrīsh* functions largely as a polemic against the self-described *Ahl al-sunna*, it repays close attention, and one cannot but conclude that it is meaningful to speak of *Sunnī* identity in the period. To hold that the intense contestation of Sunnism in later centuries undermines this thesis, as Gaiser presumably would, is an example of the continuum fallacy: i.e. insofar as Sunnism is contested, it does not exist. This is evidently incorrect.

There are also a few factual errors: e.g. the claim that the *Imāmiyya* required the washing (as opposed to the wiping) of the feet in *wuḍū’* (p. 103). Additionally, *al-Mughnī fī abwāb al-tawḥīd wa-l-‘adl* is mistranslated as “The Enricher of the Gates of God’s Oneness and Justice” (p. 144), whereas *mughnī* suggests “sufficer” and *abwāb* has the sense of “aspects”.

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Sylvie Denoix and H el ene Renel (eds): Atlas des mondes musulmans m edievaux

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This innovative atlas, to which more than 60 scholars, the majority associated with the Medieval Islam team of the CNRS, have contributed, is intended both for non-specialist and specialist readers. Technical terms are limited in number and are explained in a lengthy glossary. As well as providing about 200 maps with accompanying discussion by one or more of the contributors, the work is illustrated with photographs and reproductions of buildings, paintings, and other artefacts, and provides translations of short excerpts from literature of the period. The editors insist on the plural *mondes* to emphasize the diversity of the history, culture, economic life, and other features of the regions and societies dominated by Islam at the time. What really makes it distinctive, though, is that much of it consists of fairly detailed case studies of specific features or developments, e.g. of the proliferation of congregational mosques (*jawāmi‘*) in Damascus and its hinterland from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries.

The *Atlas* consists of seven chapters, each divided into several subsections. The first chapter is concerned mainly with medieval Islam’s own tradition of geographical and travel literature, while the second is perhaps the most conventional – a series of maps that mainly illustrate the political and military history of the area dominated by Islam from the Arab conquests of the seventh and eighth centuries to the rise of the Ottomans in Anatolia and the establishment of the Delhi sultanate. Chapter 3 discusses and illustrates the development of several towns; chapter 4 is concerned with sanctuaries, pilgrimage routes, and the transmission of knowledge; chapter 5 examines commercial