

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



and craft activities in towns and their hinterlands; chapter 6 deals with economic centres and exchange networks; and the final chapter 7 is mainly devoted to military matters, borders, and diplomacy.

The case studies that make up the chapter subsections are presented on two facing pages. For example, chapter 3, on the development of towns, has a subsection on the building activities and investments of the political and military elites which has discussions and illustrations covering building activity in Tlemcen from the Idrīsids to the Merinids, Granada from the Zīrids to the Naṣrids, Baghdad from the eleventh to twelfth centuries, Jerusalem under the Mamluks, and Cairo under the Mamluks, each illustrated with a detailed map. The subsection begins with a discussion of the *waqf* and *hubus* institutions underlying the building activity. It is illustrated by a map of the properties in and around Damascus constituted as a *waqf* for the benefit of the Duwayrat Ḥamad Khanqah in the sixteenth century, and by a scale diagram of the *waqf* properties in the Khān al-Khalīlī of Cairo between the twelfth and the sixteenth centuries and the pious foundations with which they were linked. In the latter, each *waqf* property is coloured to indicate when the endowment was made, from the Ayyūbid period, through various Mamluk sultans, to the time of Ottoman rule.

To give another example, chapter 4 has subsections on sacred places shared by different varieties of Islam, or by Islam and the other monotheisms; routes for the Hajj and other pilgrimages; the architecture of mosques, their function and relationship to towns; Sufi institutions and networks; and the transmission of knowledge as related to places (notably *madrasas*), people (among them Ibn Sīnā), and texts (including *Kalīla wa-Dimna*). The evolution of mosque architecture is illustrated not by any map but by diagrams showing the changes made to the form of the Great Mosque of Iṣfahān from the ninth to the eighteenth century, the original plan of al-Azhar in Cairo, and the plan of the Üç Şerefeli mosque in Edirne.

Most of this atlas, then, apart from chapter 2, consists of quite tightly focused studies, even though the accompanying text may sometimes be broader and more general in nature (as in the discussion accompanying the illustrations of the three mosques just mentioned). Inevitably, that means that coverage of the medieval Islamic “worlds” is variable. To take a random example, the topographical index s.v. Boukhara, for example, gives about 22 entries, but the majority of them simply relate to maps on which the town is marked and it has no special relevance for the case study or topic under discussion (an exception is the map illustrating the career of Ibn Sīnā). The town does not receive any detailed treatment in the way that, say, Damascus or Cairo do. There are discussions and maps regarding Merv, Iṣfahān and Delhi, but this reviewer’s impression is that the *Atlas* is more weighted towards the Arabic-speaking and western regions. The emphasis on towns and trade undoubtedly reflects their importance in medieval Islam, and the evidence it has left behind, but the relative lack of material on agriculture and pastoralism is notable. Regarding religion, which is specifically treated in chapter 4, one could again point to reasonably fundamental topics that are not included: for example, the spread and distribution of the Sunnī *madhabs*, or of various varieties of Shiism.

As for readability and practicality, the size of the *Atlas* is approximately 28 cm wide by 23 cm high, making it easy to handle and large enough in most cases for the maps to be clear. Sometimes, though, where there is a lot of detail on the map, a magnifying glass is useful. Many maps too feature shadings in different pastel colours and, as someone whose sense of colour is not perfect, I found some of this challenging. A good reading light is necessary. There is an index of toponyms but not a general one or one of other names.

An extensive bibliography, mainly in French and English, of the sources (medieval texts and modern studies) and secondary literature drawn on for each of the chapter subsections is provided. This, together with its preponderance of detailed case studies and relatively

narrowly focused maps and diagrams, indicates that the *Atlas* will be useful especially for university level students and teachers. It is expressly not intended to replace, but to supplement and set alongside, existing atlases such as Hugh Kennedy's *Historical Atlas of Islam* and the *Atlas of Islamic History* by Peter Sluglett and Andrew Currie. In sum, this attractive and accessible atlas is a welcome addition to those already available, and its range of topics with guides for further reading will make it a valuable resource both for casual browsing and serious study.

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Oliver Scharbrodt: Muhammad 'Abduh: Modern Islam and the Culture of Ambiguity

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I did not believe that more could be said about Muhammad 'Abduh, the influential nineteenth-century Egyptian religious scholar, but Oliver Scharbrodt does just that in *Muhammad 'Abduh: Modern Islam and the Culture of Ambiguity*. 'Abduh is an historical figure familiar to anyone who works on modern Middle Eastern history or Islamic political thought. He is frequently portrayed as an Azhar-trained scholar who reconciled modernity and Islam, especially in the era of European imperialism. He is seen also as a lenient Salafi, who downplayed the importance of the 1,400-year-old corpus of Islamic scholarly tradition in favour of returning to and making relevant the foundational Islamic texts and the teachings of the first three generations of Muslims after Prophet Muhammad. Scholars who believe either portrayal tend to ignore 'Abduh's earlier works, which seemingly contradict the impressions we have of 'Abduh, the "Modernist Salafi".

Scharbrodt problematizes these assumptions on several fronts. The author insists that the mystical, philosophical thought in 'Abduh's earlier writing did not disappear in his later works; 'Abduh had to conceal some of his convictions due to the shifting political and institutional climates in which he found himself. Scharbrodt urges us to learn to live with ambiguity. 'Abduh was influenced by and in turn influenced people of various religious, political and ethnic backgrounds throughout his life, but the most influential, Scharbrodt seems to say, was 'Abduh's Shii Iranian mentor Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī.

The book is a clear synthesis of modern Middle Eastern history, Islamic and Greek philosophy, and Islamic legal theory and theology. To show the richness of 'Abduh's life and thought, Scharbrodt draws on several sources: the oft-cited biography penned by 'Abduh's student Rashid Riḍā (which he reads with some scepticism); correspondence between 'Abduh and al-Afghānī and intellectuals in the Levant and Europe, which reflected the nascent *nahda* (Renaissance) movement and budding nationalist sentiments; and journal articles, some of which were written by 'Abduh and others which were attributed to him by Riḍā.