

which make a particularly interesting pairing, “Muslims in canon law, 650–1000” and “Christians in early and classical Sunni law”.

In the second volume there are three introductory articles at the start, a general introduction to the period by John Tolan, an overview of Muslim regard for Christians and Christianity (which are of course not the same) in this period by David Thomas, and then a longer 50-page article by Nicholas Drocourt on “Christian–Muslim diplomatic relations: an overview of the main sources and themes of encounter” on a slightly longer timescale, namely 600–1000. Each volume then ends with an index of names and works included within it.

The articles on individual authors and their works each outline the biography of the author, including the main sources of information for this, and then the relevant works on Christian–Muslim relations in particular, with a description, assessment of their significance, and details of manuscripts, editions, translations and studies. The result is a formidably comprehensive work of reference which will undoubtedly be the obvious first port of call for anyone wishing to investigate a particular writer or an individual work on different aspects of Christian–Muslim relations from this period. The work is also clearly and beautifully produced, a credit to both editors and publishers, and the financial support of the United Kingdom’s Arts and Humanities Research Council in making the project and the publication possible is acknowledged with gratitude by the editor in his foreword. A project of this kind is obviously highly suitable for online publication in future, not least so that newly-discovered works, newly-published editions and studies and other relevant material can be included, and this is evidently planned, which will ensure that the results of the project become as widely available and on as long-term a basis as they deserve.

Overall the volumes build very effectively on the work of R. Caspar and others, who in the early volumes of the Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies’ journal *Islamochristiana* endeavoured to produce a comprehensive bibliography of all the works produced by Muslim authors about Christianity and vice versa. Their work, however, was much more limited, in the sense that it included only authors and titles, whereas the volumes under review contain a vastly greater amount of information about both the biographies of the different writers and the contents of their works. There is a huge amount of material out there, and these volumes succeed admirably in providing a comprehensive and accessible survey of it. Texts alone, of course, provide only a partial explanation of the dynamics of the long and complex relationship between the Christian and Muslim communities, since other social, economic and political factors also play a significant role, but as a first port of call for information about the texts these volumes could hardly be bettered.

**Hugh Goddard**

EMERI VAN DONZEL and ANDREA SCHMIDT:

*Gog and Magog in Early Eastern Christian and Islamic Sources:  
Sallam’s Quest for Alexander’s Wall.*

(Brill’s Inner Asian Library.) xx, 271 pp., 12 plates. Leiden and Boston:  
Brill, 2010. €99. ISBN 978 90 04 17416 0.

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Jews, Christians and Muslims have long been fascinated by the apocalyptic figures of Gog and Magog. The authors of this volume have a dual purpose: 1) to outline

the history of this literary theme as it developed amongst Eastern Christians and Muslims; and 2) to analyse the travel account of “Sallam the Interpreter”, commissioned by Caliph al-Wathiq in 842 to find the famous Wall of Alexander the Great, supposedly built to enclose Gog and Magog until their release in “the last days”. Throughout, the important role that Syriac literature played in transmitting this idea to Islam is affirmed.

The book is divided into two halves. Part 1 examines the literary background to the *topos* of Gog and Magog. The authors provide extensive information on the motif in early Jewish and Christian sources (chapter 1), before proceeding to discuss its development in Syriac and other Eastern Christian literature, particularly the connection with Alexander and the barrier he built to keep the eschatological hordes enclosed (chapter 2). The transition to the Muslim world is introduced by an examination of Gog and Magog in the Quran (chapter 3), followed by the evolution of the idea in *ḥadīth* literature (chapter 4). Two further chapters document the expansion of the theme in Arabic, Persian and Turkish literature, Arab poetry, *adab* literature and popular folklore.

Part 2 focuses on the journey of Sallam to the Barrier of Alexander with the express purpose of verifying not only its existence, but also its efficacy in restraining Gog and Magog. An English translation of the text from Ibn Khurradadhbih, with footnote references to the parallel text in al-Idrisi, is followed by an extensive discussion of subsequent versions of Sallam’s travelogue in later Muslim literature (chapter 7). The authors then examine the origins of Sallam’s description of Gog and Magog and the Barrier, once again noting the connections with earlier Syriac literature (chapter 8). Following some background information on possible political and religious reasons behind the journey (chapter 9), the expedition itself is evaluated, divided into the outward journey (chapter 10), the destination (chapter 11) and the return journey (chapter 12). The book ends with a conclusion, bibliography, index, plates and maps.

The volume is well-researched and the extensive footnotes display the authors’ knowledge of the subject matter, especially the primary sources. Helpful chapter subheadings are provided throughout. The book has generally been well edited, with relatively few typos. The chronological approach to the development of the Gog and Magog theme taken in chapters 1–3 and chapter 6 works very well and is easy to follow.

However, the switch to a thematic approach in chapters 4 and 5 makes the argument harder to follow. In discussing themes such as the appearance, origin, numbers, food, eschatological role, names, location and identification of Gog and Magog in Muslim literature, the flurry of quotes from different sources means that it is difficult to track the development of the motif over time. Although the authors acknowledge that this approach means “overlap and repetition is almost unavoidable” (p. 57), more could have been done to make these chapters less confusing, e.g. by including summaries in tabular form.

Again, the chronological approach used in chapter 7 to discuss the different versions of Sallam’s journey, from Ibn Khurradadhbih (d. 912/13) to Amin Razi (d. early 17th c.), is clear and straightforward, although the numerous extracts involve extensive repetition. The reliance of Sallam’s account on Syriac traditions about Gog and Magog is well presented in chapter 8, although the table comparing the former and the latter on pp. 170–2 could have made the point more convincingly. Chapter 9 introduces possible political connections between concerns in the Caliphate over the growing influence of the Turkic slave-soldiers in Samarra and Sallam’s mission to find the barrier, located in Central Asian Turkic territory (according to some traditions), a theme which perhaps could have been developed further.

Chapters 10–12 are arguably the most important in the book, given the authors' conviction that Sallam's travelogue represents a *bona fide* journey, which they endeavour to reconstruct. Since the argument is dependent on clear and consistent communication of the geography involved, separate maps in the main text for each segment of the journey would have been extremely helpful. The only relevant map is one of the entire journey at the back of the book (map 4), which is missing many of the toponyms mentioned in either the text or the summary statements at the end of chapters 10 and 12 (e.g. Ardabil, Darial Pass, Lake Ara-köl, Dzungarian Gate, Talki Pass, Bishbalik, Altmishbalik, Loulan, Bedel Pass, Ghuriyan, Barskhan, Isfijab, Tashkent, Ushrushana and Merv). The narrative of the journey is additionally cluttered by extensive historical background on various polities located along the way, better addressed in appendixes (e.g. pp. 192–4, 198–202). Moreover, there is confusion over Qocho, located in the Turfan Oasis, not on the Guchen-Barkol route (p. 202).

A lack of synchronization between toponyms mentioned in the main description of the journey and those in the summary statements (e.g. Samandar, Aktogaj, Koktash, Kabchagay, Lake Aibihu, Bukluk, Kara-köl, Tokmak, Ak-Beshim, Kish, and Nakhshab) further confuses the situation for the reader attempting to follow the route without the aid of more detailed maps. References to alternative routes that Sallam may have taken on certain legs of his journey are not consistently synchronized between the main text and the summaries (e.g. p. 195 vs. p. 197, pp. 239–40 vs. p. 242 vs. map). Again, comparison with journeys by others in the opposite direction (e.g. pp. 209–14, 230–3) would benefit from maps in the text.

The identification of the barrier that Sallam reached with the “Jade Gate” at Yumenguan (chapter 11) is generally well argued, but this chapter too needs a map or maps, and comparison with Abu Dulaf's *Risala* is less than convincing. However, despite these shortcomings, the volume will be welcomed by scholars of Islam and Eastern Christianity as an important contribution on this fascinating literary theme.

**Mark Dickens**

JOHANNA PINK:

*Sunnitischer Tafsir in der modernen islamischen Welt. Akademische Traditionen, Popularisierung und Nationalstaatliche Interessen.*

(Brill Texts and Studies on the Qur'an.) xiv, 380 pp. Leiden und Boston: Brill, 2011. €119. ISBN 978 90 04 18592 0.

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The author achieves something extraordinary with this book: for the first time in the history of Western *tafsir* studies, she manages to compare and contrast modern Quran commentaries from three linguistically different parts of the Muslim World and analyse these in their original languages (Arabic, Turkish and Bahasa Indonesian). Since Baljon's seminal 1968 study, which included Egyptian and South Asian commentaries, no other author has had either the linguistic ability or the contextual knowledge to combine two languages in their studies, let alone three. In addition, Pink has chosen several commentaries from each language (six in Arabic, three in Indonesian, and two in Turkish), on half of which nothing has been written before (e.g. the *tafsir* of Abū Zahrā, Ṭanṭāwī al-Zuhaylī and Sa'īd Ḥawwā). All of the commentaries examined here were published (even if written