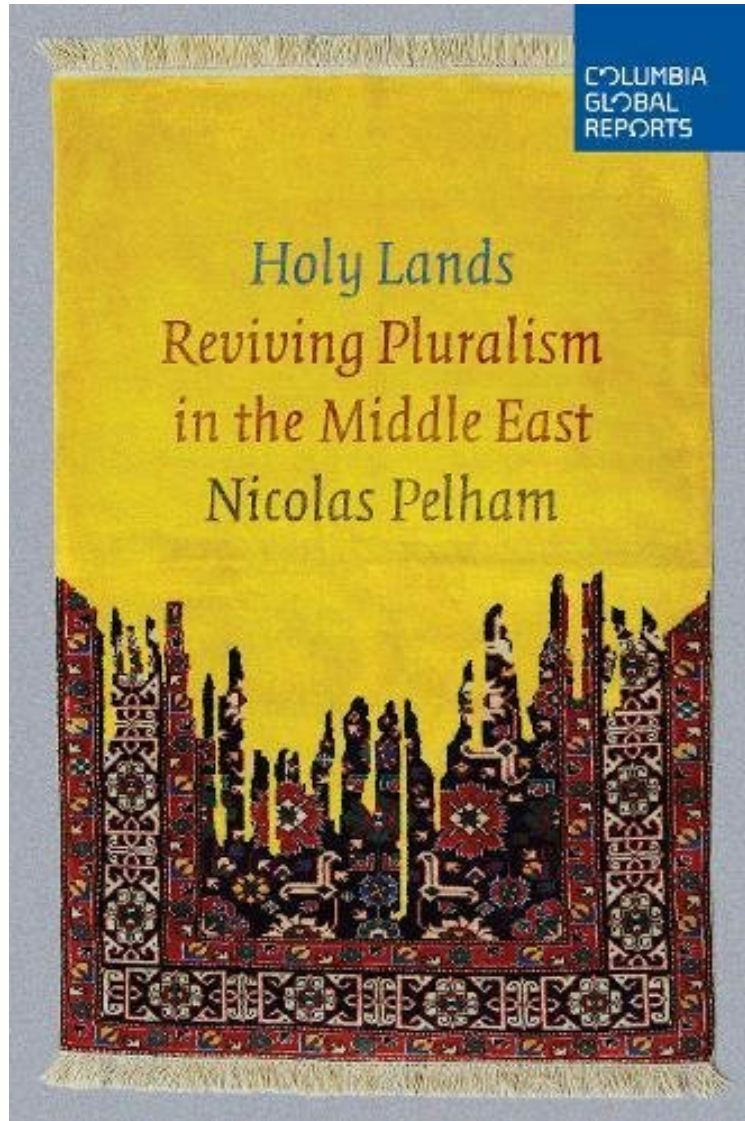


(Get free) Holy Lands: Reviving Pluralism in the Middle East

## Holy Lands: Reviving Pluralism in the Middle East

Nicolas Pelham

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**Nicolas Pelham : Holy Lands: Reviving Pluralism in the Middle East** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Holy Lands: Reviving Pluralism in the Middle East:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Hope for the LMiddle EastBy CustomerI recommend this book. It is a lot of history about the numerous religious groups in the greater Middle East and does have a hopeful message for what seems a debacle today: if various religious groups once lived in harmony--and thrived--let's try to do it again.2 of 4 people found the following review helpful. MediocreBy jeremiah aramWhen someone claims that 19th century Ottoman ruled near east was more 'tolerant' than Europe, then we definitely have a big problem with the author and his

views. Maybe the author forgot about the Druze-Christian massacres in Mount Lebanon in 1860 where Turks armed the Druze; or the attacks on Christians in Damascus also instigated by the 'tolerant' Turks. Such Ottoman 'tolerance' reached its peak when they 'starved' Christians in Lebanon (1915) by blockading its harbor. More tolerance followed when they destroyed the Armenians and Syrians. Real Middle Eastern tolerance! The author calls the Syrians 'Assyrians - a big blunder - ; they are of Aramean descent and not 'Assyrians'. Lest we forget, only in Lebanon did pluralism thrive as an idea up until 1975!. The book has its ups and downs. It should be of interest to people unfamiliar to such themes. I did not like it however.

The news from the Middle East these days is bad. Whatever hopes people may have for the region are being dashed over and over, in country after country. Nicolas Pelham, a veteran correspondent for The Economist, has seen much of the tragedy first hand, but in *Holy Lands* he presents a strikingly original and startlingly optimistic argument. The Middle East was notably more tolerant than Western Europe during the nineteenth century, because the Ottoman Empire permitted a high degree of religious pluralism and self-determination within its vast borders. European powers broke up the empire and tried to turn it into a collection of secular nation-states; it was a spectacular failure. Rulers turned religion into a force for nationalism and the result has been ever increasing sectarian violence. The solution, Pelham argues, is to accept the Middle East for the deeply religious region it is, and try to revive its tradition of pluralism. *Holy Lands* is a work of vivid reportage--from Turkey and Iraq, Israel and Palestine, Abu Dhabi and Dubai, Bahrain and Jordan--that is animated by a big idea. It makes a region that is all too familiar from news reports feel fresh.

"It is rare to come across a book on the region that charts a positive path for the future; rarer still to find one that advocates religious leadership and pragmatic communalism as the means for reaching peace....[Pelham] makes a powerful case that a regional alliance of overlapping millets, not connected with territorial boundaries, offers a better vision for restoring stability to the Middle East than the current agendas for conflict management."--Jonathan Steele, *The Guardian*"A fine collection of essays -- a rare combination of on-the-ground reportage and profound historical knowledge."--Ian Black, *The Guardian*"Can religion serve once again in the modern Middle East as the foundation for a meaningful pluralism as it did in the premodern Middle East? That is the question raised by this important book."--Jonathan P. Berkey, *The American Interest*"The reportage is well-grounded in textured life histories, interviews, and relevant historical narratives and statistics. Pelham offers impressively nuanced interpretations of entangled political rivalries and the hazy religious boundaries that crisscross the Middle East. Readers will find his investigation of the region's intolerance and aspirations for peace refreshing, particularly in the context of increasingly pessimistic headlines and political rhetoric." *Publishers Weekly*"A sound, accessible argument for why returning to the mixed-faith communities living among each other in the Ottoman model might just save the Middle East. ... Pelham traces the current crisis of violent, xenophobic sectarianism in the region to the series of forced population transfers and displacements carried out through the 20th century, most critically from the fall of the ethnically diverse Ottoman Empire to the creation of Israel and Pakistan. ... However, Pelham does not see only doom but rather a resurgence of pluralism as a natural, human response given the chance for peaceable community. A lively, succinct, nonpolemical study that will offer much thought for discussion." starred review, *Kirkus* s