

## Preface / Vorwort

*Editor / Herausgeber\**

**Dear readers,**

This new (7<sup>th</sup>) edition of the *Hikma* comprises articles, reports from conference proceedings, literature reviews and an interview, all of which fall within the scope of Islamic Theology and its related topics. Patrick Laude's text on religions within information media is followed by an article by Habib El Mallouki exploring the Arabic literature in the Abbasid era. Ensuing this, Mouez Khalfaoui looks at how the role of Muslims is described in Austrian history school books. The article by Jens Bakker provides a short overview of the system of classical theology of Sunnite Islam and finally, as the last item in the string of articles, Martin Jung gives insight into the development of Christian theologies within the context of Christian-Islamic history. Our authors then give a recap on conference proceedings, which is followed by the account of Rabbi Allen S. Maller in the miscellaneous section of the *Hikma*, in which the author describes how he benefited from reading about Muhammad. In the section on literature reviews, our authors discuss six publications and point out which of these they consider worthwhile reading. The *Hikma* concludes with an interview conducted with Hayrettin Karaman, born in 1934, who is without doubt one of the most influential and distinguished theologians of contemporary Turkey.

In the first article, entitled "*On BlackBerry and Beads: Religions in the Matrix of Information Media*", Patrick Laude observes that the decline of religious civilisations as "representational cultures" left in its stead a void of meaning. In this cavity the "religion" of mediatised globalisation and the absolutised identities of "performative cultures" are on a par in a struggle for significance. On this battleground, multiculturalism ceases to be an integrated ideal within the rules of traditional metaphysics. This causes a clash, or incompatibility, between individualism, fed by media and digital culture, and identity, which is indebted to communitarian claims, where the only feasible alternatives are either self-destructive marginalisation or the flattening and desacralising of mediatisation. Laude argues that only an inner return to the meaning and objectives of the traditional and representational cultures will liberate the individual from the catches and snares of the alienating network of globalisation.

The second article by Habib El Mallouki, entitled "*Al-Adab al-‘arabī (Arabic Literature) in the Abbasid Era*", examines the Arabic literature in this particular era. With the help of detailed historic data, El Mallouki outlines the connection between social and literary developments. When the Abbasid dynasty inaugurated an era of innovation and enlightening, literature – and especially poetry – changed too. Epic texts now centred on fables, anecdotes and myths about animals with the purpose to denounce false tendencies, to express political messages and to stipulate ethical maxims. Social progressiveness encouraged a new and different kind of poetry that was now dominated by young authors of mainly Persian origin. These poets still wrote in traditional ways, but moved their focus to new topics: away from tragedy and sadness towards more uplifting, delightful and Bacchanal themes. El Mallouki wraps up with the conclusion that the change in literature – and in particular that within poetry – is strongly linked to economical and social developments.

Subsequently, Mouez Khalfaoui takes a look at how Muslims are described in Austrian history school books in his article entitled "*The Muslims' Role in the Social History of Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: Austrian History Schoolbooks in a Case Study*". The author determines that the depiction and representation of Islam and Muslims in these books reflect the period of time the texts were written in, including the social circumstances that existed in Europe at this particular time. With all of the surveyed books being edited in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the author distinguishes five historical periods

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with distinctive socio-political characteristics. Khalfaoui draws the conclusion that the portrayal of Muslims in the European social history is characterised by a dichotomy, depending on whether Europe was more concerned with interior difficulties or with its relationships to other countries. As long as Europe was in the grip of its own interior difficulties, Muslims did not represent an important subject in European social history. However, this changed in the times of European expansion, when Muslims constituted an important focus in Austrian textbooks.

In the following article, entitled “*Short Overview of the Classical Theology of Sunnite Islam*”, Jens Bakker reflects upon the system of classical theology of Sunnite Islam. “Classical theology” refers to the form of this science predominant in the realm of Sunnite theology at least from the 7<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The eight basic disciplines of theology are characterised by their classical definitions, followed by a short description of their tasks. In doing so, the author shows that classical theology explicitly defines itself as a scientific theology because it relates itself to the profane disciplines, such as philosophy, from which it draws the epistemology and philosophy of science. Thereby, classical theology integrates itself with philosophy into a new paradigm of sciences. The article further reveals that the development of sciences in both the Islamic World and in the Latin West take their point of departure from the same foundation, namely the achievements of Ibn Sīnā, and are therefore two branches of the same tree. Bakker finds evidence of a similarity between the attitude of classical Islamic theologians towards the relationship between reason and cognition from revelation and that characteristic of the European Enlightenment. However, this way of thinking emerges much earlier in the context of classical theology of Sunnite Islam.

In the ultimate article, entitled “*The Development of the Christian Theologies within the Context of Christian-Islamic History*”, Martin Jung reveals that the history of Christian theologies is characterised by a number of important developments. First of all, Jung shows that Christianity acquires several defining impulses following the emergence of Islam, such as the reinstated knowledge about Aristotle, which constitutes one of the most important influences that Islam provided Christianity with. The received and interpreted works of Aristotle form a fundamental part in Christian theology of the Middle Ages. Later, the Turkish military conquests contributed to the beginnings of the Reformation, albeit in a more indirect way. As a consequence of the invasions, many Christian scholars migrated to Western Europe, where they introduced the Greek translations of Plato and Aristotle. These Greek translations differed from the customary Latin-Arabic translations, making scholars aware of the importance to access texts in their language of origin, one of the main principles of the Reformation.

Hussein Hamdan and Hansjörg Schmid head the section containing conference reports. They review a conference entitled *Young Muslims in Germany*, which was held at the Academy of the Diocese Rottenburg-Stuttgart in January 2013. This is followed by Ismail Yavuzcan’s account of the *Symposium on International Religious Studies and Worldwide Peace*, an event organised by the theological faculty of the Necmettin Erbakan University in Konja in May 2013. Subsequently, Melahat Kisi reports from the conference *2<sup>nd</sup> International Khadija Conference 2013*, which took place in the Kista Folgskola in Stockholm in June 2013. And ultimately, Alexander Dubrau gives an account of the Summer School of the Institute of Islamic Theology of Osnabrück, which was held in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in July 2013 and looked into the interdisciplinary field of *Law, Religion and Minority*.

The single contribution to the miscellaneous section of the *Hikma*, entitled “*What a Rabbi Learns from Mohammed*” by Rabbi Allen S. Maller, broaches interreligious issues. The German translation is provided by Reinhard Harrich. Maller’s contribution emphasises on the connection and similarities between Judaism and Islam and on the observation how much both religions benefit from each other if they are put in perspective to each other.

The following section of the journal provides several literature reviews. Bacem Dziri commences by discussing a publication by Albert Raffelt, entitled *Theologie studieren. Einführung ins wissenschaftliche Arbeiten (Studying Theology. A Guide to Academic Writing and Research)*. Dziri

finds that the book offers helpful and competent information to students of theology as well as to academics or theologians of other denomination, especially those who may equally be in the process of compiling such a manual for their respective students. Musa Bağraç continues by assessing a publication by Kazım Gülçür (2011): *Adab: Wohlverhalten und Charakterschulung im Islam. Islam in der Praxis* (*Adab: Moral Conduct and Building Character in Islam. Islam in Practice*), concluding that the material first requires a didactic preparation in order for it to be suitable for Islamic Education. However, Bağraç does recommend the book to pupils and students of higher education as well as to teachers looking for information about theoretical and practical moral conduct within Islamic Education. Subsequently, Michael Kiefer reviews a publication by Richard Heinzmann (ed., 2013) entitled *Lexikon des Dialogs. Grundbegriffe aus Christentum und Islam* (*A Dictionary of Dialogue. Basic Terminology in Christianity and Islam*). Kiefer considers this large-scale dictionary project to be an exceptional pioneer work. The dictionary provides information and explanations to 330 basic terms on roughly 850 pages. This is followed by Eva Kepplinger's appraisal of the publication *Ostarrichislam – Fragmente achthundertjähriger gemeinsamer Geschichte* (*Ostarrichislam – Fragments of 800 Years of Collective History*), a work edited by Amena Shakir, Gernot Galib Stanfel and Martin M. Weinberger (2012). The volume critically explores the various correlations and ties between Austria and Islam and includes many bibliographical references and commentated illustrations. The authors share their profound knowledge and insight into the matter, thereby shedding a new light on the collective history of Austria and Islam, all of which is presented in a vivid manner. In the penultimate review, Davut Tekin discusses the volume by Timo Güzelmansur (2012): *Hat Jesus Muhammad angekündigt? Der Paraklet des Johannesevangeliums und seine koranische Bedeutung* (*Did Jesus Announce Muhammad? The Paraclete of the Gospel of John and Its Relevance to the Qur'an*). He finds the publication to be both a worthwhile but also academically challenging read, which nevertheless allows readers who are not yet familiar with the topic to find a first approach to the subject matter. Additionally, the reviewer notes that the contributions to this volume are well-chosen and grouped. Finally, Aynur Kücük reviews another publication by Timo Güzelmansur (2012), entitled *Gott und Mensch in der Lehre der anatolischen Aleviten* (*God and Mankind in the Theory of Anatolian Alevi*), which touches on the core of Alevi faith and describes its essential set-up. Thus Güzelmansur offers an insight into Alevi belief and its matters of research. Kücük believes that the publication enables readers of Christian, Alevi, Sunnite and other denomination to form their own marked opinion on the Alevi concept of God and mankind.

This edition of the *Hikma* concludes with an interview I conducted with the distinguished Turkish theologian, Professor Dr. Hayrettin Karaman, with whom I spoke about the biographical milestones in his career and his literary achievements. This interview took place in Istanbul in 2010 and was later translated and abridged by Hakkı Arslan.

On a more personal note: Two members of our staff have left the editorial team of the *Hikma*. I would like to express my special thanks to Anna Wiebke Klie and Duncan Cooper for their truly dedicated work and their adept and sensitive handling and fine-tuning of contributions to this journal that the *Hikma* has highly benefited from. I extend to both my very best wishes for the future.

And finally, I would like to offer my most sincere thanks to everyone who contributed to this edition of the *Hikma*: to the authors of the articles, conference reports and literature reviews, and to all members of staff of the editorial team. I would like to wish everyone inspiring and enlightening reading.

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