

Theological Anthropology in Interreligious Perspective

Edited by

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Sapientia Islamica

5

Mohr Siebeck

Sapientia Islamica
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In memoriam

Christoph Schwöbel
19 February 1955–18 September 2021

Paul Hardy
5 December 1944–6 April 2022

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Note on Transliteration and Dates

The transliteration of Arabic names follows that of *The Encyclopaedia of Islam, Three (EI3)*. Technical terms in Arabic are all italicised except for terms that have become common in English (e.g. Muhammad, Hadith, Islam, imam, mufti, sufi, Sunni, Shi'i). Double dates are used in reference to the Islamic (A.H.) and Common Era (C.E.) calendars (e.g. 716/1316).

Introduction

TIM WINTER

Because religion's avowed purpose is to reconnect creature with Creator, human attempts to interpret this connection have always taken the form of anthropological as well as of metaphysical systems. Across the world religions, it has been widely understood that human beings are uniquely charged with the duty fully to respond to the Absolute, and that the nature of these knowing human agents who comprise in some way the pivot of creation must therefore be a core subject of religious discourse. The major religions have thus generated extremely rich literatures of psychological speculation and theory, often grounded in traditions of disciplined introspection combined with empirical observations and experiences rooted in active pastoral contexts. What distinguishes the 'Abrahamic' traditions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam has been the belief that the human person, in knowing or ignoring itself, confronts or absconds from a Divine person, whose creation is linear and moves towards a single end, at which the human composite is to be charged with giving an account of itself, after which, for most premodern thinkers, the human person will experience both continuity and change in a post-mortem world of resurrection and eternal life. At the start of this trajectory there is understood to be a 'first evil', sometimes described as a 'fall', with Adam as the proto-sinner, and this is thought to account for or to represent the mystery of actual evil in human life, together with the existential human intuition of disquiet, inauthenticity and longing. Religion thus exists to return us to what we were made to be.

The same monotheisms therefore concur that this arc of return shows that humanity is itself insofar as it relates wholesomely to its divine source, and that 'our hearts are restless until they find rest in Thee'.¹ Made to be mirrors of heaven, the reflection in human beings' conduct and outlook is palpably imperfect, and hence we experience ourselves not only as recurrent violators of God's instructions but as deeply inclined to such violations. The religions have addressed this distinction between actual sin and the tendency which generates it by asking complex psychological and cosmological questions about the ontology of our restlessness and the conscience which, as Heidegger saw, is strangely experienced

¹ Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Edward B. Pusey, Oxford: Parker, 1853, p. 17.

as a kind of debt. Only humans among the creatures sense a calling to apprehend the world rightly, and in this recognition they alone experience guilt and hence ethical summons.² In his attempt to characterise this human malaise and striving, the Catholic theologian Bernard Lonergan reaches for Heidegger's category of 'inauthenticity' to reference our existential self-awareness as recurrently mis-directed beings who intuit their true avocation through *Dasein*, but are distracted by a quotidian world persistently to choose otherwise: inauthenticity is heteronomy.³ In wrestling with the enigma of the estranged and wilful human self, the theologies recognise a lower and higher mode (*psyche* and *pneuma*, *nafs* and *rūh*), whose higher aspect is a mystery, referred to, for example, in the Qur'anic advice that 'they ask you about the spirit: say it is of my Lord, and of knowledge you have been given only a little' (17:85). Through the fog and passion of the lower self, a kind of *via negativa* allows the inferring of the shape of what we ought to be via a nuanced introspective pathology, richly adumbrated in penitential and pneumatological literature grounded in an attentive experience of human lives and a lived consciousness of *Dasein*, of the world present to us. The religions' familiar lists of sins are understood to be more than simply ethical, for they assist in this probing of the human mystery by suggesting that there is in reality an alternative, authentic way for the self to be. For Lonergan, authenticity is self-transcendence, a liberation of *spiritus* through the mastery of *anima*; and to accomplish this we need an energising *sorge*, a horizon, which allows us to live 'dramatically', in contrast to secular pursuits of authenticity, which are relativistic, elitist and flat; and this horizon, despite Heidegger, is the monotheistic Divine, which shapes human life through revealing a purified form of behaviour, access to which is available only through grace.⁴ The self's recovered return to a primally-authentic *Dasein* is experienced as the natural authenticity of the One and the realisation that the Others (Heidegger's *das Man*) are ontologically less authentic and cannot on their own disclose the One. Hence the human creature is both part of the nature which intimates its own ground, and apart from it.

A further broad consensus is to be found in the belief that the disposition of soul required for this retrieval of prototypical human authenticity is neither a vainglorious self-will nor a passionless Stoic abdication. Christianity and Islam, for all their differences of emphasis, have historically admired a condition of loving surrender to the mystery of self-bestowing Being in all its disclosive manifestations, the virtue that Islam calls 'purifying oneself from claims to ability and strength' (*al-tabarru' min al-ḥawl wa-l-quwwa*), which is in a sense the meaning

² See Donovan Miyasaki, "A Ground for Ethics in Heidegger's *Being and Time*", *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 38 (2007), pp. 261–79.

³ Brian J. Braman, *Meaning and Authenticity*. Bernard Lonergan & Charles Taylor on the Drama of Authentic Human Existence, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008, pp. 47–72.

⁴ Braman, pp. 48–51; see also Michael H. McCarthy, *Authenticity and Self-Transcendence*. *The Enduring Insights of Bernard Lonergan*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2015.

of *islām* (submission) itself, and which approximates to the state described by Simone Weil as a *décréation*, an enigmatic ‘passive activity’.⁵ The Abrahamic human creature, whose paradoxical willed but helpless surrender is exemplified at the binding of Abraham’s son, is thus dynamically in conflict with the lower, inauthentic self, and surrendered to the healing dynamism of divine grace and power. This *amor fati* becomes the disposition of the soul which enables prayer.

Islam and Christianity thus continue the Jewish awareness that in addition to our inauthentic actions which allow self to veil spirit there exists a tendency which underlies and generates such actions: Judaism’s *yetzer ha-ra*, which, according to some Talmudic teaching, is an infantile inheritance which outweighs any positive inclination until a boy reaches the age of thirteen, after which it may be defeated.⁶ It is on this point that the two younger monotheisms, for all their internal plurivocality, have chosen two characteristically different roads. Muslim thinkers, taking their cue from the Qur’anic data, have typically opted for a version of the relative optimism which the Rabbis evince about body and nature, and in recent times have often deployed the trope of Original Sin as a polemical tool against an overly pessimistic and hence insufficiently humanistic Christianity.⁷ For Joseph Soloveitchik, ‘Christianity viewed instinct as corrupt and sinful; man’s divine essence asserts itself in his spirit, which is always in a state of war with the flesh. Judaism rehabilitates the flesh [...] attaching the quality of divine image to the biological forces in man.’⁸ The lower soul is not coterminous with body and desire; and Judaism thus ‘proclaims the goodness of the whole of man, of the natural.’⁹ On this type of disparity, alluded to several times in the present volume, the ‘Semitisms’ and Christianity have created anthropologies which in some respects are notably different, and given the role of the Cross in Christianity, with the implication, drawn out by Paul, that so immense a sacrifice must be atoning for an immense sinfulness, this is evidently linked to their typical soteriologies, where again, Islam and Judaism show themselves substantially allied. Hence, perhaps, the absence of invocations of the beauty of the natural world in the Gospels, a notable departure from the Hebrew Biblical and the Qur’anic accounts of a natural world of divine indicativity.¹⁰ The grace which,

⁵ Simone Weil, *Waiting on God*, trans. Emma Craufurd, New York: HarperCollins, 2009, p. 126; compare Schwöbel’s essay in the present volume.

⁶ Avot de-Rabbi Natan, 16.

⁷ For instance, Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā (d. 1935), see Simon Wood, *Christian Criticisms, Islamic Proofs. Rashīd Riḍā’s Modernist Defence of Islam*, Oxford: Oneworld, 2012, p. 141; Ruq-aiyyah Waris Maqsood, *The Mysteries of Jesus. A Muslim Study of the Origins and Doctrines of the Christian Church*, Oxford: Sakina, 2000, pp. 59–61, 66. In the context of this volume, it is useful to remember that arguments over Original Sin and the *imago Dei* very seldom formed part of the premodern Muslim polemic against Christianity.

⁸ Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *The Emergence of Ethical Man*, New York: Ktav, 2012, p. 76.

⁹ Soloveitchik, *The Emergence of Ethical Man*, p. 73.

¹⁰ Cf. Palle Yourgrau, *Simone Weil*, London: Reaktion, 2011, p. 313.

for most Christians, enables the retrieval of authenticity is of a supernatural, new and radical kind: for Christianity, God does not only show, but *comes*.

Modern Muslims, typically aligned with Soloveitchik's critique, have often found this Christian story to suggest an implicit vengefulness in God directed against a hopelessly feeble humanity, and this common rebuke is cited and critiqued in turn by Daniel Madigan, and implicitly by other contributors to our volume. Nietzsche seemed to incorporate it into his philo-Islamic assault on a pusillanimous Christianity,¹¹ ignoring metaphysics and commending Islam for what he saw as its *ja-sagende* masculine validation of the will and of the body. Islam is Dionysian, Christianity is Apollonian, which explains its dreaming figurative art and its preference for unearthly choir music, which seems, some might observe, to contrast strongly with the earthy and almost sexual rhythms of dervish *dhikr*.¹² Many Muslims have professed themselves disappointed by a Christianity that seems to fight against *eros* and also to reject the principle of sacred warriorhood, the virtue which Hindu anthropology calls the *kshatriya* possibility which is considered one of the noblest of callings. This was a key apologetic focus for Rashīd Riḍā, while Iqbal, likewise seeking to interpret Islam to the Western-educated, explicitly drew on Nietzsche in his image of his religion as paradigm of life-affirmation.¹³ For Muslims, the person of the priest or monk proleptically living a heavenly and seemingly discarnate life has often seemed starkly at variance with the Muslim ideal of the devout married merchant, ruler or warrior;¹⁴ conversely, medieval Christian polemic frequently reproached Islam as a 'garden of nature',¹⁵ where it was believed that sainthood could cohabit with *eros*, an amalgam which could even proleptically anticipate life in a sensual paradise. Although sexuality and the often related topic of gender are unfashionably ignored in our volume, it is evident that Islam's anthropology has recurrently generated features of Muslim life such as married saints, public baths, sacred ablutions and divinely-rewarded sexuality which appeared strange or even perverse to many premodern Christians.¹⁶ In this there has been a

¹¹ Ian Almond, "Nietzsche's Peace with Islam. My Enemy's Enemy is my Friend", *German Life and Letters*, 56 (2003), pp. 43–55.

¹² Cf. Roy Jackson, *Nietzsche and Islam*, London: Routledge, 2007, p. 57.

¹³ Muhammad Iqbal, *Javid-Nama*, trans. A.J. Arberry, London: Allen and Unwin, 1966, pp. 111–3.

¹⁴ See the dialogically-rooted meditations of Louis Gardet, *Les hommes de l'Islam. Approche des mentalités*, Paris: Hachette, 1997.

¹⁵ Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West. The Making of an Image*, revised edition, Oxford: OneWorld, 1993, p. 166.

¹⁶ Ze'ev Maghen, *Virtues of the Flesh. Passion and Purity in Early Islamic Jurisprudence*, Leiden: Brill, 2005; for the development of Christian attitudes, see Peter Brown, *The Body and Society. Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity*, London: Faber and Faber, 1989.

recurrent divergence which may be realistically considered as symptomatic of very distinct anthropologies.

A stark Nietzschean binary which presents the Muslim as a simple 'Anti-Christ' does not, however, begin to account for the nuances and historical attenuations of this divergence. Islam historically believed itself to be a corrective to earlier Christian and Jewish straying, a reparation as well as a replenishment, but also claimed that its book 'confirms (*muşaddiq*) what came before it' (Q 61:6). It comes as an *Aufheben* in Hegel's sense, obliterating and preserving at the same time, and in its reflections on anthropology much of our volume points to concurrent differences and convergences between the life which is the *imitatio Christi* and what Vimercati Sanseverino refers to as the *sequela Prophetarum*. Disappointed Muslim views of an effectively Docetic Christ subside or are at least muted when notice is taken of, for instance, the attitudes to family and children shown in the images of both founders (the childhood of Jesus, the Prophet as father): Jesus too, as the Gospels record, existed very much *dans le vrai*, so that the pagan criticism of Muhammad which asks, 'what is amiss with this messenger, that he eats food and walks in the marketplaces' (Q 25:7) misses its Christic as well as its Muhammadan mark. A further and allied point concerns the primacy of love of God and of neighbour proposed by the well-known *Common Word* initiative of 2007 as shared human ground, a claim which has been queried by some Christians in their investigations of Islam, who wish to see Islam as a type of 'Semitic' reversion, as a religion of law straightforwardly opposed to the Christianity which is a religion of spirit and of love (*agape*).¹⁷ But as many of the discussions which followed the *Common Word* revealed, this binary accounts very poorly for a complex reality: Christianity has evolved intricate structures of canon law and liturgical regulation, while William Chittick, for instance, has no difficulty in defining Islam as a religion of love.¹⁸

Other confoundings of the Nietzschean dichotomy should also be noted. In its complex balancings of the Muhammadan example with the exemplary function of earlier prophets, Islamic literature reveres Christ as a recognised hagiological type, not as a simple clone of Moses or Muhammad but as an ascetic and celibate sage whose monastic followers inspired many early Muslim saints;¹⁹ the Qur'an itself respects monks and priests (5:82), and even later the 'Christic' type of saint

¹⁷ A view which has an equivalent in more secular philosophy, as in the case of Hegel: Gil Anidjar, *Semites. Race, Religion, Literature*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008, p. 32.

¹⁸ 'If any single word can sum up Islamic spirituality – by which I mean the very heart of the Qur'anic message – it should surely be *love*'. William C. Chittick, *Divine Love. Islamic Literature and the Path to God*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013, p. xi. See also several of the monographs written by Muslims in response to some Christian reactions to *A Common Word*, including Ghazi bin Muhammad, *Love in the Holy Qur'an*, Chicago: Kazi Publications, 2010.

¹⁹ Tor Andrae, *In the Garden of Myrtles. Studies in Early Islamic Mysticism*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997, pp. 7–32.

was exalted in the anthropology of Ibn ‘Arabī, in particular.²⁰ A still further reduction in polarities might resolve the claim that the Qur’anic personalities are disappointingly two-dimensional, icon-like images when set beside the *chiaroscuro* of many Biblical narratives, which portray complex actors in a theodrama in which their greatness and humanity are shown in their times of self-doubt and personal weakness. There is certainly a contrast between icons and Caravaggio, and here we might even speculate about an East-West differential that transcends confessional boundaries;²¹ and yet the Qur’an provides an account of the Nativity filled with as many cries of indecision and pain as those the Synoptics provide for Christ at Gethsemane and Golgotha, while the Hadith literature frequently describes the bearer of the Qur’an in eminently human terms. To all these challenges to a notion of Islam and Christianity’s anthropologies as comprising a simple opposing binary one could add the further observation that the two religions’ developed philosophies of the human soul both drew heavily on a shared Hellenistic heritage, and even enriched one another on that basis.²²

All these convergences and correlations suggest that Islam’s claimed repair of Christian anthropology is subtle at best, and take us rather far from Nietzsche’s fierce dichotomy. Intersections of sensibility and theoretical framing have been abundant and inexorable in two traditions which share a single Jewish and Messianic root, engage a shared monotheistic premise and a common human subjectivity and physiology, and have significantly cross-pollinated in history.

Despite such intersections, and with all due regard to contemporary alarms about metanarratives, the recurrent patterns in the literature, some of which our contributors seek to tease out, indicate that the real divergences between Christian and Muslim anthropologies cannot be entirely deconstructed into nonexistence. Nor will pluralist theologies which insist that rival religious systems are simply alternate formulations of a common truth (Panikkar’s perichoretic model of world religions,²³ for example) prove able to negate the reality and the real indicative interest of these patterns, which form part of their particular genius and integrity. Recognising this, several of our contributors attempt some general and at times bold comparisons.

The papers in this collection suggest that while simple dichotomies are unfeasible, the most stubbornly persistent and perhaps most indicative issue at

²⁰ Michel Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints. Prophethood and Sainthood in the Doctrine of Ibn Arabi*, Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1993; Maurice Gloton, *Jesus, Son of Mary in the Qur’an and According to the Teachings of Ibn ‘Arabī*, Louisville: Fons Vitae, 2016.

²¹ Consider the Orthodox convention which holds that an icon is ‘written’.

²² For instance, Dag Nikolaus Hasse, *Avicenna’s De anima in the Latin West. The Formation of a Peripatetic Philosophy of the Soul, 1160–1300*, London: Warburg Institute, 2000.

²³ Jyri Komulainen, “Panikkar the Dialogical Man. Religion and the Religions”, *Raimon Panikkar. A Companion to his Life and Thought*, ed. Peter C. Phan and Young-chan Or, Cambridge: James Clarke, 2018, pp. 76–93, at p. 89.

stake has been the definition and ontology of our intuited sense of guilt and our capacity for moral failure. Latin Christianity unmistakably took a more radical view than did Islam. Muslim culture did not produce an Augustine, and was unlikely ever to have been hospitable to the idea that Original Sin was transmitted via sexual intercourse. For Augustine, drawing speculatively on a questionable translation of Romans 5:12–5, all humans were present with Adam when he sinned ('in that one man were we all, when we were all that one man'),²⁴ and so every baby is born both sinning and guilty, while the married sexual desire which engenders it is damnably concupiscent. This diagnosis of sin as an infection or form of genetic damage caused by the radioactive fallout unleashed by Adam's temerity was once standard throughout the West, and was taken up energetically although in different ways by the Reformers, particularly in the characteristic Calvinist and Wesleyan teaching of Total Depravity. This enabled a prevalent judicial interpretation of sin and redemption, maintained by Catholics at the Council of Trent, which held that heartfelt repentance in the Jewish style was unacceptable to God, since Original Sin is not just a moral but an ontological problem: a cosmic redemption is the only logically sufficient repayment.

Adam's error is recounted also in the Qur'an (2:30–9), which calls it a 'slip' (*zalla*), but there has not been a Muslim sense that all his descendents were present in him as he slipped, to share the guilt: his mishap is a precedent and an archetype but not a source.²⁵ However, the Qur'an is not unfamiliar with the idea of humanity being present 'in Adam' in a prelapsarian world. This appears in a soteriological passage which has all human souls mysteriously present within Adam's loins during a prologue in heaven which occurred even 'before' Eden. This is Qur'an 7:172, in which all of Adamic humanity is asked to testify to God's lordship in an event often known in Persian poetry as the *bezm-i alast*, the 'assembly of the Day of "Am I Not Your Lord"'.²⁶ The subsequent human falling-away, however, of humans later ensouled in embryos and born into this lower world (*dunyā*), is characterised as forgetfulness, which is, for Chittick, 'as close as Islam comes to the concept of original sin'.²⁷ It is in this sense that we are, or were, 'in Adam'. However, the forgetfulness is not the result of that Adamic covenantal ingathering, which was an enlightenment rather than a fall, but is folded into our humanity because we have been kneaded from both 'clay and spirit, dark-

²⁴ *City of God* 13.14, cited in Andrew Louth, "An Eastern Orthodox View", *Original Sin and the Fall. Five Views*, ed. J.B. Stump and Chad Meister, Downers Grove IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020, pp. 78–100, at p. 87.

²⁵ Angelika Neuwirth, "Negotiating Justice. A Pre-Canonical Reading of the Qur'anic Creation Accounts", *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, 2 (2000), pp. 25–43, at p. 29.

²⁶ Gerhard Böwering, *The Mystical Vision of Existence in Classical Islam. The Qur'anic Hermeneutics of the Šūfi Sahl At-Tustarī (d. 283/896)*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1980, pp. 146–9.

²⁷ William Chittick, "The Islamic Conception of Human Perfection", *Jung and the Monotheisms. Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, ed. J. Ryce-Menuhim, London: Routledge, 1994, pp. 154–65, see p. 161.

ness and light, ignorance and knowledge, activity and passivity,²⁸ and are prone to forget that we no longer inhabit the primordial world where everything was unmistakably theophanic. Charles Upton thus describes the Fall as a shift from a ‘cardiac’ to a ‘cerebral’ consciousness.²⁹ Because of the primacy of God’s love and compassion, humanity is redeemed from this forgetfulness through divinely-bestowed knowledge, gained through a grace-enabled contemplation of God’s signs in nature and scripture. The *sequela Prophetarum* renders the Muslim open to this knowledge by conforming him or her outwardly and inwardly to a model of humanity perfectly in accordance with the Adamic pattern, bodying-forth the attributes of perfection whose ground is the Divine names, and acting appropriately towards other creatures in accordance with their nature as God’s epiphanies, in what Christian theology might call a ‘relational’ model of the image of God.³⁰

Perhaps the concurrent resemblance and distinctiveness could be further suggested through a different speculative juxtaposition, this time of the enactment of the soteriology of fundamental rituals. At the Eucharist, the Christian is transformed by the blood and body of the Second Adam, whose free self-sacrifice fully satisfies the Father and extinguishes Adam’s sin. For the Muslim, it is the obligatory Hajj which calls to mind Adam, the first dweller in the sanctuary, where the Black Stone is considered God’s ‘right hand on earth,’³¹ confirming Adam and his purified descendants as God’s *khulafā’* or vicegerents. According to a hadith, the Stone ‘contains’ the witnessing of all humanity at the Day of *Alast*, which it received when it was a pure white, because unfallen humanity, in the state of *fiṭra* (primordial natural disposition: recall Lonergan’s sense of ‘authenticity’), did not yet possess the knowledge of good and evil. Sins (but not an original sin) then turned the Stone black.³² As they kiss the Stone, set in a silver monsternace in the tabernacle of the Kaaba which is the locus of the *sakīna* (= *shechina*, God’s peaceable indwelling, perhaps a real presence), the pilgrims are engaged in a key sacramental rite, as they follow and enact this visible sign of sanctifying grace. Chroniclers record that some pilgrims, as they gazed into the Stone, would attempt to descry some trace of its original whiteness.³³ Again, we find here a strangely simultaneous familiarity and disparity.

²⁸ Chittick, “The Islamic Conception of Human Perfection”, p. 158.

²⁹ Charles Upton, *The Science of the Greater Jihad. Essays in Principal Psychology*, San Rafael CA: Sophia Perennis, 2011, p. 85.

³⁰ For which see Oliver Crisp, “A Christological Model of the *Imago Dei*”, *The Ashgate Research Companion to Theological Anthropology*, ed. Joshua R. Farris and Charles Taliaferro, Farnham: Ashgate, 2015, pp. 217–32, at p. 220.

³¹ Simon O’Meara, *The Ka’ba Orientations. Readings in Islam’s Ancient House*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020, p. 59.

³² Charles-André Gilis, *La doctrine initiatique du pèlerinage à la Maison d’Allâh*, Paris: l’Oeuvre, 1982, pp. 25, 67–8.

³³ Michel Chodkiewicz, “The Paradox of the Ka’ba”, *Journal of the Muhyiddin ibn Arabi Society*, 57 (2015), pp. 57–83, at p. 62.

So there exists here a significant difference between the anthropologies. However, in our volume, and in the domain of Muslim-Christian engagement more widely, it is noteworthy that the wider Christian theological shift away from a strict interpretation of the Augustinian hamartiology has figured very conspicuously, and in many cases this has improved the dialogue by reducing one of the familiar grounds of modern Muslim disapproval. For many twentieth-century Christians the concept that babies are born in a damned state seemed to undermine their religion's self-understanding as a religion of love. To protect the same self-understanding many also moved away from penal understandings of the atonement. New and improved understandings of Judaism have also contributed to this shift, with critics observing, for instance, that for the Hebrew Bible, the Golden Calf rather than Adam's fall is more usually cited as the root cause of Jewish idolatry.³⁴ To these movements of the scholarly consensus was added a growing desire to acknowledge Darwinian doubts about monogenism (the claim that humanity shared a single human ancestor), which seemed to discredit the Original Sin doctrine on palaeobiological grounds. For reasons such as these, Emil Brunner famously described belief in Original Sin as no less obsolete than belief in centaurs.³⁵

The cumulation of these scholarly displacements together with a wider humanistic *zeitgeist* ensured that the Second Vatican Council of the early 1960s discreetly retreated from a strict Augustinianism. Instrumental here were Henri de Lubac, who lamented the centuries of neo-scholasticism which had separated nature from grace,³⁶ and fellow-Jesuit Karl Rahner, who accused Augustine of 'an indescribable coldness in your heart'.³⁷ Although criticised as 'Pelagian' by conservatives,³⁸ or as a modernism which reduced the doctrine of Original Sin to a meditation on the combination of genes with social mimesis,³⁹ the new and apparently more humanistic hamartiology became standard in Lonergan, who called for an entire recasting of the doctrine, with a new valuation of sexuality as the 'call of love', a symbol of the natural desire for God,⁴⁰ which in the theology

³⁴ Joel B. Green, "A Wesleyan View", *Original Sin and the Fall*, ed. Stump and Meister, pp. 55–77, at p. 72.

³⁵ Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption*, trans. Olive Wyon, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1952, p. 48.

³⁶ Randall S. Rosenberg, *The Givenness of Desire. Concrete Subjectivity and the Natural Desire to See God*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017, p. 18.

³⁷ Karl Rahner, *Faith in a Wintry Season*, cited in Ralph Martin, *Will Many Be Saved? What Vatican II Actually Teaches and its Implications for the New Evangelization*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012, p. 104.

³⁸ Romano Amerio, *Iota Unum. A Study of Changes in the Catholic Church in the XXth Century*, Kansas City: Sarto House, 1996, p. 565, of *Nostra Aetate*; see also his critique of Rahner, p. 574.

³⁹ See Hans Madueme, "An Augustinian-Reformed View", *Original Sin and the Fall*, ed. Stump and Meister, pp. 11–34, at p. 28.

⁴⁰ Rosenberg, *The Givenness of Desire*, p. 130.

of Jean-Luc Marion becomes a theology of the erotic which Islam and Judaism would not find disappointing.⁴¹ Many Protestants, too, have moderated their appreciation of Augustine's anthropology.⁴²

Despite the anxieties of conservatives and the ongoing commitment to the older doctrines on the part of many evangelicals, this shift is evidently more than a simple *aggiornamento* or a capitulation to Enlightenment confidences about the benign individual. Historians have pointed to the absence of a serious Original Sin doctrine in the apostolic age (Justin Martyr, for instance, is innocent of it, and the three ecumenical councils do not mention it).⁴³ As the *periti* at Vatican II noted, Augustine's severity was by no means the most obvious interpretation of the Gospel anthropology, or even that of Paul's letter to the Romans. The Eastern Churches had generally regarded Augustine with reserve, not least on this question;⁴⁴ he had in any case only been rendered into Greek in the fourteenth century. For Orthodox anthropology the focus is on the great arc of creation-deification, with the fall-redemption arc seen as subsidiary, and humanity is perceived not as essentially guilty but as disordered by a sin which cumulatively corrupts us, although it was originated in Adam.⁴⁵ For some modern Orthodox writers the Original Sin doctrine emerges from Jerome's misreading of Paul (Romans 5:12–15), on which Augustine built his hamartiology (and also much of his theodicy, which again, in the East, seemed overly severe).⁴⁶ This all suggests that the modern Christian turn away from Augustine, strongly evident in most of the Christian contributions to the present volume, need not be seen as an inauthentic modernism in rupture with tradition, but appears as an internal Christian *ressourcement* deriving from a church undeniably rooted in patristic and apostolic wisdom.

This repristination of Christian soteriology incorporates a mystical turn, the Eastern Churches maintaining a focus on 'sharing in the divine nature' (2 Peter: 4) coupled with a tendency to apophaticism and a relative resistance to systematic philosophical theology. Do we detect an analogous turn among the Muslim contributors to our volume? Many readers accustomed to con-

⁴¹ Jean-Luc Marion, *The Erotic Phenomenon*, trans. Stephen E. Lewis, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

⁴² E. g., Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society. A Study in Ethics and Politics*, New York: Charles Scribner, 1932, p. 70.

⁴³ Green, "A Wesleyan View", p. 62.

⁴⁴ Fr Seraphim Rose, *The Place of Blessed Augustine in the Orthodox Church*, Platina CA: St Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1983. The impression of some forms of Augustinianism as verging on Marcionite belief seems underlined by the fact that the Orthodox Church celebrates many feast days for Old Testament figures, while the Church of Rome currently recognises none.

⁴⁵ Louth, "An Eastern Orthodox View", pp. 81–2. For an excellent account of Orthodoxy's overall perspective, see Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, Cambridge: James Clarke, 1957, pp. 114–34.

⁴⁶ Peter C. Bouteneff, *Beginnings. Ancient Christian Readings of the Biblical Creation Narratives*, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008, p. 41.

temporary discourses in the Muslim world, whether of an Islamist, rationalist or Salafist tendency, will be startled by the immanentism which seemed to guide the Muslim theological anthropologists present at the Tübingen conference. Were the Christians engaging with Muslim interlocutors who were recognisably representative? A good number of them relied extensively on Ibn ‘Arabī (d.1240), a figure widely repudiated by contemporary Muslims. Does this represent a sufi tendency current among Muslim theologians in the somewhat narrow world of Western universities, and if so, how should we parse it? The answer, probably, lies not in any undue shaping by the spiritual atmosphere prevailing in Occidental academe, nor in any formal domination of Islamic Studies by the study of Sufism; in fact, the most evident strength of the most recent ‘Oriental Studies’ work has been in Islamic law (*fiqh*) and in the area of Muslim dialectical theology (*kalām*). One need not speculate about this ‘mystical’ turn too heavily. It is useful to note that until the nineteenth century, and perhaps, for most *ulema*, even for much of the twentieth, Ibn ‘Arabī’s system was far more influential on Muslim ideas of human selfhood, particularly through his prophetology and his theory of the Perfect Human (*al-insān al-kāmil*), than was the system of any other thinker. In late nineteenth-century Indian Islam, for instance, his system was ‘axiomatic’.⁴⁷ So our conversation has been between a Christianity looking to a future reshaped by Orthodox anthropologies, and an Islam which chooses to reference a premodern, more mystical discourse. The resulting mystically-minded convergence on a creation-deification arc seems potentially very fruitful: a *ḥikma mashriqiyya*, an Oriental Wisdom which seems to suggest new horizons of dialogue and commonalty.

Perhaps one final convergence may be identified, this time of a metahistorical nature. Just as one might crudely identify current disputes between Islamists and Sufis as clashes over alternate moods in the Qur’anic text, which very boldly juxtaposes *tanzīh* (affirming transcendence) and *tashbīh* (affirming immanence), one might consider the implications of recent trends among Christians concerned to place Islam more respectfully on the map of acknowledged sacrality. Particularly intriguing here are those who try to reference the primal divergence which arose between Judaising and Hellenising tendencies in the early Church and in the New Testament writings themselves. The ‘sin’ text in Romans, whether or not it was distorted by Jerome, reflects a perspective current in much late Greek religion, which sought to dichotomise flesh and spirit (the evolution considered by Foucault in the later volumes of his *History of Sexuality*). However, there exists another New Testament tradition, evident in the Synoptics

⁴⁷ Charles M. Ramsey, “Religion, Science, and the Coherence of Prophetic and Natural Revelation. Sayyid Ahmad Khan’s Religious Writings,” *The Cambridge Companion to Sayyid Ahmad Khan*, ed. Yasmin Saikia and M. Raisur Rahman, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019, pp. 138–58, at p. 142.

and the Book of James, which is more conventionally Jewish. Historians of Jewish Christianity have often pointed to the apparent re-emergence of its themes in Islam.⁴⁸ For some advocates of comparative Muslim-Christian theology this even supplies the ground and origin of the divergence, so that Muhammad and Augustine turn into later confections of the dispute between Peter and Paul. The hugely-influential Tübingen theologian Hans Küng has been outspoken here, insisting that the Jewish Christians were ‘the very first paradigm of Christianity’,⁴⁹ its ‘legitimate heirs’,⁵⁰ and while he is far from rejecting the Pauline ‘brother Christianity’, proposes this as a basis for a new Christian recognition of Islam. Neither Muslims nor Christians have been immediately galvanised by this latest innovation of Tübingen biblical theology, but it rests on reasonably secure historical and New Testament grounds, and may obtain greater traction in future, as our dialogue continues to evolve.⁵¹

We turn now to a brief summary of the papers presented in this volume. The first is by Christoph Schwöbel, whose death in September 2021 came as a serious loss not only to Christian theology but also to the discipline of Muslim-Christian relations. Schwöbel begins our discussion with some far-reaching observations about the nature of religious talk about humanity. Since, for him, we are relational beings whose relations are determined by God’s relationship to us, a theological anthropology stands as a direct and categoric challenge to any secular equivalent. Bringing Luther, Ghazālī and HaLevi into conversation, he demonstrates their convergence on the need for a philosophically-rigorous demonstration that philosophy is insufficient in any metaphysical project, which must begin with a self-knowledge rooted in an awareness that our personhood exists ‘in God’. The three authors recognise the validity of a self-knowledge which allows an intuition of the divine, through a ‘radical passivity’ of the humbled human subject, which is identified as a ‘knowledge of the heart’. The adequate operation of this faculty is dependent on our admission of our subjection to demonic forces, and although Judaism, Christianity and Islam have differed widely in their diagnosis of our status as entities distant from God, they agree that the divine and human mysteries interpret each other. Theology, then, unlike philosophy, can attempt a contemporary account of mind and self, accommodating context, history, our fallibility, and divine ineffability.

⁴⁸ Robert Eisenman, *James the Brother of Jesus. Recovering the True History of Early Christianity*, vol. I, London: Faber and Faber, 1997, p. 3.

⁴⁹ Hans Küng, *Islam. Past, Present & Future*, trans. John Bowden, Oxford: Oneworld, 2007, p. 37.

⁵⁰ Küng, *Islam*, p. 497.

⁵¹ For an attempt at a full theology of convergence based on this analysis, see Samuel Zinner, *The Abrahamic Archetype. Conceptual and Historical Relationships between Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, Cambridge: Archetype, 2011.

Recep Şentürk's contribution, which is informed by a social science perspective, returns us to Ghazālī, but this time to his moral and psychological opus the *Revival of the Religious Sciences*, supplemented with references to Ottoman scholarship. Ghazālī's complex treatment of the human person continues the trope of the difficulty of defining the conscious human subject, which Şentürk shows can be resolved by adding soul to body and mind. Islamic and specifically sufi theories of human personhood often identify seven 'degrees', which represent an ontological hierarchy in the self, which may, on the basis of Qur'anic phrases, be reduced to three degrees or manifestations of the self. Sufism's concern with self-knowledge through self-awareness and self-discipline allows a progression from subordination under the sign of instinct, through a conscious struggle rooted in self-reproach, to a mastery of lower impulses, generating a true freedom. The complex Ghazālian science of self-transformation delivers a theory of humanity in which introspective self-naughting shaped by the rectification of intention can generate a 'self' worthy of salvation; this remains, however, entirely under the authority of divine grace.

Ivana Noble's contribution in many respects affirms Şentürk's idea of the sanctity of the freedom of the human will. But it does this by exploring the difficult but all-important tension between the Biblical ideas of humanity as God's image, and the idea of God's likeness. All creation partakes in the former, for all are His beloved creatures, and this can be determined in the face of the Other, who is always to be defended and upheld, even against improper theologies of hierarchy and distinction which separate gender, class and nation. Adam and Eve 'fell', and the way back is repentance, experienced as a gift and an occasion for grace, so that 'the expulsion out of Paradise would make another growth possible: the Fall enables Christ to appear in history'. Building on Irenaeus and the modern Orthodox theologian Dumitru Stăniloae, Noble shows that the purpose of the 'fall' is to initiate humanity into the wisdom that our freedom, constitutive of our Divine likeness, is only itself if we are free of passion and liberated to serve the Other, and hence God, the source of the love which enables this restoration of 'the memory of God in us.'

In her contribution Lejla Demiri considers the human condition through the optic of our mortality. While Islam is an axial religion and assumes the reality of linear time, which leads from Creation to Resurrection, it incorporates aspects of a cyclical vision of temporal movement in its comparisons between human experience and the seasonal cycles of the natural world. Using material from the Qur'an and Ghazālī's *Ihyā'*, she shows how in this dynamic vision of creation after creation, every stage of human life is a renewal. Even death, for the scripture, is not a dark terminus but another creation, a positive aspect of divine agency which takes the human subject 'back'. This anthropology is thus strongly eschatologically-oriented, with Ghazālī's work ending with the 'remembrance of death'. There is also a volitional death, by which we strip ourselves of