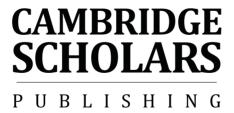# Philosophy and the Abrahamic Religions

Philosophy and the Abrahamic Religions: Scriptural Hermeneutics and Epistemology

Edited by

Torrance Kirby, Rahim Acar and Bilal Baş

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P U B L I S H I N G

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This book first published 2013

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Agath. *Hist.*	Agathias, *Agathiæ Myrinæi Historiarum libri quinque*, ed. Rudolf Keydell. Berlin, 1967.
Burhān	Avicenna / I. Madkour (gen. ed.), Abū l-'Alā' 'Afīfī (ed.), *al-Šifā'*, *al-Manṭiq*, Book 5 (*al-Burhān*). Cairo, 1956.
BM Syr.	British Museum, Syriac MSS
CC	Porphyry, *Contra Christianos; Porphyry against the Christians*, ed. Robert M. Berchman, Studies in Platonism, Neoplatonism, and the Platonic Tradition 1. Leiden, 2005.
Chron. Seert	*Chronicle of Seert*, *Histoire nestorienne inédite*, ed. Addai Scher. Turnhout, 1908-1919.
Cod. Add.	Addison MSS, British Library
Cod. Cus.	Codex Cusanus, Sankt Nicholaus Spital/Cusanusstift, Bernkastel-Kues
Cod. Harl.	Harleian MSS, British Library
Confus.	Philo, *de confusione linguarum*
Congr.	Philo, *de congressu quærendæ eruditionis gratia*
Cyr. Scyth.	Cyril of Scythopolis, *Kyrillos von Skythopolis*, ed. Eduard Schwartz. Leipzig, 1939.
DEA	Thomas Jackson, *A Treatise of the Divine Essence and Attributes.* London, 1628.
De Mal.	Proclus, *De Malorum Subsistentia*
DPF	Nicholas Cusanus, *de pace fidei*
*EI*²	*The Encyclopædia of Islam*, New Edition, 11 vols. Leiden, 1960-2002.
Enn.	Plotinus / P. Henry and H.-R. Schwyzer (eds.), G. Lewis (tr. from Arabic), *Plotini Opera*, *Enneads*. Paris and Brussels, 1959.
ESHE	*The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus*, transl. Michael Whitby. Liverpool, 2000.
FLE	*Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker,* 1977-1997.
Goichon	A.-M. Goichon, *Lexique de la langue philosophique d'Ibn Sīn (Avicenne)*. Paris, 1938.

Guide   Moses Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed,* transl.
                Shlomo Pines. Chicago, 1963.
Her.   Philo, *Quis rerum divinarum heres*
Ilāhīyāt   Avicenna / I. Madkour (gen. ed.), G.C. Anawati and
                Saʿīd Zāyed (eds. of pt. 1), Muhammad Mūsā, Sulaymān
                Dunyā and Saʿīd Zāyed (eds. of pt. 2), *al-Šifāʾ*, *al-*
                Ilāhīyāt. Cairo, 1960.
In Alc.   Proclus, *In Platonis Alcibiadem I Commentaria*
In Crat.   Proclus, *In Platonis Cratylum Commentaria*
In Eucl.   Proclus, *In Primum Euclidis Elementorum Librum*
                Comentarii
In Parm.   Proclus, *In Platonis Parmenidem Comentaria*
In Remp.   Proclus, *In Platonis Rem Publicam Commentarii*.
                Amsterdam, 1965.
In Tim.   Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum Commentaria*
Iqtiṣād   Ġazālī, *al-Iqtiṣād fī al-Iʿtiqād*, ed. ʿAbdallah Muḥammad
                al-Ḫalīlī. Beirut, 2004.
Ishrāq   al-Suhrawardī / John Walbridge and Hossein Ziai, eds.
                and transl. *The Philosophy of Illumination*. Provo, UT,
                1999.
Iḥyāʾ   Ġazālī, *Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-
                Malik al-Zuġbī. Dār al-Manār, nd.
JECS   *Journal of Early Christian Studies*
JEHE   John of Ephesus, *Historiæ ecclesiasticæ pars tertia*, ed.
                Edmund Wright Brooks. 2 vols. Turnhout, 1935-1936.
JEVitæ   John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, ed.
                Edmund Wright Brooks. Turnhout, 1923-1925.
JRS   *Journal of Roman Studies*
Lawes   Richard Hooker, *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie*.
                London, 1593.
LC   Eusebius of Cæsarea, *Oratio de laudibus Constantini*
Leg. 1-3   Philo, *Legum allegoriæ* I, II, III
MSC   Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, ed. J.-B. Chabot. Paris,
                1899-1910.
Mos.   Philo, *De vita Moysis*, I and II
Munqiḏ   *al-Munqiḏ min al-Ḍalāl*, ed. Dr. Samīḥ Daġīm. Beirut,
                1993.
Muṯul   *al-Muṯul al-ʿAqlīya al-Aflāṭūnīya,* ed. ʿAbd al-Rahmān
                Badawī. Cairo, 1947.

OUMM	Thomas Jackson, *A treatise containing the originall unbeliefe, misbeliefe, or misperswasions concerning the veritie, unitie, and attributes of the Deitie.* London, 1673.
Opif.	Philo, *de opificia mundi*
Plat. Th.	Proclus, *Platonic Theology*, transl. Thos. Taylor. Frome, Somerset, 1995.
Plot.	Porphyry, *de vita Plotini*
Proc. *BP*	Procopius, *de bello Persico*
Proc. *Aed.*	Procopius, *de ædificiis*
QG	Philo, *Quæstiones et Solutiones in Genesim*
SGZ	Peter Sloterdijk, *God's Zeal: The Battle of the Three Monotheisms.* Malden, Mass., 2010.
SC	Eusebius of Cæsarea, *de sepulchro Christi*
SEG	*Supplementem Epigraphicum Græcum*
SGE	Peter Sloterdijk, *Gottes Eifer: Vom Kampf der drei Monotheismen.* Frankfurt am Main & Leipzig, 2007.
Soz. *HE*	*Kirchengeschichte Sozomenus*, ed. Joseph Bidez. Berlin, 1995.
Spec.	Philo, *de specialibus legibus* I, II, III, IV
ST	Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, translated by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province. New York, 1947.
Strom.	Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis*
Tahāfut	Ġazālī, *Tahāfut al-Falāsifa*. Ed. Sulaymān Dunyā. Cairo, 1947.
Theology	Pseudo-Aristotle, *Theology*. In *Aflūṭīn 'ind al-'Arab*, ed. 'Abd al-Raḥmān Badawī. Cairo, 1955.
TLG	*Thesaurus Linguæ Græcæ*
VP	Iamblichus, *de vita pythagorica liber*
V. Sym. Styl.	*Das Leben des heiligen Symeon Stylites*, ed. Hans Leitzmann. Leipzig, 1908.
ZRHE	*Historia ecclesiastica Zachariæ Rhetori vulgo adscripta*, ed. Edmund Wright Brooks. 3 vols. Turnhout, 1919-1921.

INTRODUCTION

From Greco-Roman Antiquity through to the European Enlightenment, philosophy and religious thought were inseparably interwoven. This was equally the case for the popular natural or 'pagan' religions of the ancient world as it was for the three pre-eminent 'religions of the book', namely Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The lengthy and involved encounter of the Greek philosophical tradition—and especially of the Platonic, Aristotelian, and Neoplatonic strands of that tradition—initially with the Hellenistic cults and subsequently with the three Abrahamic religions, played a critical role in shaping the basic contours of Western intellectual history from Plato to Philo of Alexandria to Plotinus, Porphyry, Augustine, and Proclus, from Aristotle to al-Fārābī, Avicenna, al-Ġazālī, Aquinas and the medieval scholastics, from Meister Eckhart and Nicholas Cusanus into modernity with such thinkers as Richard Hooker, the Cambridge Platonists, Jacob Boehme, G.W.F. Hegel and Henri Corbin, to name just a few. On the common ground of Greek philosophy, the intellectual worlds of the three Abrahamic religious traditions have interacted for centuries, and by doing so have created similar shared patterns of thought in dealing with crucial religious concepts such as the divine itself, creation, providence, laws both natural and revealed, such problems as the origin of evil and the possibility of salvation, as well as defining hermeneutics, that is to say the manner of interpreting their sacred writings. The impact of Greek philosophy on Jewish, Christian, and Muslim theologians, philosophers, and mystics was decisive in determining the shape of both their understanding of the nature of the authority of Scripture and of their fundamental approaches to epistemology or theories of knowledge.

The Platonic-Aristotelian tradition of philosophy in particular provided them with a common and indeed indispensible paradigm of core concepts. The primary aim of this companion to 'Philosophy and the Abrahamic Religions' is to explore and to render more clearly visible the broad array of profound links which tie together the intellectual worlds of the three religious traditions, and which manifested themselves over the course of many centuries in the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim encounter with Greek philosophical tradition. Within the broad arc of the history of ideas, the encounter of religion and philosophy found expression in a complex

system of closely linked concepts, authors, and currents of thought which cannot in the end be adequately understood if studied outside the broader inter-connected intellectual context. The aim of this volume is thus to gather a diverse assemblage of modern scholarly interpretations of the intricate relationship between the scriptural sources acknowledged by these three religions and their reciprocal appeal to a common ontological and epistemology tradition of thought with a view to shedding light upon a variety of specific exegetical and philosophical questions.

The occasion of this specific collection of essays was an international conference hosted in December 2010 in Istanbul by the Faculty of Theology of Marmara University and jointly sponsored by the Centre for Research on Religion of McGill University, Montreal. The organisation of the conference was undertaken by a steering committee consisting of the editors of this volume together with Professors Bilal Kuspinar of Ahlia University, Bahrain and Robert Wisnovsky of McGill. All wish to express gratitude to the Dean of the Faculty of Theology at Marmara, Dr Raşit Küçük, and to the Mayor of the Istanbul Municipality of Ümraniye, Mr Hasan Can for their very generous support of this symposium. Thanks are also owing to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for their support and to the Faculty of Religious Studies and the Centre for Research on Religion, McGill University.

The volume consists of three primary divisions. The first addresses 'Philosophy and Exegesis in Antiquity' with a particular emphasis on the pioneering achievement of the great first-century Jewish scholar and exegete, Philo Judæus of Alexandria (20 BCE to 50 CE). Philo's eager and sustained effort in the welding together of Hellenistic philosophy— and the Platonic inheritance in particular—with the task of biblical exegesis provides the decisive point of departure for our exploration of the interweaving of scriptural hermeneutics with Greek epistemology. In her treatment of Philo as the "paradeigmatic exegete", Emily Parker demonstrates that the Alexandrian scholar provides the first explicit synthesis of scripture-based monotheism with Hellenic and Hellenistic philosophy. After Philo, Parker argues, there emerges a vast tradition of scriptural exegesis in which sacred texts and philosophical methods and doctrines are interpreted in light of each other. In Philo, we find many of the principles fundamental to this hermeneutical tradition, such as the allegorical reading of scripture, the formulation of dogmatic statements, the concordance between Plato, Aristotle and revelation, to name just a few. Moses, as Philo understands him, is the pre-eminent source of all philosophical doctrine, which is both recorded in the narrative of the Pentateuch and is exemplified in his virtuous life. Thus for Philo, and for

those who follow him, religion and philosophy are wholly intertwined; to consider these activities as separate in ancient and medieval thinkers is a misunderstanding, which undermines the common philosophical heritage that was formative of Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. In her essay Parker summarizes the argument in *De Opificio Mundi* – Philo's exegesis of the book of Genesis – and identifies certain key principles contained there.

Jennifer Otto addresses Philo's hermeneutics of scripture more specifically in her exposition of both his and Clement of Alexandria's (ca. 150-215 CE) interpretation of the allegory of Sarah and Hagar in the book of Genesis with reference to classical Greek theory of education. The concept of *paideia*, that is the educational process by which youths became citizens in ancient Greek city-states, is today infamous for having included sexual relationships between teacher and pupil. For early Jews and Christians, 'paideutic' relationships also contravened prescribed sexual ethics. Jennifer Otto's paper examines two instances in which allegorical interpretation, an originally Greek hermeneutical method, is applied by these philosophically-inclined Jewish and Christian exegetes to the Scriptures in order to locate *paideia* within their own religious traditions. In his treatise *On Mating with the Preliminary Studies*, Philo gives an exegesis of Genesis 16:1-6, in which Abraham's sexual relationships with Hagar and Sarah are allegorically interpreted as the pursuit of preliminary studies and philosophical education, respectively. Moreover, Otto shows that Philo's allegory is borrowed two centuries later by Clement of Alexandria in his *Stromateis* where he clearly prefers Philo's paideutic interpretation of Sarah and Hagar to the one given by Paul in the Epistle to the Galatians (4:21-31). In both cases, these two exegetes employ allegorical interpretation of scripture in order to mediate the sexual elements of Greek *paideia,* with a view to integrating the contents of classical studies into Jewish and, later, Christian education.

Drawing upon Plato, Stoic notions, Jewish legends and the Septuagint, Wayne Hankey sets out to show that Philo constructs Moses as simultaneously Philosopher-King, Legislator, Mystic, Prophet, and Cosmic Priest. This extraordinary amalgam re-emerges as model in the representation of the Roman Emperor Constantine by Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea (263-339 CE); but it is likely, Professor Hankey maintains, that Philo was known also among the pagan philosophers of late Antiquity. In any case, constructions of the divine philosopher and theurge such as Philo's belong to the development of the conceptions of hierarchy in Iamblichus and Proclus and these, moreover, influenced the models of both Christ and the hierarch in the writings of the enormously influential

Dionysius the pseudo-Areopagite (fl. ca. 6th CE) who also gives evidence of familiarity with the doctrines of Philo. Dionysius was also known in the Syrian-Arabic world out of which Islamic and Jewish political conceptions emerged after the 9th century, both of which drew upon the Hellenic philosophical heritage. Al-Fārābī's (870-950 CE) different representations of the ruler who unites the philosophic and prophetic have in their background the Moses of Philo, and Moses Maimonides is also in this sillage. Hankey concludes that we cannot properly understand the titles of Christ according to Thomas Aquinas, nor his treatments of his knowledge apart from the Philonic exemplar.

In her treatment of 'Exegesis and Identity among Platonist Hellenes and Christians', Elizabeth Digeser addresses Averil Cameron's *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of Christian Discourse* (1994), where she applied Michel Foucault's concept of a 'totalizing discourse' to describe both the rise of Christian power in Late Antiquity and the evolution of Christian identity. Cameron's book was revolutionary, both for its application of political theory to late antique studies and for its original assessment of the forces driving the Christianization of the late Roman world. What Cameron did not see, however—and what Digeser argues—is that the trend she had identified for Christian discourse and Christian identity was actually a response to a new third-century approach to Platonist exegesis. Pioneered by the 'middle' Platonist Ammonius Saccas (ca. 160-242 CE), the notion of a 'philosophy without conflict' revolutionized the philosophical community by positing that the doctrines of Plato and Aristotle agreed in their essential points, and that their writings ought to be edited and interpreted in such a way so as to harmonize their apparent conflicts. Ammonius applied two overriding exegetical principles in seeking to find what was 'true' in philosophy: first, one ought to start with Plato; secondly, truth ought to emerge in areas of agreement. As a Christian, Ammonius also interpreted the Gospels in a way that did not conflict with his reading of Plato: although he saw Jesus as the prophet that Moses had predicted, he denied that Jesus was the *logos* incarnate as his contemporary, Clement of Alexandria, had argued by putting together the Gospel of John with the *logos* theology of Philo. Professor Digeser goes on to argue that it is not difficult to see in Ammonius' approach the seed of a totalizing discourse; when one considers the legacy of his disciples, the corollary trend of identity formation becomes clear as well. A liminal figure, Ammonius taught a diverse circle of students, including the famous Christian theologian, Origen of Alexandria (185-254 CE), as well as Plotinus (205-270 CE), the foremost Platonist philosopher of the age. In both lineages

survived the concept of a 'philosophy without conflict', but in a way that became implicated with issues of identity by the century's end. The line starting with Origen maintained the idea that truth was found in areas of agreement, yet began, not with Plato, but with the core notion that Jesus was the *logos* incarnate, a premise that required not only exegetical strategies that harmonized Christian and Platonist doctrine, but that also required applying figural exegesis to Hebrew Scriptures (in the tradition of Philo) and to the Gospels in order to produce a system that was conflict free. Plotinus' school produced Porphyry of Tyre (234-305 CE) whose critique of Origen's exegesis as betraying the laws of the Roman polity and Greek philosophy set out Hellene identity in sharp opposition to Origen's form of Christianity. In response to Porphyry, Eusebius of Caesarea, historian and defender of Origen, criticized the latter's figural exegesis of mythology as a betrayal of the tenets of monotheistic Platonism and a reversion to polytheism, in a way that defined Christian identity as embracing the only true philosophy that correctly interpreted the teachings of Moses, Jesus and Plato.

Heidi Marx-Wolf continues the theme of the appropriation of classical Greek patrimony in late Antiquity with her treatment of 'Images of the Ideal Philosopher among third-century Platonists'. She highlights the fact that in the late Roman period, this patrimony was both shared and contested among Christian and non-Christian intellectuals. Furthermore, the identity of those intellectuals who saw themselves as the heirs and preservers of the classical Greek patrimony was itself under construction. This is particularly true of the third century when Christians and non-Christians were frequenting the same philosophical schools, studying under the same teachers and sharing ideas across religious boundaries. According to Marx-Wolf this interaction and the way in which Hellenic philosophers laid claim to the Greek past is crucial for understanding the ways in which Greek philosophy influenced later epistemology and textual approaches in the Abrahamic religions. This is because Greek philosophical tradition continued to develop in deliberate, dialogical and self-conscious ways well into the period of Christian and Rabbinical formation. In particular Dr Marx-Wolf addresses the identities which Porphyry and Iamblichus (250-325 CE) constructed for themselves by exploring the biographical portraits they themselves created of the ideal philosopher, including portraits they created of the Pre-Socratic philosopher, Pythagoras. She also explores the possibility that Porphyry and Iamblichus used their constructions of Pythagoras (ca. 570-495 BCE) to continue their discussion about the role of ritual in the life of the philosopher as well as their understanding of philosophers as political actors.

Turning even more explicitly to the political implications of Hellenised approaches to biblical exegesis, Bilal Baş considers the Eusebius of Caesarea's interpretation of Scripture in relation to his 'Imperial Theology'. Eusebius (260-340 CE) lived throughout the Constantinian era (306-337 CE) when the Christianization of the Roman Empire began in earnest. As the most prolific ecclesiastical witness of the Constantinian project, he took a strongly affirmative view of Constantine's open support for the Church, and frankly welcomed the Christianization of the empire in his writings. Dr Baş explores the first fully fledged Christian political theology in Eusebius' *Tricennial Orations* and *Life of Constantine* that ascribed to the Roman Empire an essential role in Christian economy of salvation. According to Bas, the primary goal of this 'Imperial Theology' was to Christianize the Roman political discourse and to establish the theological principles of positive church-empire relations. Following the lead of the Church fathers of Alexandrian tradition such as Clement and Origen, who had formerly employed the *Logos* theology in accounting for the Christian use of Greek philosophy, Eusebius developed his political theology within a perspective of salvation history. By this means he presents the prophetical and political histories of mankind as a providential progress towards final cooperation between the church and the Roman Empire for the salvation of the entire human race. Through an analysis of Eusebius's *Church History, Tricennial Orations* and *Life of Constantine,* Dr Baş puts two critically important questions: first, how did Eusebius interpret the scriptures in articulating his political theology? And secondly, how did his political theology benefit from Greco-Roman political exemplars?

There is currently renewed interest in the nature of Arab Christianity in the centuries before the emergence of Islam, a result of new work on a number of groups who comprised the most prominent Arab allies of the Roman and Sasanian Empires in Late Antiquity (c. 400-650). Of particular interest is how Arab conversions to Christianity within and on the fringes of Empire, and the resulting state of 'being Christian', contributed to identity formation for the Arabs before Islam. Within this there is a certain amount of attention on the impossible question of the religious sincerity of Arab Christians as a marker of religious identity. 'Sincerity' is, however, a chimera, and focusing on it obscures our ability to understand the relationship between Arabs such as the Ğafnid group (active c. 500-585) and the Roman Empire, as well as the Hellenic culture shared by both groups. Greg Fisher suggests that it is more fruitful to place the Ğafnids and the other Arab Christians in contact with Rome within the wider context of the Christological disputes of the fifth and sixth centuries taking

place between Chalcedonians, miaphysites and Nestorians, which were entwined within attempts by the Emperor and others to define what correct belief should be. By examining religious affiliation within this highly fluid and unstable environment—where the question of orthodoxy was always open for negotiation – and the cultural and political benefits which accrued to the Arabs through their Christianisation, we can better understand the contribution which the heritage of Hellenic culture and the complex processes of Christianisation made to the formation of discrete Arab identities before the emergence of Islam in the seventh century.

In the concluding essay of the first part on "Philosophy and Exegesis in Antiquity" Gregory MacIsaac argues against a number of commonly held dichotomies in the history of Western thought. He begins with an examination of Proclus's *Commentary on the Cratylus of Plato* in order to demonstrate that in Greek Neoplatonism one cannot draw a sharp line between philosophy and the interpretation of sacred texts. Divine revelation and philosophy have a common source for these pagan Neoplatonists, and among them the dialectician is considered to be the authoritative interpreter of a revealed text. After this Dr MacIsaac suggests that the Neoplatonic model similarly describes the situation in Medieval Christianity, so that for Augustine and Aquinas the practice of scriptural interpretation can plausibly be said to be the highest form of philosophy, rather than a practice different in kind, with the further implication that the same may be the case in both Medieval Judaism and Islam. In the second part of his essay he maintains that these various strains are drawn together in the common practice of the assembly and interpretation of textual canons, governed by and as the expression of the respective tradition's conception of the truth about the world. Through a very brief characterisation of Derridean deconstruction and a few remarks about Analytic philosophy the piece concludes with the suggestion that these two contemporary schools are still engaged in the much the same exegetical practice as the Ancients and Medievals. After pointing out that these widely disparate traditions seem to be engaged in the common practice of philosophy, MacIsaac warns against the philosopher's inherent tendency to make rigid canons.

In the middle section of this Companion the focus shifts to medieval Jewish, Christian, and Islamic thought. Hikmet Yaman analyzes the earliest Muslim philosophers' reception and perception of Greek philosophy in its particular relation to the prophetic revelation, and thus to religion. In this context, he focuses on a peculiar genre of Islamic philosophical writings, namely the Ṭabaqāt literature in philosophy, a literature that has been mostly and unjustifiably neglected in modern academic studies, as

Yaman sees it. This genre provides comprehensive accounts concerning the history of philosophy, its beginning in Greek antiquity and its journey to early Islamic times. Yaman reports that the earliest Muslim philosophical figures treated philosophy in reference to the prophetic revelation and that their primary motives and objectives for entering into philosophical inquiry were religiously oriented. They believed that true philosophy and religion did not contradict one another, for, in the final analysis, philosophy was the intellectual expression of religious beliefs, though the two used different modes of expression. They, accordingly, thought that philosophy represented the true nature of things and derived from the prophetic revelation (miškāt al-nubuwwa) by way of Luqmān and David. Yaman examines the patterns of such a perception of the history of philosophy in the writings of three major Muslim philosophers from the formative period of Islamic philosophy, namely al-Kindī (d. ca. 260/873), al-Fārābī (d. 339/950), and Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037). Yaman notes, for instance, that al-Kindī states that the ultimate goal of philosophy is to attain the true knowledge of God and that only the one who comprehends this noble knowledge deserves to be called real philosopher. In al-Kindī's view, authentic prophetic message is completely compatible with true philosophy, as both religion and philosophy teach the same fundamental metaphysical and ethical principles. Likewise, in the case of Ibn Sīnā's writings, Yaman reports that in the context of his perception of philosophy the former makes reference to Qur'ānic statements and works towards establishing a religious ground for his philosophical activities.

Fariduddin Attar Rifai compares interrelated aspects of medieval ethics and metaphysics as formulated by twelfth-century archbishop Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109 CE) and the *kalām* theologian Faḫr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (1149-1209 CE) within the framework of what contemporary scholars call the 'metaphysics of goodness', a theory that intuits a basic correspondence between the 'good' with the category of 'being'. In doing so, Farid Attar draws attention to how the tradition of the metaphysics of goodness undergoes a drastic reinterpretation from the Greek, specifically Neoplatonic, inheritance at the hands of these two prominent theologians of the Christian and Islamic traditions. The two theologians share a Greek inheritance with respect to fundamental aspects of their metaphysics of goodness. Anselm inherited this tradition from such Platonist Christians as St. Augustine (354-430 CE) and Boethius (480-525 CE), while Rāzī worked within the *falsafa* tradition of Islam, prominently represented by Avicenna. The essay sets out to show that both Anselm and Rāzī introduce certain fundamental changes to the theory within the framework of their

respective theological doctrines and assumptions. Despite their differences, they nonetheless share common intuitions regarding the nature of God and his relationship to the created order. According to Attar, Anselm and Rāzī conceive of different metaphysical structures regarding the relation between the transcendent and immanent aspects of the Divine, particularly with respect to the idea of divine self-disclosure or theophany within the ontological limits of conditioned being. Attar's aim is to trace out the precise assumptions and methods that underlie these two medieval perspectives by comparing and examining their respective approaches to the inherited Neoplatonic metaphysics of goodness.

Ömer Mahir Alper continues the discussion with his consideration the epistemological value of Ibn Sīnā's scriptural statements and puts the question whether religious propositions can be premises of philosophical demonstrations. Avicenna holds that genuine demonstration is based solely on premises which are true and certain and are thus, necessarily, causes of knowledge. Dr Alper explores Avicenna's thought on the precise nature of religious language and concerning propositions in relation to the various types of logical inquiry and discourse. In this essay he seeks to determine the Avicennian attitude to questions of relating scriptural authority and epistemology by focussing primarily on certain passages in *'Uyūn al-Ḥikma* (*Sources of Wisdom*) where philosophy in general and practical philosophy in particular are described as acquiring their first principles from religion.

Whether Avicenna approved divine attributes, properties of perfection, or denied them is an issue of debate among scholars. While some reject the view that God, for Avicenna, has any attribute in the proper sense of the term; others argue that he indeed affirmed the divine attributes. According to Rahim Acar, both interpretations of Avicenna's position have a textual basis. Certainly in his discourse concerning God Avicenna predicates many attributes to Him. At the same time, however, he qualifies these predicates such that they are no longer to be understood as we ordinarily understand attributes. This ambiguity of Avicenna's position regarding the divine attributes, Acar argues, is closely related to his position regarding the nature and scope of human knowledge about God. That is, we do not know God by demonstrative proofs, by reasoning from cause to the effect, but rather by reasoning from the effect to the cause. Such limited human knowledge however, does not render certain that what is proved is indeed the God of Abrahamic religions as taught by Islam. The weakness of our way of proving 'that God is' consequently affects the nature and scope of human rational knowledge concerning 'what God is,'

and how we speak about this God. Thus, for Rahim Acar, Avicenna's analyses concerning human speech about God waiver between attributing to God the kind of properties found in religious texts, on the one hand, and refraining from predication of such properties as they are generally used on the other. This dilemma of predication provides a helpful indication of Avicenna's efforts to balance the claims of philosophical criteria and scriptural authority.

In his treatise *On the Classification of Rational Sciences*, Avicenna classifies the practical part of philosophy following a traditional approach and adds a new element to the third part of it, namely the politics. This new element concerns religion (*šarī'a*) and prophecy (*nubūwa*). Cüneyt Kaya examines Avicenna's treatment of 'Prophetic Legislation' as his means to reconcile philosophy and religion. Through the science of politics, claims Avicenna, one knows the necessity of prophecy and the human need of religion for its existence, preservation, and life hereafter. Through this 'third part' of practical philosophy, one may come to know moreover the wisdom in the universal penalties or borders (*hudūd*) that are common to all religions, and in the penalties/borders pertaining to particular religions which have to do with particular peoples at particular times. Avicenna makes some crucial changes in his classification of philosophical sciences in his famous treatise *On the Eastern Wisdom* (*al-Ḥikma al-Mašriqīya)*. Here he introduces new parts to both theoretical and practical philosophies. Parallel to his addition of the so-called 'universal science' to theoretical philosophy, he includes the category of 'prophetic legislation' as the fourth part of practical philosophy. While Avicenna does not delineate the precise content of this new science, Professor Kaya argues that when Avicenna's approach to the relationship between religion and practical philosophy and his thoughts about practical sciences in *al-Šifā* and other works are studied carefully, it is possible to evaluate this new science as having a crucial role in mediating between practical philosophy and religion.

Yazid Said inquires into the foundations of political society for al-Ġazālī (1058-1111 CE). Dr Said discusses how Ġazālī's theological sympathies, as derived from his definition of jurisprudence or *fiqh* in the first book of the *Iḥyā'*, which is his *Book of Knowledge* (*Kitāb al-'Ilm*), form the foundation for his subsequent legal and political thought. If Ġazālī's legal and political methodology and epistemology provide a polemic analogous to his writings on philosophy and other matters, then, Dr Said argues, they would reveal to us a manifesto for an alternative order concerned with a coherent definition of the community or *Ummah*

broadly considered. Pursuing political theory with Ġazālī entails revealing the extent to which he examines the nature or meaning of *fiqh* as the knowledge and discernment that applies to the entire body politic, and thus gives rise to a number of broader questions about law, government, and the political role of the individual, their meaning and purpose.

In the Middle Ages, in both East and West, the problem of the nature, sources and limits of knowledge was one of the central issues of controversy between philosophers and theologians. Muammer Iskenderoglu compares the approaches of two representatives of the Islamic and Christian theological traditions, Ġazālī and Bonaventure (1221-1274), to the problems of epistemology and in particular their criticism of the nature of philosophical knowledge. The transmission of philosophical knowledge from the Greek to the Islamic world was a source of considerable controversy between Muslim philosophers and theologians, and this controversy reached its peak with Ġazālī's criticism of the claims made on behalf of philosophical knowledge. Similar disputes arose when Greek philosophical knowledge was later transmitted from the Islamic world to the Medieval Christian world, and Bonaventure played a pivotal role in Christian tradition analogous to that played by Ġazālī in Islamic tradition. Dr Iskenderoglu begins his treatment of this theme by examining their approaches to the nature, sources and limits of knowledge with particular reference to their common mystical inclinations. He then proceeds to analyse their respective classifications and evaluations of the philosophical sciences. This essay concludes with a concrete example in the form of a discussion of their two approaches to the problem of the eternity of the world in order to reveal in greater detail the similarities of their methods in their criticism of philosophical knowledge.

Alexander Treiger's contribution 'A fourteenth-century Arabic treatise *On the Platonic Intellectual Ideas*' is the last in the second part of the volume. It offers an analysis and a partial English translation of an important Arabic work, devoted to Platonic Ideas. (This treatise is now available in a new German translation by Rüdiger Arnzen.) Contrary to what one might expect, the 'Platonic Ideas' discussed in the treatise owe relatively little to Plato himself; instead, the anonymous author's reflections are squarely based—albeit with a reversal of attitude—on Avicenna. As is well known, Avicenna understood Ideas to be universals (e.g. species and genera) believed—wrongly, in Avicenna's view—to subsist separately from their individual instantiations. Since Avicenna denied separate existence of universals (for him universals are not separable from their individual instantiations in external reality, but only in the mind), he also rejected the existence of Ideas. The author of *On the*

Platonic Intellectual Ideas shares with Avicenna the understanding of Ideas as universals. Yet, unlike Avicenna, he enthusiastically affirms their existence. Dr Treiger shows how this treatise illustrates the particular shape that Arabic philosophy in the Muslim East took in the fourteenth century, when Avicenna's works provided the framework for all subsequent philosophical and theological reflection, which was then modified in various directions under the influence of Arabic Neoplatonic sources, al-Suhrawardī's illuminationism, and Ibn 'Arabī's monistic mysticism. Treiger also shows how the anonymous author of *On the Platonic Intellectual Ideas* views the history of philosophy (including Plato and Aristotle) through the prism of Avicenna's works.

In a transition to modern responses to our theme of scriptural authority and epistemological theory in the exegetical and philosophical traditions of the Abrahamic religions, for David Burrell the designation 'Islamic' offers a more comprehensive descriptor of this philosophical tradition than does 'Arabic' on the view that the latter is a cultural descriptor which accounts for just a fifth of the Muslim population; and he employs the adjective 'Muslim' in his essay exclusively in reference to the faith-component of Islam. Burrell offers a revisionist account of the major phases of Islamic philosophy by focussing attention on its ongoing attempt to bring Qur'ānic revelation into conversation with rational strategies inherited from Greeks and Persians. That intentional conversation, he contends, is best called 'philosophical theology' and its religious context, 'Islamic.' His retelling of the broad contours of the history of Islamic philosophy aims to show how religion, which in the Muslim world focuses strongly upon practice, becomes a path leading to understanding, long taken to be the province of philosophy. Burrell distinguishes two phases in Islamic philosophical theology with Ġazālī providing a bridge between the two. Burrell depicts the first phase as represented principally by al-Kindī, al-Fārābī, and Ibn Sīnā while the second phase Suhrawardī (1154-91 CE), Ibn 'Arabī (1165-1240 CE), and Ṣadra al- Dīn al-Šīrāzī, commonly known as Mulla Ṣadra (1572-1640 CE).

In his essay 'For the Peace of Constantinople: Nicholas of Cusa's *De pace fidei* and the polis as nexus of Christian-Muslim dialogue' Joshua Hollmann is concerned with a bridge of another kind. Hollmann presents Nicholas of Cusa's treatise *De pace fidei* as a Neoplantonic vision of Christian-Muslim dialogue centred in Jerusalem, a city of deeply interwoven importance to all three Abrahamic religions. Influenced by Plato's *Republic* and other Christian and Muslim philosophers, notably Augustine and Averroës, Cusanus transmits the Greek archetypal idea of

the *polis* as nexus of religious concordance. While on a journey from Constantinople, Cusanus received his consequential vision of *docta ignorantia* (learned ignorance). On Hollmann's view, this vision provides the metaphysical foundation of his later vision of religious peace in *De pace fidei*, composed in response to the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans in 1453. The two cities—Constantinople, which for Cuansus was the primary repository of Neoplatonic thought, and Jerusalem, which in the western medieval mind was the centre of the earth—spatially and symbolically mark the Hellenic-patterned geography for the social imaginary of Christian-Muslim dialogue in *De pace fidei*. Hollmann argues that for Cusanus as the *Logos* of concordance extends by gradation to all being, so also religious peace realized dialectically and hierarchically through that same *Logos* extends from the city of Jerusalem to Constantinople and thence throughout the world.

James Bryson takes up the thread of Interreligious Dialogue in the context of English Renaissance Platonism as represented by the Cambridge Platonists and, in particular, by the less well-known Oxford Platonist, Thomas Jackson whose metaphysics were significantly influenced by Nicholas Cusanus. For Bryson, the irenical spirit of Cusanus's *De pace fidei*, together with the Neoplatonic metaphysics on which its argument depends, reemerge in the early seventeenth century in Jackson's polemic against atheism *The Original of Unbelief, Misbelief, or Mispersuasions, concerning the Verity, Unity, and Attributes of the Deity* (1625). Bryson shows how Jackson categorizes men according to their belief (or disbelief) in a unified Godhead, in strict opposition to their peculiar cultural or historical-religious situation.   Common to Jackson and Cusanus is the use of philosophy to reconcile the apparent psychological and religious divisions in the creation. Following Nicholas of Cusa's lead, Jackson develops an ecumenical theological system, within a metaphysical framework inspired by late-medieval Neoplatonic mysticism.

Jackson was President of Corpus Christi College, the Erasmian 'tri-lingual' foundation—Hebrew, Greek, and Latin—in the University of Oxford, also the *alma mater* of the 'judicious' Elizabethan philosopher and divine, Richard Hooker. Torrance Kirby addresses the second book of Hooker's treatise *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiastical Politie* (1594) where he speaks of 'sundrie waies of wisdom' and seeks to define the relative limits of the authority of scripture and reason. Concerning 'holie Wisdom', says Hooker, 'we may not so in any one speciall kind admire her that we disgrace her in any other, but let all her wayes be according unto their place and degree adored' (*Lawes* II.1.4). As Kirby shows, the 'maine pillar' of Puritan objections to the Elizabethan Settlement rested upon their

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claim that 'scripture ought to be the *only* rule of all our actions.' The immediate practical concern here was whether it was necessary to look to the scriptures directly for the structures of church government. Hooker argues that the authority of scripture must be interpreted strictly with respect to 'that end whereto it tendeth.' On the one hand, he affirms the Protestant reformers' doctrine of *sola scriptura*, namely that the Bible contains a complete account of all things 'necessary to salvation'. Tradition and human authority exercised through the church cannot add anything to God's written word for this purpose. On the other hand, the grounds of *religion* are understood by Hooker both to be revealed in scripture and accessible to the light of natural reason. Kirby considers the main features of Hooker's 'natural theology': God the creator of the world speaks through nature 'whose voice is his instrument' and is manifest to the eye of reason in the glorious works of creation. Whereas scripture alone is to be followed in formulating the 'rule of faith', reason, custom and human authority, on the other hand, are necessary in order to avoid 'infinite perplexities, scrupulosities, doubts insoluble and extreme despaires' in the *external* ordering of religion. Thus, for Hooker it is not the purpose of the divine law revealed in scripture to provide prescriptions for political structures. Indeed Hooker's contribution to the early-modern treatment of boundaries between the authority of Scripture and that of Reason is profoundly influenced by the ancient Hellenic sources of Neoplatonic philosophical tradition.

Throughout the European Enlightenment the three Abrahamic religions were often treated as if they were 'monoliths'; within each of the faiths, adherents were represented as if they conformed to a unanimity of categories and professions. Yet the fact remains that the 'religions of the Book' have each, individually, manifested all of the hermeneutical difficulties associated with identification of specific religious writings as 'Scriptural', 'canonical' and 'revelatory'. Immense confusion as to the theological essence of each religion was sown by predominantly enlightened principles of Biblical interpretation evident, especially in 19th-century liberal scholarship. In the European context, these developments in Biblical criticism and interpretation result in the most extraordinary conclusions. The principles which are meant to govern human behaviour were no longer found in Scripture (where only broad and highly flexible principles are at work), but were to be discovered rather in the inalienable tenets of human reason; religious prohibitions and the principles of ethical life proceeded not in terms of absolutes, but solely in terms of the unfolding of human history, situation and context. While Christian polity claims to be *semper eadem*, it turns out, in fact, to be in a state of continual