

Preface / Vorwort

Bülent Ucar and Friedrich Schweitzer*

Dear readers,

As the first of its kind, this edition of the *Hikma* is conceived as a special issue concentrating – as far as the category of articles is concerned – on a distinct field of research by discussing topics solely from the fields of Islamic Religious Education and, with a broader outlook, of Religious Education on the whole. Further special issues will follow in the future on relevant thematic fields that prove to be of special interest to Islamic Theology and Islamic Religious Education. It is our sincere hope that this deepened and extensive focus of attention will meet with widespread approval on part of our specialist readers and we thus attend to our expert readers' interests by approaching a subject matter that offers diverse perspectives that purposely contain and reflect interreligious vantage points.

This *Hikma* is the result of a highly productive collaboration between the Chair of Islamic Religious Education in Osnabrück, held by Prof. Dr. Bülent Ucar, and the Chair of Protestant Religious Education in Tübingen, occupied by Prof. Dr. Friedrich Schweitzer, while being also assisted, especially in the stages of development and conception, by the Chair of Roman-Catholic Religious Education in Würzburg, which is headed by Prof. Dr. Hans-Georg Ziebertz. Its express aim is to further develop Religious Education in dialogue with Islamic and Christian Religious Education. This does not only apply to Religious Education and its praxis but also to Religious Education as a science. Also in this respect, the opportunities the future holds for further cooperation have by no means been exhausted. In his article considering the state of the art of research in Islamic Religious Education, Friedrich Schweitzer asks about the particular profile of Islamic Religious Education, in particular in regard to Islamic Theology but also in comparison to Protestant Religious Education or Christian Religious Education.

At the same time, this edition of the *Hikma* contains contributions depicting recent developments in the current practices of Religious Education. In this case, too, special emphasis is placed on research reports, which, undeniably, still exist in far too small a number in the entirety of the field of Islamic Religious Education and Teaching and further afield. In this sense, Margit Stein, Veronika Zimmer, and Rauf Ceylan explore the attitudes of Muslim teachers of Religious Education and students training for the profession, i.e. trainee teachers, on the

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basis of a qualitative interview study and match their results to three teacher types according to the expressed views regarding the objectives of Religious Education and the teacher's role. Fahimah Ulfat uses results she obtained in a previously conducted qualitative narrative interview study exploring children's relation to God to lay a theoretical groundwork for a children's theology in Islamic Religious Education, which also includes the theology made by children. Turning the focus to include and discuss methods and concepts of Islamic Religious Education, the authors Amena Shakir and Said Topalovic present their textbook series "*Islamstunde*" ["Islam Lesson"] that pursues a competence-oriented approach in Islamic Religious Teaching, but is mindful of innovative methodical-didactic concepts at the same time. Harry Harun Behr establishes "interreligiosity" as an area of competence within Islamic Religious Education, realising the potential it holds for students developing and stabilising their "religious identity" in contact with other religions. Learning to deal with interreligiosity marks an essential property for Muslim students for they belong to different religious and cultural domains that challenge them to define their individual (religious) positions in relation to others. Taking stock of the development of Islamic Education as a teaching subject at schools, Michael Kiefer casts a light on the obstacles that had to be overcome and must still be overcome in the process of implementing the subject at schools and presents the differing states of realisation in the different German *Länder*.

We are most honoured and delighted to publish in this journal the presumably last article of the late Karl Ernst Nipkow – a classic not only of Protestant Religious Education – who died in 2014. In particular during his last years of scholarly work and research, Nipkow strongly committed himself to the cause of religious education within Islamic-Christian dialogue. In this sense and in what may be assumed to be also the author's, this publication must be read and considered as a symbolic expression of an attempt to establish peace between religions within the field of Religious Education. Bringing the category of articles to a close, Peter Antes, too, wishes to further the understanding and peace between the religions by unmasking the uniformity and homogeneity popularly attributed to Islam in Western Europe, on the one hand, and to Western European social and political order, on the other, with each supposedly standing in marked contrast to each other. By calling to mind the antagonism Roman-Catholicism was once subjected to in Protestant-majority regions and countries in Western Europe, Antes expresses his hopes and expectations that Islam – which has many faces in Western Europe – will also soon be considered an integral part of the Western European social and political systems.

As the above contributions manage to demonstrate very well, adopting an inter-religious perspective bears such fruit for Islamic Religious Education since it enables to draw on the long-term experiences gained by Christian Religious Education in the field of Religious Education, to which it positions itself in a comparative or contrasting way, but also helps to identify shared fields of inter-

ests that further interreligious dialogue and thus establish peace and understanding between the religions.

In light of the various horizons that are described and established in relation to each other, we wish our readers to gain from these horizon-broadening and innovative insights.

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Bülent Ucar and Friedrich Schweitzer