

Preface / Vorwort

*Editor / Herausgeber**

Dear readers,

The everyday relationship between Muslims and Christians, the societal reality in Germany in the present and in the past and in present day Romania are at the center of this edition of HIKMA.

This edition of the journal opens with an article from Assem Hefny, in which the author looks at the Islamic-theological views and the societal reality in today's Germany by briefly examining the concept of *al-wala' wa-l-barā'*. He highlights the approaches people take to dealing with this concept, which dictates that Muslims should on the one hand treat other Muslims with love, reverence and friendship and on the other hand should maintain a degree of distance and aversion towards non-Muslims. One of the main justifications for the concept of *al-wala' wa-l-barā'* is found in one particular interpretation of the Koran 5/51. In order to allow a societal discussion on methods of interpretation of the Koran and of other religious text sources and so as to avoid the emergence of 'blind spots' in the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims, it is very important that that controversial issues such as this are examined in an academic fashion. In the article, Hefny approaches the subject in question by firstly defining the terminology employed and then by examining the differing approaches taken by Muslims towards dealing with this concept (i.e. *al-wala' wa-l-barā'*) in everyday life. The author stresses that all approaches taken towards dealing with this concept find their justification in the Koran. By taking this approach, the author is subsequently able to appraise the various ways in which people read and understand the holy text. The author concludes the article by proposing a number of possibilities for the development of Islamic theology as an academic discipline in Germany. Hefny's support for the development of Islamic theology is derived on the one hand from his desire to inhibit the spread of radical groupings and to enable the freedom of movement of students of Islamic theology. On the other hand, it is also a result of the wish to promote a critical discussion on a) religious questions that are difficult to reconcile with the legal structures of a modern, democratic state and b) on the difference between religion and religious knowledge.

Christiane Paulus takes a step into the past in her article, in which she examines the life and work of Amīn al-Ḥūlī (1895-1966). This Egyptian and Islamic theologian travelled extensively in Western Europe in the 1920s and developed a theory on the history of Islamic theology and the Islamic religion that is considered especially modern and tolerant. The theologian was strongly influenced by the theory of evolution when developing his views. Al-Ḥūlī discerned a connection between the Islamic religion and the Reformation and was able to demonstrate that Islam actively influenced developments in the church in the Middle Ages. Paulus examines Amīn al-Ḥūlī in the context of his biography, his academic achievements and the development of his ideas and theoretical viewpoints. In addi-

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tion, the author draws the reader's attention to the influences which Islam had on the many central parts of the Reformation. The author concludes the article by calling for the history of religion and the church in Europe to be revisited in order to take the Muslim influence on European society fully into account.

Halid Akpınar, Lisa Jochmann und Elif Medeni investigate the integration of young Muslims into Romanian society and examine their views on the coexistence between the Muslim minority and the Romanian society in general. The article is entitled "*An investigative Report into Muslim Youngsters' views on the Relationship between the Minority and Majority Sections of Romanian Society*". The text focuses mainly on interpreting survey data concerning the everyday relationship between the minority and majority sections of society in the region of Dobrogea. It places the data into the context of a) past developments in Romania and the legal position of Muslims in the country, and b) the Romanian education system and the situation of Islamic religious teaching in the country.

Ömer Yılmaz examines the scholar Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī in the article "*Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī (dec. 1690) – a Sufi in conflict with the teachings of the Waḥdat al-Wuḡūd*". The article looks at the scholar in general, his works and his actions. Yılmaz pays especial attention to the teachings of the *Waḥdat al-Wuḡūd*, i.e. the unity of being – God's unity among the diversity of Creation, and describes al-Kūrānī's interpretations of these teachings. The author then turns to the criticism which has been made of the scholar's interpretations of the aforementioned teachings.

The above-summarized academic articles are followed by a series of conference reports and book reviews. These underline firstly the increasingly positively charged dialogue over Islam in Germany and Islamic religious teaching in Germany and in Europe as a whole, and secondly the debate which is currently taking place between differing religions and inside the Islamic religion itself. The development of a positively charged dialogue on Islam was further underlined at another level by the decision of the German president, Christian Wulff and the Turkish president, Abdullah Gül, to visit the city of Osnabrück and to spend time at the Center of Intercultural Islamic Studies (ZIIS) of the University of Osnabrück on September 20, 2011. The newly founded centers for Islamic theology, such as that in Tübingen, together with the expansion of centers already in existence, such as those in Osnabrück, Münster, Frankfurt and Erlangen, will help to deepen the academic discussion about all aspects of the Islamic religion and will in all likelihood result in an increase in the number of academic conferences.

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The editorial team hopes you enjoy reading this edition of the journal and that it prompts you to think about the issues discussed.

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Bülent Ucar