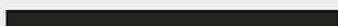


Transfer and Religion

Edited by
ALEXANDER A. DUBRAU,
DAVIDE SCOTTO,
and RUGGERO VIMERCATI SANSEVERINO

Sapientia Islamica



Mohr Siebeck

Sapientia Islamica
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3



Transfer and Religion

Interactions between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam
from the Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century

Edited by

Alexander A. Dubrau, Davide Scotto,
and Ruggero Vimercati Sanseverino

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Introduction

Religious Transfer in the History of the Abrahamic Religions

Theoretical Implications and Case Studies

ALEXANDER A. DUBRAU, DAVIDE SCOTTO,
RUGGERO VIMERCATI SANSEVERINO

From a semantic-historical perspective, the concept of transfer harks back to the act of transferring or moving ideas, texts, or objects from one context to another. The two involved contexts – geographical, political, cultural, or religious – interact in ways and on hierarchical scales that are distinct, thus representing a matter of debate. The transfer process can imply cultural dynamics of reproduction and transformation, resonance and imitation, hybridization and syncretism, innovation and preservation, misinterpretation and interpolation. At the same time, the aims of transferring and the reactions of the recipients of transfer are various. Transferring can indeed stem either from negative, defensive and disruptive purposes, or from positive, constructive, enriching scopes, as can the reactions to transfer or attempts at transferring.

Overcoming the limits of comparativism,¹ cross-cultural and transepochal scholarship of cultural transfer has recently suggested – in an obvious yet incontrovertible way – that transfer as a phenomenon is controversial and disputed by definition. Hartmut Kaelble keenly noted that the same existence of a transfer can be questioned by scholars. The evidence of a transfer can be either neglected despite its manifest reality, or overstated although it lacks compelling proofs. As a concept and an object of study, transfer originated in European history and in particular in the history of European expansionism involving interactions and conflicts with non-European cultures. Thus, it has become an enticing subject of intercultural and postcolonial reflections.²

¹ On the methodological implications of scholarship on transfers, see Stefanie Stockhorst, “Cultural Transfer through Translation: A Current Perspective in Enlightenment Studies”, *Cultural Transfer through Translation. The Circulation of Enlightened Thought in Europe by means of Translation*, ed. Stefanie Stockhorst, Amsterdam NY: Rodopi, 2010, pp. 7–26; pp. 19–22.

² See, for instance, Michel Espagne and Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink (eds.), *Transferts de savoirs sur l’Afrique*, Paris: Éditions Karthala, 2015.

It was noticed that transfer often materializes in a framework of unequal interchange in either political, social, or economic terms, reflecting the non-homogeneity of the two societies or cultures which provide the backdrop and conditions for transferring. An intriguing question related to the definition of cultural transfer is whether this phenomenon is to be regarded as mutual and multilateral: mutual, as it can imply influences by and upon both cultures in contact; multilateral, as it can develop beyond bilateral exchanges, involving a third mediating or intermediate culture whereby the transfer process is in fact enacted, hence the fruitful idea of a chain or a sequence of transfers.³ Given this increasing scholarly attention to transfer, it is not surprising that Jörg Feuchter has somehow defiantly claimed that cultural interconnectedness should be taken as a factor of history, pointing to a well-established trend which regards cultural contacts as ultimately intrinsic to history, and recalling Peter Burke's provocative suggestion that cultural hybridization is in fact historically ubiquitous.⁴ This assumption is not far from stating – as Lutz Musner did regarding the transferring of architectural patterns – that culture itself might be interpreted as transfer.⁵

This seems to suggest that the time has come for scholars to analyze global challenges and to rewrite history – from cultural to religious history – as a constellation of hidden transfers which have long awaited being finally disclosed. In the last decade, several methodological purposes stemmed from this theoretical assumption. Cases of cultural transfer lie behind the concepts of connected history, *histoire croisée*, *Transfersgeschichte*, which have been discussed recently by scholars of different disciplines and chronological interests. This is the case of Michel Espagne's investigations of the cultural relations between France and Germany in modern times, or Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmer's critique of the concept of hegemonic influence (*Einflussgeschichte*), which they suggested replacing by focusing on the role of neighbouring cultures and peripheral zones as central to the understanding of transcultural history.⁶ At the same time, the historical dynamics of transfer are at the core of the recent research approach labelled entangled history, which originated in the controversial debate on the

³ See Hartmut Kaelble, "Forward: Representations and Transfers", *Cultural Transfers in Dispute. Representations in Asia, Europe and the Arab World since the Middle Ages*, ed. Jörg Feuchter, Friedhelm Hoffmann, and Bee Yun, Frankfurt: Campus, 2011, pp. 9–13.

⁴ Jörg Feuchter, "Cultural Transfer in Dispute: An Introduction", *Cultural Transfers in Dispute*, pp. 16–7; Peter Burke, *Cultural Hybridity*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009, pp. 1–9.

⁵ Lutz Musner, "Kultur als Transfer. Ein regulationstheoretischer Zugang am Beispiel der Architektur", *Ent-grenzte Räume. Kulturelle Transfers um 1900 und in der Gegenwart*, ed. Helga Mitterbauer, Wien: Passagen-Verlag, 2005, pp. 173–93.

⁶ Michel Espagne, *Les transferts culturels franco-allemands*, Paris: PUF, 1999; Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, "Vergleich, Transfer, Verflechtung. Der Ansatz der *Histoire croisée* und die Herausforderung des Transnationalen", *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 28/4 (2002), pp. 607–36; Michel Espagne and Michael Werner, "Deutsch-Französischer Kulturtransfer im 18. und 19. Jh.: Zu einem neuen interdisziplinären Forschungsprogramm des C. N. R. S.", *Francia*, 13 (1985), pp. 502–10.

spatial turn raised by global history and the re-assessment of modern history through postcolonial studies.⁷

While with regard to cultural transfer, these and other critical observations are intriguing and compelling – and today even self-evident – they are not so obvious nor necessarily pertinent to a type of transfer that specifically involves religion. It is only in the last five years that research outcomes and editorial initiatives have shown that the debate on entangled history and cross-cultural history can play an influential role in the renovation of disciplines such as religious studies (*Religionswissenschaft*), comparative history of religions, theology, and the interfaith history of the premodern Mediterranean. Cross-disciplinary and epistemological achievements in this regard are also particularly relevant to the present book.⁸

Describing transfer in terms of global mobility, Manuela Rossini and Michael Toggweiler have remarked that the process of transfer involves ‘words, concepts, images, persons, animals, commodities, money, weapons, and other things’, triggering interdisciplinary research on cultural mediation on a broader level.⁹ This volume intends to add to this telling list of movable or moved elements implicated by transfer a further and in many respects overlooked aspect, namely the transferring of knowledge, ideas, objects, texts, and customs of a religious character, which affect religious life on an individual or community level. To this type of transfer – which can be defined as religious transfer – and to a series of case studies concerning its enactment amongst Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the Mediterranean and in Central Europe from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century, this collection of essays is devoted.

Historians of interfaith encounters are well aware that the intellectual space in which religions interact, through exchanges, mutual influences, or conflicts, may be characterized by a series of hindrances and barriers which are due to lack of knowledge of the other religion, doctrinal recalcitrance, and legal or political opposition stemming from the existence, implementation and dissemination of distinct religious laws.¹⁰ Religious transfer operates within this space of interaction between faiths leading either to the building of bridges or to the

⁷ Sönke Bauck and Thomas Maier, “Entangled History”, InterAmerican Wiki: Terms – Concepts – Critical Perspectives, 2015, www.uni-bielefeld.de/cias/wiki/e_Entangled_History.html (download 30.12.2018).

⁸ We allude in particular to the journal *Entangled Religions*, founded in 2014 and published by the Center for Religious Studies and the Käte Hamburger Kolleg *Dynamics in the History of Religions between Asia and Europe* at Ruhr-Universität Bochum; all contributions are available through open access: <https://er.ceres.rub.de/index.php/ER/issue/archive>. And, regarding medieval history, to the *Journal of Transcultural Medieval Studies*, coordinated by Matthias M. Tischler (editor-in-chief) and published with De Gruyter.

⁹ Manuela Rossini and Michael Toggweiler, “Cultural Transfer: An Introduction”, *Word and Text. A Journal of Literary Studies and Linguistics*, 4/2 (2014), pp. 5–9: p. 5.

¹⁰ See Ana Echevarría, Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala, and John Tolan (eds.), *Law and Religious Minorities in Medieval Societies. Between Theory and Praxis*, Turnhout: Brepols, 2016.

exacerbation of contrasts. One of the most engaging challenges behind religious transfers is indeed the self-affirmation, inner development, and intellectual expression of a religion through close interaction with other religions or theological worldviews.

The book is divided into two parts, pointing to both a chronological and a critical watershed in the history of religious transfer concerning the so-called Abrahamic faiths or Abrahamic religions.¹¹ The mutual interactions between Judaism, Christianity and Islam cannot but be dated to as early as the birth and the expansion of Islam as a religion at the dawn of the seventh century CE/first century AH. Since then the binary relation between Judaism and Christianity on the level of theological thinking and religious practices, so essential to shaping the later history of both religions,¹² became tripartite and properly Abrahamic. Focusing respectively on the interaction of Judaism with Islam, Christianity with Islam, and Judaism or Islam with the secularized space descending from Latin Christendom, we suggest looking at the (from a European perspective) so-called Middle Ages and early modern times as the laboratory for the making of religious transfer with its peculiar dynamics and patterns.

Over the course of the development of the three Abrahamic religious systems in the Middle Ages – Rabbinical Judaism, medieval *Christianitas* and classical Islam – through peaceful and conflictual coexistence, crossing of borders, and intellectual confrontation, the enactment of religious transfers played a pivotal role. Tackling the one-directional or mutual dimensions of transfer, and the bilateral or multilateral dynamics they imply, the contributions in this book help the reader to detect types of religious transfer and the distinct reactions displayed by the recipients of transfer. Referring to encounters and confrontations of an intercultural character, Hartmut Kaelble affirmed that transfer can function either as a disruptive factor or as a benign acceleration of a process, entailing consequences which are regarded by historians either as positive, such as cultural innovation and transformation, or negative, such as forms of social oppression and decline.¹³ This is equally apparent in the cases of religious transfer discussed in this book.

A long-term historical perspective on the implementation of transfers involving the doctrines, rites, and customs of the Abrahamic religions in the Mediterranean

¹¹ On the potentials of a history of the Abrahamic religions, see Garth Fowden, *Abraham or Aristotle? First Millennium Empires and Exegetical Traditions*. An Inaugural Lecture by the Sultan Qaboos Professor of Abrahamic Faiths given in the University of Cambridge. 4 December 2013, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015; Adam J. Silverstein, Guy G. Stroumsa (eds.), and Moshe Blidstein (associate editor), *The Oxford Handbook of the Abrahamic Religions*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

¹² See Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines. The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity*, Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004; Guy G. Stroumsa, *La fin du sacrifice. Les mutations religieuses de l'Antiquité tardive*, préface de John Scheid, Paris: Odile Jacob, 2005.

¹³ Kaelble, "Forward: Representations and Transfers", p. 9.

and Central Europe allows us to assess the shifting reactions to transferring, ranging from polemical purposes to intercultural mediation or forms of conciliation between faiths. Case studies from the eleventh to the sixteenth centuries show that the shift from theological polemics to interfaith mediation cannot be regarded as chronologically predetermined: these two aspects of transfer are not mutually incompatible.¹⁴ Forms of cultural mediation and religious conciliation were already attested in the medieval Mediterranean,¹⁵ as shown by Tzvi Langermann's study of the controversial conversion to Islam of Maimonides (532–600/1138–1204) and the underlying role of his Muslim friend, who acted as a trigger for a religious experience based on double-identity and transdoctrinal perspectives. At the same time, conciliatory purposes behind religious transfer emerged in early modern Europe after the inner division within Christianity caused by the Reformation, as Andrea Celli's study of the reception of the Biblical narrative of Hagar and Ishmael in the Baroque clearly demonstrates. In fact, the shift from polemics to conciliation is not one-dimensional nor definitive or unchangeable throughout time. In his investigations currently underway on the Hagar narrative, Celli underlines how the persistency of medieval polemical tropes on Hagar and Ishmael coexists with a new, constructive understanding of this narrative based on compassion and piety for the exile. This allows for unexpected proximity between the Christian and the Islamic world through interfaith common ground consisting of shared origin narratives and proximate theological sensitivities.

The act of translating texts has long been investigated as a self-evident case of knowledge transfer. The impressive increase of research on the history of translations, especially the important achievements of the last years regarding the translation of the Qur'an into Latin and neo-Latin languages,¹⁶ has shown how the translation of scriptural writings functions as a special observatory for the

¹⁴ A critically relevant discussion of the cultural dynamics and religious implications of interfaith polemics in medieval and early modern Mediterranean contexts is provided by Mercedes García-Arenal and Gerard Wiegers, "Introduction", in *Polemical Encounters. Christians, Jews, and Muslims in Iberia and beyond*, ed. Mercedes García-Arenal and Gerard Wiegers, University Park PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019, pp. 1–21.

¹⁵ Meaningful case studies of cross-cultural interaction (travels, conversions, dissemination of books) are collected in *Identity and Religion in the Medieval and Early Modern Mediterranean*, ed. John Jeffries Martin, special issue of *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 41/3 (2011).

¹⁶ We allude to the outcomes of the international research groups *Islamolatina*, coordinated by José Martínez-Gázquez and based at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona; the Centre for the History of Arabic Studies in Europe (CHASE), coordinated by Charles Burnett and Alastair Hamilton, and based at the Warburg Institute, London; *Corpus Coranicum. Text Documentation and Commentary on the Quran*, coordinated by Angelika Neuwirth within the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences; and the recently launched ERC Project EuQu, Synergy Grant, dedicated to *The European Qur'an. Islamic Scripture in European Culture and Religion 1150–1850*, coordinated by Mercedes García-Arenal (Madrid), Roberto Tottoli (Naples), Jan Loop (Kent), and John Tolan (Nantes).

history of interfaith relations. Translating the Scriptures of the other religion can imply either harsh polemical claims and even military purposes, ways to come to terms with the doctrines of the other religion, or plans to convert its believers through intellectual strategies.¹⁷ Tackling the relation between Qur'anic translations and the Crusades, Davide Scotto shows how the translations of the Qur'an into Latin or vernacular produced in Europe from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries did not respond to a pure linguistic interest, but were rather a result of the spiritual militancy of the commissioners and translators of the texts. The three complete translations of the Qur'an from the Middle Ages shed light on the thorny theological implications of transferring doctrinal contents from an Islamic to a Christian context. They display three different aims that are related to crusade propaganda in either a supportive or an opposing way: to make fully available the Qur'anic contents to Christian readers as a remedy to Western-Christian ignorance and a stronghold against the dissemination of Islam; to polemicize against the Qur'an to intellectually support military endeavours against Muslim kingdoms enacted through the Crusades; and to disseminate new translations of the Qur'an among both a Christian and an Islamic readership to achieve the peaceful conversion of Muslims in the long run.

Besides translations, theological and legal debates on religious law help to clarify the polemical reactions to knowledge transfers of a religious nature and to highlight the underlying reasons for such reactions. Four of the essays in this book tackle cases of distinctly defensive reactions to the dissemination or imposition of doctrines and religious practices by one religion towards the other. In his extensive survey of Jewish responses to Islamic anti-Jewish polemics, Daniel Boušek delves into three main topics of this debate, all of them reflecting potential concerns behind transferring knowledge from a Jewish to an Islamic context: the misinterpretation or distortion of the Hebrew Bible; references to Muḥammad in the Bible and Muḥammad's prophethood in particular; and the abrogation of Jewish law. Although limited in number and all written in Iberia between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Jewish polemics against the Qur'an prove to be a refined intellectual tool aimed at avoiding transfer and contamination affecting essential doctrinal claims on which Judaism based its religious identity. Boušek's essay demonstrates how Islamic doctrine raised enticing challenges to the Jewish and Christian religious identities in the context of the Muslim dominance in medieval Iberia and North Africa.

¹⁷ See Thomas J. Heffernan and Thomas E. Burman (eds.), *Scripture and Pluralism. Reading the Bible in the Religiously Plural Worlds of the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, Leiden: Brill, 2005; Lejla Demiri, *Muslim Exegesis of the Bible in Medieval Cairo. Najm al-Din al-Tūfī's (d. 716/1316) Commentary on the Christian Scriptures*, Leiden: Brill, 2013; Ryan Szpiech (ed.), *Medieval Exegesis and Religious Difference. Commentary, Conflict, and Community in the Premodern Mediterranean*, New York NY: Fordham University Press, 2015.

Polemical reactions to religious transfer are attested in the theological or legal thinking of all three Abrahamic religions impacting European society in the Middle Ages and beyond.¹⁸ Switching from Jewish to Islamic theological literature, Nadjat Zouggar's study copes with a cutting Muslim critique against the transfer of Greek philosophical legacy – identified as a group of participants in a foreign cultural or a speculative theological system – to the Muslim world. According to the Muslim authors examined by Zouggar, Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) in particular, the merging of Islamic doctrines and Greek philosophical thought (*falsafa*) gives birth to an unnatural alliance, which must be strenuously opposed on an intellectual level. As a further case in the trajectory of Islamic reactions to non-Islamic theological claims, Irina Synkova and Michail Tarelka analyze a series of polemical writings against idolatry excerpted from the Tatar manuscript heritage of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In their philological contribution, they show how Tatar literature makes careful use of quotations from both the so-called Old and the New Testaments as a reaction to the spread of both Jewish and Christian thinking. While sometimes omissions, interpolations, and changes in the original scriptural quotations occur accidentally during the copy process, they are often deliberately made by Tatar-Muslim authors for ideological, exegetical, or stylistic reasons. Tatar manuscripts outline some of the most challenging theological claims coming from the Jewish and the Christian polemical legacy – transferred to Central Europe also through the missionary efforts of the Jesuits in particular¹⁹ – which the Tatar-Muslim minority communities in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania harshly rejected as idolatry.

In the framework of a broader project on *Muslim Minorities in the Iberian Peninsula: The Challenge of the Convivencia Model*, Ana Echevarría suggests a groundbreaking perspective on the legal and theological debate on the building of mosques in Christian lands of late medieval Iberia by examining canon and civil Christian laws concerning non-Christian religious buildings.²⁰ While in principle mosques and synagogues should not have been built in the Christian kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula, Echevarría shows that Islamic prayer halls in fact existed after the Christian conquest of former Islamic territories, having been moved inside medieval cities according to the needs of subjected minorities.

¹⁸ See, for instance, Gerard A. Wiegers, "Polemical Transfers: Iberian Muslim Polemics and their Impact in Northern Europe in the Seventeenth Century", *After Conversion. Iberia and the Emergence of Modernity*, ed. Mercedes García-Arenal, Leiden: Brill, 2016, pp. 229–49.

¹⁹ See Stefan Schreiner, "Anti-Islamic Polemics in Eastern European Context. Translation and Reception of 'Western Writings' on Islam in Polish Literature (16th-18th Centuries)", *Esperienza e rappresentazione dell'Islam nell'Europa mediterranea (secoli XVI-XVIII)*, ed. Andrea Celli and Davide Scotto, special issue of the *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa*, 51/3 (2015), pp. 541–84.

²⁰ For the impact of this debate on present policies towards religion in Europe, see Stefano Allievi, *Conflicts over Mosques in Europe. Policy Issues and Trends*, London: Alliance Publishing Trust, 2009.

Through the permission or the tacit acknowledgement of Christian authorities, Muslims in the non-frontier areas of Castile and Aragon could establish or decorate mosques in places where previously they did not exist. Though Muslims could not undertake any new construction work, they could lease extant buildings for devotional purposes. This is a telling example of a reaction to religious transfer of a devotional and architectural nature which to contemporary eyes might appear ambivalent or even contradictory. The buildings of mosques in Christian lands was forbidden by law to avoid the dissemination of Islamic practices and its ostentation in the public sphere, but Muslims living among Christians were in fact allowed to keep or renew mosques or prayer halls, even beside Christian churches. This discrepancy between theory and praxis clearly reflects the model of peaceful yet legally unequal coexistence between the Christian ruling majority and Islamic communities in Spain (*aljamas*), which was largely adopted in Castile from the thirteenth century – especially after the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) – to the first years after the Christian conquest of Muslim Granada (897/1492), the last Islamic kingdom of Europe.

The phenomenon of fluctuation and the coexistence of polemical and conciliatory dynamics behind transfers between Abrahamic religions is also detectable throughout so-called modernity, implying distinctions with respect to pre-modern times mainly due to the secularization processes affecting society, and the increasingly central role of non-confessional forms of knowledge and science within this process. Several case studies collected in the second part of the book tackle the confrontation – by means of transfer of texts or intellectual patterns – of religious and theological stances of the Jewish or Islamic tradition with secular paradigms stemming from former Western or Western-Christian models of society. The examination of historical contexts, in which cultural and political ideas related to the construction of modernity come to light, reveals new models of religious transfer, which are mainly triggered by tendencies towards the secularization of previous religious paradigms. Between the eighteenth and the twentieth century, transfers between religions hardly contribute to the formation of new patterns of religious knowledge related to the three religions, but they are rather used to redefine or reenact well-established religious patterns in relation to other religions and secular worldviews, ideologies, and institutions. This intellectual tension creates new ground for religious transfer, brings transfer beyond a tripartite or Abrahamic religious scheme, and thus opens unprecedented perspectives for interfaith coexistence.

Religious traditions from the eighteenth century onwards are confronted with a wholly new type of challenge represented by the secularization of political discourses, social practices, and moral values. This challenge gives rise to the emergence of a series of unprecedented phenomena: non-confessional scientific approaches (*Wissenschaft*) to religious facts; political ideologies founded on nationhood and nationalism, and their connection to new waves of colonialism;

the bourgeoisification of knowledge and the vulgarization of Enlightenment philosophies; the ideologization of antijudaism through anthropological theorization of the concept of race; and the social competition between religious and secular institutions. On the one hand, these phenomena lead to conflicts with traditional religious paradigms, and on the other hand, they give birth to new dynamics of transfer with to some extent unexpected results in terms of coexistence. With the passage from the medieval and early modern times to the so-called Secular Age,²¹ transfer of religious knowledge was necessarily conceived in relation to or in contrast with the dynamics of modernity and a range of new policies – based on nationalist and secularizing stances – towards the presence of religious groups within political and legal contexts where the role of religion was diminished, contested, or denied.

If the impact of secularism unveiled a considerable difference between religious transfers in premodern times and those regarding modern scenarios, there simultaneously exist parallel features between the two timespans. This bridge between eras is well exemplified by Ulli Roth's comparatist study of the Christian attitudes towards Islam in the Council of Basel (1431–1437) and in the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965). Inquiring into how both Councils reflected and encouraged the theological engagement of Christianity with Islam, Roth detects four aspects which make visible the analogies and continuity between the two. Both Councils share a certain self-perception and the way in which this influences their engagement with Islam; they show analogies in their respective historical contexts and the role that contact with Muslims played within it; they draw on similar models for their attitude towards Islam; and finally, they preconize similar ideas concerning the concrete ways of engagement with Muslims and their religion. Nonetheless, secularism in contemporary Europe and the rise of the debate on religious pluralism also explain some of the differences between the two conciliar experiences. The distinction between religious mission and the modern concept of interreligious dialogue, which was explicitly accepted only at the time of the Second Vatican Council, is a paradigmatic example of this shift.

A case study reflecting the way in which the transfer of secularized approaches to knowledge and literature challenged contemporary Islam is discussed in an article by Ruggero Vimercati Sanseverino. Arguing that rationalist prophetology, Hadith scepticism and modern *Sīra* writing are the symptoms of an intellectual and cultural crisis in modern Islam and the result of the influence of Orientalism, the Azhar scholar 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd developed a theological critique of

²¹ See Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*, Cambridge MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007; Adrian Pabst, "The Paradox of Faith: Religion beyond Secularization and De-secularization", *The Deepening Crisis: Governance Challenges after Neoliberalism*, ed. Craig Calhoun and Georgi Derlugian, New York City NY: New York University Press, 2011, pp. 157–81; John Milbank, *Beyond Secular Order. The Representation of Being and the Representation of the People*, Oxford: John Wiley & Sons and Blackwell, 2013.

Muslim reformism and of the de-theologization of the representation of the Prophet Muḥammad in contemporary Islamic thought. In the context of the modernization of religious education and the public debate about the role of Islam and Azhar scholarship in modern Egyptian society and culture, Maḥmūd intends to show that the transfer of secularized approaches to the prophetic tradition in fact dissolves the Muslims' personal attachment to their Prophet. Against reformist tendencies in contemporary Egypt, Maḥmūd argues that it is only through this personalist approach to the figure of Muḥammad that it is possible to make Islam intelligible to the modern middle class and thus to overcome the current crisis in Islamic thought and culture.

If the secular study of religion represented a challenge to Islamic scholarship in the modern period, the history of transfers between Christianity and Islam in the Middle Ages equally challenged the Eurocentric vision of modern Western historiography. Within the debate about the relationship between Orientalism and Colonialism, initiated by Edward Said's much-debated work,²² Enas Aly Ahmed analyzes the knowledge-making processes of Spanish Arabists by situating the ideas of one of Spain's most prominent Arabists, Miguel Asín Palacios (1871–1944), in the context of intellectual tendencies that marked both European Orientalism and Spanish Arabism during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.²³ Taking as a key case study Palacios's study of Ibn Ḥazm's *al-Fiṣal fī l-mīlāl wa-l-ahwā' wa-l-niḥāl*, Ahmed evaluates the engagement of the Spanish Arabist with the phenomenon of cultural transmission between Islam and Christianity. Contemporary Spanish Orientalists deemed this chain of transmission and the circulation of ideas it implied to be a crucial element for their scientific understanding of the Middle Ages. Through a new understanding and rewriting of past interactions between Christianity and Islam, national historiography and the underlying construction of political identity were explicitly or implicitly fostered.

A close examination of the relation between *Wissenschaft* and religion is also to be found in nineteenth-century European Judaism. As Ottfried Fraise points out, Jews in the nineteenth century increasingly refer to Islam with the aim of modernizing their own tradition. The culturalization and historicization of their own and the other religion in Judaism and Islam at the turn to the twentieth century, contributes to the development of new theologies that escape the dominant concepts of Western history and culture of that time, which were deeply rooted in cultural homogeneity and self-referential universalism. The critical distance from the prevailing Western-Christian understanding of history and

²² Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978.

²³ On the relation between European and Spanish Orientalism and the historiographic controversy on the exceptionalism of the latter, see Gonzalo Fernández Parrilla and Carlos Cañete, "Spanish-Maghribi (Moroccan) Relations beyond Exceptionalism: A Postcolonial Perspective", *The Journal of North African Studies*, 24/1 (2019), pp. 111–33.

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