of the role assigned to rationality as a prerequisite of legal responsibility in Hanafi fiqh. There is a misreading, too, in one of Poonawala’s translations from the Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ: the kutub tabīʿiya mentioned at the start of the 45th epistle are not ‘books on natural sciences’ but, literally, ‘natural books’ or in other words the ‘Book of Nature’, a reference to the medieval concept of the liber mundi.

Such minor flaws, however, should not detract from the volume’s overall achievement. Michael Morony and his fellow contributors have highlighted important and hitherto under-explored facets of Islamic intellectual history, producing a work that is both authoritative and accessible.

Reference


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Several good overviews of the history of Christian–Muslim relations have been available for some time, such as Hugh Goddard’s A History of Christian–Muslim Relations (2000). They describe important characters, conversations, movements, and background information. Titles of important writings are mentioned and short passages may be quoted, but they give only a brief taste of what certain authors wrote. One of the earliest such historical overviews of this writer’s acquaintance is Jean-Marie Gaudeul’s two-volume Encounters and Clashes: Islam and Christianity in History (1984). The first volume is an outline survey of the history of Christian–Muslim relations; the second is a collection of texts, which serves as a valuable supplement to volume one. In recent years, several other scholars have produced collections of primary texts in translation, which allow scholars, students, and other interested persons to read from important texts instead of merely about them.

In the book under review here, Charles Tieszen gives us one such recent collection of primary texts. They are extracts from previously published English translations of Christian and Muslim theological sources spanning the seventh through the fifteenth centuries. They include religiously apologetic and polemical texts, accounts of theological discussions, responses to theological questions, and theological treatises. The materials assembled here help the reader to experience a range of voice tones and modes of discourse.

Structurally, the book consists of an introduction, six chapters of excerpted texts, a concluding essay, a short glossary of selected terms found in the book, suggestions for further reading, and a very useful 10-page index. The six chapters are arranged chronologically. The first chapter, ‘Between Heresy, Adaptation, and the End of The World’, consists of three seventh- and eighth-century texts from early Christian responses to the rise of

The particular texts chosen represent many of the most essential texts for those who wish to understand the history of Christian–Muslim theological engagement and the fullest range of theological issues that arise from this history. Further, the theological topics that emerge from these texts continue to appear in present-day works about Christian–Muslim dialogue. (8)

The book was conceived ‘with students and professors in mind’ (xii). While there are other important sources that need to be studied in order to gain a fuller picture of the history of Christian–Muslim relations during the seventh through fifteenth centuries, these texts are intended to meet Tieszen’s objective of providing ‘readers with a helpful introduction to the ways in which Christians and Muslims reflected theologically about each other’, letting ‘as many voices speak as possible so that we can begin to understand the history of Christian–Muslim relations with greater clarity’ (6).

In classes I have taught on the history of Christian–Muslim relations, in which I like to use excerpts of such texts, one of the problems students have faced is the mixed readability of the translations from which they are drawn, which has been further complicated by the modes of reasoning and argumentation of Christian and Muslim writers who lived centuries ago. Students easily become frustrated and annoyed. Many readers will run up against these same challenges as they work through the texts in this collection. Tieszen, however, provides brief but helpful introductions to the authors and excerpted texts, which assist the reader to see them in context and identify some of the key theological issues in the texts.

In addition, the concluding chapter of the book, ‘Mapping Some of the Literary Topoi of Christian–Muslim Relations’, highlights and briefly analyses theological themes found in the texts. These include: Muslim comments on unity and trinity; Muslim concern over the person and work of Christ; Muslim comments on the Church; the corruption of Christian scripture; Muhammad as the Paraclete and a biblical figure; attacks on the Prophet Muhammad, the Qur’an, and Muslims; Christ versus Muhammad; discerning the true religion; and apocalypticism. While this list does not exhaust examples of literary topoi to be found in texts of the type gathered in this book, it does detail some of the most prominent. I believe many (especially the novice) will find it helpful to read this chapter before launching into the texts and then come back here again after reading them.

One may regret that other extracts have not been incorporated, including different excerpts from the larger texts from which this collection has been drawn. At least with respect to the latter, Tieszen has clearly identified the sources from which he has drawn. This will aid the interested reader to track down those sources and discover further riches. In spite of the challenges some readers may encounter in reading the texts in this volume, and while one might like to see other extracts in such a collection, this book is an excellent resource for those interested in studying the history of Christian–Muslim relations. It also provides in one convenient
volume an important collection of primary texts for those who like to use such material in courses on the history of Christian–Muslim relations.

References

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This is an excellent and ground-breaking study of Muslim communal headstones in Bosnia-Herzegovina over the past 500 years. The Ottoman Empire in Bosnia, long-neglected or marginalized in traditional Western historiography, has been the subject of considerable academic attention over the past 20 years. Few issues are more intriguing and unique than that ultimate human legacy of the Devlet-i Aliyye-i Osmâniyye in this region, namely the gradual Islamization of a significant proportion of the native population. The deliberate criminal destruction of much Ottoman and Islamic heritage during the 1990s war has left modern scholars with limited options for research, however. Amila Buturovic accepts this challenge by examining artefactual evidence that remains in abundance across Bosnia and can, in fact, reveal much about the historic spread and practice of Islam. The primary aim of this book is to explore ‘how funerary markers shape the culture of death in Bosnian Islam, including memory practices and consecration of space’ (5). The author examines a broad variety of Muslim grave-stones from Ottoman and post-Ottoman Bosnia in an effort to deduce how the Islamic community defined their religious identity in their own words and terms, paying particular attention to both the art of sculpture employed and the sepulchral texts carved on such, and how this has evolved over time.

Death is a subject critical to every functioning society. There are emotive issues of bereavement, loss and remembrance plus ethical quandaries with regard to the transformation of the deceased into material around which personal, communal and societal relationships may persevere. ‘The relationship between the dead and the living is continually shaped and restored through memory, more specifically through a variety of commemorative practices embodied in rituals and retold in stories, funerary inscriptions and images’ (203). Buturovic argues that the use of reflected self-image as a tool for interpreting complex social evolution between Christians and Muslims in these enduring public edifices allows them to be read for the impressions the Muslim communities wished to project at different stages of development instead of simply proffering an alternative to existing, mainstream or more stringent religious paradigms. The funerary markers and polyvalent aesthetics thus become a set of borders – both inclusive and exclusive of any shared burial praxis – that allow communities to successfully navigate the realities of a