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Justice and Rights

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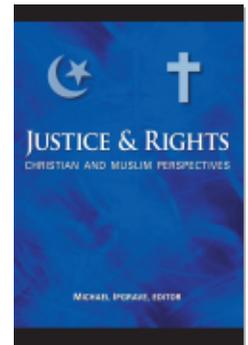
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PART II



EVOLVING TRADITIONS

What were the pressures that generated the continuing development of Muslim and Christian reflection on justice and rights? As the following presentations by Vincent Cornell and John Langan show, the primary horizons in both traditions were intrareligious conflicts rather than the external presence of the true “religious other.” It was the urge to define and contain heresy or schism, the challenge of relating political and religious authority, and—conflating these two—the felt need for unity to be apparent in both church and state, in both *dīn* and *dawla*, that motivated theologians’ thinking and writing in this area. Cornell and Langan, respectively, stress that for Muslims the main problem was posed by other Muslims, and for Christians by other Christians.

This point is largely borne out in the four texts of chapter 6, unambiguously so in the first, third, and fourth. Thus Augustine is seen struggling theologically with the political realities of the Donatist schism; al-Ghazālī seeks a way of recognizing and delimiting the scope of heresy within a fiercely contested Islamic space; Luther tries to identify the role under God of political government in a Christendom whose unity is shattered by the Reformation. Only the second text, ibn Lubb’s responsum from fourteenth-century Spain, is set in an interreligious rather than an intrareligious context; yet here too the argument is directed toward an internal Islamic disputation, and it is quite possible that no real *dhimmī* is involved, that the “religious other” is just a theoretical construct.

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