

New Approaches
to Human Dignity
in the Context
of Qur'ānic
Anthropology

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Anthropology:

The Quest for Humanity

Edited by

Rüdiger Braun and Hüseyin I. Çiçek

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Anthropology: The Quest for Humanity

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This volume owes its genesis to a symposium on “*Approaches to the notions of dignity and deficiency in the context of Qur’ānic anthropology*” held in September 2015 at the Chair for the Study of Religions at the University of Erlangen (FAU). Twelve Muslim and non-Muslim scholars accepted our invitation to present and discuss their respective contributions on Islamic theological anthropology, and entered into a series of vigorous and memorable debates and discussions concerning the different hermeneutical and systematic-ethical perspectives regarding the concepts of human dignity and deficiency in the context of Qur’ānic anthropology.

Their presentations on Qur’ānic and Islamic theological anthropology exhibited quite divergent views concerning this issue and bore witness to the diverse referential and multiperspective nature of the anthropology of the Qur’ān, which deserves to be continually rediscovered. As a contribution to this rediscovery, the present volume contains three sections (*grammars, translations, hermeneutics*), which differ considerably in length, structure and methodological approach but give a vivid testimony to the significance and complexity of theological issues relating to man and his dignity in the context of Qur’ānic anthropology. We hope that this volume will stimulate further contributions to this fascinating field.

As the editors of this volume, we would like to express our sincere appreciation to all collaborators for their contributions – not only to the abovementioned symposium but also to this volume. We would also like to acknowledge the generous financial support of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), and (especially with regard to the symposium itself) by the Dr. German Schweiger Foundation of the University of Erlangen. Without this support the symposium could not have taken place and this volume could not have been published.

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The Editors
February 2017

CHAPTER ONE

DYNAMICS OF THEOLOGICAL
ANTHROPOLOGY IN ISLAMIC CONTEXTS:
AN INTRODUCTION

RÜDIGER BRAUN

**The ambivalence of human nature and theological
anthropology**

“If nobody asks me about it, I know it, but if I should tell it to someone who asks me, I do not know.”¹

Saint Augustine’s famous ‘confession’ on the nature of time may also be valid for the question of the essence of human nature. It is a question in which the basic philosophic questions of metaphysics, ethics and politics or, as Kant said, of what we should know, do and hope, seem to culminate.² Aristotle was less reserved than Augustine and described a

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¹ *Si nemo ex me quaerat, scio; si quaerenti explicare velim, nescio*: St. Augustine, Confessions, Book XI, Ch.14,17, in: Augustinus, Bekenntnisse, Latin-German, tr. Joseph Bernhart, Frankfurt 1987, 629.

² “Metaphysics answers the first question; morality the second, religion the third and anthropology the fourth. Basically, however, all this could be reckoned with as anthropology, since the first three questions refer to the last”, Immanuel Kant,