

religion in democracies, and its stated *telos* of “translation”—as “open invitations for theological questioning” (131). Here, as throughout the book, I struggled slightly to distinguish J.-K.’s description of Habermas’s view of “religion” with the potential usefulness of his philosophy to “theology.” Theologians very often are not particularly concerned with “religion,” at least as Habermas conceives of it. Certainly when one considers many ordinary practices—such as grace before a meal, the placing of flowers at a shrine, or prayers at the bedside of the sick—the theistic, Enlightenment categorization of what is supposedly going on by naming these acts “religion” seems a far cry from the varied understandings of the self, God, and community that usually concern the theologian in these activities.

That said, J.-K.’s steering throughout the book cambers to the study of ethics and perhaps in such an account “religion” aligns itself more comfortably with the subject of “theology.” Certainly her conclusion to this extraordinarily clear presentation of some extraordinarily complicated debates is persuasive by the time we reach it: “In the alternative between basing one’s theory either on the power analyses of Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Nietzsche, or on those of philosophies of recognition, [Habermas] has made the case for reason in its communicative, identity-building capacities” (162).

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ATHEN UND JERUSALEM: DIE PHILOSOPHISCHE KRITIK AM CHRISTENTUM IN ANTIKE UND NEUZEIT. By Winfried Schröder. *Questiones und Gestalten der Philosophie* 16. Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 2011. Pp. 291. €68.

Schröder, a well-known German historian of philosophy, investigates the reception history of the ancient critics of Christianity in early modernity, and thus contributes to the ongoing debate about the so called “synthesis” of Greek philosophy and Christian doctrine. For S. such a synthesis never happened. He believes that Christianity rejected ancient philosophy too harshly and never honestly engaged with its criticism. Indeed, until this study appeared, hardly anybody had paid much attention to the question of whether the arguments of Celsus, Porphyrius, and Julian had an afterlife in the Renaissance and Enlightenment, whether these were greatly improved, and especially whether the fundamental criticisms of Christianity had changed in modern discourse.

Despite their distaste for ancient Platonism, many freethinkers like Anthony Collins (1676–1729) and Hermann S. Reimarus (1694–1768) used the best arguments from antiquity in their attacks on Sacred Scripture (71–85). The hottest topics of dispute were, however, the nature of faith

(87–137), miracles (138–189), and the essence of morality (190–221). The argument of Celsus, that Christians would adhere to a blind faith that was not only unverifiable but also contradictory, is the same argument that was reiterated 1300 years later. S. proves this with a detailed analysis of the relevant texts. Additionally, the ancient reasons for the necessity and value of religious plurality that Collins, Spinoza (1632–1677), and others raise were not new. Already Celsus, Themistos, and Symmachus asserted that it is epistemologically impossible to make true statements about the gods apart from their existence and some attributes, that it is unnecessary and impossible to bring about religious uniformity by means of intellectual insight, and that the plurality of cults is intended by the gods (117). A logical consequence of the second proposition is that Christians used force to bring about this religious uniformity. In S.'s discussion about the reception of these arguments, however, it is surprising not to find reference to Sebastian Castellio (1515–1563), a scholar who was well acquainted with ancient writers. The arguments Castellio brings in defense of Miguel Servet and for religious tolerance seem to echo the positions of the ancient critics almost to the letter. It has to be remarked that throughout the book S. sides with Celsus and his fellows. Thus it comes as no surprise that S. sees Celsus as a legitimate forerunner of the Baron d'Holbach (1723–1789), who had stated that from Christianity's claim to exclusivity follows with necessity "the spirit of intolerance" (138).

Regarding the criticism of miracles, even the witty apology of the ancient miracle worker Apollonius of Tyana by Christian Paalzow of 1787 relies heavily on ancient arguments. He used the same methods that Catholic theologian Nicholas Bergier (d. 1790) had used to defend the miracles of Christ. Consequently, Paalzow argued that if one dismissed Philostrate's reliable reports about the miracles of Apollonius, one also had to dismiss the Gospel accounts about Jesus' miracles. Most striking, however, is that S. successfully refutes the widespread claim that the rise of modern science had brought about a different concept of miracle and natural causality. Quite the contrary! If one consults the ancient critics of Christianity and their statements—for example, about the resurrection of Christ—one can detect a surprising continuity in terminology and in the theoretical definition of miracles (181). Christian morality was attacked because it had departed from the consensus of ancient moral philosophy, especially when it taught the human inability to achieve a virtuous life without grace (219).

Certainly, not many theologians will share S.'s conviction that Christian theology is based on a "voluntarist concept of faith," and that it is "hopeless to make Christian doctrine compatible with basic moral standards" unless one sacrifices the integrity of its doctrinal body (226). Nevertheless, this is an extremely carefully written analysis of ancient texts and their reception

patterns, which every theologian and historian of religion must take seriously. The biggest downfall of the book results from S.'s seeming ignorance of anything Catholic. For S. modern Christianity—with the exception of his treatment of Nicolas-Sylvestre Bergier—equals Protestantism. S. would have made his book much stronger had he looked at and incorporated what early modern Catholic theology and philosophy have to offer.

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