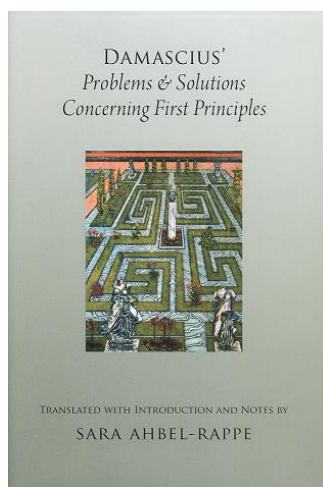


Welcome to The Book Corner. In each March and October issue, we will feature books that have recently been published by Oxford University Press in the various AAR/OUP book series. The books featured in this issue were published between July and December 2010. For more books published in the various series, visit [www.aarweb.org/Publications/Books](http://www.aarweb.org/Publications/Books).

**Ahbel-Rappe, Sara. *Damascius' Problems and Solutions Concerning First Principles*. Oxford University Press, 2010.**



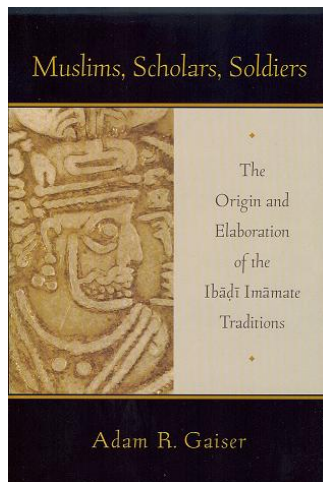
Damascius was head of the Neoplatonist academy in Athens when the Emperor Justinian shut its doors forever in 529. His work, *Problems and Solutions Concerning First Principles*, is the last surviving independent philosophical treatise from the Late Academy. Its survey of Neoplatonist metaphysics, discussion of transcendence, and compendium of late antique theologies make it unique among all extant works of late antique philosophy. It has never before been translated into English.

Damascius's work exhibits a thorough-going critique of Proclean metaphysics, starting with the principle that all that exists proceeds from a single cause, proceeding to critique the Proclean triadic view of procession and reversion, and severely undermining the status of intellectual reversion in establishing being as the intelligible object. Damascius investigates the internal contradictions lurking within the theory of descent, while showing that similarity of cause and effect is vitiated in the case of processions where one order (e.g., intellect) gives rise to an entirely different order (e.g., soul). Neoplatonism as a speculative metaphysics posits the One as the exotic or "extopic explanans" for plurality, conceived as immediate, present to hand, and therefore requiring explanation.

Damascius shifts the perspective of his metaphysics: he struggles to create a metaphysical discourse that accommodates, insofar as language is sufficient, the ultimate principle of reality. After all, how coherent is a metaphysical system that bases itself on the Ineffable as a first principle? Instead of creating an objective ontology, Damascius writes ever mindful of the limitations of dialectic, and of the pitfalls and snares inherent in the very structure of metaphysical discourse.

ISBN: 978-0-19-515029-2

**Gaiser, Adam R. *Muslims, Scholars, Soldiers: The Origin and Elaboration of the Ibadi Imamate Traditions*.  
Oxford University Press, 2010.**

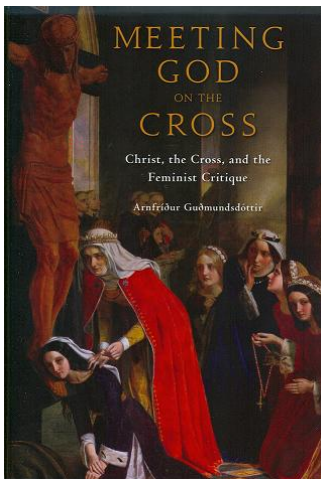


A study of the origin and development of the Ibadi Imamate ideal into its medieval Arabian and North African articulations, this book traces the distinctive features of the Ibadi Imamate to precedents among the early Kharijites, rashidun Caliphs, and pre-Islamic Arabs.

Using the “four stages of religion” as an organizing principle, the book examines the four associated Imam-types that are considered appropriate at such stages — the Imam of manifestation, Imam of defense, the “seller” Imam who



**Gúðmundsdóttir, Arnfríður. *Meeting God on the Cross: Christ, the Cross, and the Feminist Critique*  
Oxford University Press, 2010.**



The past thirty years have seen the emergence of a broad-ranging feminist theological critique of Christology. Speaking out of a range of Christian traditions, feminist theologians have exposed the androcentric character of classical Christology, drawing attention to the fact that women's voices in Scripture and in the history of theology have gone and continue to go unheard. The theological consequences have been grave: Christ's liberating message of the full humanity of both women and men has been compromised by the patriarchal bias of its interpreters.

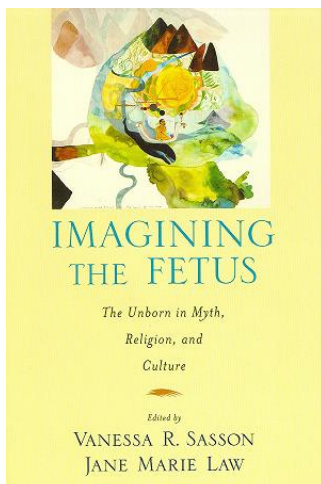
Feminists have also argued that of all Christian doctrines Christology has been most often turned against women. Christological arguments have been used to reinforce an exclusively male image of God, and thus to legitimate men's superiority over women. Further, the image of Christ on the cross has contributed to women's acceptance of abuses of power, as it has often been interpreted as a model of passive submission to unjust suffering. Some feminists have argued for the total rejection of the doctrine of the cross. Others have concluded that Christianity and feminism are incompatible.



In this book, Arnfridur Gudmundsdottir provides a lucid survey and analysis of the full range of such criticisms, as well as her own explicitly feminist retrieval and reconstruction of a theology of the cross. She argues that there is a redemptive message hidden in the cross of Christ that is valuable to women today. Despite its potential for abuse and its well-documented history of misuse against women, a theology of the cross can also affirm Jesus as a divine cosufferer who brings good news to all who are poor and oppressed. Such a theology, Gudmundsdottir contends, offers women meaning and strength from a God who takes human form and enters redemptively into their suffering.

ISBN: 978-0-19-539796-3

**Sasson, Vanessa and Jane Marie Law, eds. *Imagining the Fetus: The Unborn in Myth, Religion, and Culture*. Oxford University Press, 2010.**



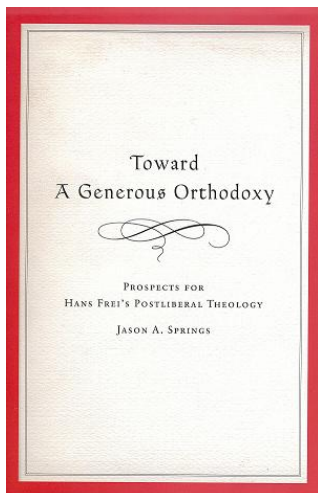
In the current North American climate, the word “fetus” usually either evokes turbulent political issues or

*Imagining the Fetus* seeks to take the topic of the fetus well beyond its usual conversational context

ISBN: 978-0-19-538004-0



**Springs, Jason A. *Toward a Generous Orthodoxy: Prospects for Hans Frei's Postliberal Theology*. Oxford University Press, 2010.**



Hans Frei, one of the most influential American theologians of the twentieth century, is generally considered a founder of postliberal theology. Frei never set forth his thinking systematically, and he has been criticized for being inconsistent, contradictory, and insufficiently rigorous.

Jason Springs seeks in this book to offer a reevaluation of Frei's work. Arguing that Frei's theology cannot be understood without a meticulous consideration of the complex equilibrium of his theological and philosophical interests and influences, Springs vindicates Frei's Christologically-motivated engagement with Ludwig Wittgenstein, Clifford Geertz, and Erich Auerbach, as well as his use of ordinary language philosophy and nonfoundational philosophical insights, while illuminating his orientational indebtedness to Karl Barth's theology. Moreover, by placing Frei's work in critical conversation

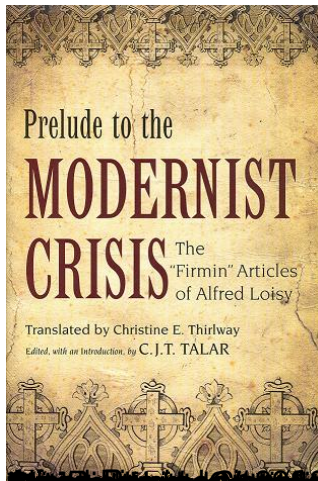


with developments in pragmatist thought and cultural theory since his death, this rereading aims to resolve many of the misunderstandings that vex his theological legacy. What emerges from *Toward a Generous Orthodoxy*

is a sharpened account of the Christologically-anchored, interdisciplinary, and conversational character of Frei's theology, one he came to describe as a "generous orthodoxy" — modeling a way for academic theological voices to take seriously both their vocation to the Christian church and their roles as interlocutors in academic discourse.

ISBN: 978-0-19-539504-4

**Thirlway, Christine E., trans. *Prelude to the Modernist Crisis: The "Firmen" Articles of Alfred Loisy*. Oxford University Press, 2010.**



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