

Ulrich Winkler Award

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Salzburg, August 2024

Ulrich Winkler Award 2024

Dr. Lukas WIESENHÜTTER

Job's Encounter.

Islamic and Christian perspectives on theodicy and theodicy sensitivity.

(Original: Hiobs Begegnung. Islamische und christliche Perspektiven auf Theodizee und Theodizeesensibilität)

The board of trustees has elected the work of Dr. Lukas Wiesenhütter to be the Ulrich Winkler Award-winner of 2024. I am delighted to share some voices of the responses from our board of trust:

Catherine Cornille, Boston College: "The topic and the approach are highly important and original. The dissertation seems to be a model of how to do comparative theology: examining what light another religious tradition might shed on a fundamental problem in one's own tradition. (...) Two elements in the dissertation strike me as particularly original: 1. The discussion of the Qur'an itself as a form of lamentation and conversation with God, and 2. The focus on beauty or aesthetics as a source of consolation or answer to the problem of suffering. The author then considers how these elements might also be found in Christianity, for example in the sacraments."

Perry Schmidt-Leukel, Münster: "Opening new ground for Islamic-Christian comparative theology by focusing on the joint issue of theodicy. His treatment of the topic is very much up to date in as much as he deals with contemporary theologians both from the analytic and from the hermeneutic camp with the laudable effort of doing justice to their key concerns. Regarding Islamic theology, he avoids the mistake of looking at it by taking Christian discourse as normative, but rather identifies the Islamic emphasis on the question of divine justice as a specific key point."

Reinhold Bernahrd „Nach Abwägung unterschiedliche Kriterien spreche ich mich dafür aus, den Preis an Lukas Wiesenhütter für seine Dissertation „Hiobs Begegnung“ zu vergeben, (...) eine sehr innovative Studie, die christlich-theologische und islamische Ansätze zur Theodizeedebatte in einen lernbereiten Dialog bringt und damit die Komparative Theologie bereichert. Wiesenhütter greift dabei auch auf Reflexionen der amerikanischen Religionsphilosophin Eleonore Stump zurück, welche die methodischen Zugänge der analytischen und der hermeneutischen (erfahrungsbasierten, an interpersonalen Beziehungen orientierten und narrativen) Theologie auf eine kreative Weise miteinander verbindet.

Paul Hedges: “His focus on theodicy is interesting, especially in seeing how the Joban narrative is read across both the Christian and Islamic traditions as well as wider narratives of suffering and its purpose. (...) The way that Wiesenhütter further links this to be political theology and the question of performance is also interesting and, perhaps, set this is apart as a novel reworking of these issues. There appears to be a solid reading of not just the Christian but also the Islamic tradition in what is undertaken, as such it seems that it could be a fitting recipient of the Winkler award.”

Francis X. Cloony Harvard University: “This work presents itself as a serious instance of comparative theology, engaging the Christian and Islamic traditions on matters related to theodicy. Wiesenhütter points out, this very difficult matter does not reduce simplistically to a “why?” question, and merits a careful examination across religious borders, and he shows us the way to such a deeper consideration, drawing diligently on Christian and Islamic sources- Hiobs Begegnung aims toward a “comparative theological practice” as I understand it, in line with my own practice in the field.”

Prof. Dr. Ulrich Winkler



Ulrich Winkler was born in 1961 in Gallneukirchen/Mühlviertel (Upper Austria) into a family of small farmers. After school and grammar school, which he completed at the Collegium Petrinum in Linz, he began studying theology in Linz in 1980, soon transferred to the renowned year of study at the Dormition Abbey in Jerusalem and then went to Salzburg, where he completed his studies with a Master's degree in 1987 after guest stays in Munich and Tübingen. After completing his doctorate in 1997 with a thesis on the theology of creation, Ulrich Winkler focussed on a subject area that was becoming increasingly important in German-speaking theology: the theology of religions. He played a decisive role in the founding of the now internationally recognised Centre for Intercultural Theology and the Study of Religions (2001). His habilitation thesis "Wege der Religionstheologie. Von der Erwählung zur komparativen Theologie 2010), Ulrich Winkler focussed in particular on comparative methods and the theology of Israel. This was also applied in the university course 'Spiritual Theology in the Interreligious Process', which he co-developed and led. In 2016, Winkler took over the Laurentius Klein Chair of Biblical and Ecumenical Theology at the Theological Year in Jerusalem. After falling ill, he passed away on 27 January 2020. In the award he initiated and financed, he would like to continue to promote the topics of his research life in theology.

Lukas Wiesenhütter

Career

2023 Doctorate in theology at the Faculty of Catholic Theology of the University of Bonn (summa cum laude)

2022 Dissertation awarded the Pax Bank Prize for theological research contributions

Since 2021 Research assistant at the Chair of the Schlegel Professorship for Systematic Theology with special consideration of social challenges at the Faculty of Catholic Theology at the University of Bonn

Summer semester 2018 Language stay in Amman, Jordan

2016-2021 Research assistant at the Institute for Catholic Theology of the Faculty of Cultural Studies at the University of Paderborn (Chair of Systematic Theology)

2014-2015 Studied Near and Middle Eastern Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London (degree: MA)

2012-2013 Theological study year in Jerusalem

2009-2015 Studied Catholic Theology at the Albert-Ludwigs-University, Freiburg im Breisgau (Degree: Magister theologiae)

Publications

Monograph

Job's Encounter. Islamic and Christian perspectives on theodicy and theodicy sensitivity (Beiträge zur Komparativen Theologie 39), Paderborn 2024. Open Access: <https://brill.com/display/title/69575>

Essays and book contributions

Erzählend Brücken bauen - Zur Bedeutung von Narrativen für Compassion in der interreligiösen Begegnung, in: Domsel, Maïke Maria/ Steffens, Maurice (eds.): Compassion als Schlüssel für eine zukunftsfähige Bildung nachhaltiger Entwicklung?! Mission and further development of a theological principle, Stuttgart 2024, 141-155.

together with Klaus von Stosch: Die Ambiguität lehrantlicher Aussagen in Bezug auf das Judentum, in: Stosch, Klaus von/ Dockter, Cornelia (eds.): Ambiguität, Macht und die Formierung religiöser Identitäten (AIS 3), Freiburg i.Br. 2024, 174-197.