PART II

ISLAM AND SOCIAL PRACTICE
Among scholars of the research on Islam in Europe there is little interest in authority structures and production of religious knowledge relevant for reaching salvation. The current state of research on Islam concentrates insufficiently on the issue of institutionalisation which is strongly connected with the aim of societal integration. In this contribution I will try to contextualize the institutionalisation issue in a historical-political framework. The connection between religion and governmental techniques is here at the core of interest.

One of the major critics of religion, the controversial German philosopher Nietzsche, did not remain on the level of big words like God, Truth, Soul, Salvation and so on, but he asked, following his genealogical method, where these ideas come from and who put them on the agenda, and finally which interests underpin them. In this, the (actually monotheistic) priest plays a central role. Although he is actually not the creator of ideas (such as the prophets are), the priest claims to administer transcendence, an Otherworld. He tied wellbeing in this world to the truth of the Otherworld and he is the only one that has privileged access to it. Nietzsche explained the Judaic (and later the Christian) invention of transcendence and the monopoly retained by the priest as the priest’s revenge on the warrior (the Romans) and considered it as a radical revaluation of values in favour of forces hostile to life.

The idea of invention of transcendence also attracted the interest of other thinkers. The sociologist Shmuel N. Eisenstadt (1987), adopting Jasper’s concept of Axial Age (1956), traces, in the invention of

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