

# In this number

JARI KAUKUA

## **Islam and Religious Tolerance: Freedom of Religion in Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's Great Commentary**

This article is an investigation into the viability of an Islamic concept of religious tolerance. The question is approached by asking how one canonical Sunnī author, the 12th-century theologian Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1210 CE), interprets those Qur'ānic verses (especially 2:256, but also 4:94 and 10:99) that are commonly introduced in support of arguments for contemporary notions of Islamic tolerance. The somewhat tentative outcome is that Rāzī's explanation of these verses does provide a systematic basis for religious tolerance.

ILKKA LINDSTEDT

## **History of and Sources for the Islamisation of the East Coast of Africa**

The article explores the history of the Islamisation of the east coast of Africa from the birth of Islam to the arrival of the Portuguese, roughly 600 to 1500. The geographical focus is on the 'Swahili coast', which lies in present-day Somalia, Kenya,

Tanzania and Mozambique. Also, contemporary Arabic sources are analysed to find what Islam contributed to the culture of the region. The Islamisation of eastern Africa was a slow process partly linked to piracy and the slave trade but also to peaceful commerce. Islamisation provides an interesting parallel to the later history of the east coast of Africa, where Christian Europeans played a significant role.

ARI MAUNU

## **A Timeless, Omniscient God: The Problem of Temporal Indexicals**

Is God a timeless God? One standard argument against this supposition is that it appears to be incompatible with God's posited omniscience. If God is timeless, He cannot know truths involving temporal indexicals, such as the one I express right now by saying "I am sitting now". In this article, I discuss this argument and consider some replies to it. I focus on the denial of the view according to which knowledge expressed with temporally indexical true statements is relevantly different from knowledge expressed with corresponding statements without indexicals.

VILLE MÄKIPELTO

### **Creative Editing of Scripture in the Textual History of the Book of Joshua**

Biblical studies have shown that many Jewish scribes in the Second Temple Period did not merely copy the Hebrew scriptures but also made creative changes to the texts they transmitted. Even a brief look at the complex textual history of the Book of Joshua illuminates many such creative editorial changes. This article examines three different cases in which an editor-scribe either introduced changes to an existing text or created a new composition based on an older text. The focus is on comparable documented evidence. Thus, the article offers a cross-section of the various sources (MT, LXX, Qumran, Samaritan Joshua) for the textual history of the Book of Joshua.

ELINA HELLQVIST & AULI VÄHÄKANGAS

### **The Recongnition of Registered Same-Sex Partnerships in the Finnish Lutheran Church: Church Discussions on Registered Partnership and Experiences of the Persons Concerned**

Based on the analysis of official church documents of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and on thematic interviews with the persons concerned, this article poses the question: can the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland recognise same-sex partnerships? The results show that the Church is not willing to recognise same-sex partnerships as equal to marriage and thus perform a wedding or blessing. The Church does allow prayer privately "with and for" the couple. The couples see the prayer as tantamount to a blessing and even a marriage. They feel that they were recognised by the community gathered in prayer but not by the Church as an institution.

Translation: Jaakko Mäntyjärvi