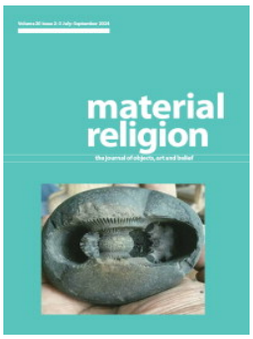

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divine trust (*amana*) and climate change in jordan: valuing water in the face of water scarcity

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ABSTRACT

In the current context of environmental collapse and climate change, warnings about the threat of global severe water shortages have proliferated in media and policy discourses. At the same time, in many parts of the world, ordinary people, state institutions, and global financial actors are engaged in daily struggles over forms of water valuation. At stake in these struggles is the question: is water a commodity or a right? Based on ethnographic research conducted among Muslims and Christians in Jordan, this paper will explore how debates about forms of valuing water could be extended beyond the right/commodity and private property/commons distinctions to include religiously-informed forms of valuation. To do so, this paper shows how Muslims and Christians in Jordan provoke a mode of water valuation that is grounded in the idea of the ethical imperative to fulfil the *amana* (divine trust). Central to *amana* is the constant ethical labor of balancing the human right to govern/enjoy public resources such as water with divine responsibility. Amana affirms the value of water as a common good accessible to all and shared across generations while simultaneously making the realization of this value dependent on the divinely mediated relations of trust and obligation that hold together all of God's creation. As such, the stakes in this mode of valuing water go beyond the struggle to counter the financialization of public water to insist on the necessity of making space for a non-possessive relationship to water that is embedded in shared createdness and oriented towards the hereafter and accountability to God.

Keywords: Value, water scarcity, Jordan, Islam, Christianity, ethics, temporality, climate change

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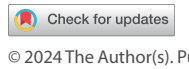

Introduction

On a very cold Tuesday morning in late March 2022, I joined Nora, a female preacher from the Jordanian Ministry of Religious Endowment, at one of her weekly study circles in a mosque in Amman. As soon as Nora opened the door of the women's area of the mosque, members of the study circle started coming in slowly, wearing heavy coats and carrying jugs of Turkish coffee and trays of chocolate, dates, and sweets. The conversation began, as it had become the norm those days, with comments about the weather. Rana, a woman in her late fifties, apologized for not attending the circle in the previous two weeks because it was too cold, which made it very difficult to leave her house, particularly in the morning. Turning to me, Rana said: "You know, I am fifty-eight-years-old now and have never experienced such weather before. It is late March, and we are still in winter. It is supposed to be spring now." The other women agreed with Rana, adding that "the weather has lost its logic" in the last five years, that "winter and summer have become longer, and spring and autumn have practically disappeared," and that "even plants are no longer able to figure out the weather."

Nora informed the women that the day's lesson will focus on conserving water.[1] She began the lesson stating that Jordan suffers from water scarcity. The women immediately challenged this narrative of scarcity, arguing that "it is a created rather than natural scarcity because Israel has been stealing our water since 1967" before adding that "it rained non-stop for the last several months, where has that rain gone!" Turning to me, they explained that several months prior to this unprecedented rainfall, the media was saturated with images featuring empty dams and dire warnings that Jordan is on the verge of running out of water. They explained that the government was using these threats of scarcity to pass what came to be popularly known as the "water for energy" agreement with Israel that would yet again deprive Jordan of its rightful shares of the region's natural resources. For them, the rainfall "confirmed the people's suspicions of the government" and "aborted the government's plans to sell Jordanian energy to Israel."

Noticing Nora's unease about their criticism of the government's relationship with Israel, the conversation moved to criticizing what they described as "the unfair distribution of water" across the regions in Jordan, arguing that not everyone gets their rightful share of water.[2] While their area receives water on a weekly basis, they insisted that "other parts of Amman get water only fortnightly. Outside Amman and in rural areas, people get water only once a month, and sometimes in the summer once every two or three months." They explained that the reason their area gets a regular supply of water is that they share water infrastructures with the nearby royal palaces. When asked about how they use water in their homes, one of the women, Hoda, admitted that she and all other members of her family shower every day and that they use the washing machine on most days

of the week, noting that as long as she is paying for water, she can use whatever quantities she desires, before adding that "if there is scarcity in Jordan why do rich people have swimming pools and jacuzzies, the government should focus on them not us." While agreeing with Hoda's views regarding the upper-class' unhindered consumption of water, her daily water practices were not shared by the other women. This led to a discussion about whether the fact "that we pay for water or that we have a right to water absolve us of our responsibility in front of God." The issue of accountability to God led the women's debates towards a discussion of the *amana* that each Muslim is obliged to uphold. One woman responded:

> This is an *amana* and *ni'ma* that God is going to ask us about on the day of judgement. What do we say to him? That he should instead ask rich people about the jacuzzies! Of course, he will hold them ask what they have done with the *amana*, but he will also ask us.

Another added: "If you use more water than your needs, God will ask you about that."

Father George, the pastor of an Anglican church in Amman, similarly stressed upholding the *amana* as fundamental to water justice in Jordan.[3] Father George's church is located in a low-income neighbourhood of Amman that is inhabited predominantly by poor Jordanians and refugees from different parts of the Arab world. Like Nora's study circle, members of Father George's congregation question the narrative of scarcity and criticize the unfair distribution of water in Jordan. Father George's shares his congregation's criticisms. Yet, he also emphasizes the importance of being a *wakeel amin* (an entrusted steward). As he put it:

> My responsibility as a Christian is to be a *wakeel amin* over water because we don't own water, it belongs to God. Everything belongs to God, including water, and therefore we are accountable for it. Just become we pay for water, and it comes through the tap, we think that we own it and that we decide how to use it and when to use and who has right to it. We have lost the ability to see it as God's '*atiyya* and and *amana* for which we will be held accountable.

First, the above discussions illustrate that water scarcity is never the product of only natural processes but is socially and politically produced. Second, how people inhabit, understand, and respond to water scarcity is the product of second-order judgments and narratives about justice, property, ethics, rights and duties, accountability and the divine through which particular regimes of value around water are constructed and enacted. Orlove and Caton famously described water as a "total social fact" (2010: 402), calling attention to its interconnections across multiple social and natural domains. The intimate connection between water and the social world has inspired a wealth of research on the multiple ways water shapes, and is

shaped by systems of knowledge, political and technological arrangements, regimes of governance and access, and values (Helmreich 2015; Bakker 2012; Barnes 2014; Linton and Budds 2014; Strang 2015; Hastrup and Hastrup 2015; Anand 2017, Ballestero 2019; Muehlebach 2023a). Building on this literature, particularly the recent ethnographies of Andrea Ballestero and Andrea Muehlebach, this paper explores the regimes of value through which water justice and water futures come to be envisioned and enacted in Jordan amid growing water scarcity that is further exacerbated by inequitable access. Based on two months of ethnographic fieldwork among mostly female members of mosque groups and Orthodox and Anglican church congregations in Amman, the paper traces how Muslims and Christians locate water justice and futures in a regime of value grounded in the concept of *amana* or divine trust.

Divine Trust and the Production of a Regime of Value of Water

In March 2021, the organizers of World Water Day, which has been observed annually by the UN since 1993, launched a global social media campaign, titled "*Valuing Water*," inviting people from around the world to reflect on the ways they value water. This call, through which the campaign organizers hoped to involve ordinary people in the valuing of water, a task traditionally "left to policymakers and experts from environmental, engineering, scientific, finance and legal sectors" (WWD 2021, 1), took place at a moment when two important and contradictory regimes of water value were gaining traction. In 2010, amid dire projections of increased water contamination, overextraction, and scarcity, the United Nations General Assembly declared water a human right. This was soon followed by the extension of constitutional rights to rivers, along with mountains, in several countries (Chiasson 2019). This shift towards humanitarianism went hand in hand with the extension of market logics to water as growing financialization and privatization subjected publicly owned water utilities and infrastructures to exploitation and capital extraction by global financial actors.[4]

Recent scholarship has turned to the everyday struggles, politics and ethics of imbuing water with value generated by these contradictory developments as objects of fruitful anthropological analysis. In many parts of the world, the conscription of water to the logics of both rights and markets, didn't only defy traditional regimes of water value, but also set the terrain for the emergence of new and competing forms of value in the form of the commodity/right opposition, subjecting water to the question: Is water a commodity and a private good or a human right and a public good?

In *A Future History of Water* (2019), Andrea Ballestero addresses this question through an exploration of the ways the categories of "right" and "commodity" produce and are produced in the everyday labour of making water a human right and a

public good in Costa Rica and Brazil. Ballestero shows that maintaining the delicate balance between commodity and right, which is fundamental to water justice and equitable access to water in the Latin American context, involves the continuous ethical labour of what she calls "bifurcations" or distinctions through which water as a commodity is disentangled from water as a right. This labour is carried out by bureaucrats and lawmakers who use mundane and taken-for-granted techno-legal devices to set just water price, enact legal reform, and promote care for water in order to determine water's value. Andrea Muehlebach similarly traces the ways the fundamental dichotomies of right/commodity and private property/commons inform the struggles over water access and justice in Europe. In *A Vital Frontier: Water Insurgencies in Europe* (2023a), Muehlebach follows the various modalities of protest deployed by water movements in Italy, Ireland, and Germany. Disputing the argument that financialization will lead to better management of a resource that is becoming increasingly scarce, these insurgencies engage in practices of "counter-valuation" through which they seek to reclaim public ownership of water, and relatedly, to defend its status as a common good and commons that is accessible to all.

Both ethnographies illustrate that the regimes of water value that orient current ethical struggles for water justice and the uncertain future of water are never stable but always plural and contested, reflecting not only the unalienable and unruly nature of water, but also the multiplicity of the social, political, ethical and affective practices that structure these forms of value. Yet, for Muehlebach and Ballestero, these regimes of value remain predominantly secular and organized according to the prevailing assumptions of liberal capitalism about subjectivity, property, economy, future, and human-nature relationship. Even though these authors and their interlocutors acknowledge water as "sacred," "transcendent," and "a godly gift," it remains autonomous from the divine. Rather than belonging to God, water is reified as an agent to whom humans owed a transcendent debt (Muehlebach 2023b). In the remainder of this essay, I would like to "[place] God in the foreground" (Mittermaier 2019) and explore an ethics of water justice that is oriented by a regime of water value grounded in the *amana*, the obligation of divine trust and culpability.[5] This does not mean that the forms of value explored by Ballestero and Muehlebach don't exist in Jordan. Rather, I am concerned with exploring a different kind of value that exists alongside and overlaps with these global regimes of value in Jordan and other parts of the Arab world: a regime of water value that is not centred on the right/commodity and private property/commons distinctions but prioritizes the constant ethical labour of reconciling divine permission to use and "enjoy" water with the obligation to preserve it and return it to God "as it was given, 'without exposure to harm'" (Hallaq 2019, 254).

In the Quran, humans as God's appointed vicegerents (*khulafa*), are vested with carrying the burden of divine trust and accountability for that trust, a responsibility that other creations, including the heavens, the earth, and the mountains refused to bear: "Truly, We did offer *al-amaanah* to the heavens and the earth, and the mountains, but they declined to bear it and were afraid of it (i.e. afraid of Allah's torment). But man bore it. Verily, he was unjust and ignorant" (Al-Ahzaab 33, 72). The concept of *amana* emerges within the Bible as a testament of the faith of the entrusted steward (*wakeel amin*) who is able to uphold and deliver what he has been trusted with: "Peter asked, 'Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to everyone?' The Lord answered, 'Who then is the faithful and wise manager (*wakeel amin),* whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns'" (Luke 12, 41–44).[6] Despite important differences in the theological underpinnings of the concept of *amana*, my Muslim and Christian interlocutors in Jordan shared an understanding of *amana* as the ground of both human ethical actions in the world and divine judgement of these actions (Hauter 2023, 698).

Such human bearings of divine trust embody an arrangement wherein humans are implicated in a relationship with the environment that is rooted in both shared createdness (*Khalq*; *Khaliqa*) and trusteeship. God is the creator, and therefore the true owner of both humans and the natural world. Although humans are not equal to the rest of creation and are the ones entrusted with the natural world, they are not the possessors of that world, but must continuously strive to uphold and reproduce the obligation to care for it. For my interlocutors, shared createdness and the obligations attached to being entrusted and granted accountability hamper and stifle the human possessive impulse and desire for mastery and ownership of water. Indeed, for them, water is not only a right and a commodity, but a divine trust for which they will be held accountable on the day of judgment. As such, in the regime of value examined here, water justice is not dependent on securing human rights and the common good, but in upholding and returning the *amana*

Divine Trust and Everyday Water Practices in Jordan

One afternoon in late March 2020, I visited Mona and Reem to conduct an interview with them about climate change. I had met Mona and Reem two weeks earlier during a weekly religious lesson in their local mosque and they both invited me to visit them as they were interested in knowing more about my research on climate change and water scarcity. As soon as I entered her house, Mona showed me a large damp patch on one of the living room walls, explaining that it began to appear when the weather started to turn strange in Jordan approximately five years earlier. We discussed the changes in the weather for a few minutes before

Reem joined us. I then asked them to explain to me what it means to live with water scarcity in Jordan. Both Mona and Reem live in one of Amman's middle-class neighborhoods, and unlike other less affluent parts of Amman and Jordan in general, they have regular access to water because the water distribution schedule in their neighborhood is reliable most of the time.

However, in answering my questions about water scarcity in Jordan, they both stressed that, while water is a major problem in Jordan and that it is the responsibility of the state to secure adequate access to water for all, as Muslims their ethical relationship with water is also articulated by the obligation to uphold the *amana*. In everyday life, this obligation to establish and reproduce the *amana* in relation to water requires the activation of a sense of fragmentation "through thinking times of scarcity (*ayyam* al-*qilla*) as being inseparable from times of abundance *(ayyam al-wafra)*." As Reem pointed out: "While we, until now, praise be to God, are not really struggling with water scarcity, I already enact/perform water scarcity in my everyday life." She explained this by saying:

> Whenever I am using water whether for bathing, ablution to perform prayers, wash the dishes, or clean the house, I remember the prophet's *hadith*: "Be good neighbors with God's blessings for if they leave a people, they rarely come back to them." This hadith stops me in my tracks because it reminds me that scarcity is intimately interwoven with abundance and is already here and ready to emerge. It changes the way I live my life and relate to the world around me.

To this, she added:

> I treat the possibility of water scarcity the way I treat death. Although I don't know whether I am going to die tomorrow or in a hundred years, I still have to encounter my death in my everyday life.

This fragmentation of the everyday was also stressed by Sarah, one of my Anglican Christian interlocutors in Amman. As a former teacher and environment specialist, she has been actively involved in environmental activism in her local church. She organizes regular workshops for women and youth in the church on environmental and water issues using teachings from the Bible. Sarah lives in a middle-class neighborhood of Amman where the weekly water distribution schedule is not very reliable. Some months, especially in the summer, Sarah's neighborhood receives water only twice a month. Like Reem and Mona, Sarah attributes the problem of water scarcity in her neighborhood to corruption and the state's failure to provide residents with adequate water. Yet, she also describes these moments of water scarcity as important in helping her treat water as a divine trust rather than a commodity. She explained this in the following way:

> In the weeks when water is scarce, I use a jug of water, about 2.5 liters, to shower. However, in the weeks when the water flow is normal, I turn on the shower and don't pay any attention to how many liters of water I am using. I don't think about water then because it is abundantly available. The interesting thing is that I feel clean whether I use 2.5 liters or 50 liters of water. This leads me to examine my actions and ask myself whether what I am doing is ethical and whether I am not being faithful to the *amana* that God has given us. When we have a lot of water, I try to remember the days when I have to shower with only 2.5 liters of water.

For Mona, Reem, and Sarah, this labor of enacting water scarcity in the everyday is neither a waiting for, nor an anxious anticipation of, a future water scarcity, but a continuous effort to maintain an order of the everyday where water scarcity exists as a permanent potentiality. The purpose of this permanent potentiality is not to imbue the person with fear of future scarcity, but to allow for the establishment and reproduction of the ethical space of experience that enables her to engage with water as an *amana* and not only a commodity and a right.

This daily enactment/performance of water scarcity produces a process of ethical accounting and self-examination in the form of what some interlocutors described as the ethical disposition o*f tazakor* (remembering) and others described as the ethical disposition of *istish'aar (raising to consciousness, making one alert). Tazakor* and *istish'aar* are what ensures that the person upholds the *amana* through sustaining a sense of fracture in the present, by binding together the temporality of abundance with the temporality of scarcity in the everyday. By doing this, *tazakor and istish'aar* help establish and reproduce water as an obligation of divine trust. The purpose, as Reem put it "is not to learn how to save water during times of scarcity, but to learn how to treat water as an *amana* at all times as the prophet taught us not to waste water 'even if you were on the banks of a flowing river.'" Reem is referring to the following popular prophetic *hadith*: "The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, passed by Sa'd while he was performing ablution. The Prophet said, "What is this extravagance?" Sa'd said, "Is there extravagance with water in ablution?" The Prophet said, "Yes, even if you were on the banks of a flowing river." This hadith was invoked by all my Muslim interlocutors to stress that even when the person is performing ablution for prayers, which is fundamental and something that pleases God, she should not forget that water is an *amana* and whether one lives in times of scarcity or abundance (i.e. by a river), upholding the *amana* remains a fundamental duty of the Muslim person.

Imagining the Future of Water

Current struggles over the value of water are intimately tied to struggles over temporality as the various regimes of value seek to shape the future of water, particularly with climate change

increasingly becoming the primary site through which narratives and visions about the future are formed in the present. Muehlebach's ethnography of water movements in Europe, for instance, demonstrates how the financialization and privatisation of water creates visions of the future built on dislodging "those forms of debt that organize intergenerational relations and without which humans could not be" (2023b, 687), and replacing them with "financialized debt." Within this temporality of value, the present (parents) and the future (children) are bound together by perpetual bondage to global financial institutions. Water movements in Europe fiercely reject this vision of the future offering a counter-vision centred around "[the moral] debt that current generations owe to water as life-giving substance" (2023a, 11) This reorientation of the question of "to whom does life on earth owe debt?" from capital to water generates a temporality of value built on "life's indebtedness to water …as it holds together humans and non-humans, bodies across space, and generations across time" (2023b: 678).

In contexts where human subjectivities are self-fashioned as entrusted stewards and vicegerents, the distinctions of right/commodity and private property/commons are not the core of the ethics of water justice. Instead, the question of "to whom does life on earth owe debt? and its entanglments with the future and intergernatioal relations and responsbilities, emerge within very different parameters and temporal configurations. Given that the *amana* foregrounds God, its temporal horizons don't only connect the present to the future but extend that connection to include the past as well as the unknown future of accountability in the hereafter.

Pointing to the glass of water on the table in front of us, Sarah says

> One day we will give an account of what we did with that water… Yes, we have heard all those stories about how water scarcity will get worse, that we might have water wars, that climate change might end the world. Yes, we are scared, very scared, but in the end only God knows what will happen in the future and when the world will end. These narratives will not spur people to action, they will say "let me eat and drink now and by the time the world ends as they say, I will be dead."

Sarah's words were in response to my questions about the revival of water wars narratives, which first rose to prominence in the 1990s (Selby 2003), as part of the emerging apocalyptic framings of climate change and global warming in media and political discourses.

Similarly, among my Muslim interlocutors, being subjected to divine justice was invoked much more than the threat of scarcity, water wars, and apocalypse as the driver of self-reckoning and ethical conduct as they contemplated what ethico-religious practices would secure water justice and

well-being for future generations. It was this accountability to Allah, manifested in sentences like, "It is forbidden (*haram*)," "I fear Allah that my actions will result in the transgression of the rights of others in water," and "I want to please Allah," that prompts them to examine whether their everyday practices of using water were just. This commitment to just practices is key to upholding divine trust in this world so that one is able to account for it in the hereafter.

My interlocutors' commitment to justice and accountability to God open up, as noted in Sarah's response, a temporal orientation where the future is only known to God and cannot be foreseen, imagined, or predicted by humans. For this reason, the apocalyptic framings of the future in which many of the narratives of water scarcity and climate change in the Middle East are increasingly grounded were rejected by all my interlocutors, mainly because they are rooted in "a habit of thinking of the future as a particular configuration that, even if not fully predictable in every detail, is somewhat imaginable" (Ballestero 2019, 190). Instead of engaging with the future through apocalyptic metanarratives, my interlocutors seek to inhabit a temporal configuration where this world is entwined with the hereafter; a temporal horizon that is indifferent to the idea of making the future imaginable. One effect of this orientation towards the hereafter and indifference to making the future imaginable is that water justice in the present becomes uncoupled from the idea of a better future for future generations that animates most secular discourses on climate change and intergernational equity.

Instead, the *amana* articulates the relationship between present generations with future generations through a different arrangement. Because everything in the world is God's property, natural resources, including water, are as one Muslim interlocutor put it to me:

> One right of God's rights in this world. Therefore, no one person or community, or generation owns its and has the exclusive right of using it. It is a common right for all humanity and all generations. Islam gives the right to each generation to use and enjoy water, but it doesn't give them that exclusively. No generation is allowed to use water beyond its fair need. As the prophet said: "humans are partners in three, water, pastures and fire," and "Three are not prevented - water, pastures and fire." Water is one of the three things humans have the obligation to share across generations.

For my interlocutors, this obligation to partner and share across generations requires an ethical and temporal arrangement that is exemplified by the old Arabic proverb: "*They planted so we ate and we plant so they would eat*." Sarah, for instance, explained this proverb to me in the following way:

> This proverb means that God told us that the earth and everything on it is entrusted to all of us, not just one generation. We all get to

> benefit and enjoy its goodness (*khayrat*), all the generations, my parents, me, and my children. God said that the earth is an *amana,* take care of it because I will take it back and I will ask you about it. Our role is to uphold this *amana* in a way that allows the next generation to receive it in a good condition so as to be able to benefit from it and enjoy its goodness, but more importantly to be able to uphold the *amana*. Because my parents planted, I was able to eat, and I am planting to enable the next generation to eat. God has given us the *amana* and we are not being faithful to it simply because we have forgotten that it is an *amana,* and act in this world as if we own it.

Given that the *amana* is shared across generations, each generation partakes in mediating the reproduction of the entrusted space that enables the next generation to carry out the responsibility of upholding the *amana*. Furthermore, this act of mediating the reproduction of *amana* means that each generation's accountability to God extends beyond one's lifetime to include accountability for actions and practices carried out in the future and by future generations.

To enact water justice with the next generation in mind requires, as Sarah further explains, steering one's consciousness towards death:

> When somebody dies and we go to bury them, we keep saying that this world is nothing, we are all going to die, and we really don't own anything in this world. However, this only happens in the two hours of the funeral, after which we forget everything. Of course, God has blessed us with forgetfulness so that we can live in this world. If we think of death all the time, we won't be able to live and do anything. We will be constantly thinking about death. Yet, God has given us forgetfulness, but he didn't promise us eternity. Nobody in this world will live forever. We are in this world for a limited time, and someone else will come and take our place. This house in which I live now, was built by my parents. They used to say: "tomorrow, when we die, our children will live in this house." When they gave this house to me, it was in a good condition and I am able to live in it comfortably and happy, now I need to ask myself how I am going to leave for my children. If I am unfaithful to this *amana* [the house], how will my children live in it.

Upholding the *amana,* for Sarah and my other interlocutors, requires living and acting in a temporal framework where the past, the present, and the future are connected through death and its remembrance. Remembering death is also the way people "[welcome] a temporality of the end in the time of the now." (Pandolfo 2007: 337). Death, as Sarah and others have repeatedly told me, is what constantly reminds humans of God's ownership of this world as well as of their accountability for it as entrusted stewards and vicegerents in the hereafter.

Conclusion

The United Nations declared water a human right in 2010, yet making water universally and equitably accessible to all seems to be increasingly unrealizable in the current crisis of climate change and increasing water scarcity in many parts of the worlds. In recent years, across the world, individuals and institutions, including ordinary citizens, corporations, politicians, bureaucrats, and NGOs, have become deeply involved in creating new modes of valuing water through both mundane everyday practices and major political struggles. Anthropologists have highlighted the continual differentiation of water as a commodity from water as a right entailed in these practices and struggles as well as their importance not only for valuing water in the present but also for their aspirations to shape the future of water as its accessibility becomes more difficult. Nevertheless, these efforts to develop new modes of valuing water take place within existing secular political, legal, and economic frameworks and are therefore indifferent to forms of value that draw on religious teachings and traditions. This article, by contrast, sought to recognize and take seriously the ways, religion, particularly Islam and Christianity, inform people's efforts to imbue water with value as they learn to live with increasing scarcity and attempt to respond to the moral demands of future generations' right to water. To be sure, in Jordan, where fieldwork for this paper was conducted, struggles over water accessibility and water justice enfold in a context where the right/commodity distinctions play an important role.

Yet, Muslims and Christian in Jordan also draw on the concept of *amana* when trying to imbue water with value in their everyday life. Here, the right/commodity and private property/commons distinctions exist alongside *amana* to give meaning to water ethics and justice and visions of the future. *Amana* doesn't abandon, but affirms the value of water as a common good accessible to all and shared across generations. Yet, it makes the realization of this value dependent on the divinely mediated relations of trust and obligation that hold together all of God's creation. In exploring *amana* as the foundation of Christian and Muslim modes of valuing water, the paper also sought to show how religion could create space for other ways of countering the growing efforts to turn water into a "capitalist frontier," particularly at times when environmental collapse and climate change are making the search for new modes of valuing water and new articulations of intergenerational equity an urgent necessity. Perhaps concepts like *amana*, with their orientation towards divine responsibility and other-worldy telos rather than human rights and worldy telos, might offer important conceptual resources for rethinking the grounds on which the obligations to share across generations are founded.

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notes and references

[1] Nora was one of hundreds of Muslim and Christian preachers that took part in a water conservation program implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (popularly known as GIZ) in cooperation with various Muslim and Christian religious institutions. The project trained preachers in the use of scripture to promote water conservation among Muslims and Christians in Jordan. For Nora, and many other preachers, I interviewed during my fieldwork, taking part in this program was the first time that they began to link religion to climate change and started preaching about it in their sermons and weekly lessons.

[2] Jordan is portrayed in academic and political discourses as the country with the second most severe water shortage crisis in the world. Yet, many Jordanians are very sceptical and suspicious of the scarcity discourses arguing that water scarcity in Jordan is not natural, but 'invented' by an unfair water agreement with Israel, widespread water grabs and smuggling by wealthy Jordanians and Emirati investors, and poor infrastructural provisions. This 'invented' scarcity is further exacerbated by the waves of refugees that more than tripled the population of Jordan in the last two decades. For more on water scarcity in Jordan, see Hussein (2018). On the Jordan-Israel water sharing agreement, see Talozi et al. 2019.

[3] Father George also took part in the GIZ program.

[4] A wealth of research has explored the transformation of water into what Jamie Linton calls 'modern water' (2010: 14) through the commodification and privatization of public water services amid increasing water scarcity (Strang 2004; Bakker 2010; Linton 2010; Orlove and Caton 2010; Linton and Budds 2014; Keogh and Youngstedt 2019).

[5] The relationship between water and religion was explored by a number of scholars through an examination of the importance of water as a 'godly gift' and 'holy waters' in religious rituals (Alley 2002; McAllister 2020). More recently, Tessa Farmer (2023) explored the ways religion impacts the ethics of procuring water and managing wastewater in an informal settlement in Cairo.

[6] The Arabic version of this verse uses the term "trustworthy wise steward (*wakeel amin*)" instead of "the faithful and wise manager": يارب ألنا قلت هذا المثل أم للجميع أيضا .فقال الرب فمن هو الوكيل الأمين الحكيم الذي يُقيمه سيده على خدمه ليعطيهم العلوفة في حينها. طوبى لذلك العبد الذي إذا جاء سيده يجده يفعل هكذا بالحق أقول لكم إنه يُقيمه على جميع أمواله. Likewise, my Christian interlocutors used *amana* and *wakeel amin* to describe the relationship with water.

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