The special collection appearing in this issue of the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society makes a valuable contribution to lively ongoing discussions centred on explorations of the concept of the sovereignty of God within contemporary Islamic traditions. As its Guest Editors Humeira Iqtidar and Oliver Scharbrodt highlight in their introductory essay, the concept of divine sovereignty has come to occupy a key place in Islamist thinking, with the writings of Abul A'la Maududi playing a hugely significant role in its twentieth- and twenty-first-century articulations. Comprising articles based on papers first presented in September 2019 at an ERC-funded workshop organised jointly by King’s College London and the University of Birmingham, it offers cutting-edge scholarly reflections on how Maududi’s articulation of ḥakimiyat-i ilahiyya has been received in a multiplicity of Muslim contexts and communities. Hence, their authors—Humeira Iqtidar, Oliver Scharbrodt, Usama Al-Azmi, and Simon Wolfgang Fuchs—grapple with how far Maududi’s thinking can be understood as a response to perceived challenges of ‘modernity’, as well as to the ways in which ideas linked to this notion connect with debates going back much further in time.

As the Guest Editors acknowledge, the original initiative that has resulted in this special collection was prompted in part by a JRAS article that had appeared not long beforehand, namely ‘The sovereignty of God in modern Islamic thought’ (JRAS 25, 3 [2015], pp. 389–418). It is particularly apt, therefore, that its author Muhammad Qasim Zaman provides the Afterword here, in which he reflects on the contributions, while also considering how his own engagement with the subject has evolved in recent years. Indeed, for readers interested in exploring Professor Zaman’s own scholarly engagement with the topics under the spotlight here, they may like to seek out articles by him in earlier issues of the JRAS: for example, ‘The relevance of religion and the response to it: a study of religious perceptions in early Islam’ (JRAS 20, 2 [1988], pp. 265–87), ‘Arabic, the Arab Middle East and the definition of Muslim identity in twentieth-century India’ (JRAS 8, 1 [1998], pp. 59–81), and (most recently) ‘Political power, religious authority and the caliphate in eighteenth-century Indian Islamic thought’ (JRAS 30, 2 [2020], pp. 313–40).