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KEEPING ACCOUNTS BY THE BOOK: THE REVELATION(S) OF ACCOUNTING

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Abstract

Our paper addresses what the moral foundations of accounting are, regardless of capitalistic operations, as we are seeking to trace a genealogy of accounting thinking disconnected from coincidence with Capitalism. We demonstrate that the three monotheisms have bared the core of accounting. We purport to explicate how the three monotheisms (Judaism, Christianity divided into Roman Catholicism and Protestantisms, and Islam) have successively revealed the nature of accounting to moralise people's day-to-day conduct. Our approach to the revelation of accounting is informed with practice theory to study how accounting was used in believers' day-to-day activities and faith management. To this end, we read theological debates on accounting from Rabbinic, Islamic, Catholic and Protestant literatures raised at the time of the Reformation. Our study reveals that, in the four religions, bookkeeping serves as routine and rules to account for daily conduct, its content being contingent upon common understandings (viz. God's identity, capabilities and expectations) and teleoaffective structures (viz. definition of and ways to salvation). Through this paper, we demonstrate that accounting issues have always served as a sub-practice in moral practices and is therefore not necessarily coincidental with economic operations. Ultimately, we contribute to literature on the genesis of accounting, accounting as situated practice and accounting as moral practice.

Keywords: religion, accounting, Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism, Islam, Control as practice

Paper type: Research paper

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In accounting research, it has been commonly agreed that accounting was born coincidentally with Capitalism (Bryer, 1993; 2000a; b; Carruthers & Espeland, 1991; Chiapello, 2007; Derks, 2008; Miller & Napier, 1993). All these works are very suggestive of Weber's argument that economic rationality needs a rational and systematic ordering of assets and liabilities, as in the *Capital* account. As Capitalism is not uniform and varies across cultures, space and time (Deeg, 2009; Lane & Geoffrey, 2009), one could wonder alongside which form of Capitalism accounting was born. It is also argued that accounting serves as a moral practice within Capitalism and is therefore influenced by religious thought underpinned by faith (Carruthers & Espeland, 1991; Maltby, 1997; McKernan & Kosmala, 2004; 2007; McPhail & Walters, 2009). In such a context, it is consistent and unsurprising that Lucca Pacioli on one hand and merchants on the other wrote on the bottom of their books of accounts "in the name of God" to whom they were addressed (Carruthers & Espeland, 1991; Maltby, 1997). This points to whether books of accounts been kept for economic or religious reasons.

Obviously, economic and religious rationales for the development of accounting are intertwined. As the economic part has been extensively studied, this paper addresses what the an-economic foundations of accounting are through emphasis on the spiritual dimension. Following the stream of thought arguing that accounting is a practice moralising conduct, we explicate how the religions of the Book (Judaism, Christianity divided into Roman Catholicism and Protestantisms, and Islam) supported the development of accounts of day-to-day activities as spiritual practice. Positioned in accounting history, we focus on Reformation time, climax of theological debates on how to render accounts of faithful conduct to God. Day-to-day activities and the way they develop accounting are observed through the lens of practice theory, i.e, a bundle common understandings, routines, rules and teleoaffective structures (see Schatzki, 2000a). Doing so, we follow prior works on management accounting and control as practice (Ahrens & Chapman, 2002; 2007) or accounting and strategising (Jørgensen & Messner, 2009).

We note that, in the four religions, bookkeeping serves as routine and rules to account for daily conduct, its content being contingent upon common understandings (viz. God's identity, capabilities and expectations) and teleoaffective structures (viz. definition of and ways to salvation). Through this paper, we demonstrate that accounting issues have always served as a sub-practice in moral practices and is therefore not necessarily coincidental with economic operations. In other words, the case of the four religions reveals that the design of accounting systems is contingent upon the social context in which they operate. Ultimately, an accounting system upholding the morals of business operations should offer routines and rules consistent with the common understandings and teleoaffective structures driving them, reflection on these being crucial.

This paper is divided into four sections. First, we develop our theoretical framework on accounting and religion as practices. Second, we introduce our research site and historiographical methodology. Third, we explore the revelation of accounting thinking in the spiritualities of the Book. In the fourth section, we discuss our findings and conclude the paper.

1. Key constructs and theoretical framework

This section introduces the study key constructs and theoretical framework. We first explicate

our approach to accounting thinking as the logic of dual world categorising. Second, to provide the reader with an intelligible text, we establish connections between accounting and religion through the path of practice theory, which offers a common base for the understanding of the two phenomena studied.

1.1. Accounting as mode of thinking

It is commonly agreed in the literature that double entry bookkeeping and other calculative threads of accounting have developed alongside Capitalism (Bryer, 1993; 2000a; b; 2006; Chiapello, 2007; Miller, 1997; Miller & Napier, 1993). The main social scientists interested in accounting and Capitalism have stressed that they had been resting upon religion as a common base since the Middle Ages (Aqbal & Mirakhor, 2006; Carruthers & Espeland, 1991; Derks, 2008; Gambling & Karim, 1991; Rodinson, 1966; Sombart, 1911; 1916; Taqi-Usmami, 2002; Weber, 1921; 1922). These authors argue that Judaism, Roman Catholicism, Islam and later Protestantism(s) have created accounting as a means of recording and coordinating trade activities, money lent to European monarchs, inventory resources available in monasteries and managing offertories to deities. Until societies became post-modern and secularised, they have been driven by religious prescriptions.

In the Middle Ages already, Islamic and Catholic merchants accounted for economic transactions “*in the name of God*” (Carruthers & Espeland, 1991), while in the nineteenth century Jewish and Protestant tradespersons kept such books “*in the name of God and profit*” (Freytag, 1855; Maltby, 1997). In the latter cases, profit accumulation was considered a moral practice. In other words, as Weber (1921) and Sombart (1911, 1916) note, capital accumulation was a delineation of faith. What they observed in Judaism and Protestantism has been noted in Roman Catholicism (Hallman, 1985; Michaud, 1991) and Islam (Rodinson, 1966) too. Such practices were enabled through the development of calculative practices by the clergy and religious people. To demonstrate God’s boundlessness, Pascal developed the mathematical theory of infinite and limits as well as the first computing machine, following Arab mathematicians who had invented calculative sciences through numbers (namely 0) through arithmetics and geometry (Rodinson, 1966). As extensions of faith, numbers and calculative threads were used to “render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s”¹, Caesar being concerned about political and economic life, while God judges moral and faithful daily conduct². Beyond mere economic rationality, in the act of giving accounts, the individual and the organisation reveal the morality of their conduct (McKernan & Kosmala, 2004).

In this paper, we regard accounting as a comprehensive process driven by a worldview resulting in categorising any situation into two: debits/credits always equalling each other (Gambling, 1987; Hopwood, 1994). We consider here the core of accounting lies in indentifying items received for a purpose (credit) and the use made thereof (debit), both counterparts equalling each other. In other words, we consider accounting starts from double entry bookkeeping for those reasons. Borrowed from the Ancient Greeks’ twofold view of the world, this understanding of accounting has reconciled abstract items coming from the world of ideas with their physical manifestation in practical life (Derks, 2008). Stepwise, accounting has been narrowed down as the equalisation of resources and use made thereof, summarised as “we own a particular amount because at some other time we have given or owe an

¹ Matthew 22:21; Luke 20:25.

² See Acts 25:6-21, 27:24, 28:19.

equivalent amount” (Aho, 2005, p.72).

Balance of credits and debits can only be observed through formal representations, i.e. written records. As giving an account of and account-ing for something embrace different realities, accounting comprises of numerical and discursive threads enabling to name and count the features of balanced credits and debits. Discursive skills enable to name and frame what is to be accounted for, whereas calculative capabilities support quantification and measurement (Quattrone, 2009, p.86). Items to be accounted for are first named and then transformed into numbers through working units reflecting what is expectedly balanced and evaluation models revealing this.

We consider accounting a practice situated in the social context in which it operates (Burchell, Clubb, Hopwood, Hughes & Nahapiet, 1980; Burchell, Clubb & Hopwood, 1985; Hopwood, 1994; Laughlin, 1988). Here, social context is revealed religion. As religion is broad, we offer a compared analysis of four social contexts apparently similar and explicate the extent to which they differ. Thereby, we bring additional evidence of the influence of social context on accounting systems.

1.2. Accounting and religion as practice

Religion encompasses individual perceptions (Durkheim, 1898; Lévinas, 1974; 1975), collective constructions and normative views. Individual encounters with the Holy are underpinned by belief in deities (*Faith*) steadily capable of explaining the world order (*Faithfulness*). When these convictions are shared by several people, a *congregation* is informally created, in which devotees recognise the *clergy* as a legitimate authority qualified for designing and managing the *Religious Beliefs System* (Derrida & Wieviorka, 2001; Latour, 2002), norm issuance and coordination of local practices being parts of their administrative tasks (Durkheim, 1898; 1902; Eliade, 1959; Weber, 1922). The four religions observed in this paper are those of the Book, which is here extensively understood. Basically, the Book is the Old Testament, i.e. the Torah and later pieces. In Judaism, the Book comprises of the Mishnah and Talmud, these theological discussions being as sacred as God’s word. Later, in Christianity, the Book comprehends the Old and New Testaments. Later, when Islam appeared, Angel Gabriel rewrote the Bible and revealed the Qur’an to mankind. The three Monotheisms have as common base a Book in which God revealed Himself to mankind through prophets and angels.

Accounting and religion will be treated as practices for two reasons, one being topical, while the other is methodological. First, practice theory reads the most appropriate to study day-to-day activities. Practice theory was developed by social scientists dealing with the construction of a religious *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1977; Certeau (de), 1984; 1986). It has then been used to study day-to-day management accounting practices, such as menu construction in a restaurant chain (Ahrens & Chapman, 2002; 2007) or new product development (Jørgensen & Messner, 2009). As this paper crosses day-to-day accounts and day-to-day religious activities, practice theory seem particularly appropriate. Second, accounting thinking and religion have differentiated conceptual bases. Therefore, in order to study both jointly, a common base is necessary, which can be found is the notion of practice. In practice theory, a practice is usually defined as a bundle of *common understandings, routines, rules* and *teleoaffective structures* (Barnes, 2000; Bourdieu, 1977; Certeau (de), 1984; 1988; Coulter, 2000; Lounsbury & Crumbley, 2007; Schatzki, 2000a; b; 2005). The next paragraphs show the

conceptual common foundation of both through explicit routines and rules, whereas common understandings and teleoaffective structures differentiate these two social phenomena.

Common understandings of how to do things are first the knowledge that *individuals* have of the way of performing actions, be it explicit or implicit. But they also encompass the interpretation they can make of knowledge and the way they can translate it into actions. However, owing to particularities of the context, practices may be altered, as common understandings might change from one actor to another (consciously or non-consciously), different rules might be issued, while ends might be emphasized differently (Schatzki, 2005, p.475). Therefore, *rules* are issued to impose a normative way of doing things within the practice. Doctrines, guidelines and other norms are intentionally developed and enforced to make individuals comply with the structure's overall views through a normalised array of understandings, desires, beliefs, expectations, emotions and ultimately actions (Schatzki, 2005, p.481). Daily application of these rules rests upon a *habitus* consisting of the exteriorisation of interiorised knowledge through *routines*. Rules and routines specify *correct* or at least acceptable behaviour for the practice to be perpetuated. This normative scheme is supplemented by *teleoaffective structures* encompassing ends and projects whither the practice is addressed, and combined with the emotions usually expressed in the pursuit of that practice. Actually, as appropriations may vary, arrangements are necessary to constitute a practice: people make confront their understandings with those of others and readjust themselves accordingly until their behaviour is acceptable (Schatzki, 2000a; 2005).

Accounting thinking can be viewed as a practice, in which common understandings are the labels and threads used to tell the story of resources and use made thereof. In other words, the dual logic of accounting could be considered a commonly shared understanding revealed through the notion of double entry bookkeeping. Routines can be traced through the procedures used to construct reports and disclosure periodicity. It is commonplace to consider that rules are GAAPs or the procedures issued and enforced through management control systems. Lastly, teleoaffective structures deployed in accounting thinking can be found in pride to witness one's capabilities and actualisations (re use of resources, outcomes, conduct, etc.)

Religion also can be conceptualised as a practice, in which common understandings can be found in faith, viz. the definition of deities' capabilities. In other words, common understandings can be manifested in the religious belief system. In that practice, routines are manifested in rituals developed and followed to pray, praise and honour deities, viz. liturgy and translation into everyday activities. Given the interplay between laity and clergy, the latter issuing norms about the interpretation of deities' requirements, rules can be found in the congregation/denomination theology, which is the normative science of divinity. Lastly, teleoaffective structures entailed in the social construction of religion as practice are divine grace perception and salvation, i.e. the God's unbounded love revealed to the believer.

| | Accounting | Religion |
|---------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| Common understandings | Labels and threads upholding reporting | Faith in capable deities |
| Routines | Procedures Periodicity | Rituals, liturgy, prayer, praises |
| Rules | GAAPs MCS requirements | Theology |
| Teleoaffective structures | Proud to witness one's capabilities and morale | Salvation Divine grace |

Figure 1. Accounting and religion as practices

The figure above stresses both the common conceptual base and main differences between accounting and religion. The core of their common base lies in routines and rules deployed, accounting procedures and periodicity resembling religious rituals (Gambling, 1977; 1987). On the other hand, GAAPs, management control systems and theology are issued and enforced by legitimate authorities compelling other practice members to conform hither. The clergy operates as God's managers (Kreander, McPhail & Molyneaux, 2004) issuing a doctrine and enforcing regulations re the Lord's will. In other contexts, GAAPs can be issued and enforced by governments to ensure that managers will comply, while management control systems are designed to make individual goals convergent, consistent and congruent (de Haas & Algera, 2002). Despite such overlapping of accounting and religion, common understandings and teleoaffective structures differ. Whereas common understandings in accounting practice are manifestly driven by economic rationality (labels and tools), they are resting on emotions in religion. Accordingly, the teleoaffective structures erected also differ: accounting rests on proud to witness one's capabilities and possibly morals, whereas religion reposes on salvation and divine grace. In that context, we read theological debates on accounts rendered to God to understand the moral and spiritual foundations of accounting.

2. Dataset and methodology

In this section, we explicate how we collected and analysed data to answer our research question. First, we clarify our positioning in historiography and history of theological thought. Second, we stress how the practice framework developed early on drives the interpretation of those texts.

2.1. Historiography of theological debates on accounting

To answer our research question, we rest our study on a historiographic analysis of the way the four religions have revealed accounting thinking to mankind. We will not base our analysis on historical archives, but on interpretations made thereof by historians, sociologists or theologians. Moreover, as we are interested in how spirituality has upheld accounting

thinking, we deliberately consider actual practices beyond the scope of our study.

We collected data reflecting accounting as a mode of thinking applicable to any everyday activity, even if it is apparently insignificant. We collected three types of data: first passages from the Holy Scriptures relating to accounting, secondly theological debates about interpretations of God's word, and third recent theological debates re ancient disputes. As such disputes arouse at Reformation time, we focus on mainstream theologies handling accounts of day-to-day life in the Renaissance. Protestantism emerged as the offshoot of accounting disputes with Catholic practices, which, in turn, were reinforced by the Jesuits. As a reaction, Protestant theologies turned back to the Jewish roots of Christianity, while Islamic scientific discoveries facilitated European accounting practices. As accounting issues in day-to-day life seem to be critical in theological debates, we leave aside prior studies dealing with financial accounts in Judaism³, Catholic monasteries⁴, Protestant denominations⁵, or Islamic organisations⁶.

Despite difficulties in gathering homogeneous and reliable texts, we were able to identify regularities, convergences and trends in accounting-thinking-based spiritualities. Difficulties were as follows. In Judaism, rabbinic tradition is mainly oral, rare texts being written in Hebrew and deliberately not translated into other languages. Eventually, in Judaism, learning the Hebraic language and reading original texts is part of the believers' spiritual journey (Lévinas, 1963; Lévinas & Aronowicz, 1990; Neusner, 1979; 1993). Although a similar phenomenon is observable for Islam, commentaries and theological debates have flourished since the nineties, which facilitated our study. In sum, our dataset comprehends of publications in theology, history of religious thought and historical surveys on applied spirituality in the four religions⁷. In addition to these texts, we collected data from informal conversations with ministers: rabbis, imams, priests and pastors. We also attended various theological seminars to be aware of contemporary disputes about the way accounting thinking was revealed in the Book.

2.2. Analysing theology through practice lens

Empirical evidence is a synthesised restitution of theological and historiographical debates re the Monotheisms underpinned by accounting thinking. To make the story clear for the reader, we articulate here the points on which commentators seem to agree and emphasise as the intertwining of accounting with religion. Accordingly, our approach provides a synthesis of mainstream approaches to the revelation of accounting through the religions of the Book. Deliberately, we will consider that themes on which theologians and historians profoundly disagree are beyond the scope of our study. Evidently, our synthesis is addressed to the layperson, religious people considering such observations common knowledge.

Moreover, to make our approach systematic and intelligible to the reader, we re-wrote the outcomes of theological and historiographical debates adopting the practice framework developed early on. As for accounting and religion, this will facilitate comparisons between

³ Three papers were published in *Accounting History* on financial accounts in Judaism.

⁴ Numerous PhD dissertations dealing with these issues have been defended in Latin America and Italy.

⁵ See *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 2004 and 2005 special issues (17:3 and 18:2)

⁶ In 2006, *Accounting Historians Journal* published several papers on Islamic accounting. On the other hand, in 2010, the first issue of the *Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research* will be published, in which these issues will be handled more systematically.

⁷ For more details re our dataset, see Appendix 1.

the four religious contexts studied. Eventually, we expect to identify regularities and also specificities for each religion from the story written. Although we do not focus on how individuals in their everyday lives actualise accounting spirituality, we consider the latter a practice in Schatzki's (2000a, b, 2005) terms. Indeed, we will rely on the four-dimensional model of a practice to understand how accounting thinking and the four religions have overlapped. Heuristically, we will observe each religion as a bundle of common understandings, routines, rules and teleoaffective structures informed with the Holy Scriptures and theological debates. The table below summarises our analytical scheme and does not pretend to reduce Judaism, Catholicism, Islam and Protestantism to an array.

| | Judaism | Catholicism | Islam | Protestantism |
|---------------------------|---------|-------------|-------|---------------|
| Common understandings | | | | |
| Routines | | | | |
| Rules | | | | |
| Teleoaffective structures | | | | |

Figure 2. Coding template.

As this study is concerned about understanding how accounting thinking has been revealed in the Book, we will fill the sixteen cells of our template with the very specificities of revelation for each of the four religions. Filling the cells should provide the reader with an intelligible motif and recurrent theme. Common understandings re God's capabilities, realisations and expectations/requirements will probably vary from one religion to the other. We expect the honouring, praying and praising of God (routines) to vary too because of differentiated modes of revelation and theologies (rules) underpinned by differentiated conceptions of grace and salvation (teleoaffective structures).

3. Accounting revealed in the religions of the Book

In this section, we explicate how accounting as thinking and practice is revealed through the religions of the Book. To this end, we present the contribution of each religion with respect to their chronological revelation to Man. To have a common and comparable base, we present each of them through four stages: common understandings of God and revelation, teleoaffective structures re salvation, rules such as issued and debated by clergy members and theologians and accounting routines upholding revelation and subsequent ways to salvation. We then conclude on the main issues for accounting raised by the religion observed. Unsurprisingly, we will first deal with accounting for the Law in Judaism, then for the Original Sin in Roman Catholicism. We moderate the argument through references to Protestantism (section 3) before introducing accounting for the Sharia in Islam, although the latter appeared before the former. In fact, we hereby consider Protestantism and Roman Catholicism two practicalities of Christianity different enough to deserve separate treatments.

3.1. Accounting for the Law in Judaism

In the rabbinic literature, most authors agree that common understandings relate to God's identity, revelation and commandments. After millennia of paganism, God revealed the Tablets to Moses on Mount Sinai. All commentators agree that the core commandment guiding the understanding of God's identity, capabilities and will is the honouring of His uniqueness, idolatry being the main offense against God (e.g. (Copeland, 2002; Kaplan, 1998; Neusner, 1993; Schechter, 1894a; b; Ward, 1999)). Subsequently, no representation of God was allowed, Who was not to be personified through any icons, idolatry being the utmost sin against Him (Ross, 1999). At the same time as the Lord gave Moses the Tablets, He revealed to His people His law and counterparts through a covenant (Urbach, 1979). The people of Israel were to honour Him and were in turn rewarded or punished in this life as well as in the next life (Neusner, 1979; 1993; Schechter, 1895b; 1896; Urbach, 1979). Such common understandings have been driven by the consciousness of being chosen by God to reveal Him to the world. The rabbinic belief in the election of Israel finds its clearest expression in a prayer commencing as follows (see Schechter, 1894b):

“Thou hast chosen us from all peoples; thou hast loved us and taken pleasure in us, and hast exalted us above all tongues; thou hast sanctified us by thy commandments and brought us near unto thy service; O our King, thou hast called us by thy great and holy name”

Eventually, Moses was chosen by God to free the people of Israel from Egyptian enslavement. Since its Exodus from Egypt, the Jewish people have been considered saved by God and His witnesses worldwide (Elman, 1994; Satlow, 2003). After Moses died, a Messiah had been expected, whose coming should reflect salvation completion. It is commonly understood that honouring God's Law expressed through the Ten Commandments and the Sabbath collectively and individually is the sole way to salvation⁸ (Elman, 1994; Jaffee, 1997; Lévinas & Aronowicz, 1990; Satlow, 2003; Schechter, 1895a; b; 1896). These teleoaffactive structures are summarised as follows:

1. The faith that the Messiah will restore the Kingdom of Israel, which under his sceptre will extend over the whole world. 2. The notion that a last terrible battle will take place with the enemies of God (or of Israel), who will strive against the establishment of the kingdom, and who will finally be destroyed. 3 the conviction that it will be an age of both material as well as spiritual happiness for all those who are included in the kingdom (Schechter, 1895a, p.206).

Obviously, these have been the cement of the Jewish Law⁹ and rules for everyday life. Initially, rules were 613 in number and covered all aspects of life, 365 being prohibitive laws (and as many sanctions), whereas the other 248 were affirmative and accounted for (Urbach, 1996). The rabbinic literature, such as synthesised by Urbach (1996), explains that every day brings its new temptation to be resisted only by a firm *Do-Not*. On the other hand, the whole

⁸ See Exodus 27:2 and Leviticus 18:2.

⁹ The Old Testament (viz. the Jewish Bible) evokes on numerous occurrences that the believer must account for his conduct and for God's gifts (see in Genesis 1:22-28, 3:16, 6:1, 8:17, 9:1-7, 16:10, 17:2-20, 22:17, 26:4-24, 28:3, 35:11, 48:4; Exodus: 1:10, 7:3, 23:29, 32:13; Leviticus 26:9; Deuteronomy 6:3, 7:13, 8:1-13, 13:17, 30:16; Leviticus 7:12-16; 22:29; I Chronicles 4:27; Job 19:18; Psalms 16:4, 107:38; Proverbs 6:35; Isaiah 51:2; Jeremiah 23:3, 29:6, 30:19, 33:22; Ezekiel 36:10-11, 37:26; Hosea 4:10, 12:1; Amos 4:4; Nahum 3:15; Chronicles 11:11, 16:19, Esther 10:2; Prophets: Isaiah 2:22, Ezekiel 12:19, 16:61, 24:13; Nehemiah 12:8-46; Daniel 6:2, Amos 4:5, 8:8, Jonah 1:7-8, 2-9; Psalm 26:7, 50:14-23, 100:4, 107:22, 116:17, 147:7, Jeremiah 30:19).

man stands in the service of God, each part of his body being entrusted with the execution of its respective functions (Urbach, 1996, pp.355-361). Then, David came and reduced them to 11, Isaiah to 6, Micah to 3, Isaiah to 2 and lastly Amos and Habakkuk to one: seek the Lord and live by faith. Ultimately, the Tanna of the school of Elijah exclaims: “*Let man fulfil the commandments of the Torah with joy and then they will be counted to him as righteousness*”(emphasis added), which opens to accounting records and procedures as routines in Jewish thought (Cohen, 1936; Schechter, 1896; Sombart, 1911; Urbach, 1979).

Judaism has suggested that believers should practice metaphoric books of accounts, wherein faith in God is recorded as for credit and should be balanced through actual conduct, the latter reflecting mankind’s indebtedness to the Lord (Sombart, 1911). Actual conduct and expected duties performed would expectedly match. As rabbinic literature states, the believer is bound to God through a direct relationship resulting in them identifying on their own what God expects. In Jewish theologies, faith offered by God should lead the believer to conduct him/herself righteously (viz. consistently with God’s expectations).

Whether one is accounted ‘righteous’ or ‘wicked’ depends on the balance of commands performed and commands neglected. Obviously this necessitates the keeping of accounts, and each man therefore has his own, in which his words and his deeds, event the words spoken in jest, are all carefully registered. According to one authority (*Ruth Rabba, 33a*) the prophet Elijah keeps these accounts, according to another (*Esther Rabba, 86a*) the duty is assigned to angels. Every man has thus an account in heaven: Israel a particularly large one (*Sifra, 446*). And one of the ways of preparing for death is to have your account ready [...] It is difficult to perceive that the keeping of these accounts was no easy matter (Sombart, 1911, pp.144-145).

Effectively, “man is rewarded for duties performed and punished for duties neglected, the rewards and punishments being received partly in this world and partly in the next world” (Sombart, 1911, p.144). Such religious accounts are underpinned by the fact that the God of the prophets is a responsive God making moral demands that humans are free to obey or disobey and reacting to human actions in judgement through rewards and retributions (Ward, 1999, p.164). The believer records his life on a daily basis and keeps them secret but ready for the Judgement Day. A twofold relationship to God is revealed through these books of accounts. First, in this life, the believer is rewarded when commanded duties were completed; the individual is in peace and acknowledged by other community members as a righteous person (Urbach, 1979, p.380). Conversely, if duties are not performed, man is punished on earth through public revelation of guilty conduct and quietness absence (Urbach, 1979, p.373).

In addition to such counterparts, on Judgement Day, the individual encounters God and the regularity of the accounts is verified by the Lord, which leads to two verifications: regularity and contents. If accounts are not fair to the actual conduct of life, the self will be punished in the next life. For recollection, God is omniscient and cannot be cheated: He can identify such fairness easily. If accounts are fair, reward becomes possible but is enabled only if the accounts are balanced. Balance or imbalance is appraised on the basis of biographic accounts, commandments and performance being compared. In case of imbalance, the believer may sincerely repent him/herself and be rewarded for acknowledging poor conduct and being fair onwards (Urbach, 1979, p.466). The rabbinic literature insists on the privacy of such books and the prohibition of any intrusion between God and the believer (Cohen, 1936), as nobody can know the value of a commandment, but God in person (Costa, 2004).

Faith is given by God and is recorded as for credit. By faith, the believer must fulfil duties ordered by the Lord and accounts for them as debit. Fulfilled duties balance commandments from faith. Book balance is rewarded by God, rewards being net result and therefore accounted for credit (Urbach, 1979, p.466; Sombart, 1911, p.144). Unfulfilled duties being missing, faith has no counterpart. A dual mechanism is noticed. First, unfulfilled duties are recorded as an offence to God diminishing value to Him, viz. as negative debit (wicked conduct) and are compensated through retributions from God (recorded as for credit). Retributions are expected in this life, for the offender to have a chance to rebalance the account. If missing duties are not performed at all, when the Jew dies, God punishes him/her in the next life. The figure below summarises the contents of biographic accounts in Judaism.

| Debit | Credit |
|---|--|
| Performed duties (Unfulfilled obligations) | Faith in God Retributions and rewards in this life Retributions and rewards in the next life |

Figure 3. Accounting for the Law in Judaism

Judaism reveals four issues relevant for contemporary accounting as practice. First, the notion of balance between commandments revealed by God through the Tablets and actual conduct stresses double entry thinking. Everything, every item, every activity, every amount of money has a counterpart, nothing existing *per se*. This leads to the second issue regarding evaluation models. It is obvious that faithfulness and divine commandments cannot be known, measured or evaluated (Derrida, 1994), which reveals the vanity of any evaluation model, these operating at best as theologies or sets of quasi-religious beliefs (Kamuf, 2007). Therefore, and consistent with rabbinic literature, only the believer can faithfully identify what the Lord expects from them, no intermediary being legitimate to articulate any doctrine of God's will. Third, as individual accounts are not subjected to any human control, God will exert His on Judgement Day. The two books will be examined by God, Who will either reward the righteous or punish the wicked. Faithfulness can be found in the fairness of accounts and in the balance of commandments ordered by God and those actually honoured. God being omniscient, cheating is impossible, and books of accounts appear as a driver of personal life (Schechter, 1895b). Correlatively, reconciliation of mankind with divinity through autobiographic accounts leads the latter to serve as drivers for the morals of people knowing that they will stand trial before God.

3.2. Accounting for Original Sin in Roman Catholicism

In Christian theologies, it is commonplace to consider God revealed to the world through three features: the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. In Aquinas' theology, God is beyond essence and understanding, which requires mediation between Him and the self (Torrell, 2002). Eventually, in Roman Catholic theologies, such mediation is an offshoot of Original Sin: Adam and Eve ate the apple from the knowledge tree and thereby expected to know and equal God¹⁰. Therefore, Christian theologies agree on that clergy is the sole habilitated to

¹⁰ See Genesis 3:1-13.

approach God and should interfere between Him and believers, the first intermediary being Jesus, sent to clean mankind's sins (Cohen, 1980a; Harrison, 2002; Norman, 1997; Torrell, 2002).

The sinning nature of mankind leads Catholic theologians to consider that teleffective structures re divine grace and salvation are not acquired, believers being to work for it. Effectively, people are justified by their acts, evil leading to Hell (Dante, 1314), good work to Paradise (Dante, 1321) and repentance for poor conduct to Purgatory before God decides to send the guilty to Hell or Paradise (Dante, 1316). Moreover, Jansenist theologians consider that divine grace is not granted to all, God selecting amongst men those who shall be saved (Pascal, 1656). As nobody knows who will be saved, demonstrations of faith through acts should be made: people bet that they might be saved. At best, they are and at worst, they go to Purgatory in *lieu* of Hell (Pascal, 1670). Considered sinners in nature, believers are expected to be justified through confession of sins, subsequent repentance (Saint-Augustin, 1637) and manifestation of willingness to belong to God's people through the Holy Sacraments iterated in the whole course of life (Case, 1907; Christie, 1918; Panofsky, 1951).

Rules driving justification were based on the notion of a path to God (Pascal, 1670) consisting of seven sacraments, each of them characterising a stage in Christian life. Eventually, seven days after birth, children were to be baptised, *baptism* meaning entry into God's community. Seven years later, by the age of reason, *communion* was received, whereby the child accepts God as Lord and Jesus Christ as saviour. Seven years later, as teenagers, they receive *confirmation*, whereby they iterate the prior oath. When they become adults, *marriage* is celebrating by a priest or a deacon, some receiving *ordination* as the fifth sacrament. Ultimately, short before passing away, *last rites* are received. During their entire life, believers receive *Eucharist* in the course of the service, whereby they weekly iterate faith in their Saviour and Lord. To be allowed to receive Eucharist, believers were to confess their sins, penance being part of the rule (Saint-Augustin, 1637)¹¹.

Although medievalists traditionally acknowledge that the Roman Catholic Church has accounted for the Original Sin through sacramental and confessional accounting, they tend to remain elusive re procedures adopted (Aho, 2005; Joannidès, in press). However, accounting scholars have focused on records in the books practiced by the Catholic Church (Aho, 2005; Hoskin & Macve, 1986; Quattrone, 2004; 2009).

Each person's credits and debits [...] are entered not just once, but twice: first in the Book of Accounts, a judicial record kept on earth by humanity, and again in the Book of Life, a register of citizenship in [heaven] (Aho, 2005, p.xv).

Nonetheless, the meaning of accounting figures in Roman Catholicism differs from that of Judaism. Whereas spirituality in Judaism relies on individual accounts, Catholic spirituality has dominated the entire life of its flock by confessional bookkeeping since the High Middle Ages (Aho, 2005). In fact, the Roman Catholic Church as the earliest social institution developed double-entry-accounting whereby souls were accounted for (Hoskin & Macve, 1986; Quattrone, 2004; 2009). Technically speaking, working units were the Holy Sacraments

¹¹ See Leviticus 16:21, 26:40; Numbers 5:7; Psalms 32:5, 38:18, John 9:22, 12:42; Acts 24:14; Romans 10:9, 14:11; Philippians 2:11, I Timothy 3:16; James 5:16; I John 1:9, 4:3; II John 1:7; Revelation of John 3:5, 11:1-13.

associated with the major events of Christian life: births, marriages, deaths, baptisms, confession and communion. Each person was accounted for as a soul. As such, it was to have some of the sacraments as a counterpart. In the double-entry-accounting system of the Church, every member of the community was to have his counterparts. At every age in life, the corresponding sacrament was due. Absence was considered a sin, and the account of life was unbalanced (Aho, 2005), which required rebalances through indulgences raised by God's representatives, viz. clergy members (Quattrone, 2004). Eventually, if the account happened to be unbalanced, s/he was to penitent. A fine was required for rebalancing the account. On the very short run, the guilty person was to say a given amount of prayers or to pay a fine for evil conduct.

In the second book of accounts, sins were recorded. Again, to a sin corresponded an indulgence expressed in monetary terms (Quattrone, 2004). In practice, the believer self-accounted for one's conduct on a daily basis and submitted his biographical records to the priest, the sole person capable of appraising them and saying whether they might be pardoned. As sin were viewed as destroyers of God's creation, they were accounted for as negative values in debit records. Subsequently, rebalancing the account required indulgences amounting higher than sins themselves (Aho, 2005). On penance time, the counterparts of sins are defined and paid, if any. The keeping of such personal accounts followed clerical procedures and language.

Penance is required of all believers beyond the Ages of discretion at least once a year, preferably more often. This, with a priest [...] It consists of three parts: contrition, confession proper, and satisfaction [...] After rehearsing their case, penitents must approach the sitting priest and in the sight of all – the private booth would come later – clearly, frankly and humbly disclose their sins; not, it must be emphasized, their 'sins in general only', but 'one by one', according to their species and number, situating each in the circumstances that occasioned it (Aho, 2005, pp.19-20).

The priest appraised conduct compliance with the church laws and the regularity of subsequent accounting records. The sole appraisal of the behaviour of churchgoers, balanced accounts and subsequent rewards (booking a seat in Heaven) and punishments (promise of Purgatory or Hell) were means of maintaining the sacred sanctuary. Effectively, the universalistic and holistic heuristic of the Roman Catholic Church required homogeneous records and application of the doctrine worldwide. Therefore, the Holy Siege issued standards for the recording of souls, sins and sacraments: souls were accounted for as credit (given by God), whereas debit records encompassed the seven sacraments (Aho, 2005), sins and corresponding indulgences (Aho, 2005; Hoskin & Macve, 1986; Quattrone, 2004; 2009). As sins were an offence against the soul offered by God, they were accounted for as negative, which required rebalance through subsequent indulgence. In sum, at each stage of Catholic life, the result of the balance revealed individual faithfulness. In territories, cardinals were to enforce the accounting system, whereas bishops in dioceses were to compel congregations to everyday application by priests (Hallman, 1985). All congregations were to record the same books and report them to the upper hierarchical level for approbation. The figure below summarises biographic accounts in Counter-Reformation Roman Catholicism.

| Debit | Credit |
|---|--------|
| 7 sacraments Baptism Communion Confirmation Marriage Ordination Eucharist Last rites Indulgence (if imbalance) (Sin) Indulgence | Soul |

Figure 4. Accounting for the Holy Sacraments in Roman Catholicism

Like Judaism, Roman Catholicism reveals the notion of biographic accounts based on balanced double entry records. Listing sins and confessing them to the priest, who acts in God's stead, should lead to provide him with fair accounts. As in Judaism, giving an account contributes to constructing the moral person, while publicity in sacrament accounting reveals a practicality for rewards or retributions on earth suggested in Judaism. If sacraments are missing, other Christians can know it and blame the guilty person, which should lead to self-control through subjectivation of the rule (Hoskin & Macve, 1986; Quattrone, 2004). Roman Catholicism reveals the earliest international reporting standards, such as conceived of, enforced and practices: all congregations worldwide have kept the same records for centuries.

3.3. Accounting for blessings in Protestantism

Protestantism was delivered in the 16th century as an offshoot of the Reformation already intuited by Jan Hus' (1373-1415) distance *vis-à-vis* sin accounting and subsequent indulgences. Hus' sentence to death for heresy became the symbol of contests of clerical authority by Henry VIII, Luther and Calvin in the following two centuries (Smahel, 1995). In particular, Martin Luther published 95 theses, in which he denounced the overemphasis on Original Sin and Fall in Catholic theology and promoted faith alone, which decried the existence of indulgences. Moreover, he called to rely on God's love (Berman, 2000; Gerrish, 1988), which Calvin proclaimed too (Allegritti, 1991; Dowey, 1960; Potter, 1985; Vincent, 1987). Effectively, it is commonly understood in various forms of Protestantism¹² that God sent Jesus Christ to expiate mankind's sins *qua* their saviour inspired by the Holy Spirit. Thence, Trinity, in *lieu* of meaning the need for intermediaries between God and the self, was considered the visible Revelation to mankind (Nischan, 1987; Preserved, 1911; Reinburg, 1992; Ritter, 1958; Schilling, 1983).

Clearly, in Protestant theologies, Original Sin is not considered the central issue and is subsequently not accounted for. In fact, Reformation insufflators, especially Luther and Henry

¹² Through the plural form, we emphasise that Protestantism is not unique. It comprises of Lutherans, Calvinists, Methodists, Pentecostals, Evangelists, Adventists, Baptists, Anabaptists, Pietists and numerous new congregations popping up.

VIII, have strongly contested the legitimacy of sacrament accounting. Eventually, they contested that marriage should be accounted for once only and suggested that divorce would be allowed, which would enable Protestants to receive marriage anew (Haigh, 1981; Rex, 1996). Moreover, they considered that nothing in the Scriptures prohibits clerical marriage and supported incompatibility with clergy ordination (Carlson, 1992; Fudge, 2003; Yost, 1981). Correlatively, Luther contested the divine revelation of indulgences for two reasons. First, such practices are absent from the Scriptures, the Canon Law operating as an undue substitute for them. Second, divine revelation of the amount was denounced as an arbitrary practice. As God is revealed to the self only, external evaluations of conduct and faithfulness should not be tolerated (Ritter, 1958; Schilling, 1983; Swanson, 1971). Understandably, central in Protestantism is justification by faith and not by actions¹³.

In Protestant theologies, but Calvinist, salvation as teleoaffective structure is considered given *a priori* and gratuitously, the sole condition to be touched being that the self accepts God as Lord and Jesus Christ as saviour. God draws a plan for every self, following it leading to success and holiness (Weber, 1921; Wesley, 1765; 1956). To meet the Lord's requirements, the individual must respond to His *calling* through vocational work (*Beruf*: calling, vocation, profession, Weber, 1921, p.125). If s/he works well, God rewards him/her through the compensation received. The self only must seek to know what God decided and preserve confidence in Jesus Christ resulting from actual faith and remain thankful for the grace and blessings received. The individual is justified twice: first through divine grace and second through faith. Although Calvinist theology considers predestination to salvation or non-salvation, believers are encouraged to conduct themselves by faith, as if they were saved, explanation being close to Pascal's bet (Allegretti, 1991; Dowey, 1960; Potter, 1985; Vincent, 1987). If the individual is saved, faith is the righteous counterpart. On the contrary, if s/he is not chosen by God to be saved, believing in His love does not endanger life.

Protestant theologies encourage to summarise faith as identification of God's blessings, which believers are encouraged to count. In turn, once God's blessings have been identified by faith, the Protestant is encouraged to thank the Lord for those (Weber, 1921)¹⁴. The following incident is the refrain of a traditional Protestant canticle still chanted nowadays:

Count your blessings, name them one by one,
Count your blessings, see what God hath done!
Count your blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.

For Weber, the most obvious blessing is capitalistic success in particular and success in undertakings in general. If successful, any undertaking has been validated and blessed by God Himself. The notion of thankfulness for those results in believers counting their thankful praises¹⁵. They have two books of accounts. Expectedly, both accounts would be balanced. The consolidation of the two sets of records results in double entry books. God's blessings are gifts entrusted by God and are recorded as for credit. Symmetrically, thankful conduct is their counterpart and should be accounted for as debit. Credit is given *a priori*; the believer

¹³ See Galatians 2:17-21

¹⁴ The following paragraphs summarise *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. As the book is supposedly well known, we deliberately do not quote Weber literally.

¹⁵ For Biblical insights into accountability for God's blessings, see in the New Testament Matthew 5:11, 12:36, 13:21, Mark 4:17, Luke 1:3, 6:22, 16:2, 9:23, 19:3, John 12:9-11, 14:11, 15:21; in the Epistles: Romans 14:12, I Corinthians 14:24, II Corinthians 10:10, Philippians 1:24, Colossians, 3:6, 4:3, Philemon 1:18, Hebrews 4:13, 13:17, I Peter 4:5. These references are to be supplemented with those of the footnote above. Indeed, references from the Old Testament apply to Protestantism too.

constructs the debit records accordingly to balance credits. Debits consist of Bible reading, praising and praying (Jacobs & Walker, 2004). Periodically, the Protestant utilises prayer as the very device for communicating with God (Lévinas, 1975), whereby, s/he thanks Him for His blessings and acknowledges His magnificence. In brief, the Protestant praises Him.

Thankful conduct also consists of utilising God's blessings wisely, for which purpose, the believer records in a book what shall be the outcomes of his/her faithful conduct (Booth, 1890; Wesley, 1956). S/he self-records how s/he plans to use his/her gifts as well as what he expects from them. Only afterwards, s/he can compare his actuality with expectations. Thanks to such dashboards, s/he can measure the performance of his/her own conduct and the extent to which God is honoured. By this conduct, the believer is called for directing capabilities and skills at the maximisation of capitalistic profit. In order to be pleasant to God, the Protestant shall use his gifts in the most efficient and rational way. Thirdly, thankful conduct consists of paying back for God's blessings. The individual self-evaluates the amount to be paid. He then can refund his congregation accordingly. Lastly, the Protestant is encouraged to support people, who have not accepted God yet and are marginalised from society. To this end, books of accounts are expected to reveal witness actions, viz. sharing God's love with others (McKernan & Kosmala, 2004) and social work activities (Booth, 1890). In these cases, activity type and time devoted are used as working units and accounted for debit (faithful conduct and thanksgiving).

In all these cases, the rule guiding life is that Protestants rely on their own judgement and faith to conduct themselves. Nobody knows better than they do for what to thank God. In the same vein, nobody is able to feel how to thank and how much to refund. It is the believer who evaluates these on his own. Analogously, he self-appraises what wise use of God's gifts would mean. It is his responsibility that he erects a comprehensive rational evaluation system. It is his responsibility too that he always relies on that model for appraising the counterparts of God's blessings. As faith is the very intimacy of the individual (Lévinas, 1975), the same blessing can be accounted for differently from one person to another (McKernan & Kosmala, 2007).

| Debit | Credit |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Paybacks (self-evaluation) Prayers Praises Refunds Witness | Faith in unbounded God's blessings |

Figure 5. Accounting for blessings in Protestantism

Protestantism reveals the contents of contemporary debates re accounting objectivity/subjectivity and the role of criticism. Manifestly, Protestantism resists to the logic of Roman Catholicism and returns to the Jewish roots of Christianity (Wax, 1960). Hence, Protestantism, by questioning God's hand in clergy evaluation models, reveals the aporetic nature of the Lord and value (Derrida, 1992; 1994). Whereas the Catholic clergy claimed a revealed universal truth given through the Magisterium, Protestantism calls for subjective and contingent truths upheld by active Bible reading and prayer. Applied to accounting, these issues reveal the impossibility of objective and true measurements and evaluation models, which does not disqualify bookkeeping. Rather, this should stress the assumptions made by

accountants, criticism being a quality for the accounting profession (Bourguignon & Chiapello, 2005).

3.4. Accounting for the Sharia in Islam

Historically, Islam appeared later than Judaism and Christianity and has been considered borrowing from both elder religions. In particular, common understandings of Allah are similar to those of the Christians’ God, i.e. the almighty Creator punishing unfaithful people forever or promising Paradise for the Just; Allah is commonly presented as the incarnation of Justice (Rodinson, 1966). As in Judaism, Allah was revealed to the Prophet through Angel Gabriel to whom He gave instructions re the conduct of a holy and just life. During his life, the Prophet was His messenger on earth and delivered the Sharia. Moreover, in Islam, Jesus Christ is an apostle of God and not His son, which does not prevent believers from awaiting his return (Décobert, 2004; Murata & Chittik, 1994; Tapper & Tapper, 1987).

As in Judaism and Roman Catholicism, teleoaffective structures refer to salvation. When the believer passes away, s/he stands trial before Allah, Who appraises the consistency of conduct with the Sharia. Noticeably, the judgement day in Islam is called the *Day of Accounts*, on which the deceased person introduces the biographic accounts s/he kept to the Lord. If accounts are consistent with prescriptions from the Sharia, the person will be declared just and sent to Paradise. On the contrary, if the person is declared unjust, the next life will have Hell for retribution. However, as in Jansenist and Calvinist theologies, Islam is characterised by predestination, God selecting *ex ante* those who shall be saved, others being to conduct themselves as if they were chosen. At worse, they will not be rewarded, while as best Paradise is promised. Again, the Pascalian bet, prevailing in Calvinist theology, can apply to Islam too (Mohammed, 2000; Thomson, 1950a; b; Watt, 1946).

Rules enforced to arrive at Salvation rest upon the honouring the Sharia, viz. Islam’s five pillars: faith in the Oneness of God and the finality of the prophethood¹⁶ of Muhammad, establishment of the daily prayers, concern for and almsgiving to the needy, self-purification through fasting, and pilgrimage to Mecca for those who can (Murata & Chittik, 1994; Rodinson, 1966). Eventually, the Sharia operates as the Law in Judaism, the five pillars being similar to the duties ordered by God (Torrey, 1967) and as sacramental accounting in Christianity, as daily prayers, casual almsgiving, annual fasting (on Ramadan) and pilgrimage to Mecca are recorded as events driving life (Rodinson, 1966).

Routines developed borrow from earlier Monotheisms and rely on recording in books all events of life. In Islamic literature, every believer is supervised by an angel keeping biographic books of accounts, in which the five pillars of Islam are the human doctrine of what Allah expects from faithful believers. Thence, the angel records their honouring as for debit balancing faith (Rodinson, 1966; Torrey, 1967). In case of imbalance between commandments and actual conduct, retributions are expected in the next life (Hell), which reads as follows:

| | |
|-------|--------|
| Debit | Credit |
|-------|--------|

¹⁶ Hereby, we do not address theological debates re prophet identity leading to dichotomies between Chism and Sunnism. We do not question here whether the right Prophet in Islam is Muhammad or Ali.

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| | |
|---|---|
| Islam's five pillars Praising one God and His Prophet Establishment of daily prayers Concern for and almsgiving to the needy Self-purification through fasting Pilgrimage to Mecca | Faith in God Retributions and rewards in the next life |
|---|---|

Figure 6. Account of life for the Sharia in Islam

As salvation can be obtained through acts, the angel must record other daily events and their impact on Allah's Creations (Gambling & Karim, 1991; Murata & Chittik, 1994; Rodinson, 1966). In particular, actions directed at increasing the wellbeing of Allah's people must be accounted for. At the collective level, this consists of decreasing poverty and social inequality, for which purpose, collective effort is rewarded. At all times, the believer must seek for the counterpart of his/her conduct, either a beneficiary or a casualty. If conduct increases others' wellbeing, it is rewarded. On the contrary, if it decreases one piece of Creation, reparation is required. A common example is that of accidental death: if a believer incidentally kills another person, s/he is indebted to the casualty family unto death and must repair in accordance with his/her capabilities (Murata & Chittik, 1994; Rodinson, 1966; Smith, 1957; Torrey, 1967)¹⁷.

Every feature partners' life was recorded in the Book of Accounts. So were counterparts in Islam. When Moslem held money, the counterpart appeared in the book. If a transaction happened to spoil a counterpart, the guilty person was prosecuted. Unfair and dishonest conduct was punished. In particular, Islamic bookkeeping has pointed out how believers honour the ideal of social justice as well as the prohibition of interest and speculation¹⁸. The following recitations from the Quran instance this:

But your Lord is Most forgiving, full of Mercy. If He were to call them (at once) to account for what they have earned, then surely He would have hastened their punishment: but they have their appointed time, beyond which they will find no refuge (Al-Kahf 18:58).

Verily We shall give life to the dead, and We record that which they send before and that which they leave behind, and of all things have We taken account in a clear Book [of evidence] (Yaa Seen 36 :12)¹⁹

In both recitations, Islamic faithfulness rests upon an accounting system in which conduct is accounted for twice. The goods that the self left behind are accounted for as credit. The goods

¹⁷ The same principle applies to business and other economic transactions. As stated in the methodology section, these are beyond the scope of our study and are accordingly not developed in this paper.

¹⁸ Nowadays, Islamic finance and bookkeeping translate principled prohibition of interest and of speculative conduct and rest upon the notion of property rights, risk sharing, sanctity of contracts and Sharia-approved activities.

¹⁹ For further insights into revealed accounting procedures, see Al Baqarah 2:225, 2:233, 2:284; Ale'Imraan 3:11, 3:62, 3:199; An-Nisaa' 4:86; Al-Maa'idah 5:89; Al-An'aam 6:34, 6:44, 6:52; Al-'Araaf 7:95, An-Nahl 16:46, 16:47, 16:56, 16:93; Maryam 19:94; An-Noor 24:39; Ash-Shu'araa' 26:113; Al-Qasas 28:78; Al-Ankaboot 29:13; As-Saafaat 37:18; Saad 38:16, 38:26, 38:39, 38:53; Ghaafir 40:21, 40:22, 40:27; Ash-Shooraa 42:22; Az-Zukhruf 43:18; Al-Fath 48:25; Qaaf 50:4; Adh-Dhaariyaat 51:60; Al-Haaqah 69:20, 69:26; Al-Jinn 72:13, 72:28; Al-Inshiqaq 84:8.

sent to Heaven are accounted for as debit. One could summarise the Islamic accounting spirituality as the recording of good and evil actions and of their counterparts, i.e. beneficiaries or casualties. Moslems introduce their Book to Allah Who rewards good conduct and punishes evil actions. The double entry design of the Book sheds light on the nature of the honouring of Islamic principles.

To ensure that believers would conform to the principles of the Sharia in their day-to-day conduct, Arab mathematicians might have first intuited double entry bookkeeping (Aho, 2005). The invention of the so-called Arab numbers allowed the birth of modern arithmetic and of calculation, which Roman numbers did not enable. Luca Pacioli developed his theory of double entry bookkeeping on the basis of modern arithmetic stemming from Arab numbers. Arab Mathematicians have developed the tools that would uphold the development of formal accounts. Although Tinker (2001) refutes the idea that modern accounting is a direct discovery of Islam, for the largest part of Moslems was not acquainted with these scientific discoveries, most scholars consider accounting has been an indirect discovery of Islam (Crone, 2004; Gambling & Karim, 1991; Iqbal, 1997; Iqbal & Mirakhor, 2006; Taqi-Usmami, 2002; Tinker, 2004; Zubair, 1983).

| Debit | Credit |
|-------------------------|--|
| Conduct Compensation | Beneficiaries/Casualties (as God’s creatures affected) |

Figure 6. Account of Transactions for the Sharia in Islam

The two books recorded by Moslems reveal morals duality: in this life as well as in the next life. When directed at Allah, the *Account of Life* reflects how conduct served and honoured Him faithfully. On the other hand, the *Account of Transactions* reveals how the individual conducts him/herself *vis-à-vis* Creation. Whereas in Judaism the former book is kept by the believer, in Islam accounts are recorded by an angel. But, as in Judaism, the believer stands trial before Allah on the Day of Accounts. On that day, consistency of conduct with the orders revealed by the Lord to the faithful believer is appraised. Accordingly, rewards or punishments are not appraised by anyone, but Allah Himself. Contrarily to Roman Catholicism, no intermediaries interfere in the construction of the account. The Account of Transactions reveals the realm of accounts: giving a fair representation of conduct to external parties. Accordingly, Islam emphasises two major issues in double entry bookkeeping. First, everything has a counterpart, which the accountant must find. It is on this sole base that balances or imbalances can be noted, rewarded or punished. Correlatively, the second issue is that a counterpart is contingent upon the context in which it is found, which prevents any claim for objective or true value, fair value being what really counts for the accountant. Perhaps, it is the reason why Allah audits these accounts, to ensure that values have the appropriate counterpart. It is also probably the reason why Islamic theologies do not seem to impose *a priori* counterparts or values.

4. Discussion and conclusion

Practice theory was used in this paper to address the moral foundations of accounting

regardless of any imperative to constitute economic profits. This paper was an attempt to approach the essence of accounting. To do so, we deliberately left financial and physical dimensions of accounting aside. We rather focused on prescriptions of religious texts as through theological disputes to understand moral, cultural and social mechanisms whereby books of accounts are constituted and kept. Hence, we analysed the revelation of accounting to mankind through accounts of life and faith directed at God.

Islamic spirituality rests upon the Day of Accounts. Unto death, the believer records good and bad actions and their beneficiaries or casualties, if any. In fact, double entry bookkeeping supported the moralisation of their day-to-day life, including social and economic conduct. Likewise, Judaism has based its spirituality upon the recording of performed and neglected duties unto death. When the Day of Judgement comes, the Jew shall be ready to disclose the account of his life to God. In Protestantism, the believer rests his spirituality upon the permanent counting of God's blessings. These grants from God are accounted for as credit and require gratitude as the debit counterpart. These accounts support the believer's day-to-day self-management whereby he thanks God and pays Him back for His benevolence. The Original Sin allowed the Roman Catholic Church to develop an accounting system whereby souls, sacraments and sins were accounted for. The table below summarises these four revelations of accounting.

| | Judaism | Catholicism | Protestantism | Islam |
|---------------------------|---|--|--|---|
| Common understandings | God is unique and was revealed to the people of Israel through the Tablets of the Law | Trinity reveals the need for intermediaries between God and mankind following the Original Sin and subsequent fall | God is revealed through three entities evidencing the human, divine and faithful dimensions of His love | God is unique and revealed to the Prophets through angels. |
| Routines | Judgement Day, audit of biographic accounts for the honouring of the Law | Everyday accounts for conduct (sins) and account of Life (sacraments) controlled by clergy | Accounts of God's blessings and self-evaluation of paybacks (prayer, praise, Bible reading, witness) | Recording the honouring of the 5 pillars of the Sharia in books. Recording other daily activities and impacts on Creation |
| Rules | The Law and Judgement Day | Accounts of confession and penance | Faith and free judgement | The Sharia and the Day of Accounts |
| Teleoaffective structures | The chosen people was first saved and must save the world | Salvation comes through acts: sacraments and sin confession | Salvation is given <i>a priori</i> for free and is effective once the individual accepts God as his/her Lord and Jesus Christ as saviour | Salvation comes through acts, viz. the honouring of the Sharia and just conduct appraised on the Day of Accounts |

Figure 7. Differentiated revelations of religion as practice²⁰

In the four practices, the providing of an account was revealed as a routine driving and moralising everyday life. In the four cases, faith is offered by God and therefore recorded as for credit. Conduct in this life is accounted for as debit and must balance faith in the Lord. It does seem that the four practices reveal the identification of the right counterpart for God's

²⁰ For more details on comparisons between Judaism, Christianity and Islam, see appendix 2.

credits as morals. Eventually, the issues commonly raised in whichever practice is that of counterpart identification and measurement. Thence, beyond the sole rendering of accounts, morals rests upon the exact identification of what balances faith.

The very difference between the four practices lies in the understanding of what conduct can balance faith, viz. what is faithful conduct. Such understanding is manifested in differentiated doctrines of God's will. Hence, Judaism leaves the believer totally free to identify which duties are ordered by God, whilst Protestantism encourages the believer to count God's blessings and pay back for them through self-constructed conduct. On the contrary, Catholicism prescribes what conduct balances faith and soul offered by God, the clergy controlling that the flock acts consistently. Islamic spirituality stresses an intermediate position, in which the believer must honour five pillars to balance faith in Allah and evaluates on his/her own their very content. An angel keeps the books on the basis of what the Moslem understands as God's will. In other words, the very difference between the four practices lies in the contents of the accounts driven by stricter or looser doctrines of what should be done (common understanding, rules and teleoaffective structures), while routines read common.

As theologies are clearly differentiated, different dimensions of accounting are revealed to mankind. Issues in rewards and punishments driving Judaism, Roman Catholicism and Islam could let think accounting dual nature lies in opposition of good and evil. Considering Protestantism makes a common feature emerge: dualism reconciles divinity and mankind, credits being given by God, while debits are human use made of these gifts. In the four practices, accounting is underpinned by conceptions of God's identity, capabilities and will and purports to appraise conduct fairness with regards to Salvation.

In Judaism and Protestantism, accounts serve to manage daily life and therefore are driven by no explicit rules. In both practices, the believer is permanently in contact with God from Whom they expect orders. The latter are then interpreted and translated into actions nobody can verify. Free judgement, demands for help re interpretation of God's will and absence of any intermediaries between the self and the Lord are the common base of Judaism and Protestantism (Wax, 1960). Difference between both stems from common understandings (God's identity and capabilities) and teleoaffective structures (re salvation). In Judaism, God revealed Himself through the Law, which the believer must honour to be saved. Unsurprisingly, the notion of obligations drives the practice and leads to verification followed by rewards and retributions. In Protestantism, the Lord sent His son to expiate the world's sins and save it under the condition that mankind accepts and follows him (Wesley, 1956). The nature of salvation can only be understood by the believer, who correlatively will thank God for it. Therefore, Protestant accounting reveals no systems of verification, rewards and punishments.

In Roman Catholicism and Islam, accounts are rendered through a pre-established format: ways of faithfully balancing the soul given by God are made explicit and controlled. The Sharia five pillars and the Book of Transactions in Islam read similar to sacramental and sin accounting in Roman Catholicism. In both practices, accounting procedures are standardised, which enables a priest or an angel to keep records of life events. In Islam, God appraises the fairness of the believer's books of accounts and rewards or punishes accordingly. Hence, verification of counterpart exactitude and appropriateness seems to be inherent to bookkeeping, which leads to auditing as an inherent dimension of accounting. Through sacramental and confessional accounts, Catholicism reveals the need for an institution on earth training individuals to keep the books and standardising reports through the enforcement

of generally applicable principles controllable by the clergy and auditable by God.

In sum, in the four practices, mankind is expected to provide God with biographic accounts balancing life and faith. In the four cases, common understanding-based procedures drive the way believers must render accounts of their life. These consist of the similar features: naming and counting actions directed at God to balance or measure faithfulness, internal control exerted by intermediaries and auditing of the books by God or intermediaries to verify consistency and fairness. Hence, balances of fairly measured and exposed counterparts (given by and returned to God) are routines serving practice as morals. The four practices observed reveal that similar devices are used in accounting systems, the utmost formal difference being the rules driving them and format under which they are kept. As the latter read like formal representations of common understandings, they operate as the doctrine of what should be done and how.

This paper investigated the spiritual origins of accounting through day-to-day activities in the religions of the Book. In the four cases, accounts served to drive spiritual life and were addressed to God. *Qua* a regulator of daily conduct, accounting inevitably served to assess morality of economic transactions, as these were made *in the name of God* (Carruthers & Espeland, 1991; Freytag, 1855; Maltby, 1997). In the four cases, making profit through means consistent with commandments from God was a moral obligation. Just like other day-to-day activities, economic transactions were accounted for. As they were easier to identify, measure and record, systematic books of accounts could be kept, as we know them nowadays.

Historians of Judaism consider that the earliest revealed religion first developed economic transactions and their morals through books of accounts. Sombart (1911, 1916) relates this to the status of wandering Chosen People. In that capacity, Jews have always been responsible for the world and travelled to moralise most transactions, which was considered a duty ordered by God. From their voyages overseas, they first brought back new products and thereby created the earliest forms of international trade and Capitalism, developing profitability calculations (Sombart, 1911, p.120). Stepwise, Jewish traders were tolerated in European countries to handle prohibited activities, such as money lending, which allowed the development of finance and banking (Sombart, 1911, p.122). Financial activities enabled the constitution of the *Bank* account, which is likely to be the very base of double entry bookkeeping (Attali, 2002). In sum, day-to-day activities addressed to God comprised of economic transactions facilitated by the status of Chosen People.

Historians of Catholicism have unanimously outlined that the Church has operated like a capitalistic organisation since the Renaissance, either in France (Michaud, 1991) or in Italy (Cohen, 1980b; Hallman, 1985). Sacramental and sin accounting has long been a source of income for the Roman Catholic Church, which has stepwise traded them: marriage (Davidson & Ekelund Jr., 1997), confession (Aho, 2005), or more broadly the cure of souls (Hallman, 1985). As churchgoers were to book their seat in Heaven, they were to pay for the perpetual cure of their sinning soul, including marriage and confessional practices (Hallman, 1985, p.1). Every Christian was considered as a provisional provider of resources for the church. Therefore, they were all accounted for from birth to death, which allowed to provision them as accrued perpetual income until death (Hallman, 1985, p.19)²¹. These perpetual rents

²¹ In Davidson's and Ekelund Jr.'s (1997) article, the theory of interest is metaphorically applied to the evaluation of provisional rents. The Church accounted for people from birth unto death. The wise insights of its leaders into fecundity and mortality rates allowed to forecast how many living children would bring perpetual resources. Thence, rents from one couple could be multiplied by the expected amount of offspring and their

allowed the acquisition of properties by the Church, which were managed to generate additional income. The management of church property consisted of alienating them, i.e. letting or leasing vacancies and receiving instalments as counterparts (Hallman, 1985, pp.52-53). Similarly, properties could be distributed to reward faithful churchmen or churchgoers. In the case of churchmen, faithfulness was assumed. In fact, it is their ability to accumulate church income that was rewarded. As such, individual economic or spiritual effort was rewarded with capital (Hallman, 1985, p.107). This allowed the accumulation of monetary capital. Its reinvestment in lucrative properties is consistent with Sombart's approach to capitalism, i.e. the perpetual accumulation of capital. On the other hand, rewarding faithful servants from the church equity is similar to contemporary employee incentives or profit sharing. In fact, the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church have historically behaved as capitalistic entrepreneurs.

Whereas the Roman Catholic Church has evolved as an enterprise, its flock has historically not been much involved in economic life. In a study on the religious affiliation of industry leaders, Weber (1921) observes that these tended to be Protestants rather than Catholics. He attributed this statement to the Protestant ethic that encourages capitalistic undertaking and success. On the contrary, money and capital are taboos within Roman Catholicism, possibly because evaluation models of indulgences and ecclesial benefices have been problematic. Weber ascribes the spirit of Capitalism to the Protestant ethic: reaction to the Roman Catholic notion of divine grace and its delineations. To meet God's requirements, the individual must respond His to *calling*, which consists of vocational work. The valuation of the fulfilment of duties in worldly affairs as the highest form which the moral activity of the individual could assume (Weber, 1921, p.40). For Weber, the utmost blessing given by God is entrepreneurial success: capital accumulation rewards faith in unknown future. God responds to faithfulness and risk exposition through economic rewards, which are the most intelligible for mankind. In turn, multiplication of blessings (skills, money, offspring) appears as a righteous use of initial gifts. The Protestant ethic then consists of thanking God for His blessings and of paying Him back by funding one's church. Economic rationality operates as a substitute to emotions in Protestantism.

Historians of Islam admit recognition that there is a basic affinity between the economic scheme of Islam and the capitalistic system (Iqbal & Mirakhor, 2006; Rodinson, 1966). They unanimously agree on that Islam has been seeking for the increase of collective wellbeing through rewarded consistent with individual merits. Private ownership of means of production is encouraged by Islam, as it enables collective enrichment and the improvement of needy people's situation. Earned profits are shared with others through almsgiving (Sharia's fourth pillar). To ensure that no actor in economic life is spoiled, Islam prohibits future arrangements: wages are paid instantly and may not be delayed; price of goods must be paid when they are delivered. As future is risky, there is no reason that only one party in the transaction bears it entirely. Like profits, it is shared, which leads to interest and interest prohibition. Rodinson (1966) explains that the honouring of the Sharia was to be accounted for in books of economic transactions on the same base as day-to-day conduct.

This research has a dual contribution to accounting knowledge. First, it shows that accounting systems are consistent patterns of rules and routines upheld by common understandings and

ability to pay the same rent. Actually, the resources of the Roman Catholic Church had followed a geometrical trend, to which worldwide missionary expansion has added arithmetical progression too.

teleoaffective structure and have no existence and essence *per se*. Despite similar calculative and discursive threads, accounting systems differ from one context to another by common understandings re the goals they pursue and teleoaffective structures to reach these. Although this confirms and supports the idea that accounting is a practice situated in the social context in which it operates (Burchell et al., 1980; Burchell et al., 1985; Laughlin, 1988), the originality of the study lies in the topic: a comparative analysis of day-to-day accounting practices in the three Monotheisms. The comparison enabled us to contribute to that body of literature, identifying that social context strongly influences the contents of accounting systems and not their essence. For instance, in a restaurant chain, the contents of accounting systems are driven by perishable inventories and menu design: food, beverage and transformation into profitable dishes (Ahrens & Chapman, 2002, 2007).

Second, our study demonstrates that double entry bookkeeping and accounting have some common bases. The four religions reveal that accounting calculations are underpinned by strong assumptions re God's expectations (theology). Hence, in any social context, accounting serves as routines shaped by rules to drive individuals towards common goals on the basis of clear common understandings of what a Higher-Stakeholder expects (Laughlin, 1996). Once common understandings and teleoaffective structures are clarified, various ways of measuring, keeping books, and auditing may be delivered. Transferred to other social contexts, this early revelation stresses that evaluation models are based upon strong assumptions operating similarly to religious beliefs (Derrida, 1994; Kamuf, 2007). Faith and God's gifts can be identified and counted in infinite ways, each of these resting upon strong assumptions revealed as common understandings and teleoaffective structures. Similarly, any evaluation models and their accounting offshoot have no value *per se* and merely reflect assumptions made by practice members, regulators or verifiers. For instance, investors' expected returns are assumed to be revealed through the CAPM, whose *beta* is the offshoot of optimisation programmes. All this assumes that capital markets are efficient and investors economically rational.

These conclusions call for further twofold development in accounting history. First, the argument would benefit from confrontation with other religious contexts than the three Revealed Monotheisms. Conclusions consistent with ours would feed accounting as device in moral practices and enrich our understanding of its shapes. On the contrary, divergent conclusions would challenge the moralising capabilities of accounting.

Second, our conclusion that accounting is a sub-practice entailed and upheld by broader moral practices would benefit from confrontation with studies aligning the birth of accounting and Capitalism. Our study calls for extensions scrutinising accounting and Capitalism as moral practices. We do believe that identifying the morals of Capitalism and economic rationality would either challenge our conclusions, or enrich our understanding of the possibilities offered by accounting. Conclusions supporting ours would enable to consider accounting a powerful moral device wherever it operates. On the opposite, divergent conclusions would offer new possibilities for the understanding of accounting.

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Appendix 1. Historiographic and theological references

| Judaism | Roman Catholicism | Protestantism | Islam |
|--|--|--|---|
| Attali (2002) Sombart (1911, 1916) Urbach (1979, 1996) Kaplan (1998) Copeland (2002) Schechter (1894, 1895a, b, 1896) Ward (1999) Ross (1999) Cohen (1935) Neusner (1933) | Aho (2005) Quattrone (2004, 2009) Hallman (1985) Dante (1314, 1316, 1321) Pascal (1656, 1670) Augustine (1637) Torrell (2002) Harrison (2002) Cohen (1980) Norman (1997) Case (1907) Christie (1918) Panofsky (1951) | Weber (1921) Wesley (1756) Niebuhr (1950) Booth (1890) Rex (1996) Yost (1981) Berman (2000) Carlson (1992) Ferry (1997) Nischan (1987) Reinburg (1992) Schilling (1983) Preserved (1911) Swanson (1971) | Rodinson (1966) Tinker (2004) Décobert (2004) Tapper & Tapper (1987) Smith (1957) Murata & Chittik (1994) Mohammed (2000) Thomson (1950a, b) Watt (1946) Torrey (1967) Katsh (1963) |

Appendix 2. Comprehensive comparisons between Christianity, Judaism and Islam

| | Islam | Judaism | Roman Catholicism |
|-------------------------|---|--|--|
| Type of theism | Strict monotheism | Strict monotheism | Trinitarian monotheism |
| Ultimate reality | One God | One God | One God |
| Names of God | Allah (Arabic for God) | Yahweh, Elohim | Yahweh, the Holy Trinity |
| Other spiritual beings | Angels, demons, jinn | Angels and demons | Angels and demons |
| Revered humans | Prophets, imams (especially in Shia) | Prophets | Saints, church fathers |
| Identity of Jesus | True prophet of God, whose message has been corrupted | False prophet | Son of God, God incarnate, savior of the world |
| Birth of Jesus | Virgin birth | Normal birth | Virgin birth |
| Death of Jesus | Did not die, but ascended into heaven during crucifixion | Death by crucifixion | Death by crucifixion |
| Resurrection of Jesus | Denied | Denied | Affirmed |
| Second coming of Jesus | Affirmed | Denied | Affirmed |
| Divine revelation | Through Muhammad, recorded in Qur'an | Through Prophets, recorded in Bible | Through Prophets and Jesus (as God Himself), recorded in Bible |
| View of sacred text | Inspired, literal word of God, inerrant in original languages | Views vary | Inspired, some believe inerrant in original languages |
| Human nature | Equal ability to do good or evil | Two equal impulses, one good and one bad | "Original sin" inherited from Adam - tendency towards evil |
| Means of salvation | Correct belief, good deeds, Five Pillars | Belief in God, good deeds | Correct belief, faith, good deeds, sacraments (some Protestants emphasize faith alone) |
| God's role in salvation | Predestination | Divine revelation and forgiveness | Predestination, various forms of grace |
| Good afterlife | Eternal paradise | Views vary: either heaven or no afterlife | Eternal heaven |
| Bad afterlife | Eternal hell | Views vary: either eternal Gehenna, reincarnation, or no afterlife | Eternal hell, temporary purgatory (Catholicism) |

Source: http://www.religionfacts.com/comparison_charts/islam_judaism_christianity.html