Juynbolliana, Gradualism, the Big Bang, and *Ḥadīth* Study in the Twenty-First Century

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I. INTRODUCTION

There is something about *ḥadīth* studies that seduces its students. The sheer mass of the field—the commentaries, biographical dictionaries, supplementary studies, its seemingly precise terminology, seeming specificity and facticity—draws scholars to it like a giant gravitational field, and keeps some of them there for their entire careers. Too often it is a black hole from which no light escapes. Sometimes this is because the scholar is sucked into the world of the *aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth* and loses critical distance. Or sometimes it is because the critical distance itself becomes an event horizon that radiates only suspicion, disdain, and hyper-criticism as scholars position themselves against the forces of religious irrationality and tradition.

Recent scholarship has moved us, finally, beyond the dichotomy of "forgery" and "faith" that has characterized *ḥadīth* studies since Ignaz Goldziher and, especially, Joseph Schacht. The publication of earlier *ḥadīth* collections, the refinement of *isnād* analysis, and, as importantly, a recognition that there are other questions in *ḥadīth* studies besides "did Muḥammad do it or not?"—all have helped profoundly transform the study of *ḥadīth* and early Islamic religious practice in ways that now promise to alter our understanding of Islam's origins and development.

What follows is an attempt to develop the picture of this crucial Islamic practice that is coming into focus. This essay is a review of several recent books in the field but it also draws on a number of other recent and not-so-recent works to provide an overview of *ḥadīth* studies at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

A *ḥadīth* (in English the word is often used as a collective, with *ḥadīth*s used also as plural of particularity, in preference to the Arabic *aḥādīth*) is an anecdote reporting that the Prophet Muḥammad did or said something, or allowed something to occur without comment, thereby permitting it. For most of Islamic history these reports have served as Muslim religious norms and data alongside, or complementary to, norms and data derived from the Qurʾan; they are the true source of most Islamic law (of the parts that can be persuasively tied to sources, that is). Using as an example a *ḥadīth* now of supreme relevance to those who fly, it can be seen that a *ḥadīth* has two parts: the *matn* (the body of the report):

The Prophet said, "Traveling is a measure of punishment which bars man from sleep, food, and drink. When he has achieved the goal he set out for, he should hasten back to his family." [1]

and the *isnād*, a "headnote," verifying the account by listing the report's line(s) of transmission. The *isnād* of this report about traveling begins with Abū Hurayra, who is reported to have heard it from the Prophet, and Abū Ṣāliḥ Dhakwān reported this to Sumayy, who reported it to Mālik ibn Anas, who recorded it in his great work of *ḥadīth* and law, the *Muwaṭṭaʾ*. It continued to be related and is found also in the greatest of the canonical Six Books, the two sound (*ṣaḥīḥ*) works of al-Bukhārī and Muslim (referred to collectively, in the dual (oblique), as *al-Ṣaḥīḥayn*). These collections have functioned as the second scripture of Islam alongside the Qurʾan.

Around these collections *ḥadīth* scholars—the *muḥaddithūn*—created a vast apparatus of commentaries, as well as reference works that identified and assessed those whose names are found in the *isnād*s: who was this Abū Ṣāliḥ Dhakwān; when did he live; where did he travel; could he possibly, in fact, have met and transmitted *ḥadīth*s to Sumayy; did he have a good memory, good hearing; was he of sound moral character; was he theologically sound; and from whom, in turn, did he learn *ḥadīth*? These supplementary works envelop the *ḥadīth* in masses of additional data, making precise, adding, confirming, and augmenting it so that one either is intimidated from studying *ḥadīth* at all or neglects that corona around the *ḥadīth* and treats it as freestanding scholarship—or, even, gives over one's life to mastering its detail and nuance. The vast apparatus of *ḥadīth* scholarship seemed to ratify the authenticity of the *ḥadīth* in part because it itself was ratified by the authority of the *ḥadīth* experts; symbiotically, the authority of the *ḥadīth* and the Prophet, who is "inlibrated" in them, gave authority to the scholars who certified the *ḥadīth* as authentic and therefore authoritative.

These two aspects of the *ḥadīth* (authenticity and authority[2]) are intertwined and need to be separated. The former asks the question: did the Prophet say or do what is attributed to him in the *ḥadīth* (as well as in the *sīra*, the *maghāzī*, and the histories)? In other words, are the *ḥadīth* a historical source for knowledge of Muḥammad's life and practice? This is a historical question, as is another related question: do the *isnād*s record historiographically useful information about the transmission of the *ḥadīth*-story? It is not merely a question of whether the *isnād* guarantees the authenticity of the *matn* but also whether it reliably reveals the transmissional history of the *matn*'s wording. If, in a given case, we suppose the *matn* not to be authentically Muḥammadian, can the *isnād* still tell us about the *matn*'s point of origin—either particularly (was it Abū Ṣāliḥ Dhakwān who invented the tradition?), or more generally (did this story originate in Syrian pietist circles?)?

The second aspect—much less studied but from a history of religions standpoint much more important—has to do with authority. When did Muslims decide that the stories of, inter alia, the Prophet's practice (and then, later, exclusively the Prophet's practice) begin to govern their own practice? Was the position that these stories were authoritative a minority position or the spontaneous commitment of all Muslims from Islam's beginning? When did the idea that Muḥammad's acts were a source of religious knowledge become an incontestable article of faith? And how did certain forms and certain collections acquire their authority so that, in effect, the *ḥadīth* became Muslims' second scripture, alongside and in many ways of more practical significance than the Qurʾan?

Putting to one side the pious position that everything of classical Sunnism was there from the moment of the Prophet's death in 632, two views of early Islamic religion appear

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1. Juynboll, *Encyclopedia of Canonical Ḥadīth* (hereafter Juynboll, *Ency*), 213(b). All bibliographical references are given in full at the end of the article.

2. This formulation is most clearly articulated in Musa, *Ḥadīth as Scripture*.

in the literature, though both are too seldom explicitly articulated and defended. One is the "gradualist" view that in the unstable social and religious transformation of the early Islamic period, say, 632–92, the *kerygma* of the Qurʾan alongside ad hoc rulings by figures with religious prestige constituted the body of Islamic belief and practice. Story-tellers (*quṣṣāṣ*) Qurʾan reciters, sermonizers, and others also augmented the lore of Islam. Alongside them were people reporting the practices of Muslims during Muḥammad's lifetime, including, no doubt, particular dicta of Muḥammad. This is the picture of Islam one gets from sources contemporary with this transformation, whether from non-Muslims—Christian and Jewish sources[3]—or slightly later Muslim sources such as the Aphrodito papyri.[4]

The gradualist account supposes that sometime in the late 600s C.E., plausibly in connection with the *fitna* of Ibn Zubayr, some religious enthusiasts began to systematize their reporting of religious lore and to attribute their knowledge to the sources from whom they had heard this information. They may even have begun to collect this lore in aide-mémoires listing the narrators, and at least the idea (if not the wording) conveyed from the first and second generations of Muslims. These experts who recorded the data of oral transmission were very much a minority, but over time they succeeded in imposing their view on Muslims to the extent that lore from the first generation and particularly lore attributed to the Prophet became a supplement, and then the only acceptable supplement, to the Qurʾan for the derivation of Islamic practice, but also for theological principles and pious practice. As such, *hadīth*ism began as a controversial and minority position and remained so for much of the formative history of Islam.

The alternative to the gradualist position is what I might call the Big Bang theory. This position points to the apparatus surrounding the *hadīth*—particularly the biographical dictionaries—to support the argument that from Islam's beginning thousands of Muslims occupied themselves with the transmission of *hadīth*. In the Big Bang vision, a massive religious commitment to reporting what the Prophet and early Companions did and said not only justifies the primacy of the *hadīth* as a source of religious knowledge, but also, because of the quantity of the transmission and religious intentions of the transmitters, the size and accord of the movement go far toward justifying the authenticity of the *hadīth* as well.[5] In this view Sunnism, as a creedal commitment to the normativity of the first two generations of Muslims and especially of the Prophet's acts, is fully present from, say, the third generation of Muslims, the successors of the Successors of the Companions of the Prophet.

My own view is that the controversial nature of the methodologies and beliefs of the *aṣḥāb al-sunna* is well enough established[6] that we have to view the *hadīth* apparatus skeptically, as well as the *hadīth* themselves. The claims that the *hadīth* reliably record the Prophet's deeds, that the methodologies used to establish their reliability are convincing, and even that the Prophet's acts are normative and should be recorded were all at one time controversial; the *hadīth*-science edifice that Islamicists regard with intimidated awe in part conceals the *hadīth*'s polemical functions. Ibn Saʿd's *ṭabaqāt* work, for instance, does not disinterestedly

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3. See Hoyland, "New Documentary Texts and the Early Islamic State"; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam As Others Saw It*.

4. Bell, "Translations of the Greek Aphrodito Papyri in the British Museum" (1911 and 1913); see also Halevi, "The Paradox of Islamization."

5. See Lucas, *Constructive Critics, Ḥadīth Literature, and the Articulation of Sunnī Islam*, especially his introduction. Zaman, *Religion and Politics under the Early ʿAbbāsids*, seems also to fall into this camp.

6. Melchert, "The *Musnad* of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal"; Melchert, "The Piety of the Hadith Folk"; Melchert, "Traditionist-Jurisprudents and the Framing of Islamic Law"; Juynboll, "An Excursus on the *Ahl al-Sunnah* in Connection with Van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft* vol. IV"; Juynboll, *Studies on the Origins and Uses of Islamic Ḥadīth*"; Juynboll, "Some Notes on Islam's First *Fuqahāʾ* Distilled from Early *Ḥadīṯ* Literature."

report the activities of early Muslims; it argues and attempts to demonstrate that Muslims of the first generations were doing what the mythology of the pristine early community[7] requires them to have been doing: recording *ḥadīth* and transmitting it, asking each other about precedents, and reproaching those who disregarded this authentic religious knowledge.

At first, of course, it appeared to Orientalists that the mass of the *ḥadīth*[8] and other biographical information established Muḥammad as, indeed, the first religious founder "born in the full light of history."[9] As with so many things in Islamic studies, Ignaz Goldziher's was the first critical study of the *ḥadīth*, and in a series of truly seminal essays[10] he argued that *ḥadīth* could not be relied upon as historical data because (1) the *isnād*s were often fabricated to father religious lore that served a partisan purpose onto the Prophet, and (2) the *matn*s manifestly contained anachronisms and prophecies *ex eventu* that made it impossible that even the most unobjectionable report could, in historiography's critical gaze, be trusted to be authentically Muḥammadian. Goldziher's genius was to recover proof from Islamic texts themselves that established Muslims' (or some Muslims') mistrust of writing *ḥadīth*—their recognition that *isnād*s were regularly forged and that *ḥadīth* were put into circulation to justify political and theological positions after the fact.

With less originality than is often assumed, Joseph Schacht (*The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*, pt. III) restated Goldziher's view of the *ḥadīth* and used it to create a theory of Islamic law's development that has not held up entirely well—namely, that the Qurʾan had no role in the development of Shariʿa and that the *ḥadīth* were "forged" in the late 100s h. to allow the insertion of Umayyad and Roman administrative practice and other items into Islamic law. His *ḥadīth* studies, however, have continued to inspire discussion.

Schacht demonstrated, for example, that in the case of many *ḥadīth* the *isnād* can be shown to have "grown backwards": given the growing prestige of reports attributed to the Prophet rather than anyone else, lore that was once attributed to a Companion or a Successor was later provided with an *isnād* linking that datum to the Prophet. This means that because a story has more efficacy if it is linked to Muḥammad (d. 10/632) rather than, for example, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728), when we find two *isnād*s, one that stops at al-Ḥasan, the other "raised" to Muḥammad, it is probable that the "Ḥasan *isnād*" is older than the one that continues to Muḥammad. It was also Schacht (pp. 171ff.) who named what he called the "common link" phenomenon. It is based on the striking fact (once attention is called to it) that at least in the so-called Six Books considered by Sunnis to be the most prestigious, nearly

7. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, on "pristine Medina," vol. 1: 318ff.

8. Hodgson's strictures against the misleading use of the term "tradition" are convincing, not least because the "traditions" are often manifestly "faux traditions" and to call them "traditions" begs the question of their origin (ibid. 63–66).

9. This phrase is often alluded to but seldom cited. It is a lovely irony to quote it here:

The birth of Islamism is, in this regard, a unique and truly inappreciable fact. Islamism was the last religious creation of humanity, and in many respects the least original. Instead of the mystery in which other religions wrapped their cradle, this was born in the full light of history; its roots are even with the ground. The life of its founder is as well known to us as that of the reformers of the XVIth century. We can follow year by year the fluctuations of his thought, his contradictions, his weaknesses. Elsewhere religious beginnings are lost in dream; the toil of the most untrammelled criticism can hardly detect the reality beneath the deceitful appearances of myth and legend. Islamism, on the contrary, appearing in a centre of advanced reflection, is absolutely destitute of the supernatural. Mahomet, Omar, Ali are neither seers, nor illuminati, nor magicians. Each of them knows perfectly well what he is about, neither of them is his own dupe; each presents himself for examination, naked and with all the frailties of humanity about him. Thanks to the excellent labours of MM. Weil and Caussin de Perceval, we may say that the problem of the origin of Islamism has in our day reached a solution all but complete (Renan, "Mahomet and the Origins of Islamism," 228–29).

10. Goldziher, *Gesammelte Schriften*; Goldziher, *Muslim Studies* [*Muhammedanische Studien*]; Goldziher, *The Ẓāhirīs*.

all *ḥadīth* are related uniquely by a single member of the first generation of Muslims—a Companion. He or she, in turn, is usually reported to have related the *ḥadīth* to a single Successor. From there the *isnād* fans out from a single figure to a large number of scholars, just at the point in Islamic intellectual history when the *ḥadīth* were being established as definitive sources of law and theology (more on this below). This single strand at the beginning of the *isnād* is ubiquitous despite the doctrine that plural transmission was theoretically the guarantor of authenticity.[11] It is, all in all, a stunning fact and cries out for an explanation. Is it believable that a given Prophetic act was witnessed by only a single Companion? And what is to be made of the astonishing dominance of this feature? And is it plausible that some Companions, such as the notorious Abū Hurayra, to whom 5,374 *ḥadīth* are attributed, should have observed and reported so many Prophetic acts when other Companions with whom the Prophet had been intimate for a far longer time—such as his cousin and son-in-law ʿAlī, to whom a mere 536 are attributed—should report so relatively few? (Cf. Brown, *Hadith*, pp. 19–20.) Schacht argued that it was, in fact, the figure from whom the *isnād* fans out, the "common link," who "forged" the *ḥadīth* in question. Yet, in asserting that the common link was the "forger," he was also asserting that while the *ḥadīth* was in all likelihood inauthentic, the *isnād* did nonetheless preserve reliable information about the *ḥadīth*'s transmission from its common link forward.

Even in Schacht's time—though often partially silenced by Schacht's caustic retorts— some scholars had reservations. The first question, which is still uninvestigated, is whether the *ḥadīth* can be said to form a single genre so that generalization to all *ḥadīth* from merely the corpus of legal *ḥadīth*—Schacht's exclusive focus—leads to a methodological mistake. Might not the *ḥadīth* have genres—legal, but also doctrinal, exegetical, historical, hortatory (*targhīb wa-tarhīb*), as well as those expressing merits (*faḍāʾil*), curiosa, "firsts" (*awāʾil*), and so on—each with differing histories of transmission and different degrees and standards of reliability? Another reservation concerns his categorical and disdainful use of terms like "forgery." To see the *muḥaddithūn* en masse as "forgers" and members of a massive conspiracy requires a degree of credulousness on the part of academic scholars that would have matched the credulousness Schacht attributed to Muslims. Could this huge corpus of material have been made up out of foreign sources and contemporary fantasy?

Such, then, was the state of *ḥadīth* studies, for the most part, into the 1970s and 1980s of the last century.

II. *ISNĀD* CRITICISM IN THE ACADEMY

A. G. H. A. Juynboll

If it has been a given since Goldziher that the *isnād* cannot guarantee the authenticity of the *ḥadīth*, can the *isnād*s tell us anything at all? Some scholars believe they can tell us nothing whatsoever.[12] Others assert that the *isnād* itself is a revealing historical datum even if the *matn* is not authentic. This has been the arena in which a number of talented and tireless scholars have jousted over the past two decades or more. Foremost among these combatants was the feisty and erudite G. H. A. Juynboll. It is thanks to him that a consensus is emerging, confirming that *isnād*s do, in fact, tell us important things about the story to which the *isnād* is attached. Indeed, Juynboll's methods are used by scholars less suspicious of the *ḥadīth*

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11. One possibility to consider is that to require of the "pristine" first generation confirmation through plurality was thought otiose and subverted the notion of their merit. Yet there are a few *ḥadīth* that have redundancy at the Companion or Successor level, which suggests that to do so was not repugnant; it just did not happen.

12. Cook, "Eschatology and the Dating of Traditions"; see also Conrad, "ʿUmar at Sargh" (p. 523), who asserts that the *isnād* may tell us the regional origin of the *ḥadīth* but nothing else.

corpus or at least of individual *ḥadīth* than was Juynboll himself, and this surely indicates a degree of accord on the question.

Juynboll's engagement with *ḥadīth* materials dates back to his graduate student days when he helped compile Wensinck's *Concordance et indices de la tradition musulmane*. His first published work on *ḥadīth* appeared in 1969, and subsequently, by my count, he published at least twenty more articles on the subject, in addition to his set of essays, *Muslim Tradition: Studies in Chronology, Provenance and Authorship of Early* Ḥadīth.[13] Characteristically, he staked out strong positions on the origins of the *ḥadīth* movement and the production and recording of *ḥadīth*s, and proposed some important though recherché methods for studying *isnād*s. His arguments are remarkably clear but remorselessly technical and complex, and this, I suspect, has inhibited them from being fully utilized even by such accomplished technicians as Jonathan Brown and Scott Lucas. There are also, as we shall see below, technical critiques by other scholars.[14] Yet no contemporary scholar of *ḥadīth* can afford to neglect Juynboll, who is, using a term he first recognized as a *terminus technicus*, the *madār* of our age in *isnād* studies.

Juynboll's beginning point is the incontestable fact of single-strand narration. In many ways his entire work is an effort to explain this seeming anomaly. Thus, with the Prophet at the bottom, nearly all *isnād*s begin like this:[15]

(Successor)

Successor

Companion

Prophet
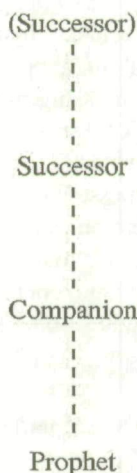
From this point the *isnād*s (especially when the *isnād*s are viewed agglomerated from the various "sound" collections) fan out—either from a single nodal transmitter, with nodal transmitters above him (the first node in Juynboll is the common link, the subsequent ones partial common links—abbreviated CL and PCL, respectively), or in parallel, suspension-

bridge-like formations which, collectively, Juynboll refers to as "spiders."[16] What attracted Juynboll's attention and enabled him to develop conclusions from these characteristic *isnād* structures is the medieval reference work *Tuḥfat al-ashrāf* of al-Mizzī (d. 742/1341), whose usefulness Juynboll was the first to recognize. In the *Tuḥfa*, al-Mizzī organized the canonical corpus of *ḥadīth*[17] by Companion (*musnad*-style), but without reproducing the entire *matn* and all its variants. Instead he includes the *ṭaraf*, the gist of the *ḥadīth*'s *matn*. Al-Mizzī then sorts the *ḥadīth* by transmitters in such a way that the reader can easily see the common link.[18] Here is what a *ḥadīth*'s *isnād* looks like when all of its variants from the Six Books are analyzed and recorded.
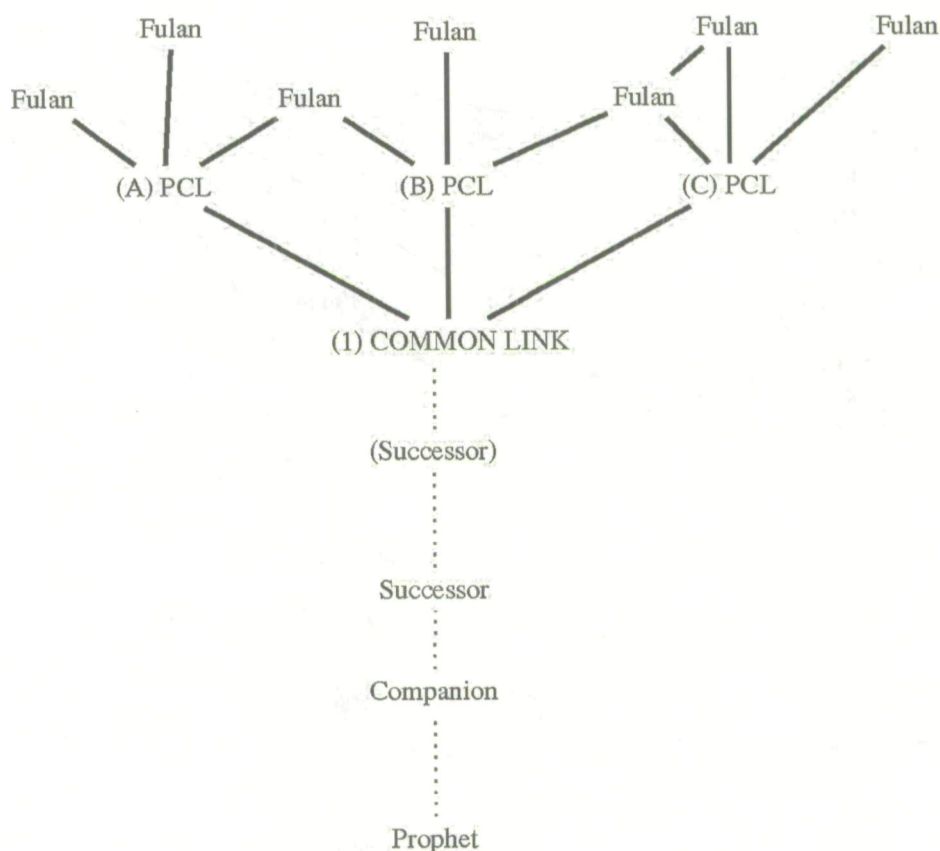
No one *ḥadīth* collection will contain all the strands by which it was related in all the other collections. That is why al-Mizzī must be used to agglomerate all the *isnād*s together. Above we see a sort of idealized *ḥadīth* with (1) as the CL and A, B, C the PCLs.

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16. Juynboll's technical terms and abbrevations are a significant barrier to following his closely reasoned arguments. I have compiled a cheat-sheet of Juynbolliana, available at www.dartmouth.edu/~akr/juynboll.pdf.

17. With references not to al-Nasāʾī's *Sunan* but to his *Sunan al-kubrā*.

18. See Juynboll's article "al-Mizzī" in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (1960–2004) (hereafter, *EI²*).

In an argument too extensive to reproduce here, Juynboll argues ("Early Islamic Society as Reflected in Its Use of Isnads," 153) that the more PCLs there are, the more likelihood that the CL is the origin of the *ḥadīth*'s wording.

The "spider" is an alternative *isnād* structure, usually found in late *ḥadīth* collections to fortify the more commonly found *isnād*, one that provides a more direct—that is, shorter—*isnād* to the Successor (and here to the Prophet) and that legitimates the weaker, longer, or less ideal *isnād*. This he calls a "spider" with "dives" past common links to provide the appearance of plural transmission. As found in "nature," a spider *isnād* will tend to look something like this:
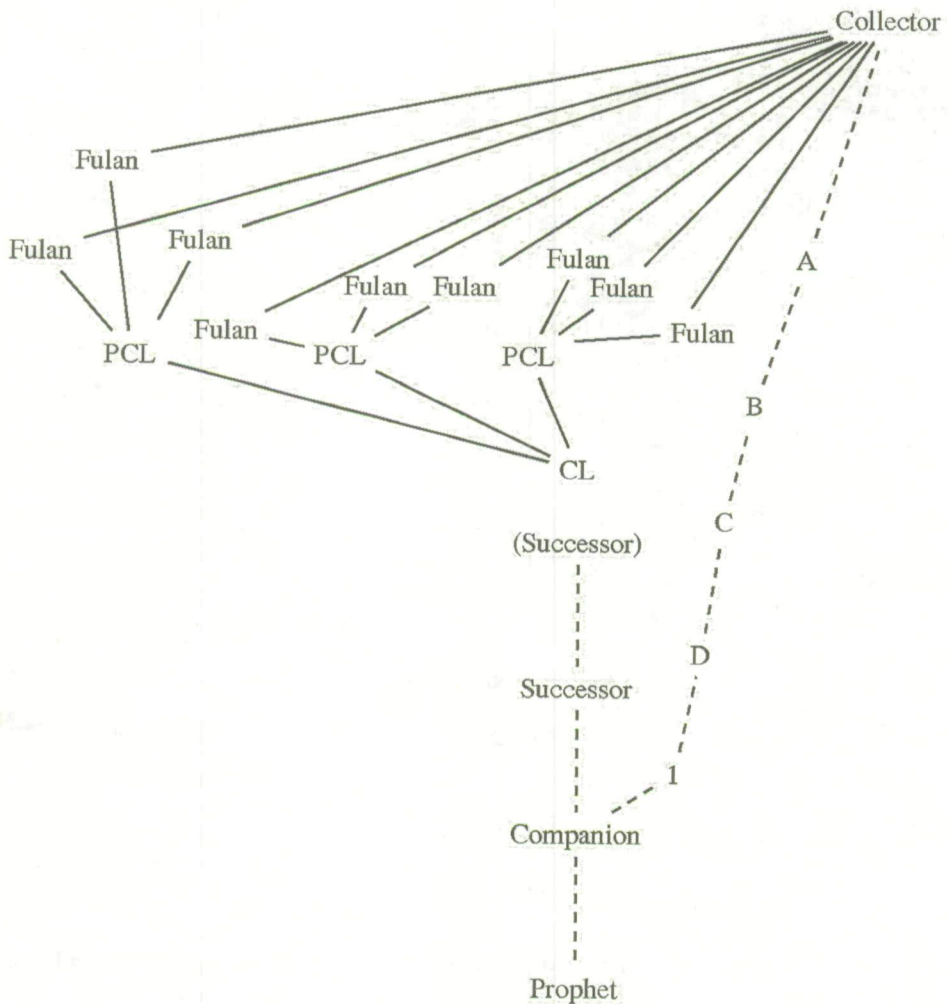
Here the *isnād* from A to D to 1 to the Companion strengthens an *isnād* that otherwise depends entirely on the CL.

IBN MĀJA

MUSLIM

TIRMIDHĪ   Ibn Rāhawayh   al-Ḥārith
                                                                                        b. Miskīn

          IBN ḤANBAL   IBN ABĪ   M. b. 'Al.   Abū   'Ar. b. al-
                               SHAYBA   b. Numayr   Khālid   Qāsim   Suwayd
ABŪ DĀWŪD   BUKHĀRĪ   b. Naṣr

     M. b. al-   Abū 'r   Abū   Sul. B.
     Muthannā   M. b. Y.   Rabī'   Kurayb   Manṣūr
          Qutayba   b. A. 'Umar   Muḥ. B.
                                                          Rumḥ   Yaḥyā b.
                                       Musaddad   Abū   Ḥabib
M. b.   ḤUMAYDĪ   Nu'mān   TAYĀLISĪ
Kathir   Ḥafṣ b.   'Al. B.
          Ghiyāth   Sufyān b.   Y. b.   Layth   al-MUBĀRAK
Sufy. ath-   'Abd al-Wahhāb   'Uyayna   Yaz. b Qazā'a Qa'nabī   Ḥammād
Thawrī   Hārūn   b. Zayd
                                                                      Zuhayr
                                        MĀLIK   b. Muḥ.

YAḤYĀ B. SAʿĪD al-ANṢĀRĪ

Muḥammad b. Ibr. at-Taymī

'Alqama b. Waqqāṣ

'Umar b. Al-Khaṭṭāb

PROPHET: Innamā ʾl-aʿmāl bi ʾn-niyyāt

The figure above shows an actual *isnād* "bundle," in his terminology.

Hard as it is to believe, I have scarcely touched here on the subtleties and technicalities of Juynboll's method; yet the reader can see why mastery of his tools, terminology, and axioms is a daunting task. The value of his method is, he believes, confirmed by the fact that it parallels practices that even masters of the High Tradition of Muslim *ḥadīth* studies used (though, of course, they did not draw the conclusions that Juynboll draws). For instance, the term *madār*—as well as *infirād* and *tafarrud*—refers to a pivot, or a unique source, for a *matn*; in other words, the common link around which subsequent narrations turned.[19] Muslim scholars' observation of the CL made it the basis for a whole genre of *ḥadīth*-discipline works, foremost among them al-Mizzī's *Tuḥfa*.

In addition, Juynboll's cabalistic diagrams may reveal to the cognoscenti the story of the *ḥadīth*'s (or, to be more precise, the *matn*'s wording's) origin and subsequent transmission. It is, Juynboll argues (following Schacht, but much more rigorously), the CL—often concealed in thickets of dives and various other obfuscating devices—who originated the text of the *ḥadīth* as it is known in the tradition.[20] When *isnāds* became prerequisite for authoritative non-Qurʾanic religious lore, diverse texts and stories circulating in various circles were formulated in fixed form, given an *isnād*, and then put into circulation by the *ḥadīth* narrator found at the common-link node.

Juynboll's work makes certain assumptions about the sociology of *ḥadīth* transmission. The most important is that, at the time of the CL, *ḥadīth* did not already have fixed forms and

19. See Juynboll, "(Re)Appraisal of Some Technical Terms in *Ḥadīth* Science."

20. The information the wording transmits may conceivably be from the Prophet—who knows? Muslim tradition itself records that religious lore was at first conveyed without rigorous *isnāds*. Further, Juynboll asserts—I find persuasively—that the recording of *isnāds* did not begin at the earliest before the *fitna* of Ibn Zubayr: Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition*, 9 and *Ency*, xvii, n. 2. But, he says, and even Motzkians agree, the wording was probably constructed by the CL.

were not consistently transmitted with *isnād*s, or, at least, *isnād*s going back to the Prophet. In a sub-culture that prized high-quality *isnād*s for their own sake, and also deployed these *ḥadīth* in doctrinal, legal, and other forms of competition, there were compelling incentives to provide your *matn* with the shortest *isnād* (that is, with the fewest links between the Collector and the Prophet), and one with the most prestigious, most credible transmitters.[21] If one could, with various minor adjustments, strengthen the *isnād*—by proposing a longer-lived tradent to replace two more transient experts, or by supposing that a Companion must have offered this maxim transmissionally rather than as an act of his own individual insight, and so on—there was every reason to do so. It is here that what Juynboll calls "creativity" in the *ḥadīth* culture comes in: some *isnād*s were strengthened by the attribution of improbably long lives to certain transmitters, but, he believes, tradents often outright invented Successors, Companions, and other transmitters (*Ency*, xxvii–xxix). These are the *majhūl*s ("unknowns") in the biographical works, and others whose lives are so sparsely documented as to arouse suspicion. Yet note that changes in the *isnād* and even in the wording of the *matn* do not change the historical reality or unreality of the ideas expressed in the *matn*—its authenticity—however much it enhanced the *ḥadīth*'s religious authority and its efficacy in debate, and however much the *isnād* became ahistorical.

Surprisingly, Juynboll's work (and that of others described below) suggests that Schacht's constant reference to *ḥadīth* as "forged" is anachronistic, not to mention needlessly pejorative. There were, of course, forged *ḥadīth*, as the tradition itself recognized. It was, after all, from *ḥadīth*-oriented sources that Goldziher took the most spectacular of his dubious *ḥadīth* examples. Reading Juynboll carefully, however, it would seem he believed that massive amounts of religious lore of hazy origin—some of it authentically Prophetic or even pre-Islamic—were in circulation and, planet-like, these stories, arguments, assumptions, and assertions gradually coalesced into *ḥadīth* in the form we think of as normative—a *matn*, often with the addition of egregious circumstantial verification ("I was holding the reins of the Prophet's camel when he said to me . . ."), and an *isnād*. There is no reason to suppose constant bad faith on the part of those who put *ḥadīth* into circulation. Once it seems "obvious" that religious knowledge outside of the Qur'an must come from the Prophet, religious data that "everyone knows," or that one's authoritative teacher taught, or that one's community observes as indisputably Islamic, must have come from Muḥammad; by simply reflecting on the student-master relationships, a technically correct *isnād* could in relatively good faith be brought into existence. In other words, changing technologies of transmission may well have generated good-faith alternations in the form of the religious lore then in circulation.

Indeed, I am struck in reading through Juynboll's *Encyclopedia* how often Juynboll presents a *ḥadīth* and remarks that it is likely very early, or plausibly from the Prophet, or some similar locution. Yet Juynboll rigorously presents this as a judgment of art rather than science—nothing in the *isnād* actually proves that it is "authentic." To his eye, in some cases, clues in the *isnād* fail to indict the *ḥadīth* as a later production and this, combined with the intuition of one who labored so long in the field of *ḥadīth*-studies, justifies the leap of faith to authenticate this saying as, possibly, Muḥammadian.

As a culmination of a life's study of all these technical features of *ḥadīth*, Juynboll published what is called an "Encyclopedia of Canonical Ḥadīth," an intimidatingly erudite, often witty, and elegantly written work. The purpose of this work is to include within it

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21. *Ency*, xxv. See also Cook, "Eschatology and the Dating of Traditions."

the texts of all the *ḥadīth* found in the Six Books, arranged by person associated with the *ḥadīth*.[22]

The *Encyclopedia,* however, has idiosyncratic features. First, the texts of the *matn*s are cited in the *Encyclopedia* as a *matn*-cluster (MC), Juynboll's equivalent of al-Mizzī's *ṭaraf*. A *ṭaraf* conveys not the *lafẓ* of the *ḥadīth* but its *maʿnā*, and so it can be difficult to find a *ḥadīth* if you have a specific wording in mind. Second, Juynboll's core text is the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim; the other Five Books (and the *Muwaṭṭāʾ*) are somewhat peripheral to Juynboll's notice, as we shall see (*Ency*, xxx f.). Third, the *ḥadīth* are organized by the "person with whom the *ḥadīth* is associated," a rubric that is, in the event, too vague, or perhaps too arbitrary, for even the most experienced reader.

The *Encyclopedia* presents itself as a reference work. I decided therefore to test it as we might use it in our work. The result is hard to report: this is a book that so obviously cost the author an immense, back-breaking, eye-straining amount of labor, a *Lebenswerk* in every sense; yet it is very difficult, sometimes maddening, to use. The sine qua non for a reference book is a scheme of organization that is inclusive, predictable, reliable, and comprehensible, but the *Encyclopedia of Canonical Ḥadīth* is arranged neither by topic (purity, sales, pilgrimage, foods) nor consistently by the Companion who links the *matn* to the Prophet (*musnad*), nor even by the person who appears at first glance to be the CL. Rather, as I said, it is arranged by persons with whom canonical traditions may be associated, a rubric that often turns out to be so idiosyncratic as to seem almost random.

Example: in the very first lemma in the *Encyclopedia*, we are given three *ḥadīth* associated with ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAbbās (d. 68/686–7). This would seem (remarkably for a scholar regarded as such a categorical skeptic) to indicate that Juynboll believes these *ḥadīth* to have been "put into circulation" by this Companion (who was between ten and fifteen years old when the Prophet died). Later in the *Encyclopedia*, under the name of Ibn ʿAbbās's client (Miqsam b. Bujra), Juynboll presents a *ḥadīth* (about the penalty for menstrual intercourse). By the end of the lemma on Miqsam, Juynboll has suggested that the *matn* is—not just "formally" but actually and historically—from Ibn ʿAbbās (and therefore may be authentically Muḥammadian). So if it is from—surely that means "associated with"—Ibn ʿAbbās, why does it end up under Miqsam? More importantly, how can we find this *ḥadīth* if we want to look up the *ḥadīth* "associated with Ibn ʿAbbās"?

Another example: suppose we encounter a *ḥadīth* we want to know more about. Perusing Robson's translation of the *Mishkāt* looking for teaching material I read

> Rukāna reported the Prophet as saying, "The difference between us and the polytheists is that we wear turbans over caps." Tirmidhī transmitted it, saying this is a *gharīb* tradition whose *isnād* is not reliable.[23]

There is no lemma on Rukāna in Juynboll. In the subject index there is an entry for turban, with four citations, but none refers to the *ḥadīth* I seek. Perhaps there is no entry because it is *gharīb* or only in al-Tirmidhī; but if it is in al-Tirmidhī it would still be "canonical," would

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22. *Ency*, xxx(b): the material is arranged "on the basis of the alphabetical order of the CLs." On xvii(a) it is on the basis of "identification of their respective originators . . . each with the tradition(s) for which he conceivably is, or possibly may be held, responsible."

23. Khaṭīb al-Tabrīzī, *Mishkāt al-maṣābīḥ*, 2: 916.

it not? In any case it is in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Tirmidhī[24] and in Abū Dāwūd as well.[25] Why not in the *Encyclopedia*? Again:

> Abū Bakra told that he heard God's messenger say, "No judge must give judgment between two people when he is angry." (al-Bukhārī and Muslim)[26]

There is no lemma for Abū Bakra (and none for Abū Bakr; Abū Hurayra is "associated" with a mere seven *ḥadīth*!). In the subject index under "judge" is a reference to p. 22, where one finds "No one should pass judgment between two persons whilst angry," which is under the lemma ʿAbd al-Malik b. ʿUmayr (d. 136/753). The lemma tells us that this *ḥadīth* is "with a strand on the authority of ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān b. Abī Bakra from his father Abū Bakra Nufayʿ b. al-Ḥārith." This *ḥadīth* is indeed in al-Bukhārī and Muslim and confirmed in other sources. We are told, "ʿAbd al-Malik is the convincing CL and this seems almost to be implied in so many words in [the citation from] Dhahabī" (p. 23). So here the lemma containing the *ḥadīth* is not under the Companion (as with Ibn ʿAbbās's *ḥadīth*) but under the CL. Yet it is common in Muslim literature to cite *ḥadīth* by reference to the Companion in the *isnād*; if that is my only datum, what am I to do? It turns out there *is* an entry (referring to nine separate *ḥadīth*) in the index under Abū Bakra, and that would eventually lead me to Juynboll's discussion. Yet short of turning to al-Mizzī's thirteen volumes, how am I otherwise to know that the discussion will be located under ʿAbd al-Malik b. ʿUmayr?

Again: I am leafing through Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ* and I find

> Muḥammad b. ʿAbbād related that Suryān informed us from al-Zuhrī from ʿUrwa from ʿĀʾisha, who said, "I perfumed the Messenger when he went into a state of consecration when he was consecrated (*li-ḥurmihi ḥīna aḥrama*), and when he was freed from consecration before the circumambulation of the House."[27]

In Muslim there follows a whole series of *ḥadīth* from ʿĀʾisha, with increasing detail to the same effect ("with my hand," "the best perfume," "the glistening perfume on the Prophet's hair-part," etc.). ʿUrwa and Qāsim show up in a number of these *isnāds*. Could they be CLs? Under which name should I look? Neither—the winner is ʿĀʾisha ("It is as if I still see the perfume glistening in the parting of the Prophet's hair while he was in a state of consecration"). Is she the CL? Surely not. She is a Companion and while all the different *isnāds* are from her—with various and varying transmitters—all of them also go through ʿUrwa or Qāsim. The following citational information (abbreviations expanded) follows in the *Encyclopedia* lemma:

> cf. al-Mizzī, XI, no. **15925**, 15928, 15954, 15975, 15988, 16026 (al-Bukhārī 5/14, 2, Muslim II, p. 848, Abū Dāwūd, al-Nasāʾī, Ibn Māja, confirmed in al-Ṭayālisī, nos. 1378, 1385, al-Ḥumaydī's *Musnad*, no. 215, al-Baghawī, I, pp. 89, 265, Ibn Ḥanbal, VI, pp. 38, 109, 245). Ibrāhīm an-Nakhaī is the best-attested *faqīh*. [?]. This is one version from the MC on the permissibility of the use of perfume for a person who is about to embark on the *ḥajj* and who assumes a state of consecration (*iḥrām*). See Shuʿba under al-Mizzī, XII, no. 17598 for a SCL. Mālik is yet another in this MC, see there under no. 17518*. [* Indicates that other *ḥadīth* scholars copied Mālik's wording on the authority of someone who is Mālik's authority. We do not know who, without going to al-Mizzī, 17518, or perhaps al-Zurqānī's commentary on Mālik for that *ḥadīth*.]

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24. al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, 4: 247: *Kitāb al-libās*, 42, *bāb al-ʿamāʾim ʿalāl-qalānis*, no. 1784, where it is *ḥasan gharīb*. Abū l-Ḥasan al-ʿAsqalānī is unknown, as is the Ibn Rukāna who transmits from the father.

25. *Libās*, 21, no. 4078.

26. Khaṭīb al-Tabrīzī, *Mishkāt al-maṣābīḥ*, 2: 791.

27. *Kitāb al-ḥajj, bab* 7, *al-ṭayyib li-l-muḥarram ʿind al-iḥrām*, no. 31 (1189).

This citation is not exactly reader-friendly. Not all of us sit with al-Mizzī (all thirteen volumes) at our elbow. We need to ask: For whom is this book written? How is it to be used? What is the point of it? What is its value? It is not an encyclopedia in any normal sense of the word nor is it really a vade mecum.

Despite these limitations as a reference work, the *Encyclopedia of Canonical Ḥadīth* is well worth having not only in libraries but in the personal collection of anyone who works with *ḥadīth*. It is, as I say, a *Lebenswerk* and on every page there is an illuminating remark, a rare bit of data, an amusing observation, a stimulating insight arising from a life spent perusing classical texts—particularly *ḥadīth* texts—with a discerning eye. I cannot begin to list all of Juynboll's casual dicta, each of which could provide a dissertation topic. To offer just a few (footnotes are mine):

> 77(b): Traditions on retaliation and the paying of blood-money are on the whole very old and may be dated to the lifetime of the Prophet, but he himself is hardly ever mentioned in them . . . the vast majority are *aqwāl* attributed to the *khulafāʾ rāshidūn* and the early *fuqahāʾ* . . .

> 78(a–b): "Aʿmash [a very prolific tradent] became one of Kūfa's recognized masters of ḥadīth especially the ones traced back to ʿAbd Allāh b. Masʿūd. His most celebrated *isnād* strand to that companion was via Ibrāhīm an-Nakhaʿī to ʿAlqama, . . . But these strands may have been a bit too laborious in his eyes; it struck him that they could effectively be shortened by one person, if an especially longeval one were to be inserted at some place. Aʿmash was in all likelihood an inventive imitator of Shaʿbī in the latter's use of a reputedly very old ḥadīth master, the companion ʿAdī b. Ḥātim . . . Inspired by this, Aʿmash created the personalities of some more of these longeval masters supposedly blessed by God with exceptionally advanced ages, the so-called *muʿammarūn*.[28] It is fair to assume that Aʿmash may be held responsible for the launching of the obscure—probably fictitious—Zayd b. Wahb and Maʿrūr b. Suwayd, and he made extensive use of traditions allegedly transmitted by Abū Wāʾil Shaqīq b. Salama, a *muʿammar* whose historicity—albeit not his alleged age at death—is at least tenable. Each of these three imaginary or real figures bridged the time gap between Aʿmash's own time all the way to that of Ibn Masʿūd because of the advanced ages they were reported to have reached at death, well over one hundred years.

> 160(a): In *ʿAwn al-maʿbūd*[29] we read a comment of the medieval tradition scholar aṭ-Ṭībī (d. 743/1343, cf. *GAL*, S II, p. 67) that the Prophet allegedly did not seek refuge with God from *all* diseases, because some ailments that are usually not protracted, such as headache, fever, and conjunctivitis, are better borne in *ṣabr*, i.e., silent patience, something which generates divine reward. *Judhām*, leprosy, or elephantiasis as it is occasionally interpreted, appeared in ancient Islam to be viewed as a disease which led society in the first instance to shun sufferers of that affliction. This is reflected in the saying: "Flee from a leper as from a lion." However, a later *rukhṣa* ('concession') tradition tells a different story. In Mizzī, II, no. 3010, we find a tradition (cf. *ʿAwn al-maʿbūd*, X, p. 300, with one Yūnus b. Muḥammad (d. 207/822) as SCL) in which the Prophet let a leper dip his hand into a bowl of food he was eating from, saying: "Eat and put your whole trust in God." The man is identified as one Muʿayqīb b. Abī Fāṭima ad-Dawsī. About this man we read in Ibn Saʿd, IV 1, pp. 86f., that he had contracted leprosy and that his affliction was rapidly getting worse. ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb asked around whether there was anyone who knew of a medicine that Muʿayqīb's ailment might cure [*sic*] or perhaps alleviate. Thereupon two men from Yemen approached and suggested that the juice of colocynths, rubbed into the man's foot-soles, might not make the affliction go away but it might in any case halt the aggravation of

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28. On which Juynboll himself has written extensively; see his "The Role of *Muʿammarūn* in the Early Development of the *Isnād*."

29. A commentary on Abū Dāwūd by ʿAẓīmābādī, used as the text for Abū Dāwūd since Juynboll did not like the "standard edition."

the disease. This treatment allegedly had the predicted success. NB It is clear that the concept of contagion (ʿadwā), for more on which see Shuʿba under no. 1259, is hinted at in this tradition.

There are scores and scores of similar mini-essays I could cite. In the lemma on Shuʿba b. al-Ḥajjāj alone there are erudite excurses on the Basin (ḥawḍ) (p. 473), the use of the basmalla in prayer (p. 481), the splitting of the moon (p. 483), lying in ḥadīth transmission (kadhib) (pp. 502, 510), the addition of ʿAlī to the khulafāʾ rāshidūn (p. 507), dreams as part of Prophethood (p. 513), sajda in Qurʾan recitation (p. 529), the banning of dogs (p. 532), the significance of sudden death (p. 534), pre-Islamic lamentation practices (p. 540), the coloration of horses' legs (p. 557), speaking animals (p. 558), how fosterage nullifies gender segregation rules (p. 563), and more. How much learning and antiquarian energy has gone into these short passages!

It has to be said, however, that I do not think this is how Juynboll conceived the work. I believe he saw it as a vade mecum for anyone venturing into ḥadīth-studies, but the unpredictable reference system cripples his would-be fellow traveler. An exhaustive index in a second edition would help a great deal, but some rearrangement and rechecking of coverage might also be in order. Or, at the very least, this work must offer explicit warning to the reader that, for example, ḥadīth not in Muslim may well be missing altogether (p. xxx) from the *Encyclopedia*.

B. *Other Scholars of the* Isnād *Sciences*

To understand the ḥadīth phenomenon and the state of the art at present, Juynboll's meticulous studies of the authenticity of the isnāds (and implicitly of the matns) have to be complemented by other works—works whose methods derive from his, even if their conclusions are dissimilar enough that most would put them in a different camp from Juynboll. Yet I believe that these scholars have built upon Juynboll's formalist studies, which have altered the field profoundly. I think it is fair to say that the burst of energy in the field recently is attributable to the provocative and substantial work of Juynboll over the past thirty years. More skeptical works like that of Cook or Herbert Berg[30] are coming to seem like outliers, and recent works by Harald Motzki and Gregor Schoeler, in particular, seem to derive from Juynboll but with more affirmative conclusions about the historicity of some ḥadīth, both their matns and their isnāds.[31]

One of the early controversies in ḥadīth studies concerned the orality of the ḥadīth and other early literature: Fuat Sezgin and Nabia Abbott asserted that these works or their predecessors were written from an early date and hence have a higher reliability than if they had been transmitted solely by word of mouth.[32] Gregor Schoeler, in one of many works provoked by Norman Calder's very skeptical *Studies in Early Muslim Jurisprudence*, has offered a plausible account of the development and place of writing in early Islamicate culture that is extremely relevant for the study of ḥadīth.[33] In essence, Schoeler argues that

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30. Berg, *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam* (but see Jonathan Brockopp's review).

31. For a critical view of Motzki's method (not quite persuasive), see Melchert, "The Early History of Islamic Law," 301–4.

32. See the very clear account of the development of critical scholarship on the ḥadīth in Motzki, *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence*, esp. 35–39.

33. Schoeler, *Charakter und Authentie der muslimischen Überlieferung über das Leben Mohammeds*; Schoeler, *Écrire et transmettre dans les débuts de l'islam* (and the revised English trans. *The Genesis of Literature in Islam*); Schoeler, *The Oral and the Written in Early Islam*. This topic is part of the historiography of the ḥadīth insofar as the ḥadīth works became written texts at some point in their history, and at that point, presumably, their content became stable.

writing was used in conjunction with oral recitation and transmission from a very early moment in Islam's history, not merely for technical reasons having to do with deficiencies of early Arabic script.[34] There was, in fact, he says, an elaborate written culture from Islam's earliest days. The much-cited argument that *ḥadīth* should be transmitted only orally was in fact—counter-intuitively—a later development associated with Iraq.[35] Iraq resisted also the creation of a definitive Qurʾanic ur-text. Schoeler suggests plausibly that in both cases it was resistance to a closed, and hence inflexible, corpus of scripture that motivated the Iraqis; they attributed a kind of religious charisma to oral and mnemonic transmission, and, additionally, a genuinely oral corpus had a more open content (ibid., pp. 116ff.).

Schoeler suggests compellingly (especially in chapter two) that "books" were, in fact, something like a professor's lecture-notes. They were "published" by being read to an audience and commented upon by the "author." Auditors transcribed what they heard in different lectures on the same topic and reproduced something very similar to the original. Sometimes the author's text was quite stable, and the author simply recited the text time after time.[36] Other times the text was more variable and contained more or less commentarial elaboration and development. In this case different auditors consequently transmitted quite variable texts of the same book.

Schoeler's discussion of the technology of transmission has coincided with the development of a method known as the *isnād-cum-matn* analysis, a term coined by Harald Motzki but used also by others, such as Schoeler himself and Andreas Görke. These scholars' approach to *ḥadīth*, in my view, is an elaboration of Juynboll's method. They first record all the transmitted versions of an event found in the sources: *ḥadīth* works, *maghāzī*, and *sīra* accounts drawn from sources even as late as Ibn Ḥajar (d. 852/1448). From such accounts they dissect discrete narrative elements found bundled together in the narrative and they reconstruct the *isnād* bundle for each of these elements à la Juynboll. They further list all the variants in wording found in the various accounts of the same discrete elements and then—in the fashion of manuscript editors—construct the stemma of the account, treating each variant in wording as a separate manuscript witnessed by its *isnād*. Where the contents of the accounts line up with each other, these scholars see an underlying authenticity in the text of the story and link that wording to the CL. In the case where the wording describing the event differs though the content is similar, they see a witness to transmission solely by lecture, where the "author" of the written work performed the work variously each time—either because he was working from memory or because he had an outline or aide-mémoire account upon which he elaborated. Where the wording in different accounts is quite similar, they see a transmission from a stable text (by lecture or direct copying). On the other hand, when a related event is unique to one strand of the narrational bundle, they assume it originated somewhere later in the *isnād* than the—Companion or Successor—CL to whom it is attributed. In such a case the *ḥadīth* or *khabar* is put to one side as unconvincingly attested material. The remainder is believed to be plausibly trustworthy, at least as an account dating from the "author" or CL.[37]

For this sort of exercise Motzki et al. have concentrated on the corpus of historical materials (*akhbār*) attributed to ʿUrwa b. al-Zubayr and they believe they have demonstrated an

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34. Schoeler, *The Oral and the Written in Early Islam*, 30ff. and chap. 4.

35. Ibid., 115ff.: "One ought at least not display one's books in public when lecturing."

36. Students of Annemarie Schimmel will recognize this practice.

37. For a clear demonstration of this, see Görke, "The Historical Tradition about al-Ḥudaybiya." This is the best introduction to the *isnād-cum-matn* methodology. See also Schoeler, "Character and Authenticity of the Muslim Tradition on the Life of Muḥammad," 360–61; Motzki, "Dating Muslim Traditions."

authentic ʿUrwa—and in some cases even an ʿĀʾisha—corpus.[38] They have written detailed studies of the stories of the first revelation, the slander of ʿĀʾisha, the Ḥudaybiya event, relations with the *anṣār* in the period immediately prior to the hijra, and the murder of Ibn Abī Ḥuqayq.[39] A very recently published volume (Motzki, *Analysing Muslim Traditions*, which appeared too late for detailed review here; see the review forthcoming in *JAOS*) provides extensive examples of this school's methodology with translations and representations of some articles that had appeared earlier, but also some articles that clarify the claims and aspirations of the method of the *isnād-cum-matn*-ists, both Motzki and others.

For the history of Islamic *ḥadīth* and law, however, it is an earlier article by Motzki that had the most ramifications. Using the relatively recently published *Muṣannaf* of ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ṣanʿānī (d. 211/826), Motzki argues persuasively that there is much more to be learned from *isnād*s and *ḥadīth* collections than had been thought by members of the Western academy. Motzki believes he can recover *fiqh* and *ḥadīth* reliably from Islam's first century by using Juynboll's *isnād* techniques and studying the lines of transmission (and, it must be said, using what Jonathan Brown calls the "principle of charity"—see below). Essentially, Motzki stipulates that the *Muṣannaf* is from al-Ṣanʿānī, while observing that his text has roughly one-third of its material from Maʿmar (d. 153/770) and Ibn Jurayj (d. 150/767) plus twenty percent from al-Thawrī (d. 161/778) (the rest is from various others). Motzki judges that the distribution of material (a) from these three and (b) among the sources to which these three attribute their *ʿilm* rules out arbitrary attribution by al-Ṣanʿānī, as would be the case if the contributions were forged. (Interestingly, while nineteen percent of the matter from al-Thawrī is said to be al-Thawrī's personal opinion, only one percent of the material from Maʿmar and Ibn Jurayj is their own opinion.) Other features of al-Ṣanʿānī's work also suggest its authenticity and concern for accurate attribution, including recorded instances of uncertainty and anonymity (in contrast to most of the opinions, which have quite precise attributions). Since al-Ṣanʿānī's major sources are said in the biographical sources to have been the first to compile *muṣannaf* works, Motzki asserts that from al-Ṣanʿānī we can extract part of the texts of Islam's first real law books, and thereby stand at the very threshold of Islamic law's foundation.

Even more startlingly, Motzki believes that one can reach still further back toward the time of Islam's initiation by looking at the sources of these first *muṣannaf*s. He chooses Ibn Jurayj, who draws about forty percent of his material from one of his teachers, ʿAṭāʾ b. Abī Rabāḥ (d. 114/732). By the same method he used to establish the scholarly veracity of al-Ṣanʿānī as transmitter, Motzki argues for the accuracy of Ibn Jurayj's transmission from ʿAṭāʾ.

It is fascinating to find at this juncture and with these early Muslim proto-*faqīh*s that their data were a mishmash of *raʾy* (personal reasoning) and dicta—authority statements attributed to other scholars as well as to Successors, to Companions, and to the Prophet. *Isnād*s are used quite variably, as are the technical terms of transmission when there is an *isnād*: many merely use *ʿan*, while others are careful to say *samiʿtu*. Law then was not, as Schacht maintained, at first *raʾy* and only later *ḥadīth*; from the earliest time to which we can see, it was both data—dicta—and a form of reasoning not, at least overtly, grounded in data from the founding generations, including the Prophet.[40] It is, in fact, striking to observe how few Muḥammadian

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38. Schoeler believes ʿUrwa had a systematic collection of religious learning (*The Oral and the Written in Early Islam*, 61 n. 48).

39. For the latter two, see Motzki, ed., *The Biography of Muḥammad*.

40. It is not my purpose to trace the discussion of Islamic law's development. I refer readers to the translation of Motzki's monograph that reports his very important investigations of al-Ṣanʿānī's *Muṣannaf* more fully: Motzki,

dicta there are in these early legal works. In a sample of two hundred responsa from ʿAṭāʾ, only three "even hint at him." In ʿAṭāʾ's dicta only six percent are from the Prophet and only one-quarter of these have an *isnād*, although it is often an incomplete one. Along with Scott Lucas, Motzki asserts that the body of Prophetic *ḥadīth* that these early *muṣannaf* compilers considered for inclusion in their scholarship was rather small, even in the mid-200s h. [41]

Yet Motzki avers (*Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence*, 158) that the prophetic *ḥadīth* in ʿAṭāʾ's work are no later in origin than the *ṣaḥāba* traditions and that (surprisingly) they are "no more binding for him (ʿAṭāʾ) than the [Companion traditions]." There are more references in the ʿAṭāʾ sample to Ibn ʿAbbās than to Muḥammad, but more to Muḥammad than to any one particular Companion. This would mean that in the 100s h., *ḥadīth* from Muḥammad did exist and were deployed in arguments—there were just not very many of them. This is also the finding of Lucas in his study of the other early *Muṣannaf* recently published, that of Ibn Abī Shayba (d. 235/849). In his sample from Ibn Abī Shayba—in an article that deserves the attention of every student of the history of Islamic law[42]—only 8.7% of the legal rules cite a *ḥadīth* from the Prophet, and this by a very *ḥadīth*-oriented scholar.

In sum, Juynboll's skeptical formalism regarding *isnād*s presents a useful macro view of what seems to have been the enlargement of the *ḥadīth* corpus in the periods through the end of the Islamic 300s. Motzki and his fellow travelers are more sanguine, at least about the *isnād*s of the historical events with which they are primarily concerned.

> [G]enerally speaking, the *isnād* system served the expectations of the traditionist. Otherwise, we would expect that they would have quickly abandoned it. Until we have proof to the contrary, we must, therefore, presume that *isnād*s are, in principle, reliable, except, perhaps, around the time when the system came into being. Still and all, we have to be on our guard against possible cases of error, well meant improvement or forgery in the *isnād*s. [43]

If the discussion of the authenticity of the *ḥadīth* and their *isnād*s remains still divided, it is no longer between the credulous and the radically skeptical but between the formalists and the particularists; both agree that we may be able to ascertain that *ḥadīth* date from the end of the Islamic first century, and Juynboll, at least, was willing to say that *ḥadīth* may, to his experienced eye, appear Muḥammadian. Motzki—less skeptical but more reticent—is willing to say that *ḥadīth* may sometimes plausibly be dated to the point where *isnād* techniques originate. [44] Both sides agree that *isnād*s may have elements of authenticity, but what has been taken for granted has been the authority of the *ḥadīth*.

Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence, esp. 287ff. Suffice it to say that while implying that *ḥadīth* of Muḥammad were known from the time of Ibn ʿAbbās, Motzki believes it is not until the first quarter of the 100s that regular citation of *ḥadīth* is expected in support of a legal opinion (p. 289).

41. Lucas, "Where are the Legal *Ḥadīth*?"; Motzki, "The *Muṣannaf* of ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ṣanʿānī as a Source of Authentic *Aḥādīth* of the First Century A.H.," 293 n. 11: 8.7% in his sample are reports from Muḥammad; most are from Companions or Successors. His data suggest that only between 1,200 and 4,500 *ḥadīth* were actually effective: 311 n. 113.

42. Lucas, "Where are the Legal *Ḥadīth*?" Lucas points out that legal *ḥadīth* may be a genre in which there are relatively few data attributed to the Prophet in the early period, as opposed to *tarhīb wa-targhīb*, for example: 311–12, n. 113. See also Lucas, "Principles of Traditionist Jurisprudence Reconsidered."

43. Motzki, "Dating Muslim Traditions," 235–36; see at more length his "*Quo Vadis, Ḥadīth*-Forschung?" (in Eng. "Whither *Ḥadīth* Studies?").

44. See Berg, "Competing Paradigms in Islamic Origins" and Motzki's response, in "The Origins of Muslim Exegesis." Scholars of *ḥadīth* studies are nothing if not polemical. It seems that everyone in the field has published at least one article rubbishing another's work.

III. ON AUTHORITY

Jonathan Brown's *The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim* leaves aside the authenticity discussions and concentrates upon the authority question, particularly the process by which some (but far from all) Muslims came to accord canonical authority to the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870) and the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Abū l-Ḥusayn Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj (d. 261/875). "Everyone knows" that these two are preeminent among the *ḥadīth* works of Sunni Islam: they far outweigh in prestige and citation the other four of the "Six Books," which are generally said to constitute the canon of legally and theologically effective *ḥadīth*. Yet no one asked how and why these two works came to be primi inter pares until Brown's careful study, which illuminates the process by which Sunni "orthodoxy" was created—as such it is an extremely important contribution to our understanding of Islam's religious development.

Brown's beginning point is that neither the earliest biographical data we have for Muslim and al-Bukhārī nor the earliest accounts that rank *ḥadīth* scholars present them as distinguished above their peers. In fact, in some rankings of the "greats" of their time and place, they do not even appear (pp. 87ff.). Al-Bukhārī, in fact, was regarded as theologically dubious by many since his position on the createdness of the recited Qurʾan was evasive and "unsound." Yet by the last quarter of the 200s/800s both these figures were claimed by their native cities as scholarly heroes.

As Brown recounts, the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī and the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim were part of a *ṣaḥīḥ* movement that began around the ninth century C.E., in the Khorasanian/Transoxanian region. No longer were these scholars striving to include every *ḥadīth* they encountered; rather they were beginning to construct a body of choice *ḥadīth* that would be more decisive in debate because, by the criterion of something called "soundness," they would be more authoritative than others. In sum, the creation of such works marked a change in the status of the *ḥadīth*, a movement that transformed the *ḥadīth* collectively from religious information to religious scholarship, on its way to making the *ḥadīth* an infallible body of religious prose. These stages were sequential but not exclusive. *Ḥadīth* that did not meet the criteria of the *ṣaḥīḥ* movement did not disappear; they continued to be cited in some kinds of religious literature, many of them eventually growing *isnāds* that allowed their inclusion into later *ṣaḥīḥ* works. Then, with the acceptance of the written *ḥadīth* works as canonical, the *isnāds* ceased to be a means of verifying the information included in the *matn*, and instead became a pious link between the scholar and the Prophet through the distinguished and charismatic scholarly forbears. The *ḥadīth* itself ceased to be a charism—domesticated by *uṣūl al-fiqh*, it became data to be deployed in the *fiqh* process.

This account is not terribly surprising at the level of generality, although no one had yet put the story together like this. (Christopher Melchert certainly covered the pietism of the *ḥadīth* folk; Jonathan Berkey grasped the outlines and presented them in a solid synthetic account; Marshall Hodgson still gives the best "big picture" of *sharʿī*-mindedness.[45]) The great merit of Brown's book is that he not only gives us the big picture and the "what," but he also gives us the details and the "how." This is a puzzle since, of course, there are no church councils, no formal magisterium to declare *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* a definitive scriptural source. So how did it happen?

According to Brown, the two *Ṣaḥīḥ*s were compiled—Muslim's had a methodological preface, while al-Bukhārī's was more a medley of *fiqh* and *ḥadīth* that harked back to

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45. Melchert, "The Piety of the Hadith Folk"; Berkey, *The Formation of Islam*; Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*.

al-Ṣanʿānī and Ibn Abī Shayba—and "published," that is, locally put into circulation, by regional scholars copying and teaching them. In the first stage the two *Ṣaḥīḥ*s became the scaffolding for a very curious and transient genre of works, the *mustakhraj*. In a perfect *mustakhraj* the compiler would decapitate the *isnād* when it reached the teacher of al-Bukhārī or Muslim, and then the compiler would present his own *isnād* that connected his own transmission of the *matn*, with more or less the same wording, to the generation below that. From there the same *isnād* found in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* work descended to the Prophet. In this way the other scholar assimilated himself to those two works and in the process ratified the judgment and *ḥadīth* selections of the Nīshāpūrī and Jurjānī scholar. In less formally perfect *mustakhraj* works, the *isnād*s and *matn*s might be adjusted, to remove theologically objectionable tradents or to include or remove *matn*s to make a theological point vis-à-vis the Qadarīs, Shiʿa, or some other deviant group, I suppose. Yet the core of the enterprise was these two works and not others. The *mustakhraj* genre is important religiously because it was the first step in a transition between an ideology reminiscent of the Iraqi desire for an open tradition that valued precisely that vivacity and dynamism of the living tradition of transmission (even if many of the *ḥadīth* may, from a formal point, be dubious) and the newer ideology of reification and textualism that ratified these two books as exemplary, authoritative, certain, and—most importantly—sufficient.

Other genres of ancillary literature also developed that also invested the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* with canonical authority. The *aṭrāf* works indexed the *Ṣaḥīḥ* by the first words of the *matn* or by its key word; the *ʿilal* works noted flaws in *isnād*s or tradents especially by comparison with other versions of the *ḥadīth*; the *ilzāmāt* and *mustadrak* works suggested *ḥadīth* that were missing in the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* and that ought (by al-Bukhārī and Muslim's criteria) to have been included. In this way the works of al-Bukhārī and Muslim became weighty works that attracted refinement, supplementation, and authority; in short, they acquired gravitas.

By the dating of derivative works Brown is able roughly to trace the process of communal ratification, and to show that it was first in Nīshāpūr (for Muslim), then in Jurjān (for al-Bukhārī), then, ultimately, in Baghdad where scholars validated and revered these works. The claims made for the two works, Brown shows, were part of the nascent Shāfiʿī polemic against Ḥanafī sagacity-based legal argumentation. (Although Ḥanafī scholars did transmit the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*, they did not elaborate upon it during the crucial period of canonization.) The *Ṣaḥīḥayn* were deployed to make both the Shāfiʿī *furūʿ* and *uṣūl* seem authoritative and "scientific," over against the more capricious judgment of the Ḥanafīs and the textual promiscuity of the Ḥanbalīs, who would cheerfully cite "weak" *ḥadīth* in order to avoid having to make use of frail human intellects in matters of divinity. Brown's key finding is that canonization took place through tightly linked socio-ideological networks of scholars who asserted their very novel position—the sound *ḥadīth* of the Prophet as the only source other than the Qurʾan of reliable Islamic knowledge—to be the sanctified practice of the Companions and Successors from Islam's earliest days.

Brown astutely realizes that canonization is not just an institutional process but a conceptual one as well. Muslims needed to conceive a role for canonized *ḥadīth* text that the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* could fulfill. It is as vehicles to restrict the rancor and fissiparousness of the fourth and fifth centuries that these two texts were conceived—they or something like them were needed to solve the divisiveness of intra-Muslim polemic and bring together at least some of the hyper-Sunni Ḥanbalīs, the Shāfiʿīs, the *ḥadīth*-suspicious Ḥanafīs, and those inclined to even more speculative theological approaches to Islam. So successful was this enterprise that, as Brown argues, by the late 300s even the Muʿtazila did not dispute the significance of sound *ḥadīth*. They did argue that all of the *ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīth* had now been recorded, and

that their number did not exceed ten thousand. Why ten thousand? Because that is roughly the number of *ḥadīth* narrations (not reports) contained in the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*. In other words, by the late 300s even the Muʿtazila ratified the canonical status of the *Ṣaḥīḥ*s of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, and sought to use them to circumscribe the *ḥadīth* corpus (pp. 175–78).

The key promoter of the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* as canonical paragons was al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī (d. 405/1014). Brown shows that al-Ḥākim was the central node in the transmission of the two *Ṣaḥīḥ* texts and their textual penumbra (see Brown's diagram, p. 103). Al-Ḥākim asserted not only the perfection of these texts' contents, but made them methodological ideals as well. The irony is that al-Ḥākim extolled the methodological rigor of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, presented an idealization of their method, [46] and then was much less discerning and considerably more lax in his *Mustadrak* than either of his paragons on their worst days.

The gap between al-Ḥākim's methodological theory and his practice, says Brown, reflects a late-stage crisis in the canonization process itself (p. 175). Contrary to the claims of some, including the Muʿtazila, that the corpus of the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* was definitive and exclusive; that it contained all the sound *ḥadīth* that could be used in argument; that no *ḥadīth* excluded from them could be used by rigorous Muslims; and that this smaller and finite set of *ḥadīth* meant that there was still important work for their rational enterprise, *ḥadīth*-folk such as al-Ḥākim argued that it was the standards of those collections that were definitive and that any *ḥadīth* that met those standards was also authoritative (p. 181). The lack of practical rigor in *al-Mustadrak* demonstrates that legitimate valuable *ḥadīth* exist outside the covers of these two works (pp. 182–83). Not only did al-Ḥākim's methodology allow the further expansion of the *ḥadīth* corpus to resolve new controversies with textual techniques, it also diminished the need for rationalist techniques to resolve moral problems. It was a neat move against both Muʿtazilī rationalists and Ḥanafī juristic reasoners. For—and this is my reading, not Brown's—the softer border around the *ḥadīth* corpus incorporated the Ḥanbalīs as well, and allowed the authority of the Prophet to permeate the *fiqh* process and leave ratiocination as only an ancillary tool for jurists.

The effect of canonization was to create a body of technically imperfect *āḥād ḥadīth*—imperfect because, having single strands at their beginning, they were not *mutawātir*, that is, plurally transmitted. Yet because the collection in which they appeared was "canonized," they had, in effect, the authority of *tawātur*, so they could be confidently used to derive substantive law. Community ratification transmuted the epistemologically limited *āḥād ḥadīth* into a textual wildcard that could abrogate Qurʾan and determine dogma and ritual. The commitment to the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* eventually became, as Brown shows persuasively, the majority position of the Shāfiʿīs, the Muʿtazila, and even the Ḥanbalīs. Yet although al-Ḥākim played such an important part in ratifying the status of the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*, he never suggested that it was community agreement that made them definitive works. [47] It was, rather, the high technical

46. Doubling of transmitters in each generation—a standard al-Bukhārī and Muslim seldom, in fact, met.

47. Pp. 183–84. The role of communal ratification at the sociological level in the creation of a *ḥadīth* canon might seem to support Snouck Hurgronje's position that the doctrine of *ijmāʿ* was in effect justified by consensus around the primacy of Prophetic *ḥadīth* including the *ḥadīth* that justified consensus ("My community will never agree on an error . . ."). This would partially refute an argument of Aron Zysow ("The Economy of Certainty") that the circularity of such a justification process would have been apparent to the jurists. (See also Hallaq, "On the Authoritativeness of Sunni Consensus.") But to argue so would be to confuse social fact with epistemological theory. Brown's account does, however, implicitly diminish the significance of the argument made by Hallaq ("The Authenticity of Prophetic Ḥadīth") that since most *ḥadīth* cited in juristic construction are *āḥād*, they were regarded as being only probabilistically true. Here, again, the distinction between authentic and authoritative is helpful. *Tawātur* is really not about authenticity but about authority. In addition, terms like *tawātur* mean something different for the *muḥaddithūn* than for the *uṣūlīs*. See Brown, "Did the Prophet Say It or Not?"

standards of al-Bukhārī and Muslim that made them thus (the two Sound Works), and noth-
ing else (pp. 193–94).

Nonetheless, Brown shows that, among specialists, these canonized works were under-
stood to be neither inerrant nor invulnerable to criticism. Not only Ḥanafīs but also Shāfiʿīs
were on occasion willing to scrutinize, critique, and abandon *ḥadīth* included in the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*
(pp. 253–60). Indeed, *ḥadīth*-scholars had recourse to various sorts of gymnastics—which
Brown generously calls "the principle of charity" (after Donald Davidson) to get around
substantial flaws in the *isnād*s and biographies of the two shaykhs.

Once these works were canonized, then they were deployed. Brown shows that authors
such as al-Bayhaqī made conclusive arguments by asserting simply that "al-Bukhārī and/
or Muslim included it (*akhrajahu*)" (p. 220). In this way he, and others like Abū Nuʿaym
al-Iṣbahānī, not only silenced critics but more importantly obviated the need for the arcana
of *isnād*-criticism. These *Ṣaḥīḥayn* (and a few others of the *ṣaḥīḥ* movement) became self-
substantive authorities—scriptures, in short—which stood beside the Qurʾan as a source of
authority but were much more encompassing in the scope of dogma and law that fell under
their purview.

If Brown is able admirably to tell us the "what" and "how" of the canonization of
al-Bukhārī and Muslim, he is somewhat—perhaps inevitably—at a loss about the "why."
There were earlier *Ṣaḥīḥ*s, such as that of Saʿīd al-Khurāsānī (d. 227/842), and later ones,
such as that of al-Bustī (d. 354/965), but it seems to be adventitious that these two tri-
umphed. Regional loyalty, a rise of the novel Shāfiʿī doctrine, the development of Bagh-
dad as a center of scholarship, the construction of scholarly networks linking Baghdad to
Jurjān and Nīshāpūr (p. 130), the irenicism of *madhhab*-tolerance—all played a role. On the
whole it seems that the move to canonicity created the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* rather than some feature of
al-Bukhārī and Muslim that compelled their canonization.

A particularly valuable contribution of Brown's work is that the author does not assume
Islam stopped in 1258 or 1517. He reads the sources that continued to be written—particu-
larly in India—through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This allows him to notice a
pivotal shift in Muslim attitudes that may help to define part of what is distinctive about mod-
ern Islam. Brown claims that the *salafī* assertion (or reassertion) of the eighteenth century
and afterward created two new trends, or brought one marginal trend to the fore and created
another. On the one hand, traditionist radicals came to deny any presumptive legitimacy to
the whole apparatus of pre-modern Islam—*madhhab* subtlety and scholasticism, Sufi spiritu-
ality, not to mention popular religious practices such as tomb-veneration. This repudiation of
the consensus on the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* as canon was asserted particularly by the Zaydī Muḥammad
al-Ṣanʿānī (d. 1768)—a figure whose importance is beginning to be recognized. Al-Ṣanʿānī
articulated a staunch doctrine of Muslim subordination to texts of genuine *ḥadīth*, and noth-
ing—not the strictures of his *madhhab* nor any conventional usages (*taqlīd*, as he styled it)
or evasions—could have precedence over the straightforward text of a sound piece of the
sunna. As a consequence, all *ḥadīth* had to be subject to rigorous criticism. The rejection of
all religious convention meant the rejection of canon, too, and al-Bukhārī's work and that
of Muslim were likewise subject to strict technical interrogation before a *ḥadīth* from their
works could be accepted. The "principle of charity" that had overlooked the occasional slip
was replaced by a stern rigor that required perfection from the *ḥadīth*-report, followed by
meticulous observance.

On the other hand, Brown shows that another figure often thought to be a *ḥadīth*-oriented
reformer, Shāh Walī Allāh Dihlawī, was the first (despite the canonical status of the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*)
to condemn outright any disparagement whatsoever of the works of al-Bukhārī and Muslim,

and to proclaim that criticism of their canon put one outside the boundaries of the Muslim community. Al-Ṣanʿānī was in a certain sense the ivory-tower intellectual, imbedded in an isolated Muslim community, while Shāh Walī Allāh was at the forefront of Muslims combating Islamdom's political dissolution and subordination. Al-Ṣanʿānī was willing to tear it all down to create a pure Muslim edifice; Shāh Walī Allāh wanted to fortify every breach in the walls of Muslim unity, even if this meant tolerating practices that were dubious, embracing texts of uncertain epistemological certainty, or mashing together incommensurate ritual and legal norms.

Brown's *Canonization* is an important book not merely because it poses an important question and answers it in a persuasive and erudite way. What Brown does is to move us toward understanding the study of *ḥadīth* as an endeavor that applies to nearly the whole of Islam's history, one that changed as an enterprise from age to age. He sidesteps the question of authenticity in part because, in one sense, it matters little for students of Islam. By the fourth Islamic century at the very latest, Muslims were for the most part convinced that the second part of the *shahāda* obliged them to study the Prophet as a guide to Muslim behavior. For the study of Islam, therefore, the proper focus must shift to authority—not just how the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* were canonized (and the place of the others of the "Six Books" as well as the "rediscovery" of the *Muwaṭṭāʾ* still remain to be investigated), but how that authority was deployed in legal arguments, and how the commentaries became the instruments for adjusting Islam to changing circumstances after the creation of new *ḥadīth*s became more difficult.[48] This will no doubt be a rich field for Islamic studies during the rest of the century. An example of the potential of this field can be seen in Aisha Musa's *Ḥadīth as Scripture: Discussions on the Authority of Prophetic Traditions in Islam*, from which I have drawn the trope of distinguishing between authority and authenticity. Although her early chapters offer little new, the later chapters dovetail with the work of another Brown[49] to describe fascinating nineteenth-, twentieth-, and twenty-first-century discussions of the authority of the *ḥadīth* by, among others, those who deny the *ḥadīth* any authority whatsoever over Muslims.

Another recent work that would seem of interest to students of *ḥadīth* is *Narrative Social Structure: Anatomy of the Hadith Transmission Network, 610–1505*, by Recep Şentürk, a polymath Turkish sociologist who has done important work on the late Ottoman period and also on contemporary human rights issues. Şentürk attempts in this book, which was, I gather, his sociology dissertation at Columbia (2003), to bring social network theory to bear on the transmission of *ḥadīth*, or, more correctly, on the medieval accounts of *ḥadīth* transmission. Readers of *JAOS* will find it to be more about network theory than about *ḥadīth* transmission, and primarily an attempt to insert *ḥadīth* studies and Islamic intellectual history in general into the intellectual framework of Randall Collins. It is not clear what the reward of this very technical work might be for scholars whose interest is either in the historical authenticity of the *ḥadīth* or the culture of *ḥadīth*-transmission, but there is an important point to observe in the assumptions Şentürk makes in his method.

Based upon the assumption that earlier prose scholarship is preserved, as it were, in the aspic of the later biographical sources, Şentürk uses the relatively late *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāẓ* of al-Dhahabī (d. 784/1348) and *Ṭabaqāt al-ḥuffāẓ* of al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505), augmenting his study a bit with Ibn Ḥibbān's (d. 354/965) earlier *Mashāhir ʿulamāʾ al-amṣār*. Con-

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48. Although it remained an option. On the "creative" use of hitherto unknown *ḥadīth*, see Norris, *Ṣūfī Mystics of the Niger Desert*, 33–34.

49. Daniel W. Brown, *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought*, a work that all students of contemporary Islam should know.

sequently, Şentürk's account of the first several generations of *ḥadīth*-transmissions is, to say the least, highly speculative and, I think, implausible. His work takes for granted the mythography of the *ḥadīth* movement—namely, that immediately upon the Prophet's death the science of *ḥadīth* scholarship as we know it from later centuries was born ex nihilo, without development, without discord as to its value and methodology, without contestation about it as a source of religious knowledge. This is once more the Big Bang theory of *ḥadīth* historiography.

But perhaps the goal of the work is not to talk about the transmission of *ḥadīth* so much as the prestige-values in the culture of *ḥadīth* partisans. If so, it complements Juynboll and Cook and confirms the social pressure on *muḥaddithūn* to present the shortest possible *isnād*. That seems to be the import of this paragraph of socio-argot:

> An aspiring student of hadith sought ties with an extensive geodesic value . . . [*ḥadīth*-transmitters] were primarily concerned not with geographical distance but with social distance. . . . The shortest path between scholars and the Prophet, which determines what is called here geodesic value, thus plays an important role in prominence. Attention needs to be paid, nevertheless, to the layer of the scholar as well. If the layer of the scholar is not taken into consideration, then scholars from different layers with the same path distance will end up being treated the same way. For instance, if n_i from layer 5 is connected to the Prophet via a path that includes three nodes, it will have the same value as n_j from layer 7, who is also connected to the Prophet through three nodes. Paradoxically, if a scholar belongs to a later layer but his chain is relatively shorter, this actually adds value to his chain because he has traversed a longer distance at less cost. To put it plainly, reaching the center with less effort from a greater distance will increase the importance of a path. (p. 149)

However, *ḥadīth*-transmission is not always and everywhere the same—in meaning or technique. As Brown showed us, by the time al-Dhahabī and al-Suyūṭī were writing, transmission was a ritual activity more than an epistemological enterprise. Yes, prestige might have accrued to *muḥaddithūn* with relatively short *isnād*s in the eighth/fourteenth century, but it was the prestige of the autograph collector or the buyer of first editions, not the prestige of someone whose knowledge is more authentic and so more helpful to Muslims trying to sort out how God wants humankind to act. It is not clear that Şentürk understands this, because he asks:

> Why were scholars at certain times more actively involved in seeking higher numbers of teachers and students, as compared to their colleagues from other layers? The fluctuation in the average number of academic ties to prominent scholars over the course of history may be due to the political and cultural unrest that Islamic civilization underwent during certain periods in its history. (p. 161)

His subsequent diagram (figure 6.1) seems to show (it is not easily interpreted) that the peak number of contacts recorded in his sources took place between the seventh and tenth "layer," that is, between 100–206/718–821 and 170–292/786–904, which is exactly when the single strands mushroom into the florescent bundles in Juynboll's diagrams. [50] Given that this was the period, first, in which the partisans of *ḥadīth* pressed for the orthodoxy of their methodology and, second, that led up to the canonization of the standard works, it seems likely that this exuberance is a product of (a) partisan activism and (b) the variables of the biographical process itself, in which key figures in the establishment of the *ḥadīth*-ideology

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50. "Conflict over the place of hadith in Islamic theology and law characterizes the earlier and most dynamic period in the history of the hadith transmission network. . . . Opposition fueled dynamism in the network" (Şentürk, p. 182).

are remembered until their cause was won, at which point the mere fact that one transmitted *ḥadīth* does not make one interesting enough to be included in a biographical dictionary. If I have understood correctly, this expansion of traceable transmissions registers the flurry of activity that, in fact, ended *ḥadīth*-transmission as an epistemological activity and ushered in the *ḥadīth*-as-scripture era.

Şentürk's book calls attention to another problem in the study of *ḥadīth*—especially before canonization—and that is our scholarly focus on the Six Books. We do this in part because the Wensinck *Concordance* and al-Mizzī give us tools to use these particular works. Yet the Six Books do not represent all of the *ḥadīth* in circulation, or even all of the *ḥadīth* in circulation that fit the criteria of al-Bukhārī and Muslim—the genre of *iltizām* or *istidrāk* proves that. Moreover, the work of people such as Miklos Muranyi has established that there were many *ḥadīth* in circulation that never made it into the canonical collections—for whatever reason.[51] It is not that the figures in these extra-canonical *ḥadīth* are necessarily any more dubious than those in other *isnād*s. To draw persuasive conclusions about the content and transmission of *ḥadīth* in the pre-canonical period, scholars need to engage with these extra-canonical works, transmitters (or alleged transmitters), and ideas. It should be our working hypothesis that biographies of canonical *ḥadīth* transmitters do not tell us about the history of *ḥadīth* transmission, but, so far as we can tell, of a cross-section of *ḥadīth* transmission of unknown randomness or typicality. This will mean studying the content and transmission of *ḥadīth* works in manuscript, but also early law works and other sources. It is clear that the publication of al-Ṣanʿānī's *Muṣannaf* and that of Ibn Abī Shayba have revolutionized the study of *ḥadīth* and law. Perhaps there are other equally startling books out there, ignored because they never made it into the canon.

IV. THE INESCAPABILITY OF THE AUTHENTICITY QUESTION

Jonathan Brown has published not only his excellent technical work on al-Bukhārī's canonization, but a very substantive overview of *ḥadīth* as well: *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World*. It is, says the author, "an introduction to the *ḥadīth* tradition, its collection, its criticism, its functions in Islamic civilization, and the controversies surrounding it to this day" (p. 5). This book provides by far the best introduction to the *ḥadīth* and its ancillary disciplines: *ʿilm al-rijāl*, books on forgeries (*mawḍūʿāt*)—nearly all the significant genres of *ḥadīth* scholarship are introduced and explained. To the author's great credit, he also has a section on the use of the *sunna* and *ḥadīth* in Islamic law and theology, as well as on the role of *ḥadīth* in Shiʿi scholarship and in Sufism—the latter to my knowledge the first reliable overview, although it is quite brief. The former is strikingly more dependent on a small set of secondary scholarship than the sections on Sunni scholarship and refers only to a very limited set of primary Shiʿi sources. It shows little engagement with the critical work of Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, Andrew Newman, and others on the formation of Shiʿi *ḥadīth*, particularly in the Iraqi provinces, but merely reports that the Shiʿi *isnād*s go back to the imams, cites the imams' account of how they receive their *ḥadīth*, and so forth. Despite the limitations, which are mostly those of pre-existing secondary scholarship, and a revealing chapter that I discuss below, this is a notable accomplishment of clarity, erudition, and organization.

51. Muranyi, *Die Rechtsbücher des Qairawāners Saḥnūn B. Saʿīd*; Muranyi, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Ḥadīt und Rechtsgelehrsamkeit der Mālikiyya in Nordafrika bis zum 5. JH. D.H.*; Muranyi, *Ein altes Fragment medinensischer Jurisprudenz aus Qairawān*. Cf. ʿAbd al-Malik b. Ḥabīb, "*Das K. al-Wāḍiḥa*." These contain a significant number of Mālikī traditions not found in the canonical sources.

However, its approach to history is, at best, phenomenological. We are given (pp. 18–19) without comment the news that

> [f]rom the beginning of Islam, Muhammad's words and deeds were of the utmost interest to his followers . . . [I]t is not surprising that those Companions who knew how to write tried to record the memorable statements or actions of their Prophet . . . the small notebooks they compiled, called **sahīfas**, would have consisted of papyrus [etc.] . . . certain Companions were more active in amassing, memorizing, and writing down hadiths than others. Like grandchildren eager to collect stories and recollections about a grandparent they barely knew, we find that it is often the most junior Companions of the Prophet who became the most prolific collectors and transmitters of hadith. Abū Hurayrah (d. 58/678), who knew the Prophet for only three years, is the largest specific source for hadiths, with approximately 5300 narrations in later hadith collections. Although he did not write hadiths down in his early career, by his death Abū Hurayra had boxes full of the **sahīfas** he had compiled.[52]

A historically critical account this is not.

Brown's position on *ḥadīth* historiography is manifested most clearly in chapter eight, "The Authenticity Question: Western Debates over the Historical Reliability of Prophetic Traditions." Here Brown's extensive learning, scholarly thoroughness, and rhetorical skill are put in service of what can only be described as an apologetic project. It begins with a rhetorical move relativizing the work of academic scholarship.

> Like Muslim hadith critics, however, our methods of historical criticism in the West have their own tradition with its own assumptions. What we must admit before any further discussion is that, because a book does not assume that God directly intervenes in human events, that Muhammad was really a prophet, or that the hadiths are in general authentic [note the packing from the general to the particular, AKR], then what it really assumes is that God does *not* directly interfere in historical events, that Muḥammad was *just a man*, and that there are *real doubts* about the historical reliability of the entire hadith corpus. (p. 197)

This is a mistake: it confuses the religious skepticism of early philosophers and religious critics with the critical historical approach per se (of which Brown gives a good account, pp. 200–203). The critical historical approach is agnostic in discourse and method. That is what allows it to be critical. This is what allows Jews and Christians alike to contribute to the historical study of the Gospels. But generations of seminary and university scholars of the Bible would stridently reject the notion that, because they rigorously and critically study, say, the New Testament, they are committed to the idea that God does not intervene in human events, that Jesus was just a man, or that the Gospels are useless as sources of information about Jesus. However, outside of conservative Bible institutes and evangelical seminaries, few scholars would assert that the Gospel of John was written by the Beloved Disciple or that the Letter to the Hebrews was written by Saul of Tarsus. This is an oratorical red herring.

So, too, is the move that precedes it (pp. 198–99):

> Western criticism of the hadith tradition can be viewed as an act of domination in which one worldview asserts its power over another by dictating the terms by which 'knowledge' and 'truth' are established. . . . As the likes of Edward Said have shown, knowledge is power, and studying an object is an act of establishing control over it. . . . Western discussions about the reliability of the hadith tradition are thus not neutral, and their influence extends beyond the lofty halls of academia. The Authenticity Question is part of a broader debate over the power dynamic between 'Religion' and 'Modernity', and between 'Islam' and 'the West.' . . . [W]e will assume what I think is a more accurate approach: the hadith tradition is so vast and our

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52. And see p. 20 on why important Companions related so few *ḥadīth*.

attempts to evaluate its authenticity so inevitably limited to small samples, that any attitudes towards its authenticity are necessarily based more on our critical worldview than on empirical fact. Because we ultimately cannot know empirically whether Muhammad was a prophet or a character formed by history, or whether or not God played any role in preserving his words for posterity, we will not look at the Authenticity Question as one to which there is a right and wrong answer [though he does just this, at length below—which is just fine, AKR].

I am sympathetic to the quandary in which Brown finds himself, but his moves are evasive rather than persuasive. As Wilfred Cantwell Smith pointed out long ago, the Islamic counterpart of the New Testament is the *hadīth*, and it will be the domain in which the Muslim equivalent of biblical criticism will take place. Biblical criticism has been and is a painful experience for Christians, who resent being told that Exodus is not by Moses and that "harmonizing" the Gospels is impossible. The world is filled with Christians who reject biblical criticism in part or in whole. But an academic scholarly consensus has evolved—in part through wild swings in argument between absolute fidelity to scripture and utter rejection of its historical validity. There is still considerable variety on these matters. Yet this is the enterprise of critical scholarship and to reject it because of its incompatibility with fideist accounts is not a "critical worldview" at all. I am very appreciative of Said's contributions to our collective self-consciousness, but this is the sort of use of his insights that gives him a bad name. We must admit the fact of power imbalances (though I doubt that this *JAOS* article will set madrasa professors in Peshawar or Cairo trembling) but that cannot inhibit our attempts to find an "accurate approach." Moreover, one has to ask: when Fred Donner asserts that the Qurʾan is an authentic text from before the Muslim conquests began, just as Muslim tradition asserts—an account I find completely persuasive—is that, too, domination, or is it only domination when one disagrees with the orthodox? Is there a good reason why scholars should always be subalterns to the orthodox?

Brown then proceeds with a mostly fair, characteristically lucid account of various academic approaches to *hadīth* from William Muir's critical biography of Muḥammad forward.[53] In Brown's account of academic engagement with the authenticity question, there are moments of discomfort: showing that Goldziher is skeptical, or even overly skeptical, Brown seems to call into question historical skepticism itself (p. 208); Schacht and Juynboll, as *hadīth*-skeptics, are given the no-longer-neutral, no-longer-descriptive title of Orientalist; Juynboll is said to "admit" that there is repetition in the 1,700 *hadīth* attributed to Ibn ʿAbbās in Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad*; his technical terminology is referred to as "jargon" (p. 215); the CL is "accused" of being the originator (p. 215); whereas Motzki "treats *hadīth* with respect" (p. 226). Fine—the scholar admires some colleagues and is less enamored of others.

More problematic—but not uncommon in accounts of the authenticity question—is that the whole enterprise of determining the *hadīth*'s degree of historical reliability is treated as a battle between implacable adversaries rather than as an evolving understanding shaped by assertion–demonstration–critique–advance. Goldziher and Schacht stopped people like Renan from using the *hadīth* as unproblematic biographical resources and gave an account of the *hadīth* that broke from both uncritical academic views and the versions of the pious. Various other scholars (e.g., Robson) began to look at the ancillary sciences; Abbott and Sezgin showed that written sources sometimes lay behind "oral" transmission; Juynboll used his

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53. Linking the British East India Company and British colonial civil servant William Muir to Goldziher seems tendentious. Goldziher thought so little of Muir that in his second volume of *Muslim Studies* (on *hadīth*) a quick check suggests that he cites him only once, and that perfunctorily. Brown would have done better to cite the scholar Aloys Sprenger, whom Goldziher clearly respected more—of course, Sprenger was not the kind of Islam-basher that Muir was.

vast knowledge of *ḥadīth* and the ancillary sciences to describe the fundamental form of the *ḥadīth*; Mokzki used Juynboll's studies of *isnād*s with source-critical techniques (*isnād-cum-matn*) to come to conclusions different from Juynboll's. From a non-confrontational perspective, each of these scholars has improved our knowledge of the form, contents, history, and historiography of the *ḥadīth*. Even if these academics are prone to write fifty-page critical reviews of one another's works, it seems to me less a battle than a collective enterprise.

When Brown writes "Motzki raises some other interesting questions about the assumptions made by Schacht and Juynboll," it is worth turning the glass around and noting Brown's own assumption that the transmission of *ḥadīth* in the first 150 years took place "within a circle of scholars who exerted a great deal of effort to prevent material from being forged wholesale about the Prophet" (p. 234).

> Juynboll and Cook cited the practice of *tadlīs* as the loophole by which hadiths were attributed to major transmitters or equipped with additional *isnād*s. Juynboll states that "*tadlīs* 'was hardly ever detected.'" But Muslim hadith scholars from the mid eighth century onward were obsessive about identifying which transmitters lapsed into *tadlīs* and when.

Brown seems very trusting of the early Muslim scholars and, while he appeals to a social climate that deplored deception, he gives little weight to the pressures of the sort we may infer from Şentürk's *Narrative Social Structures* to "produce" more prestigious *isnād*s. In polemical strife it is perfectly likely that providing stronger, shorter, or confirmatory *isnād*s was a temptation and there is lots of evidence—some from Muslim sources—that they did so. It is appropriate for historians to be suspicious. And it is in the nature of well-done *tadlīs* that it cannot be detected by any method used by Shuʿba, al-Karābīsī, Motzki, or Brown. On the other hand, it does require a real suspension of disbelief to suppose that the entire enterprise of *ḥadīth* was built on bad faith, subterfuge, and dishonesty. Finally, there is a certain sterility at this point in debating what is as of yet not fully decidable, and no one has done more than Brown to demonstrate that the field of *ḥadīth* studies has many fields to plow besides the (perhaps) exhausted one of authenticity.

V. CONCLUSION

Where does all this new work leave us in the *ḥadīth* cosmos? Most importantly, we now have a good map of the canonization of the two most authoritative works of *ḥadīth*. I doubt that this picture will be much changed or much improved from what Brown has given us. It would now be helpful to see how the other books of the Six were constructed and how they made it into the canon with their manifestly looser standards and more artful *isnād*s. It is also worth wondering why other works produced by the *ṣaḥīḥ* movement did not make it into the canon. I think we have no clear picture yet of the movement (or movements) that asserted itself in the Muslim body politic to persuade Muslims of the virtue and concord of the first two generations of Muslims—in the face of such manifest evidence of the first generation's discord and praxic variety. Lucas's *Constructive Critics* provides an immense amount of detail—although I cannot escape the feeling that he is, in a sense, ratifying the received tradition of people like al-Dhahabī and Ibn Ḥajar or even Ibn Saʿd more than he is taking it apart and discovering how things really worked—and he has highlighted the way in which the apparatus of the *ḥadīth* sciences that makes it such an imposing edifice, that does so much to ratify the *ḥadīth*'s authority, that gives it so much attractive magnetism, is a product of Ibn Ḥanbal, Ibn Maʿīn, and others who reconstructed the *ḥadīth* artifact into an epistemological and pietistic object, a witness to the magisterium of the *umma* from Islam's mythic era. This is clearly crucial if we are to understand the authoritativeness of the *ḥadīth* culture. A

fair amount of work has been done on the proto-Ḥanbalīs and their gradual articulation as a legal school and political movement, but we still do not understand the *ḥadīth* partisans as a socio-religious movement in the period up to the second half of the Islamic third century.

In addition, the place of *ḥadīth* as religious object and activity in the period after Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ (d. 643/1245) needs examination. If the books of *ḥadīth* were now canonized, why were people still transmitting *ḥadīth* in the Mamlūk period?[54] Brown has also pushed the door ajar on the study of *ḥadīth* ideology in the time of Shāh Walī Allāh. The modern *ḥadīth* partisans such as Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī require our attention, too, particularly if we are to understand contemporary Islam in other than the political science framework of the *Jihād*™ industry.

These questions might all be seen as interrogating the continued authority of *ḥadīth* so as not to see *ḥadīth* as signifying the same thing throughout all of Islamic history. We need to study the ancillary sciences as well. Eerik Dickinson,[55] Brown, and Berkey have all pointed to this, but too many works on Islam and Islamic thought see the *ḥadīth* as a monument to the third and fourth centuries that, once in place, simply sits in the Islamic landscape unchangingly. Nowhere near as much work has been done on *ḥadīth* commentary as has been done on Qurʾan commentary although it seems at least as dynamic a genre.

What of the genetic question, the authenticity question? What do we know now that we did not know thirty years ago? Thirty years ago, under the influence of Schacht, but also of scholars like Albrecht Noth, who viewed Islamic history and historiography as mostly a set of tropes deployed to create *Heilsgeschichte*—not to mention the Revisionists—there was little hope that early Islamic history, including religious history, could ever be recovered. The corrosive macro-criticism of the historiographical tradition took on the skepticism of Schacht, amplified it, and generalized it. Now it seems that a series of micro-studies—including those by skeptics such as Juynboll—have sapped the walls of incredulity a bit, and I think it reasonable to suppose that some knowledge of early Islam is recoverable, that some material in our hands may be authentically early, and that there may be a means to distinguish the more authentic from the less authentic, if by "authentic" we refer to material from the late 600s or early 700s c.e.

The single-strand phenomenon by which nearly all *ḥadīth* are transmitted—without corroborating witness from Companion to Successor, and often to successor of Successor, before the *isnād* "blooms" into the kind of validating form that the rules of the *ḥadīth* science apparently require—seems to be inescapably significant. At the very least, that efflorescence in the *isnād* is witness to the moment when *ḥadīth* science was born, when standards tightened up. It seems to me very plausibly also the moment when the wording of the *ḥadīth* began to be fixed, when loggia became data, and when a great deal of "Islam" was devised.

It would be worthwhile to test some of the refined techniques that Juynboll, Motzki et al. have developed against the indisputable observation of Goldziher that some *ḥadīth* are manifestly anachronistic, no matter what their *isnād* may say or in which early-ish works they may be included. Allegedly Muḥammadian statements about Qadarīs, Umayyad politics, the issues of ʿUthmānic, ʿAlid, Zubayrid, and ʿAbbāsid *fitnas*—I am skeptical, irrespective of their *isnād*, on historical critical method grounds that Muḥammad said it. Without all the

54. To speak, as some do, of someone being a "transmitter of *ḥadīth*" in, for instance, Mamlūk Cairo fails to recognize the change in meaning of the process of *ḥadīth*-transmission once the *ḥadīth* are canonized. "Transmission" has become a ritual activity, the performance of *ḥadīth*, not their transmission.

55. He does not seem to get his due in Brown's books; see Dickinson, *The Development of Early Sunnite* Ḥadīth *Criticism*; Dickinson's translation of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ al-Shahrazūrī, *An Introduction to the Science of the* Ḥadīth.

resources fully to study this at the moment, I take as an example the *ḥadīth* whose *ṭaraf* is the following:

> When the Muslims set out on a raid, it shall be asked, "Is there anyone who was a Companion of the Prophet?" "Yes." And they shall succeed. Then there will come a time when it will be asked, "Is there anyone who is a companion to the Companions of the Prophet?" "Yes." They shall succeed. [It concludes:] There will come a time when it is asked, "Is there anyone who accompanied those who accompanied those who were Companions of the Prophet?" "Yes." They shall succeed.[56]

This is clearly a construction of at least the third generation and is part of the process by which the myth of the pristine early community is being constructed. When I look at the various *isnād*s and try to connect various wordings to the slightly different *isnād*s à la Motzki et al., I am unable to see any formal difference between texts and *isnād*s that some scholars believe to be from Companions or Successors and this story's *isnād* and *matn*, which is surely later. The real test of the formalist methodologies is yet to be performed: to take a series of implausible *ḥadīth* and, using the same techniques, determine if the methods that yield affirmative results about *ḥadīth al-ifk*, the Ḥudaybiya incident, or the murder of Ibn Abī l-Ḥuqayq show also how and why these implausible *ḥadīth* cannot be authentic. While I am convinced that through the efforts of these scholars we do get a reliable glimpse of at least the successors of Successors, and sometimes of the generation before that, a sound historical method should be able to exclude as well as to include.

In the 600s and 700s C.E., Islamic lore circulated among perhaps not experts, but enthusiasts of Islamic religious life and kerygma, about issues of ritual and legal conduct, as well as about the Last Days, good conduct, the Corruption of the Times, etc. This lore did not so much distinguish among that attributed to the Prophet, Companions, and Successors as we—conditioned by later norms—would expect, and there was much less material from the Prophet proportionally and quantitatively than we might have supposed. It seems that there was some distinction between hortatory material from the *quṣṣāṣ* and practical material, a distinction reflected in later practices when "improving" *ḥadīth* were much more laxly tested than legal or doctrinal *ḥadīth*. Still, the corpus of authoritative lore was fructified by an Iraqi/provincial view that resisted centralizing religious authority in general and saw Islamic lore and perhaps even revelation as having porous boundaries that allowed God and the greatest generation to continue speaking to new circumstances as they confronted Muslims, through newly "discovered" *ḥadīth* data.

Citation had been a practice employed casually since the conflicts of the 680s, but in the second quarter of the eighth century standards were developed, *quṣṣāṣ* were disparaged, *isnād*s were increasingly de rigueur, and criticism of the links in an *isnād* had begun.[57] Here is the difference: We should now be persuaded that the generation prior to this had access to genuinely early material and that thanks to the publication of early sources and to the use of new methods we can now see back into the seventh century and distinguish between the Big Bang of the Prophet's life and the first conquests and the great inflation that followed in the mid-700s. We can delimit the amount and contents of lore in this period attributed to Muḥammad. Studies may now be possible that would allow us to determine the differences in kind among Prophetic-lore, Companion-lore, and Successor-lore in the early 700s.

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56. al-Mizzī, no. 3983; in al-Bukhārī (*jihād*) and Muslim (*faḍā'il*); *Ency*, 582–83. Juynboll says this trope dates to the last part of the seventh century; see *Ency*, 238, 542.

57. See, e.g., *EI²*, s.n. S̲h̲uʿba b. al-Ḥad̲j̲d̲j̲ād̲j̲.

This would allow us truly to trace the development of Islam in a period that skepticism has shrouded in darkness.

The works discussed above have built a new, historiographically critical, potentially rigorous view of Islam's first two centuries. No doubt a survey of *ḥadīth* studies thirty years from now will have a much larger of body of material to work through and unimagined conclusions to report.

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