
---

1. INTRODUCTION

There is something about *hadith* 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 *asbāḥ al-hadith* 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 *hadith* studies since Ignaz Goldziher and, especially, Joseph Schacht. The publication of earlier *hadith* collections, the refinement of *isinād* analysis, and, as importantly, a recognition that there are other questions in *hadith* studies besides "did Muhammad do it or not?"—all have helped profoundly transform the study of *hadith* 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 survey 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 *hadith* studies at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

A *hadith* (in English the word is often used as a collective, with *hadith* used also as plural of particularity, in preference to the Arabic *ahadith*) is an anecdote reporting that the Prophet Muhammad 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 Qur’an; 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 *hadith* now of supreme relevance to those who fly, it can be seen that a *hadith* has two parts: the *narrāt* (the body of the report):


---

American Oriental Society is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Journal of the American Oriental Society*. http://www.jstor.org

This content downloaded from 140.141.130.120 on Sat, 27 Sep 2014 13:12:03 PM
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions
The Prophet said, "Traveling is a measure of punishment which bars man from steam, food, and drink. When he has achieved the goal he set out for, he should hasten back to his family." and the isnad, a "headnote," verifying the account by listing the report's chain (s) of transmission. The isnad of this report about traveling begins with Abi Hurayra, who is reported to have heard it from the Prophet, and Abu ʼAlī al-Dhakhwan reported this to Sumayy, who recorded it in Mansuri ibn Ansi, who recorded it in his great work of hadith criticism and law, the Muwatta. It is continued to be related and is found also in the greatest of the canonical Six Books, the two sound (ṣaḥīḥ) works of al-Bukhari and Muslim (referred to collectively, in the dual (oblique), as al-Sahihayn). These collections have functioned as the second scripture of Islam alongside the Qurʾān.

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

These two aspects of the hadith (authenticity and authority) are intertwined and need to be separated. The former asks the question: did the Prophet say so? What is do to is a question of the hadith (as well as in the case, the maghribi, and the historians) In other words, are the hadith a historical source for knowledge of Muhammad's life and practice? This is a historical question, as is another related question: do the isnads record historically useful information about the transmission of the hadith? It is not merely a question of the isnad that guarantees the authenticity of the man but also whether it reliably reflects the transmission history of the man's wording. If, in a given case, we suppose the man not to be authentically Muhammadian, can the isnad still tell us about the man's point of origin—either particularly (was it Abu ʼAlī al-Dhakhwan 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 Muhammad's actions 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 hadith became Muslims' second scripture, alongside and in many ways of more practical significance than the Qurʾān?

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 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 Qurʾān alongside ad hoc rulings by figures with religious prestige constituted the body of Islamic belief and practice. Story-tellers (qasidas) Qurʾān reciters, sermonizers, and others also augmented the lore of Islam. Alongside them were people reporting the practices of Muslims during Muhammad's lifetime, including, no doubt, particular dicta of Muhammad. This is the picture of Islam one gets from sources contemporary with this transformation, whether from non-Muslim—Christian and Jewish sources—or slightly later Muslim sources such as the Aphroditus papyrus. The gradualist account supposes that sometime in the late 600s C.E., plausibly in connection with the funa of Ibn Zuhayr, 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 Qurʾān for the derivation of Islamic practice, but also for theological principles and pious practice. As such, hadithism 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 posits to the apparatus surrounding the hadith—particularly the biographical dictionaries—to support the argument that from Islam's beginning thousands of Muslims occupied themselves with the transmission of hadith. 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 hadith 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 hadith as well. 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. By one's own view, that is the controversial nature of the methodologies and beliefs of the ashrāf al-sunnah is well enough established 6 that we have to view the hadith apparatus skeptically, as well as the hadith themselves. The claims that the hadith 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 hadith-science edifice that Islamists regard with innocence were in part conceals the hadith's polemical functions. Ibn ʿAbd al-Rahman’s tabaqaṭ work, for instance, does not disinterestedly


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 requires them to have been doing: recording hadith and transmitting it, asking each other about precedents, and reproaching those who disregarded this authentic religious knowledge. First, of course, it appeared to Orientalists that the mass of the hadith and other biographical information established Muhammad as, indeed, the first religious founder "born in the full light of history."10 As with so many things in Islamic studies, Iqbal Goldziher's was the first critical study of the hadith, and in a series of truly seminal essays he argued that hadith could not be relied upon as historical data because (1) the hadiths were often fabricated to further religious lore that served a particular purpose on the Prophet, and (2) the mass manifestly contained anachronisms and prophecies ex eundo that made it impossible that even the most unobjectionable report could, in historiography's critical gaze, be trusted to be authentically Muslim. Goldziher's genius was to recover proof from Islamic texts themselves that established Muslims' (or some Muslims') mistript of writing hadith— their recognition that hadiths were regularly forged and that hadiths 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 Muslim Jurisprudence, pt. II) restated Goldziher's view of the hadith and used it to create a theory of Islamic law's development that has not held up entirely well—namely, that the Qur'an had no role in the development of Shari'a and that the hadith were "forged" in the late 10th cent, to allow the insertion of Unnayzah and Roman administrative practice and other items into Islamic law. His hadith studies, however, have continued to inspire discussion. Schacht demonstrated, for example, that in the case of many hadith the hadith can be shown to have "grown backwards": given the growing prestige of reports attributed to the Prophet and to those who believe in him, etc., there was once attributed to a Companion or a Successor who was later provided with an imam linking that datum to the Prophet. This means that a story has more efficacy if it is linked to Muhammad (d. 10632) than, for example, al-Hassan al-Baqir (d. 110/728), when we find two hadiths, one that stops at al-Hassan; the other attached to him is more probable. That the "hadiths" are older than the one that contains Muhammad. 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 Sunni to be the most prestigious, nearly all hadiths 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 hadith to a single Successor. From there the hadiths fan out from a single figure to a large number of scholars, just as the hadith was being established as definitive sources of law and theology (more on this below). This single strand at the beginning of the hadith 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 astounding dominance of this feature? And is it plausible that some Companies, such as the notorious Abu Hurayra, to whom 5,374 hadiths are attributed, should have observed and reported so many Prophetic acts when other Companies with whom the Prophet had been intimate for a far longer time—such as his cousin and son-in-law Ali, 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 hadith fans out, the "common link," who "forged" the hadith in question. Yet, in asserting that the common link was the "forger," he was also asserting that while the hadith was in all likelihood authentic, the hadith did nonetheless preserve reliable information about the hadith'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 hadith can be said to form a single genre so that generalization to all hadiths from merely the corpus of legal hadith—Schacht's exclusive focus—leads to a methodological mistake. Might not the hadith have genetic—legal, but also doctrinal, exegetical, historical, hortatory (μαθηματικόν τε και συγγραφεῖα), as well as those expressing merits (fadā'il), curiosities, "facts" (μάλλον), and so on—that might vary in meaning and different degrees and standards of reliability? Another reservation concerns his categorical and disingenuous use of terms like "forger." To see the muḥaddithūn en masse as "forgers" and members of a massive conspiracy requires a degree of credulity on the part of academic scholars that would have 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 hadith studies, for the most part, into the 1970s and 1980s of the last century.

II. ISNA'D CRITICISM IN THE ACADEMY

A. G. H. A. Juybooli

If it has been a given since Goldziher that the hadith cannot guarantee the authenticity of the hadith, can the hadiths tell us anything at all? Some scholars believe they can tell us nothing whatsoever.12 Others assert that the hadith 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. A. H. A. Juybooli. It is thanks to him that a consensus is emerging, confirming that hadiths do, in fact, tell us important things about the story to which the hadith is attached. Indeed, Juybooli's methods are used by scholars less suspicious of the hadith

11. One possibility to consider is that in order to acquire the "priestly" first generation confirmation through plurality was thought crises and revered the notion of their error. Yet there is a few hadiths that have redundancy at the Companion or Successor level, which suggest that to do so was repugnant; it just did not happen.

12. Could "Technologization and the Dating of Tradition"; see also Juybooli, "Kūnum ar-Ridhī" (p. 525), who asserts that the hadith may tell us the regional origin of the hadith but nothing else.


8. Hodgson's critics agree against the misleading use of the term "tradition" are convincing, not least because the tradition is often manifestly "factual" tradition and to call them "traditions" beg 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 Islam is, in this regard, a unique and truly inapplicable fact. Islam was the last religious creation of humanity, and it in many respects the least original. Instead of the Prophet's word, which other hadiths 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 the life of the reforms of the 8th and 9th centuries. We can follow year by year the development of his thought, his contradictions, his weaknesses. Elsewhere religious beginnings are lost in dreams; the tell of the most unassailable criticism can hardly detect the reality beneath the deceitful appearance of myth and legend. Islamism, on the contrary, appearing in a center of advanced reflection, is absolutely destitute of the supernatural. Magnate, Omah, Ali are neither seen, nor illuminated, nor magnifici. Each of them knows perfectly well who he is about, neither of them is his own duke; each presents himself for examination, naked and with all the faults of humanity about him. Thanks to the excellent labours of MM. Wajid andazzi de Porcidence, we may say that the problem of the origin of Islam is in our day reached a solution all but complete (Rassou, "Mohammed and the Origins of Islam," 226-28).

10. Goldziher, Geschichte der Schriften; Goldziher, Miy teen Studien (Mittelmisische Studien); Goldziher, The Tabeks.
corpus or at least of individual hadith than was Juynboll himself, and this surely indicates a degree of accord on the question.

Juynboll's engagement with hadith 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 hadith 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, *Maxim Tradition: Studies in Chronology, Provenance and Authorship of Early Hadith*. Characteristically, he staked out strong positions on the origins of the hadith movement and the production and recording of hadiths, and prepared some important though recherché methods for studying *insāds*. 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. Yet no contemporary scholar of *hadith* can afford to neglect Juynboll, who is, using a term he first recognized as a *terminus technicus*, *al-madīr* of our age in *insād* 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 *insāds* begin like this:15

```
(Successor)

Successor

Companion

Prophet
```

From this point the *insāds* (especially when the *insāds* 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-

13. In addition, his early articles were collected in Juynboll, *Studies on the Origin and Use of Islamic Hadith*. Many of his most important articles—as well as his richly discursive book reviews—have not been collected, however, and must be gathered one by one. After this article went to press, news came of the regrettable death of I. H. A. Juynboll, on December 19, 2010.

14. The most substantial of which is Harald Mostl, "*Qne Vida, Hadith-Forschung?*"

15. The fourth diagram (p. 421) is taken from Juynboll, Ency, and used by permission of the publisher.

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 *insād* structures is the medieval reference work *Tuhfat al-ashraf* of al-Mizzi (d. 742/1341), whose usefulness Juynboll was the first to recognize. In the *Tuhfa*, al-Mizzi organized the canonical corpus of hadith by Companion (masnad-style), but without reproducing the entire *masna"* and all its variants. Instead he includes the *turufl*, the gist of the *hadith's* main. Al-Mizzi then sorts the *hadith* by transmitters in such a way that the reader can easily see the common link.18 Here is what a *hadith's* *insād* looks like when all of its variants from the Six Books are analyzed and recorded.

![Diagram](image_url)

No one hadith collection will contain all the strands by which it was related in all the other collections. That is why al-Mizzi must be used to agglomerate all the *insāds* together. Above we see a sort of idealized *hadith* with 1 as the CL and A, B, C the PCLs.

16. Juynboll's technical terms and abbreviations are a significant barrier to following his closely reasoned arguments. I have compiled a gloss-stop of Juynbolliana, available at [www.dartmouth.edu/~skj/juynboll.pdf](http://www.dartmouth.edu/~skj/juynboll.pdf).

17. With references to al-Mizzi's *Sunan* but to his *Sunan al-Hāfi*.

In an argument too extensive to reproduce here, Juyboll 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 hadith's wording.

The "spider" is an alternative isnad structure, usually found in late hadith collections to fortify the more commonly found isnad, one that provides a more direct—that is, shorter—isnād to the Successor and (here to the Prophet) and that legitimizes 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:

```
Collector

Fulan
Fulan
Fulan
Fulan
Fulan

A
PCL
PCL
PCL
PCL

B

C

(Successor)

D

Successor

I

Companion

Prophet
```

Here the isnād from A to D to I to the Companion strengthens an isnād that otherwise depends entirely on the CL.

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 Juyboll's method; yet the reader can see why mastery of his tools, terminology, and axioms is a daunting task. The value of his work is, he believes, confirmed by the fact that it parallels practices that even masters of the High Tradition of Muslim hadith studies used (though, of course, they did not draw the conclusions that Juyboll draws). For instance, the term madarah—as well as infīdāt and saffārad—refers to a pivot, or a unique source, for a marc; in other words, the common link around which subsequent narrations turn. Muslim scholars' observation of the CL made it the basis for a whole genre of hadith-discipline works, foremost among them al-Mizzī's Tadhkira.

In addition, Juyboll's cabalistic diagrams may reveal to the cognoscenti the story of the hadith's (or, to be more precise, the marc's wording's) origin and subsequent transmission. It is, Juyboll 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 hadith as it is known in the tradition. When isnāds became prerequisite for authoritative non-Qur'anic 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 hadith narrator found at the common-link node. Juyboll's work makes certain assumptions about the sociology of hadith transmission. The most important is that, at the time of the CL, hadith did not already have fixed forms and


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 isnād. Further, Juyboll asserts that any near-Qur'anic 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 hadith narrator found at the common-link node. Juyboll's work makes certain assumptions about the sociology of hadith transmission. The most important is that, at the time of the CL, hadith did not already have fixed forms and
were not consistently transmitted with isnāds, or, at least, isnāds going back to the Prophet. In a sub-culture that prized high-quality isnāds for their own sake, and also deployed these hadith in doctrinal, legal, and other forms of competition, there were compelling incentives to provide your main 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. If one could, with various minor adjustments, strengthen the isnād—by proposing a longer-lived tradition 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 Juyubii calls "creativity" in the hadith culture comes in: some isnāds were strengthened by the attribution of improbably long lives to certain transmitters, but, he believes, traditions often outright invested Successors, Companions, and other transmitters (Ency, xxvii–xxix). These are the majāhs ("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 main do not change the historical reality or unreality of the ideas expressed in the main—its authenticity—how much it enhanced the hadith's religious authority and its efficacy in debate, and however much the isnād became ahistorical.

Surprisingly, Juyubii's work (and that of others described below) suggests that Schacht's constant reference to hadith as "forged" is anachronistic, not to mention needlessly pejorative. There were, of course, forged hadith, as the tradition itself recognized. It was, after all, from hadith-oriented sources that Goldziher took the most spectacular of his dubious hadith examples. Reading Juyubii 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 hadith in the form we think of as normative—a main, 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 hadith 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 Muhammad; 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 alterations in the form of the religious lore that then circulated.

Indeed, I am stuck in reading through Juyubii's Encyclopedic how often Juyubii presents a hadith and remarks that it is likely very early, or plausibly from the Prophet, or some similar location. Yet Juyubii 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 hadith as a later production and this, combined with the intuition of one who labored so long in the field of hadith-studies, justifies the leap of faith to authenticate this saying as, possibly, Muhammadan.

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

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

22. Ency, xxxii(b): the material is arranged "on the basis of the alphabetical order of the CLs." On xviii(a) it is on the basis of "identification of their respective originators . . . with the tradition(s) of which it is conceivable it, or possibly may be held responsible."

REINHART: Hadith Study in the Twenty-First Century

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? Is it 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 Hadith is well worth having not only in libraries but in the personal collection of anyone who works with hadith. 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 pursuing classical texts—particularly hadith texts—with a discerning eye. I cannot begin to list all of Juybullid’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 . . .

78(b): "A'mash is a very prolific traditionist" became one of Kūtū’s recognized masters of hadith especially the ones traced back to ‘Abd Allāh b. Ma‘īdī. His most celebrated hadīth strand to that companion was via Ishākh an-Nakḥāī’s earlier. . . . 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 knowledgeable one were to be inserted at some place. A’mash was in all likelihood an inventive imitator of Shābī in the latter’s use of a reputedly very old hadīth master, the companion ‘Abd b. Hārīm . . . inspired by this, A’mash created the personalities of some more of these longviral masters supposedly blessed by God with exceptionally advanced ages, the so-called mu‘ammars. If it is fair to assume that A’mash may be held responsible for the launching of the obscure—probably fictitious—Zayd b. Wāhbi and Mu‘āwiyah b. Swayd, and he made an extensive use of traditions allegedly transmitted by Abū Wāsī Shāqī b. Salūs, a mu‘ammor whose history—albeit not his alleged age at death—is at least tenable. Each of these three imaginary or real figures bridged the time gap between A’mash’s own time all the way to that of Ibn Matfīd because of the advanced ages they were reported to have reached at death, well over one hundred years.

160(a): In ‘A‘īn al-mu‘ādla23 we read a comment of the medieval tradition scholar at-Tībī (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 mind, i.e., silent patience, something which generates divine reward, Judahim, 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 nakhṣa (concession) tradition tells a different story. In Mizī, II, no. 3010, we find a tradition (cf. ‘A‘īn al-mu‘ādla, X, p. 300, with one Yūsūs b. Muhammad (d. 207/822) in 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 Mu‘āwiyah b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Dawārī. About this man we read in the Sūd, IV 1, p. 86f., that he had contracted leprosy and that his affliction was rapidly getting worse. ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-Kahtāb asked around whether there was anyone who knew of a medicine that Mu‘āwiyah’s ailment might cure [sic] or perhaps alleviate. Therapists two men from Yemen approached and suggested that the juice of colocynth, rubbed into the man’s foot-soles, might not make the affliction go away but might in any case halt the aggravation of

23. On which Juybulli himself writes extensively; see his “The Role of Mu‘âmmara in the Early Development of the hadīth.”

24. A commentary on Abī Dāwūd by ‘Aziz al-Misrī, used as the text for Abī Dāwūd since Juybulli did not like the standard edition.”

it not? In any case it is in the Saḥīh of al-Tirmīzī24 and in Abī Dāwūd as well.25 Why not in the Encycolpedia? Again:

Abī 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 Abī Bakra (and none for Abī Bakra; Abī Hurayra is “associated” with a mere seven hadīths). 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 “Abī al-Malik b. ‘Umayr” (d. 1357/75). The lemma tells us that this hadīth is “with a strand on the authority of ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Abī Bakra from his father Abī Bakra Nufray’ b. Hārith.” This hadīth is indeed in al-Bukhārī and Muslim and confirmed in other sources. We are told, “Abī al-Malik is the convincing hadīth, and this seems almost to be implied in so many words in (the citation from) Dāhābi” (p. 23). So here the lemma containing the hadīth is not under the Companion (as with Ibn ‘Abdī’s hadīth) but under the CL. Yet it is common in Muslim literature to cite hadīth by reference to the Companion in the Saḥīh; if that is my only datum, what am I to do? It turns out there is an entry (referring to nine separate hadīths) in the index under Abī Bakra, and that would eventually lead me to Juybulli’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 “Abī al-Malik b. ‘Umayr” again? I am leaving through Muslim’s Saḥīh and I find

Muḥammad b. ‘Abdī related that Suyyūn informed us from al-Zuhdī from ‘Urwa b. ‘Abdī, who said, “I performed the Messenger when he went into a state of consecration when he was consecrated (bū-ḥurma nihā abnuun), and when he was freed from consecration before the circumambulation of the House.”27

In Muslim there follows a whole series of hadīths from ‘Abdī, with increasing detail to the same effect (“with my hand,” “the best perfume,” “the glistening perfume on the Prophet’s hair,” etc.). ‘Urwa and Qatīm show up in a number of these hadīths. Could they be CL? Under which name should I look? Neither—the winner is ‘Abdī (“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 these hadīths are found here—there are variously and varying transmitters—all of them also go through ‘Urwa or Qatīm. The following citation is henceforth expanded and follows in the Encyclopaedia lemma:

of. al-Mizzī, XI, no. 15928, 15928, 15954, 15975, 15988, 16026 (al-Bukhārī 5/4, 2, Muslim II, p. 848, Abī Dāwūd, al-Naschī, Ibn Mījla, confirmed in al-Jayyil, 1378, 1385, al-Hanayn’s Maṣnad, no. 215, al-Baghwī, 1, pp. 89, 265, Ibn Hishābul, VI, pp. 38, 109, 245). ‘Ibī ‘Urwa an-Nakḥāī is the best-assessed ṣafīqī. [?] 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 hajj and who assumes a state of consecration (whence). See Shābī under al-Mizzī, XII, no. 15798 for a SCL. Mu‘ādī is yet another in this MC, see there under no. 15708. [?] Indicates that other hadīth scholars copied Mu‘ādī’s wording on the authority of someone who is Mu‘ādī’s authority. We do not know who, without going to al-Mizzī, 15718, or perhaps al-Zarbārī’s commentary on Mu‘ādī for that hadīth.)

24. al-Tirmīzī, Sunan al-Tirmīzī, 4, 247; Kithāb al-lāhī, 42, Abī al-‘Ummār b. ‘Abī-Qālidin, no. 1784, where it has hūra narm. Abī l-Muras al-Aṣqāltī is unknown, as is the Ibn Rukkiya who transmits from the father.

25. Līhī, 21, no. 4078.


the disease. This treatment allegedly had the predicted success. NB It is clear that the concept of contagion (a’dwāf), for more on which see Shī’a 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 Shī’a b. al-Hājīj alone there are erudite excurses on the Basin (hawwār) (p. 473), the use of the basmalla in prayer (p. 481), the splitting of the moon (p. 483), living in hadith transmission (khadīth) (pp. 502, 510), the addition of ‘All to the khulūfī rāshīdīn (p. 507), dreams as part of Prophecyhood (p. 513), sajdah in Qur’ān recitation (p. 529), the barking 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 Juyubbî conceived the work. I believe he saw it as a vade mecum for anyone venturing into hadith-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, hadîth not in Muslim may well be missing altogether (p. xxx) from the Encyclopaedia.

B. Other Scholars of the Isma‘īl Sciences

To understand the hadîth phenomenon and the state of the art at present, Juyubbî’s meticulous studies of the authenticity of the isâlds (and implicitly of the mains) 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 Juyubbî. Yet I believe that these scholars have built upon Juyubbî’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 Juyubbî over the past thirty years. More skeptical works like that of Crook or Herbert Berg are coming to seem like outliers, and recent works by Harald Motzki and Gregor Schoeler, in particular, seem to derive from Juyubbî but with more affirmative conclusions about the historicity of some hadîth, both their mates and their isâlds.

One of the early controversies in hadîth studies concerned the orality of the hadîth and other early literature: Fiat Sezgin and Nabiya 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. 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 hadîth. In essence, Schoeler argues that 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. There was, in fact, he says, an elaborate written culture from Islam’s earliest days. The much-cited argument that hadîth should be transmitted only orally was in fact—counter-intuitively—a later development associated with Iraq. Iraq resisted also the creation of a definitive Qur’ānic un-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 context (ibid., pp. 116f).

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. 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 isâld-cum-main analysis, a term coined by Harald Motzki but used also by others, such as Schoeler himself and Andreas Gërke. These scholars’ approach to hadîth, in my view, is an elaboration of Juyubbî’s method. They first record all the transmitted versions of an event found in the sources: hadîth works, mafrîz, and zâir texts drawn from sources even as late as Ibn Hajar (d. 852/1448). From such accounts they dissect narrative elements found bundled together in the narrative and they reconstruct the isâld bundle for each of these elements a la Juyubbî. 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 isâld. 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 lecturing, 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 somewhat later in the isâld than the Companion or Successor—CL to whom it is attributed. In such a case the hadîth scholar is put on 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.

For this sort of exercise Motzki et al. have concentrated on the corpus of historical materials (akhībat) attributed to ‘Uwâb b. al-Zubayr and they believe they have demonstrated an
authentic 'Urwa—and in some cases even an 'Ā'ishah—corpus. They have written detailed studies of the stories of the first revelation, the slander of 'Ā'ishah, the Hudaybiyya event, relations with the anṣār in the period immediately prior to the hijra, and the murder of Ibn Abī Habbāş.29 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 isnāds-cum-main-ists, both Motzki and others.

For the history of Islamic hadith and law, however, it is an earlier article by Motzki that had the most ramifications. Using the relatively recently published Maqṣūnad of 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣanā'ī (d. 211/826), Motzki argues persuasively that there is much more to be learned from isnāds and hadith collections than had been thought by members of the Western academy. Motzki believes he can recover fāh and hadith reliably from Islam's first century by using Juwaybī'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 Maqṣūnad is from al-Ṣanā'ī, while observing that his text has roughly one-third of its material from Ma'mar (d. 152/767) 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 isnād rules out arbitrary attribution by al-Ṣanā'ī, as would be the case if the contributions were forged. (Interestingly, while nineteen percent of the material from al-Thawrī is said to be al-Thawrī's personal opinion, only one percent of the material from Ma'mar and Ibn Jurayj is their own opinion.) Other features of al-Ṣanā'ī'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 ascriptions). Since al-Ṣanā'ī's major sources are said in the biographical sources to have been the first to compile maqṣūnad works, Motzki asserts that from al-Ṣanā'ī 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 maqṣūnad. He chooses Ibn Jurayj, who draws about forty percent of his material from one of his teachers, 'Āthār b. Abī Rabīḥ (d. 114/732). By the same method he used to establish the scholarly veracity of al-Ṣanā'ī as transmitter, Motzki argues for the accuracy of Ibn Jurayj's transmission from 'Āthār.

It is fascinating to find at this juncture and with these early Muslim proto-fāqīḥs that their data were a mishmash of ṭa'āf (personal reasoning) and dicta—authority statements attributed to other scholars as well as to Successors, to Companions, and to the Prophet. Isnāds are used quite variably, as are the technical terms of transmission when there is an isnād: many merely use ṣanā', while others are careful to say saṃtī'. Law then was not, as Schacht maintained, at first ṭa'āf and only later hadith; 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.28 It is, in fact, striking to observe how few Muslim scholars

dicta there are in these early legal works. In a sample of two hundred responses from 'Āthār, only three "even hint at him." In 'Āthār'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 hadith that these early maqṣūnad compilers considered for inclusion in their scholarship was rather small, even in the mid-200s h.44 Yet Motzki avers (Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence, 158) that the prophetic hadith in 'Āthār's work are no later in origin than the ṣahāba traditions and that (surprisingly) they are "no more binding for him ('Āthār') than the [Companion] traditions." There are more references in the 'Āthār sample to Ibn Abī Habbāş than to Muhammad, but more to Muhammad than to any one particular Companion. This would mean that in the 100s h., hadith from Muhammad 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 Maqṣūnad recently published, that of Ibn Abī Shaybah (d. 235/850). In his sample from Ibn Abī Shaybah—in an article that deserves the attention of every student of the history of Islamic law45—only 8.7% of the legal rules cited a hadith from the Prophet, and this by a very hadith-oriented scholar.

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

[General speaking, the isnād system served the expectations of the traditionists. Otherwise, we would expect that they would have quickly abandoned it. Until we have proof to the contrary, we must, therefore, assume that isnāds 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 isnāds.43]

If the discussion of the authenticity of the hadith and their isnāds 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 hadith date from the end of the Islamic first century, and Juwaybī, at least, was willing to say that hadith may, to his experienced eye, appear Muhammadian. Motzki—less skeptical but more reticent—is willing to say that hadith may sometimes plausibly be dated to the point where isnād techniques originate.48 Both sides agree that isnāds may have elements of authenticity, but what has been taken for granted has been the authority of the hadith.

**Source:** Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence, esp. 281f. Suffice it to say that what impinging that hadith of Muhammad were known to the time of Ibn Abī Habbāş, Motzki believes it is not until the first quarter of the 100h that the collection of hadith is expected in support of a legal opinion (p. 289).

41. Lucas, "Where are the Legal Hadith?"; Motzki, "The Maqṣūnad of 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣanā'ī as a Source of Authentic Ahadīth of the First Century A.d. II," 293–295; also see his sample from Ma'mar; most are from Companions or Successors. His data suggest that only between 1,200 and 4,500 hadith were actually effective 311, n. 113.

42. Lucas, "Where are the Legal Hadith?" Lucas points out that legal hadith may be a genre in which there are relatively few data attributed to the Prophet in the early period, as opposed to ṣaḥīḥ wa-ṣaḥīḥ, for example: 311, n. 113.

43. Lucas, "Principles of Traditio Exegisis Considered." 44. Motzki, Dating Muslim traditions, 235–36; see at more lengthy his "Qua Vadis, Hadith-Forschung?" (In Engl. "Wider Hadith-Studie.")

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

---

38. Schoeler believes 'Urwa had a systematic collection of religious learning. (The Oral and the Written in Early Islam, 61, n. 49.)

39. For the latter two, see Motzki, ibid., The Biography of Muhammad.

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-Ṣanā'ī's Maqṣūnad more fully: Motzki.
III. ON AUTHORITY

Jonathan Brown's The Canonization of al-Bukhari 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 Sahih of Abi 'Abd Allah Muhammad al-Bukhari (d. 256/870) and the Sahih of Abi I-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj (d. 261/875). "Everyone knows" that these two are preeminent among the hadith 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 hadith. 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-Bukhari nor the earliest accounts that rank hadith scholars present them as distinguished above their peers. In fact, in some rankings of the "greatest" of their time and place, they do not even appear (pp. 87f). Al-Bukhari, in fact, was regarded as theologically dubious by many since his position on the createdness of the recited Qur'an was evasive and "unsound." Yet by the last quarter of the 800s/900s both these figures were claimed by their native cities as scholarly heroes.

As Brown recounts, the Sahih of al-Bukhari and the Sahih of Muslim were part of a sahih movement that began around the ninth century C.E., in the Khorasanian/Transoxanian region. No longer were these scholars striving to include every hadith they encountered; rather they were beginning to construct a body of choice hadith 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 hadith, a movement that transformed the hadith collectively from religiously informative to religious scholarship, on its way to making the hadith an infallible body of religious prose. These stages were sequential but not exclusive. Hadith that did not meet the criteria of the sahih movement did not disappear; they continued to be cited in some kinds of religious literature. Yet for them eventually growing insulas that allowed their inclusion into later sahih works. Then, with the acceptance of the written hadith works as canonical, the insulas ceased to be a means of verifying the information included in the main, and instead became a pious link between the scholar and the Prophet through the distinguished and charismatic scholars. Hadith itself ceased to be a charismatic-dominated by asdr al-fajh, it became data to be deployed in the fajh 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 hadith folk; Jonathan Brown explored the outlines and presented them in a solid synthetic account; Marshall Hodgson still gives the best "big picture" of asdr-mindlessness.) The great merit of Brown's book is that 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 Sahih al-Bukhari a definitive scriptural source. So how did it happen?

According to Brown, the two Sahih were compiled—Muslim's had a methodological preface, while al-Bukhari's was more a medley of fajh and hadith that harked back to

al-Samani and Ibn Abi Shayba—and "published," that is, locally put into circulation, by regional scholars copying and teaching them. In the first stage the two Sahih became the scaffolding for a very curious and transient genre of works, the musnadhaij. In a perfect musnadhaij the compiler would deprecate the insula when it reached the teacher of al-Bukhari or Muslim, and then the compiler would present his own insyd that corrected his predecessor's omission of the main, with more or less the same wording, to the generation below that. From there the same insyd found in the Sahih 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 selections of the Nishapuri and Harunai scholar. In less formally perfect musnadhaij works, the insyd and mains might be adjusted, to remove theologically objectionable tracts or to include or remove mains to make a theological point vis-à-vis the Qadaris, Shi'a, or some other deviant group. I suppose. Yet the core of the enterprise was these two works and not others. The musnadhaij 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 hadith 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 Sahihayn with canonical authority. The aadr works indexed the Sahih by the first words of the main or by its key word; the main works noted flaws in insulas or tracts especially by comparison with other versions of the hadith; the izalmit and mustadvak works suggested hadith that were missing in the Sahihayn and that ought (by al-Bukhari and Muslim's criteria) to have been included. In this way the works of al-Bukhari and Muslim became weighty works that attracted condemnation, supplementation, and authority; in short, they acquired gravitas. By the dawning of derivative works Brown is able roughly to trace the process of communal rationalization, and to show that it was first in Nishapur (for Muslim), then in Jurjau (for al-Bukhari), 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 Shahi polemics against the Sunni saggacy-based legal argumentation. (Although Hanafi scholars did transmit the Sahihayn, they did not elaborate upon it during the crucial period of canonization.) The Sahihayn were deployed to make both the Shahi's fard' and asdr seem authoritative and—"scientiﬁc," even over against the more capacious judgment of the Hanafis and the textual promiscuity of the Hanbalis, who would cheerfully cite "weak" hadith 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 hadith of the Prophet as the only source other than the Quran—through 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 hadith text that the Sahihayn could fulﬁll. It is as vehicles to restrict the rancor and ﬂaispuri that 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 polemics and bring together at least some of the hyper-Sunni Hanbalis, the Shahis', the hadith-suspicious Hanafis, 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 Mu'tazila did not dispute the signiﬁcance of sound hadith. They did argue that all of the sahih hadith had now been recorded, and

that their number did not exceed ten thousand. Why ten thousand? Because that is roughly the number of hadith narrations (not reports) contained in the Sahih. In other words, by the late 300s even the Mu'tazila ratified the canonical status of the Sahih of al-Bukhari and Muslim, and sought to use them to circumscribe the hadith corpus (pp. 175–78). The key promoter of the Sahih as a canonical corpus was al-Hakim al-Nayzaburi (d. 405/1014). Brown shows that al-Hakim was the central node in the transmission of the two Sahih texts and their textual penumbra (see Brown's diagram, p. 103). Al-Hakim asserted not only the perfection of these texts' contents, but made them methodological ideals as well. The irony is that al-Hakim exalted the methodological rigor of al-Bukhari and Muslim, presented an idealization of their method, and was then much less discerning and considerably more lax in his Mustadrak than either of his paragons on their worst days.

The gap between al-Hakim'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 Mu'tazila, that the corpus of the Sahih was definitive and exclusive; that it contained all the sound hadith that could be used in argument; that no hadith excluded from them could be used by rigid Muslims; and that this smaller and finite set of hadith meant that there was still important work for their rational enterprise, hadith-folk such as al-Hakim argued that it was the standards of those collections that were definitive and that any hadith that met those standards was also authoritative (p. 181). The lack of practical rigor in al-Mustadrak demonstrates that legitimate valuable hadith exist outside the covers of these two works (pp. 182–83). Not only did al-Hakim's methodology allow the further expansion of the hadith 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 Mu'tazili rationalists and Hanafi juristic reasoners. For—this is my reading, not Brown's—the softer border around the hadith corpus incorporated the Hanbalis as well, and allowed the authority of the Prophet to permeate the figh process and leave rationalization as only an ancillary tool for jurists.

The effect of canonization was to create a body of technically imperfect hadith hadith imperfect because, having single strands at their beginning, they were not mustadrab, that is, pluralized transmitted. Yet because the collection in which they appeared was "canonized," they had, in effect, the authority of tawdiin, so they could be confidently used to derive substantive law. Community ratification transmuted the epistemologically limited hadith into a text and wildcard that could arrogate Qur'an and determine dogma and ritual. The commitment to the Sahih eventually became, as Brown suggests persuasively, the major position of the Shafi'i, the Mu'tazila, and even the Hanbalis. Yet although al-Hakim played such an important part in ratifying the status of the Sahih, he never suggested that it was community agreement that made them definitive works.46 It was, rather, the high technical standards of al-Bukhari and Muslim that made them thus (the two Sound Works), and nothing else (pp. 193–94).

Nonetheless, Brown shows that, among specialists, these canonized works were understood to be neither invariant nor ineluctable to criticism. Not only Hanafis but also Shafi'is were on occasion willing to see hadiths abandoned, including al-Hakim included in the Sahih (pp. 253–60). Indeed, hadith-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 inadl and biographies of the two shaikhs.

Once these works were canonized, then they were deployed. Brown shows that authors such as al-Bayhaqi made conclusive arguments by asserting simply that "al-Bukhari and/or Muslim included it (akhrabahu)") (p. 220). In this way he, and others like Abu Nu'aym al-Ibadiharr, not only silenced critics but more importantly obviated the need for the arcana of inadl-criticism. These Sahih (and a few others of the sahih movement) became self-substative authorities—scriptures, in short—which stood beside the Qur'an 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-Bukhari and Muslim, he is somewhat—perhaps inevitably—at a loss about the "why." There were earlier Sahih, such as that of Sa'id al-Khurasanli (d. 227/842), and later ones, such as that of al-Busti (d. 354/965), but it seems to be adventitious that these two triumphed. Regional loyalty, a rise of the novel Shafi'i doctrine, the development of Baghdad as a center of scholarship, the construction of scholarly networks linking Baghdad to Jurjain and Nishabur (p. 130), the irenicism of madhab-tolerance—all played a role. On the whole it seems that the move to canonically created the Sahih, rather than some feature of al-Bukhari 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—particularly in India—through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This allows him to notice a plausible shift in Muslim attitudes of what may help to define the construction of the modern political Islam. Brown argues that the next century and a half 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—madhab-theology and scholasticism, Su'fi spirituality, not to mention popular religious practices such as tomb veneration. This repudiation of the consensus on the Sahih as canon was asserted particularly by the Zaydi Muhammad al-Sar'tami (d. 1758)—a figure whose importance is beginning to be recognized. Al-Sar'tami articulated a staunch doctrine of Muslim subordination to texts of genuine hadith, and nothing—not the strictures of his madhab nor any conventional usages (taqaddum, as he styled it) or evasions—could have precedence over the straightforward text of a sound piece of the sunna. As a consequence, all hadith had to be subject to rigorous criticism. The rejection of all religious convention meant the rejection of canon, too, and al-Bukhari's work and that of Muslim were likewise subject to strict technical interrogation before a hadith 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 hadith-report, followed by meticulous observance.

On the other hand, Brown shows that another figure often thought to be a hadith-oriented reformer, Shih Wali Allah Dihlawi, was the first (despite the canonical status of the Sahih) to condemn outright any disparagement whatsoever of the works of al-Bukhari 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 irony-inveiled intellectual, imprisoned in an isolated Muslim community, while Shāh Wali Allāh was at the forefront of Muslims combating Islamism’s political dissolution and subordination. Al-Ṣanʿānī was willing to tear it all down to create a pure Muslim edifice; Shāh Wali 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 hadith 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, little matters 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 *haditha* 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 Sahihayn were canonized (and the place of the others of the “Six Books” as well as the “rediscovery” of the *Musnad* 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 hadiths 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 *Hadith 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 devote all the work of another Brown49 to describe fascinating nineteenth- and twentieth-century discussions of the authority of the hadith by, among others, those who deny the hadith any authority whatsoever over Muslims.

Another recent work that would seem of interest to students of hadith is Narrative Social Structure: Anatomy of the Hadith Transmission Network, 610–1305, by Recep Şentürk, a postdoc Turkish sociologist who has done important work on the late Ottoman period and also on contemporary human rights issues. Şentürk’s attempts in this book, which I gather, has a sociological dissertation at Columbia (2003), to bring social network theory to bear on the transmission of hadith, or, more correctly, on the medieval accounts of hadith transmission. Rosenoff’s book (1988) will find it to be more about network theory than about hadith transmission, and primarily an attempt to insert hadith 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 hadith or in the culture of hadith-transaction; 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 arc of the later biographical sources, Şentürk uses the relatively late Taḥdīr al-buḥfūz of al-Dhahabi (d. 784/138), and Taḥdīr al-buḥfūz of al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505), augmenting his study a bit with Ibn Hibbah’s (d. 354/965) earlier Māshhīr “ilāmāt” al-amāṣr. Consequen-


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

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 dynamics in the network” (Şentürk, p. 182).
are remembered until their cause was won, at which point the mere fact that one transmitted hadith 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 hadith-transmission as an epistemological activity and ushered in the hadith-as-scripture era. Şentürk's book calls attention to another problem in the study of hadith—especially before canonization—and that is our scholarly focus on the Six Books. We do this in part because the Wenslock Concordance and al-Mizzi give us tools to use these particular works. Yet the Six Books do not represent all of the hadith in circulation, or even all of the hadith in circulation that fit the criteria of al-Bukhārī and Muslim—the genre of liḥā'at or isdīdār proves that. Moreover, the work of people such as Miklos Muranyi has established that there were many hadith in circulation that never made it into the canonical collections—for whatever reason. It is not that the figures in these extra-canonical hadith are necessarily any more dubious than those in other isnādāt. To draw persuasive conclusions about the context and transmission of hadith 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 hadith transmitters do not tell us about the history of hadith transmission, but, so far as we can tell, a cross-section of hadith transmission of unknown randomness or typicality. This will mean studying the context and transmission of hadith works in manuscript, but also early law works and other sources. It is clear that the publication of al-Sha'rāni's Masānāf and that of Ibn Abi Shayba have revolutionized the study of hadith 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 hadith as well. Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World. It is, says the author, "an introduction to the hadith 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 hadith and its ancillary disciplines: "Im al-rījāl, books on forgetters (miswālāt)—and all the significant genres of hadith scholarship are introduced and explained. To the author's great credit, he also has a section on the use of the sunna and hadith in Islamic law and theology, as well as on the role of hadith in Shi'i 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 Shi'i sources. It shows little engagement with the critical work of Muhammad Ali Amor-Moezzi, Andrew Newman, and others on the formation of Shi'i hadith, particularly in the Iraqi provinces, but merely reports that the Shi'i isnādāt go back to the imams, cites the imams' accounts of how they received their hadith, 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 Rechtsächer des Qairawan; Sohren B. Seif; Muranyi, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Hadith und Rechtsgelehrsamkeit der Mālikye in Nordafrika bis zum 5. Jh. D.H.; Muranyi, Ein altes Fragment medien- tischer Jurisprudenz aus Qairawan, C.F. Abd el-Mahdi b. HMB, "Dar R. al-Wihābah: These contain a significant number of Mālikī traditions not found in the canonical sources.

REHART: Hadith Study in the Twenty-First Century

However, its approach to history is, at best, phenomenological. We are given (pp. 18–19) without comment the news that [from the beginning of Islam, Muhammad's words and deeds were of the utmost interest to his followers ...] [1] 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 sahābī, would have consisted of papyrus [etc.]. ... certain Companions were more active in amassing, memorizing, and writing down hadiths than others. Like grandchild's 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. 687), who knew the Prophet for only three years, is the largest specific source for hadiths, with approximately 2200 narrations in later hadith collections. Although he did not write hadiths down in his early career, by his death Abū Hurayrah had boxes full of the sahābī he had compiled. [1]

A historically critical account this is not.

Brown's position on hadith 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 Muham- mad was real 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 Muhammad 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 ardent Protestants and evangelical seminarians, 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, power 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 holy halls of academia. The Authenticity Question is part of a broader debate over the power dynamics 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
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 hadith, 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 incomparability 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 JACOS 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 Qur’an 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 orthodoxy? Is there a good reason why scholars should always be subservient to the orthodoxy?

Brown then proceeds with a mostly fair, characteristically judicious account of various academic approaches to hadith from William Muir’s critical biography of Muhammad 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’s critique is a call into question historical skepticism itself (p. 200); Schacht and Jayyebi, as hadith-skeptics, are given the no-longer-neutral, no-longer-descriptive title of Orientalist; Jayyebi is said to "admit" that there is repetition in the 1,700 hadith attributed to Ibn ‘Abbas in Ibn Ḥanbal’s Musnad; his technical terminology is referred to as "jargon" (p. 215); the CI is "accused" of being the originator (p. 215); whereas Motzki "treats hadith 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 hadith’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 hadith as unproblematic biographical resources and gave an account of the hadith that broke from both uncrtical academic views and the versions of the pious. Various other scholars (e.g., Robinson) began to look at the ancillary sciences; Abbott and Sezgin showed that written sources sometimes lay behind "oral" transmission; Jayyebi used his

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 hadith) a quick check suggests that he cites him only once, and that perfunctorily. Brown would have done better to cite the scholar Alois Spranger, whom Goldziher clearly respected more—of course, Spranger was not the kind of Islam-basher that Muir was.

REINHART: Hadith Study in the Twenty-First Century
fair amount of work has been done on the proto-Hanbalis and their gradual articulation as a legal school and political movement, but we still do not understand the hadith partisans as a socio-religious movement in the period up to the second half of the Islamic third century.

In addition, the place of hadith as religious object and activity in the period after Ibn al-Salah (d. 643/1245) needs examination. If the books of hadith were now canonized, why were people still transmitting hadith in the Mamluk period? Brown has also pushed the door ajar on the study of hadith ideology in the time of Shih Wall Allah. The modern hadith partisans such as Nizar bin Din al-Aldabi require our attention, too, particularly if we are to understand contemporary Islam in other than the political science framework of the hadith industry.

These questions might all be seen as interrogating the continued authority of hadith as not to see hadith as signifying the same thing throughout all of Islamic history. We need to study the ancillary sciences as well. Earl Dickenson, Brown, and Berkley have all pointed to this, but too many works on Islam and Islamic thought see the hadith as a monument to the third and fourth centuries that, once in place, simply sits in the Islamic landscape unchangeably. Nowhere near as much work has been done on hadith commentary as has been done on Qur‘an commentary although it seems at least as dynamic a genre.

What of the genetic question, the authenticity question? 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 studies by skeptics such as Loyd—have sagged 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 we are authentic from the late 600s or early 700s c.e.

The single-strand phenomenon by which nearly all hadith are transmitted—without corroborating witness from Companion to Companion, and often to successor of Successor, before the isnad “blooms” into the kind of validating form that the rules of the hadith science apparatus require—seems to be inseparably significant. The very fact, that effacement in the isnad is witness to the moment when hadith science was born, when standards tightened up. It seems to me very plausibly also the moment when the wording of the hadith 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 Loyd and Loyd et al. have developed against the indisputable observation of Goldziher that some hadith are manifestly anachronistic, no matter what their isnad may say or in which early texts they may be included. Allegedly Muhammadian statements about Qadari, Unsayyad politics, the issues of ‘Uthmanic, ‘Ali, Zobayrid, and ‘Abbasid fana—I am skeptical, irrespective of their isnad, on historical critical method grounds that Muhammad said it. Without all the resources fully to study this at the moment, I take as an example the hadith whose paraf 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. [I conclude] There will come a time when it is asked, “Is there anyone who accompanied those who were Companions of the Prophet?” “Yes.” They shall succeed.

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 isnads and try to connect various words to the slightly different isnads in the isnads by Loyd et al., I am unable to see any formal difference between texts and isnads that some scholars believe to be from Companions or Successors and this story’s isnad and mutan, which is surely later. The presentation of the formalist methodologies is yet to be performed: to take a series of improbable hadith and, using the same techniques, determine if the methods that yield affirmative results about hadith al-Isl, the Hudaybiya Incident, or the murder of Ibn Abi l-Hajjaj show also how and why these improbable hadith 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 kerygema, 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 sort of distinction between narratory material from the guprat and prophetic material, a distinction reflected in later practices when “improving” hadith were much more laxly tested than legal or doctrinal hadith. Still, the corpus of authoritative lore was fructified by an iranian/provincial view that resisted centralizing religious authority in general and saw Islamic lore and perhaps even revelation as floating porous boundaries that allowed God and the greater generation to continue speaking to new circumstances as they confronted Muslims, through newly “discovered” hadith 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, guprat were disparaged, isnads were increasingly de rigueur, and criticism of the links in an isnad had begun. 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 Muhammad. 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.

54. To speak, as some do, of someone being a “transmitter of hadith” is, for instance, Mantiq Cairo fails to recognize the change in meaning of the process of hadith transmission once the hadith are canonized. “Transmission” has become a ritual activity, the performance of hadith, not their transmission.

55. He does not seem to get his due in Brown’s books; see Dickinson, The Development of Early Sunni Hadith Criticism; Dickinson’s translation of the al-Salah al-Shafi‘ist, An Introduction to the Science of the Hadith.

56. al-Mizal, no. 3983; in al-Buhairi (Jihada and Muslim) (Hadith), Enc, 582–83. Loyd says this trope dates to the last part of the seventh century; see Enc, 238, 542.

57. See, e.g., EF, x.vii.80a b. al-Mizal.
This would allow us truly to trace the development of the Islamic 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 hadith studies thirty years from now will have a much larger body of written work from which to draw and make conclusions to report.

WORKS CITED


