Book Reviews

Early Islam between Myth and History: al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110H/728CE) and the Formation of His Legacy in Classical Islamic Scholarship. By Suleiman Ali Mourad. Leiden: Brill, 2006. Pp. 339. €141.00.

The figure of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728) is traditionally presented within classical Islamic literature as a paragon of religious rectitude and piety: proverbs and dicta attributed to al-Ḥasan pervade the fields of mysticism, theology, exegesis, jurisprudence and Qur'an readings. The authenticity of the various epistles and pervasive corpus of reports associated with this seminal figure has been the subject of some dispute among recent scholars; and, it is the case that within classical Islamic scholarship questions were raised concerning the reliability and accuracy of various dicta attributed to him.[1] Devoted to a comprehensive treatment of the issues of authenticity and provenance, *Early Islam between Myth and History*, which was originally a PhD thesis, casts a critical eye over the reception and presentation of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī's legacy, attempting to show how and why his personage was successively manipulated within early and medieval Islamic scholarship for a range of different purposes. Mourad takes the view that the literary materials ascribed to al-Ḥasan can reveal little about the early Islamic tradition from which they are purported to emanate, but rather they tell us more about later scholarship's attempts to exploit such images and symbols from Islam's past.[2] Mourad is not claiming that al-Ḥasan is an entirely mythical character conjured up by the religious tradition; on the contrary, he accepts that his legacy as a 'teacher and exemplar' unquestionably originated with his own 'piety and charisma'. Mourad's principal contention is that in the quest for legitimacy, sanctification and authority, competing religious movements and groups took advantage of al-Ḥasan's historical standing and status, ascribing to him a plethora of anecdotes, epistles and statements which reflected their own subjective ideological leanings. He argues that attempts were made to import this contrived literary corpus into aspects of the classical discourse of religious asceticism and theology. Consequently, the 'corpus of anecdotes and letters attributed to al-Ḥasan is often contradictory and irreconcilable' and reflective of later medieval debates and disputes within the Islamic tradition.

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Following an introductory chapter which examines the life and career of al-Ḥasan, the text is divided into two broad parts: Part One examines the legacy of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī within the realms of piety, asceticism and mysticism; while Part Two assesses the putative theological legacy of al-Ḥasan, evaluating the historical background of the various epistles and tracts which he is reported to have composed. In his introduction, Mourad draws attention to the contentious issue of the reliability of the sources for the early Islamic periods, referring to the view that processes such as pseudepigraphy, the resort to transfer of authorship, and the pursuit of legitimacy hinder attempts to reconstruct historically the doctrines and movements associated with early Islam. He mentions the importance of the work of Gregor Schoeler and his findings regarding the transmission of knowledge and learning in the first 150 years of the Islamic tradition (pp. 4–5).[3] Schoeler's valuable thesis might offer insights as to whether other texts ascribed to al-Ḥasan can be considered fixed in the conventional sense of the word, or whether they were editorially augmented with the notes and comments of students, but it is important to bear in mind that Schoeler's work does not concern itself with the authenticity of the epistolary genre.[4] This last point is significant due to the fact that al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī has a number of epistles ascribed to him, including the putative treatise *al-Risāla fī'l-qadar*, which presents a fascinating refutation of the doctrine of predestination.

Mourad also uses his introduction to discuss questions relating to the processes of legitimisation and Islamisation in the early Islamic tradition. He makes the point that the incidence of pseudepigraphy and the deliberate transfer of authorship as instruments of legitimisation became prevalent in Islam's formative development, being relentlessly fuelled by the rapid spread of Islam and intra-Islamic hostility. Regarding the former, he argues that the new religion became 'more and more aware of itself as distinctly different from other religions'. The attribution of anecdotes, sermons and documents which highlighted the distinctiveness of Islam helped to ensure that the religious identity of Islam was separate and independent of other religions, particularly Christianity and Judaism. This interpretation does tend to attenuate the possibility that *a fortiori* the distinctiveness of the new faith was already a factor in its own genesis and rapid spread, although defining the Islamic or Arab character of the early conquests does remain a controversial point among historians of Islam.[5] Mourad argues that splits within the community forced competing scholars and groups to seek legitimisation: movements attempted to trace their lineage to the founding fathers of the religious tradition. Consequently, conflicting and seemingly irreconcilable images of early pioneers were constructed (p. 10). Mourad cites the genesis of biographical dictionaries as one of the by-products of such processes: his claim is that these tomes were redolent of the attempts to establish authority and legitimacy in the tradition, being deliberately developed with such objectives in mind. The traditional view is that Arabic biography has its initial origins in the attempts to

develop the *isnād* as a functional instrument of Ḥadīth criticism and authentication: the implication is that the constellation of biographical compilations which appeared under the rubric of *ᶜilm al-rijāl* remained critical to the procedures of authentication.[6] While discussing issues such as the different bases 'of religious learning and scholarship; and, of law and morality' produced by competing theological movements, legal schools and political groups', Mourad posits the view that attitudes to personal reasoning (*raʾy*) among scholars and the differences of opinions concerning the authority of caliphs and Imāms meant that a great diversity of perspectives on all types of religious knowledge existed (p. 11). The point is even made that many aspects of pre-Islamic customs were incorporated into 'the variety of new Muslim creeds'. It is difficult to weigh up this last statement because Mourad does not specify to which creeds he is referring here, although he mentions that some related patterns are discussed in Gerald Hawting's monograph on idolatry in the early Islamic tradition.[7] Mourad emphasises that the growing number of converts to Islam and the exposure of Muslims to new communities in the vast territories of the empire meant that evolving Islamic creeds were introduced to 'new ideas, types of belief, sources of law, and even sensitivities'. He speaks of a challenge in that these evolving materials had to be Islamicised in order to provide them with a measure of legitimacy and authority. Thus, for example, Mourad maintains that within ascetic and mystical expressions of Islam there was an attempt to Islamicise beliefs and practices by taking them out of the shadow of forms of asceticism and monasticism associated with Christianity and Buddhism.[8]

One methodological obstacle resulting from Mourad's train of thought vis-à-vis the issue of Islamisation is the *hysteron proteron* it presents as far as the configuration of influences is concerned: on the one hand, the inference is that the teachings and beliefs of the new religion were ostensibly malleable and seemingly in a state of flux; while, on the other hand, Mourad is referring to purposeful attempts to Islamisise imported materials, a process which predicates the existence of a more specific set of values and ideals which were then augmented.[9] Mourad moves on to stress that the extant materials betray more about the beliefs of those who authored them than those to whom they are supposed to refer.[10] He argues that the resort to pseudepigraphy and the transfer of authorship simply facilitated the quest for authority and legitimacy by groups and movements from later historical periods.[11] This last point leads to the contention that biographical accounts of prominent luminaries from the early Islamic tradition were being inflated and manipulated to influence the debates and dynamics of later polemical discourses.[12] The implication is that the luminaries portrayed in these sources were projected as archetypes and the accounts of their lives exploited over successive historical periods in order to create authority for developed doctrines and practices. In the same way, Mourad contends that the legacy of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī was the subject of frequent reconstruction and manipulation in the early and medieval

Islamic tradition, and unravelling the extent and significance of these processes is the aim of this work.[13]

The life and career of al-Ḥasan form the focus of the first chapter. It is concluded that several groups with different agendas were engaged in a project of deliberately 'glorifying and sanctifying' al-Ḥasan, using his name to endorse their political and polemical posturing. Some of the stories surrounding al-Ḥasan may have had a common origin, but it is suggested that these 'became distorted with time through confused memory or scribal errors' (p. 26). It is claimed that this process was begun in earnest by his disciples who split into competing religious camps and that the seemingly contrived sanctification of al-Ḥasan was not restricted to 'the formative period but was pursued even in the late sixth/twelfth century' (p. 30). Mourad insists that the 'glorification' of al-Ḥasan was 'meant to solidify the claim of each competing group of his followers to ownership of his legacy'. One example introduced to illustrate his point is the famous rebellion of Ibn al-Ashᶜath (d. 85/704) and the events surrounding it.[14] Mourad states that Sunnī sources were keen to play down al-Ḥasan's alleged participation in this uprising, emphasising his pacifist credentials; while, conversely, Muᶜtazilī and Shīᶜī sources stressed that al-Ḥasan actively participated in the uprising (p. 40). Mourad insists that there is little doubt that al-Ḥasan was involved in the Ibn al-Ashᶜath revolt; intriguingly, many of the sources he adduces to reach this conclusion are actually Sunnī materials.[15] Nonetheless, in Mourad's view there existed a process of 'back-projecting a vision of history which necessitated "cleansing" the *salaf*', particularly when it came to 'intra-Muslim fighting' (p. 35). It is even suggested that the famous scholar of traditions Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855) might have been prepared to sanction such activity.[16] On the subject of al-Ḥasan's status as a transmitter of traditions, Mourad points out that most medieval biographers were aware of there being concerns regarding his 'problematic reputation'.[17] Thus, for example, Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348), commented that despite his great stature, he was a *mudallis* ('forger'), drawing attention to the fact that Ibn Ḥanbal classified those traditions forged in al-Ḥasan's name as being the worst among such materials (p. 47). Mourad's association of the term *mudallis*, and by implication *tadlīs*, with forgery would require a measure of qualification for it is worth bearing in mind that in the judgement of traditionist scholars, the technical compass of *tadlīs* is more nuanced.[18] Significantly, Mourad does point out that the references to al-Ḥasan in this respect were an indictment of his posthumous legacy and not a direct reflection of the actual historical figure: however, he does contend that such occurrences exemplified the sort of fabrication that was taking place in the name of al-Ḥasan (pp. 47–8).[19] On a separate note, issues such as his relationship with Umayyad caliphs and governors; his views on caliphal succession; and his role in Ḥadīth transmission, led Mourad to conclude that al-Ḥasan was paradoxically presented as harbouring proto-Sunnī, Shīᶜī, and even Muᶜtazilī sympathies, although, once again, Mourad is at pains to

point out that al-Ḥasan was indeed a celebrated figure in his own lifetime with a large number of disciples. Moreover, some of the sources recounting his life must be genuine, although in his view it is impossible to establish which of these materials are authentic (p. 53).

Chapter Two assesses the pietistic, ascetic and mystical legacy of al-Ḥasan. It is claimed that within modern scholarship there has been a general tendency to accept that he significantly influenced 'the formation and development of Islamic mysticism'. Mourad states that this was 'irrespective of whether or not mysticism existed in the first two centuries of Islam' (p. 59). Reference is made to the accepted view among many recent scholars that his sermons had an impact upon later generations of Muslims in areas such as morality, religious rhetoric and dogma. Individuals such as Louis Massignon, Reynold Nicholson, George Anawati, Louis Gardet, AnneMarie Schimmel, Montgomery Watt and Alexander Knysh had all acknowledged, to various degrees, the role al-Ḥasan played in the foundation of Islamic mysticism and asceticism (p. 61). For example, Mourad refers to the fact that Knysh took the view that 'al-Ḥasan's religious personality promoted him among his contemporaries' and that he generally agreed with Massignon that 'al-Ḥasan's emphasis on self-scrutiny to guide one's actions had a tremendous impact on later mystical practice' (p. 61).[20] Mourad states that although Knysh admits that al-Ḥasan was a 'convenient figurehead for various later religious schools and movements', he does refer to a link between mystical practices initiated by al-Ḥasan and concepts subsequently enhanced within later expressions of Ṣūfism (p. 62).[21] He also notes that Knysh had identified him as having nurtured practices such as altruism (*īthār*), hinting that it was appropriated by later Ṣūfīs and made the foundation of the doctrine of chivalry (*futuwwa*). It is worth remarking that Knysh does preface his remarks on al-Ḥasan by emphasising that 'later Sufi writers routinely attributed ascetic and mystical tendencies to the leading representatives of the early Muslim community and even to the Prophet himself'. Knysh maintains that these writers did not 'deny that "Sufi science" emerged among the second and third generations of Muslims', although al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī is routinely identified as one of the founding figures of asceticism. Before him, Massignon had concluded that al-Ḥasan's reflection on *muḥāsaba* ('self-scrutiny') prepared the way for the formulation of this practice by al-Muḥāsibī (d. 243/857).[22] It is this sort of implied linkage between al-Ḥasan and mystical concepts which concerns Mourad: he vigorously contests the suggestion that al-Ḥasan introduced nascent ideas and constructs which were subsequently refined by later mystics. The reasoning is that impressions of al-Ḥasan's presumed ascetic and mystical 'legacy' were based on 'some selectivity with regard to the material attributed to him in medieval scholarship' (p. 62). Reviewing the earliest literature, Mourad concludes that al-Ḥasan appears in these materials not as a mystic, but rather as a pious and ascetic character.

One point made by Mourad relates to a theme briefly touched upon in the introduction to this book: namely, that the circles of Ibn al-Mubārak (d. 181/797), and indeed Ibn Ḥanbal, had a vested interest in promoting *jihād* along the Byzantine frontiers and the purpose of attributing anecdotes and reports to al-Ḥasan 'was to encourage the recruits and motivate them to aspire to imitate the lives and piety of the founding fathers' (p. 68).[23] Needless to say, one would have assumed that there was already in circulation, at the time of Ibn Ḥanbal, a profusion of Prophetic and Companion reports which could have been cited in such instances, but Mourad's argument is that the cumulative effect of these processes led to an inflated biography of al-Ḥasan being fashioned in the first two centuries of the Islamic tradition and that this biography was sustained by later accretions (p. 70).[24] According to Mourad, the earliest literary anecdotes covering al-Ḥasan reveal his mild piety as opposed to his so-called austere religious asceticism. He even includes a somewhat peculiar anecdote to illustrate his argument: a figure by the name of Ḥumayd al-Ṭawīl took part in the ritual washing of al-Ḥasan's body and noted that his belly was multi-layered with fat. Mourad infers that this 'does not fit into any category of asceticism' (p. 72).

Mourad is equally concerned that there exist problems with the corpus of ascetic materials which are attributed to al-Ḥasan: his name was confused with the names of many other prominent individuals and his sermons were the subject of misappropriation. Added to this is the suggestion that the deliberate transfer of authorship together with forgery was carried out in his name. On this basis, Mourad postulates that two images of al-Ḥasan were preserved in the literary sources: one of these images presented a pious figure who renounced the world while the second image was entirely incongruous with the former, for it revealed an individual who was content to indulge in the pleasures of this world; he adds that the traditions of asceticism and mysticism in Islam naturally preferred to perpetuate the former image. Hence, he argues that 'one cannot verify beyond reasonable doubt any authentic part of the literary corpus attributed to him or any real aspects of his character' (p. 94). And this raises the question as to whether modern scholarship can be justified in claiming that al-Ḥasan's contribution to the foundation of the Islamic tradition of asceticism and later expressions mysticism reflected an historical reality.

Turning his attention to the medieval tradition's presentation of al-Ḥasan, Mourad makes the case that the mystics of Basra in the second half of the fourth/tenth century were essentially responsible for advocating the notion that he was the founder of mysticism. Referring to a number of treatises and biographical works by Ṣūfī luminaries such as al-Muḥāsibī, Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj (d. 378/988) and Abū ᶜAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī (d. 412/1021), Mourad develops the argument that al-Ḥasan's appearance in these works is not distinctive in terms of his being recognised as the spiritual founder of religious asceticism, let alone mysticism. He states that al-Muḥāṣibī describes al-Ḥasan as someone who 'enjoined the renunciation of

seeking fame' and stuck 'to preaching, recitation (of the Qur$^{\supset}$an) and giving legal opinions' (p. 95). Statements of this kind suggested to Mourad that within the formative historical periods of Islam, al-Ḥasan was not considered a forerunner of Islamic spirituality, nor was he singled out as the ultimate authority on 'any particular ascetic or quasi-mystical topic' (p. 96). For example, the sources of legitimisation adduced by al-Muḥāsibī are the Qur'an and Ḥadīth together with the sayings of the pious ancestors, including al-Ḥasan. On such grounds Mourad questions whether it was appropriate to conclude from the thoughts expressed by al-Muḥāsibī that al-Ḥasan was either the initiator 'of reflection and self-scrutiny' or indeed that a set of mystical teachings was started by him before being 'borrowed and expanded by later mystics'. Nonetheless, it is also apparent that al-Muḥāsibī's writings do suggest that al-Ḥasan, along with many of his famous peers, was revered for his piety.

Furthermore, Mourad comments that the famous *Kitāb al-luma*^{c} of al-Sarrāj does not appear to consider al-Ḥasan in any way relevant to the mystical movement, while al-Sulamī 'provides no biography for al-Ḥasan in his *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*' (p. 97).[25] In his view this shows that al-Ḥasan was not considered to be a pioneering figure in the realm of asceticism: interestingly, it would be incorrect to deduce anything significant from al-Sulamī's omission of al-Ḥasan in the *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya* due to the fact that in the introduction to this work, al-Sulamī specifies that in this very book he wanted to collate the biographical details of later generations of saints (*awliyā*$^{\supset}$). Indeed, he mentions that his separate text, *Kitāb al-zuhd*, had already comprehensively covered the Companions, the Successors and their successors. Thus al-Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya* was specifically focusing on later generations of Ṣūfis.[26] However, Mourad also states that neither al-Mālīnī (d. 412/1021) nor al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1072) listed al-Ḥasan in their respective works; and that the famous Ash^{c}arī apologist ^{c}Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī (d. 429/1037) did not mention him when listing the notable mystics of Islam (p. 97).[27] On this point, it is important to note that the biographical section which introduces revered Ṣūfī luminaries in al-Qushayrī's work actually begins with figures who follow in the wake of the Companions, the Successors and their successors, commencing with Ibrahīm b. Adham (d. *c.* 161–3/777–80) and the specific arrangement adopted in this work is explained by the author.[28]

Mourad suggests that the most elaborate and earliest presentation of al-Ḥasan as a mystic essentially occurs in the celebrated *Qūt al-qulūb* composed by Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī (d. 386/966), who was 'a famous representative and leader of the Sālimiyya mystical and theological school of Baṣra' (p. 98f). The point made here is that by the late 'fourth/tenth century some mystical movements in Baṣra started to make the claim that al-Ḥasan was their founder'. However, it is argued that this appropriation of al-Ḥasan rested not on any historical reality, but was fuelled by sheer expediency. Elaborating this point, Mourad explains that there is evidence to suggest that the notorious Sālimiyya movement was under severe attack from critics who were

concerned about its heretical doctrines and teachings. He argues that the *Qūt al-qulūb* was composed partly in answer to these concerns, adding that by claiming in this work that al-Ḥasan was 'the master of our masters', legitimacy could be gained for the movement.[29] The rationale is that the Sālimiyya would have asserted that their brand of mysticism was traced back to the Prophet 'through, by then, the most renowned figure of Baṣra, namely al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī' (p. 98). The Sālimiyya were notorious for their 'abject anthropomorphism and crude doctrines on the nature of the divine attributes'.[30] Still, this invoking of the memory of al-Ḥasan implies that his reputation as a pious figure must have been significant. Mourad emphasises that al-Makkī declared that not only had al-Ḥasan begun 'the mystical tradition of Baṣra, but that all mystical learning started with him' (p. 99).[31] The point is also made that al-Makkī attempted to substantiate his statement by claiming that al-Ḥasan's mystical knowledge was derived from the Companion Ḥudhayfa b. al-Yamān (d. 36/656) whom the Prophet had entrusted with mystical knowledge, otherwise it might have been construed that al-Ḥasan had introduced a religious innovation. One suspects that such a statement is hardly likely to have dissuaded the movement's critics, who would have seen through such ruses. Mourad does proffer the opinion that al-Makkī's work deliberately edited out sayings which censured mysticism, keenly including materials which praised mystical practices and teachings.[32] He concludes that there is nothing to prove that al-Ḥasan was the founder of early mysticism or even a major figure within the tradition; in his calculation all the evidence points to the association being entirely anachronistic (p. 105).

Reference is also made to a corpus of sayings in which practices associated with proponents of asceticism are condemned by al-Ḥasan. One such example included by Mourad is a dictum adduced by Ibn Saᶜd (d. 230/845) in which it is stated that 'the *ṣūfis* (those who wear the wool) were once mentioned in the presence of al-Ḥasan', and he remarked '[t]hey shelter arrogance in their heart but show modesty in their dress' (p. 105). Mourad maintains that al-Muḥāsibī was aware of this very saying and disturbed by its content: he reinterpreted it to imply that al-Ḥasan 'was praising the proto-mystics for wearing wool'. One could argue that this report itself intimates that, in al-Muḥāsibī's estimation, al-Ḥasan's opinion was of great importance, confirming his reputation as a figure of religious piety in these early periods disputed by Mourad. Though, Mourad's disquiet about such reports stems from the view that al-Ḥasan should not be considered the founder of the Islamic tradition of mysticism. Massignon had singled him out in this respect, but one feels that references of this kind to al-Ḥasan and his supposed role in the inception of mysticism were understood in a very general sense, appealing to the ascetic qualities of al-Ḥasan on the basis that they were a sound foundation upon which the later tradition could build.[33] And, it is significant that the allusions to al-Ḥasan in the later literature focus upon the import of his ascetic teachings. Nonetheless, Mourad remonstrates that the earliest sources show

incontrovertibly that 'there is no historical foundation whatsoever to substantiate the claim that al-Ḥasan said anything about mysticism and mystical practices, whether in praise or condemnation', especially as the mystical movements originated in the late third/ninth century (p. 107).

Mourad suggests that the move towards presenting a manufactured image of al-Ḥasan is further evidenced in the work of later writers such as Abū Nuᶜaym al-Iṣfahānī (d. 429/1038), whose survey of famous Muslim Ṣūfī luminaries, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, focused on the pietistic and spiritual qualities of a large selection of religious figures which included al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. Mourad asserts that the *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ* is configured with the aim of glorifying the founding fathers of the mystical tradition, and that in this work al-Ḥasan is pitched as a founding father of the mystical movement. It is argued by Mourad that because such authors could collate and scour separate reports from earlier sources, they were in a position to create new images of their subjects, although he accepts that Abū Nuᶜaym was not transforming al-Ḥasan into a mystic in the way al-Makkī had done (pp. 108–9). And Mourad further insists that the materials on the life of al-Ḥasan selected by Abū Nuᶜaym contributed to later impressions of his supposed role in the formulation of expressions of mysticism. The main charge set out here focuses on medieval scholarship's choice of al-Ḥasan as a figure to whom the inception of asceticism and mysticism was attributed, particularly in al-Makkī's case. But perhaps one needs to distinguish between the use of al-Ḥasan as a figurehead and any inference that he had introduced practices and concepts which crystallised within later expressions of Ṣūfism. However, in Mourad's reasoning, the situation is somewhat compounded by modern scholarship's incorrectly identifying al-Ḥasan as a pioneering figure who laid the foundation of Islamic mysticism and asceticism. Mourad emphasises that even in the age of al-Hujwīrī (d. *c.* 465–9/1072–7), the image of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī was still under construction, although this would imply that the efforts of al-Makkī, and, to an extent, Abū Nuᶜaym, had not had their desired effect as far as accentuating al-Ḥasan as a mystic and ascetic figure (p. 112). It might also indicate that such inflated claims were not taken that seriously by many scholars. Another, related, issue is whether the expansion of al-Ḥasan's legacy is commensurate with his being associated with the synthesis of radically pronounced theosophical ideas and concepts; or, is this process of construction confined to exaggerating and embellishing biographical notices as biographers sought to produce 'mystical *silsilas*' to legitimise their peculiar expressions of Ṣūfism, implying that their teachings had been handed down by paragons such as al-Ḥasan (pp. 112–3)?

According to Mourad, the source which takes 'the issue of al-Ḥasan's contrived mystical experience beyond the historical realm' is the work of Farīd al-Dīn al-ᶜAṭṭār (d. *c.* 617/1220), *Tadhkirat al-awliyāʾ*. The material on al-Ḥasan in this work takes on legendary proportions, although once again the concern here is that a clinical

expansion of biographical notices by luminaries such as al-Hujwīrī and al-ᶜAṭṭār, who were seeking to glorify their own mystical traditions, was taking place (pp. 115–6). One controversy mentioned by Mourad is whether al-Ḥasan had directly heard from the fourth caliph, al-Imām ᶜAlī, as intimated by a mystical *silsila*. It was Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505) who set out to prove the soundness of this link, authoring a tract on the topic. Mourad argues that at stake was the legitimacy of the mystical knowledge of al-Ḥasan, adding that among Mamlūk mystics ᶜAlī was viewed as being the 'sole trustee of mystical knowledge after Muḥammad'. The implication is that it was imperative to ensure the integrity of the supposed link in order to justify 'al-Ḥasan's mystical knowledge and experience'. However, according to Mourad, such manoeuvring did not end there: ᶜAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (d. 1143/1731) spoke of a chain of authority which linked esoteric knowledge (*ṭarīq al-bāṭin*) all the way back to God, listing al-Ḥasan as one of the key figures in this chain (p. 119).[34] Logically, the question one might ask is why was al-Ḥasan singled out by these luminaries for 'projection' as a model individual? Mourad does accept that al-Ḥasan was 'the most notable figure of Baṣra' and the 'right figure for their purposes' (p. 120, 'they' being the mystics of Basra in the second-half of the fourth/tenth century). However, it seems inevitable that for al-Ḥasan to have been exploited in the later sources, there must have existed a legacy bequeathed by this individual in the first place. Mourad does acknowledge the existence of such a legacy, but argues that it was selectively manipulated to deliver a figure whose ascetic and mystical qualities were pronounced.

It is in Chapter Three of this text that Mourad turns his attention to scrutinising the authenticity of the reported correspondence between al-Ḥasan and ᶜUmar II (*reg.* 99–101/717–20). The themes and issues of this correspondence range from epistles on piety and asceticism to theological matters; it is suggested that these 'are central to many religious debates that dominated intellectual and religious circles in the medieval Islamic world, specifically piety and asceticism and the *qadar* controversy' (p. 139). Mourad concludes that there are serious doubts about the authenticity of the whole of this corpus of material. He believes that many of these tracts bear the hallmarks of pseudepigraphy and even misattribution; accordingly, he expresses the view that using such materials to gauge the history of the early periods of the Islamic tradition is fraught with difficulties. This may well be the case, although the veritable impact of such material upon the decisive debates, issues and theoretical constructs in both the mystical tradition and theology appears to have been marginal. The related theme of the authenticity of epistles and tracts is also reviewed in Chapter Four, in which Mourad looks at five works on piety and mysticism which al-Ḥasan is believed to have authored. Although the materials in question do not appear to be products of pseudepigraphy, Mourad reckons that four of these five works were incorrectly ascribed to al-Ḥasan as a consequence of misidentification and misattribution, while

the fifth is deemed too vague in form and content to be of any significance.[35] In his view such materials clearly contributed to a somewhat magnified image of al-Ḥasan as an emblem of religious piety and asceticism. Once again it is stressed that even in later periods, classical scholars were consistently amplifying an already distorted image of al-Ḥasan.

Part Two (Chapter Five) of this text turns to the subject of theology and al-Ḥasan's apparent stance on the controversy concerning predestination (*qadar*). Mourad believes that Shī^{c}ī, Mu^{c}tazilī and more importantly Sunnī, sources plainly reveal that al-Ḥasan subscribed to the doctrine of free will associated with *ahl al-qadar*, which became one of the defining creeds of Mu^{c}tazilism. Mourad adds that orthodoxy made a conscious attempt to present al-Ḥasan as having relinquished his Qadarī credentials; however, the point made in this chapter is that the converse was true. Mourad has to rely upon a selection of late sources to draw these conclusions. At the same time, as far as the later synthesis of the doctrine of *qadar* is concerned, it is important to bear in mind that the doctrine of free will as developed and refined among later Mu^{c}tazilī luminaries was by no means homogeneous but had evolved significantly from the earliest discussions on the subject: Joseph van Ess has placed some theoretical distance between the early Qadarīs and the emergent Mu^{c}tazilīs, and Daniel Gimaret has commented that the early periods were marked by 'an extreme diversity of people and doctrines' as far as expressions of Mu^{c}tazilism were concerned.[36] Regarding the contention that al-Ḥasan was a Qadarī, Mourad points to the research of van Ess, who was intrigued by the conspicuous attempts of Sunnī scholars to place distance between al-Ḥasan and the Qadariyya; van Ess was convinced that such efforts had the opposite effect of confirming his association with this movement (p. 164).[37] Mourad senses that van Ess is not wrong when he speaks of al-Ḥasan as a supporter of the doctrine of free will, although he has some issues with the evidence van Ess cited to corroborate that claim; especially his initial assertion regarding the authenticity of the famous *Risāla fī'l-qadar* ascribed to al-Ḥasan.

Probing the whole issue of al-Ḥasan's links with the doctrine of *qadar* further, Mourad refers to two reports in Ibn Sa^{c}d's *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā* in which the orthodox traditionist Ayyūb al-Sikhtiyānī (d. 131/748) endeavours to insinuate that al-Ḥasan renounced the doctrine of free will: in the first dictum Ayyūb recounts that al-Ḥasan had uttered the words 'I promise never to debate on this issue' ('*lā a^{c}ūdu fīhi ba^{c}d al-yawm*'), while in the second report Ayyūb states '[t]he only charge that one can hold against al-Ḥasan is his belief in free will. I lived long enough to know al-Ḥasan well, and I swear by God, he ceased to debate (in favour of) free will', with the following phrase being key: '*adraktu al-Ḥasan(a) wa'llāhi mā yaqūluhu*' (p. 166).[38] Mourad maintains that these two reports do not imply that al-Ḥasan gave up the doctrine of *qadar*; quite the reverse, the reports merely hint that 'he simply ceased to express his views about that doctrine' (p. 166). Mourad's translation uses the term

'debate' for both *aᶜūdu* and *yaqūluhu*. It is possible to maintain that the first term can be loosely understood as 'debating' or perhaps 'not returning to this (subject)' implying that al-Ḥasan did not necessarily relinquish his views on free will; however, in the second report the use of this verb, *yaqūluhu*, does actually connote the profession of a belief, particularly when applied in respect of a creed or doctrine. It is used in doxographies and standard apologia to introduce dogmatic statements.[39] Assuming that the reports in question are authenticated sayings describing the dogmatic inclination of al-Ḥasan, the phrase '*mā yaqūluhu*' would have to be translated as 'he would cease to profess the (doctrine)', and in the context of this report it would mean that al-Ḥasan did indeed relinquish this particular dogma of free will. However, the strength of Mourad's case does not rest solely on these passages. He puts the view forward that the numerous Sunnī sources which sought to exonerate al-Ḥasan actually raise suspicions about the intentions of those who circulated them, and that attempts on the part of Sunnī sources to prove his predestinarian beliefs significantly disclose that he never relinquished the doctrine of free will: al-Ḥasan remained a Qadarī. Besides, Muᶜtazilī and Shīᶜī sources were resolute in claiming him as a proponent of free will (p. 170).[40]

In the final chapter, Mourad turns his attention to the authenticity of the renowned *Risāla fī'l-qadar* ascribed to al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. The epistle is said to have been composed in response to a question on the issue of *qadar* raised by the Umayyad caliph ᶜAbd al-Malik b. Marwān (d. 86/705), and in it al-Ḥasan offers a detailed critique of the doctrine of predestination. The *Risāla* has been the focus of a number of key studies: Helmut Ritter, Julian Obermann, Michael Schwarz, Joseph van Ess, John Wansbrough, Gautier Juynboll and Michael Cook have articulated various views with reference to the text's authenticity and historical background. Mourad reveals that within modern scholarship some individuals have tended to accept that the work was composed by al-Ḥasan primarily as a result of the research conducted by Ritter and van Ess, who both endorsed the authenticity of the *Risāla* (p. 189).[41] He also finds it curious that those scholars who did contest the text's authenticity were still prepared to grant it an early provenance. For example, Gautier Juynboll had accepted that the absence of *aḥādīth* in the epistle revealed its early provenance. The contention is that at a later date in the Islamic tradition numerous Prophetic traditions were forged endorsing the doctrine of predestination. If the epistle had been composed at the time when these traditions were in circulation, then the author of the epistle would have taken the opportunity of contesting them. Thus, granted that there are no Prophetic traditions in the epistle, it must presumably precede the period when these traditions were supposedly fabricated. Similar points were raised by van Ess, although he later revised his position regarding the authenticity of the text.[42] On this basis, despite questioning al-Ḥasan's authorship of this epistle, Juynboll calculated that it belonged to the first century of Islam. Mourad questions this estimate, taking a similar line to the

one adopted by John Wansbrough, who argued that the epistle emanated from the late second/eighth century. Wansbrough accepted that the epistle appeared to engage in the debate on the authority of sources (*uṣūl*): namely, that it was dealing with a dispute about the validity of scriptural sources (the Qur'an contra the Ḥadīth). For that reason *aḥādīth* were intentionally excluded from the text. Wansbrough hypothesised that the epistle seeks to substantiate the independent authority of the Qur'an against the Prophetic traditions or indeed the authority of the Companions; that is why traditions were omitted, although he believed that it would have been composed at a time when such materials were in existence.

On the subject of the omission of Prophetic traditions, Mourad makes the point that there are examples of relatively late theological treatises which deliberately exclude traditions: *al-Radd ᶜalā al-mujbira* by the Zaydī theologian al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm al-Rassī (d. 246/860) and *al-Risāla fī'l-hidāya wa'l-ḍalāla* by al-Ṣāḥib b. ᶜAbbād (d. 385/995) are two such texts.[43] Mourad does draw attention to van Ess' volte-face with reference to the actual dating of the epistle on *qadar*; van Ess eventually accepted that certain arguments in the document belonged to a developed stage of the discourse on predestination and free will, concluding that the authenticity of the text cannot be proven (p. 192), and he was also sceptical about the conspicuous use of the term *al-salaf* in the opening lines of the epistle.[44] Finally, Mourad mentions that the most solid refutation of the *Risāla*'s authenticity was formulated by Michael Cook, who stressed its pseudepigraphic origin, placing it in the late Umayyad period (p. 193).[45] Perhaps what is most striking about the epistle is that it continues to attract such a varied range of judgements concerning both its authenticity and provenance.

Having outlined modern scholarship's attempt to shed light on the origin of the *Risāla fī'l-qadar*, Mourad presents his own detailed and impressive study of the epistle's provenance. He stresses that the practice of falsely attributing anecdotes and letters to al-Ḥasan was common in medieval scholarship. An epistle entitled *Risāla fī'l-radd ᶜalā al-qadariyya*, which is said to have been composed by the caliph ᶜUmar II, is one such example mentioned by Mourad (p. 195). However, a fascinating new line taken by Mourad focuses on the theological language of the epistle along with its dialectical countenance; he claims that the tenor of the style and language employed in the epistle is reminiscent of later Muᶜtazilī, Shīᶜī and Ashᶜarī treatises. Mourad floats the idea that the discourse of the text is directed at various Sunnī predestinarian (*mujbira*) groups of the ᶜAbbāsid period and that it is essentially about upholding the doctrine of *ᶜadl* ('divine justice'). One of the observations he makes is the epistle's employment of the term *mubṭilūn* ('negators') when referring to opponents, noting that Sunnī polemicists adopted the term to 'indicate those who upheld the Muᶜtazilite theology' on the basis that it 'did away (*abṭalat*) God's *ṣifāt* (attributes)' (p. 202). Mourad posits that the Muᶜtazilīs could have (sarcastically) reserved this term for their predestinarian opponents whose 'compulsionist theology dissociated God from one of his divine

essences, namely God as *ᶜādil* (just)'. However, one wonders whether this is entirely valid as the labels Sunnī theologians predominantly used when referring to their Muᶜtazilī opponents included terms such as *aṣḥāb al-taᶜṭīl* and *muᶜaṭṭila*. Thus, the use of the term *mubṭilūn* in the *Risāla* might be entirely arbitrary in the instance highlighted by Mourad.[46] A more interesting argument put forward by Mourad stems from the *Risāla*'s failure to challenge the political foundations of the predestinarian theology of the Umayyads and their supporters; as Mourad maintains, this issue was supposed to have prompted the composition of the epistle and its treatment of *qadar* (p. 204).[47]

Mourad is rightly concerned that later Muᶜtazilī scholars and sources did not quote the text: one would have assumed that it would have been a prestigious weapon in their armoury given the standing of al-Ḥasan, whom they were keen to claim as a proponent of free will. Furthermore, even selected quotes from the text, with its profusion of Qur'anic dicta, do not feature in related exegetical works where glosses attributed to al-Ḥasan occur. Thus 'it would be absurd to argue that al-Ḥasan wrote the epistle and none of his students knew anything about it, and that it was ignored by all subsequent Qadarite and Muᶜtazilite scholars until the late fourth/tenth century' (p. 206).[48] Mourad notes that al-Qāḍī ᶜAbd al-Jabbār (d. 415/1025) is the first scholar to furnish excerpts from the *Risāla*, but adds that there is no way of determining how he received the text.[49] Strangely, the arguments from the epistle are not cited in ᶜAbd al-Jabbār's seminal theological works in chapters and sections where the topics of predestination and free will are carefully analysed; nor do those works preserved by prominent Muᶜtazilī scholars such as Mānkdīm (d. 425/1034) and Ibn Mattawayhi (d. 469/1076) mention this epistle (p. 206).[50] Furthermore, those quotations in which the opinions of al-Ḥasan are adduced appear to be peripheral to the discussion of free will and predestination. Even Mourad concedes that it seems to have had little influence on theoretical debates on free will. Among the Sunnī sources which mention the epistle are the *al-Milal wa'l-niḥal* of al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153) and *Darᵓ al-qawl al-qabīḥ* by Najm al-Dīn al-Ṭūfī (d. 716/1316); al-Shahrastānī intimates that he had seen the epistle and concluded that it could not possibly be the work of al-Ḥasan. He suggested that it was probably authored by Wāṣil b. ᶜAṭāᵓ (d. 131/748). Mourad observes that the Twelver Shīᶜī scholar al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā (d. 436/1044), who was 'very knowledgeable about Muᶜtazilite theology and scholarship' does not appear to be aware of the epistle, although he identified al-Ḥasan as being a defender of *ᶜadl* (p. 212).[51]

In a separate text the Ashᶜarī theologian ᶜAbd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī mentioned that al-Ḥasan was the author of a *Risāla ilā ᶜUmar ibn ᶜAbd al-ᶜAzīz fī dhamm al-qadariyya*.[52] Is he referring to the same epistle on free will and predestination? Mourad's response is that this is not possible, insisting that it probably originates from the primary correspondence on piety, asceticism and related issues as examined in

Chapter Three.[53] Ultimately, the conclusion that Mourad draws from his circumspect probe of the relevant sources is that the epistle's function was simply to prove that al-Ḥasan was a believer in free will. He accepts that the work has no technical or theoretical function in the decisive theological debates on *qadar* and that the dialectical discussions in the epistle 'agree broadly with several arguments documented in Muᶜtazilite literature from the fourth-tenth century onward' (p. 214). Mourad does suggest that there are similarities between the theological points made in the epistle and Zaydī theology (pp. 218–9). It is the *Kitāb al-radd ᶜalā al-mujbira* by al-Rassī which is used to assess this perceived correspondence between the two documents.[54]

Mourad has previously mentioned the *Kitāb al-radd* when discussing the absence of traditions in the *Risāla*. He notes that al-Rassī's theology is based on the 'principle that all tenets of belief should originate from the Qur'an' although his fellow Zaydīs endorsed a doctrine of predestination which emphasised the independence of human capacity and will (p. 219). The point made is that the author of the epistle appears to follow the same approach as al-Rassī.[55] Mourad draws attention to the similarities in methodologies and emphasis between the two texts: in the *Kitāb al-radd*, al-Rassī requests that his adversaries furnish the authoritative basis of their positions; while in the epistle, ᶜAbd al-Malik the caliph proceeds to ask al-Ḥasan to 'provide the basis of his argument' (p. 220).[56] Mourad locates this configuration of argumentation in both texts within the vector of disputes about the applicability of sources: namely, Qur'an, Ḥadīth, Sunna, *raᵓy* and *qiyās*. In Mourad's view the epistle encapsulates a debate concerning the authority of *ūṣūl*, a dispute which has its origins in the second/eighth century and 'reached its climax in the third/ninth century' (p. 220). His view is that to accept that al-Ḥasan was actually indulging in such discussions would be anachronistic. This reference to *uṣūl* stems from Wansbrough's provisional observation regarding the polemical structure of the epistle and his claim that 'the very absence of all but scriptural *shawāhid* and the express insistence that all answers were to be found therein could suggest an *uṣūl* controversy'.[57] For Wansbrough the presentation of the Qur'anic ayas in the labyrinth of arguments outlined in the *Risāla* was reflective of its *uṣūlī* schema. Within such a debate 'the plain meaning of scripture was being asserted in the face of analogical reasoning and of tradition, whether from companions or prophet'.[58] One would need to bear in mind that Wansbough's explanation about an *uṣūl* controversy was largely conjectural, a point he makes having introduced his explanation. Mourad does proceed to offer a detailed range of samples from both the epistle and al-Rassī's text, referring to the levels of congruence distinguishing these two texts. Among the many arguments he puts forward for the late dating of the *Risāla* is the fact that al-Ṣāḥib b. ᶜAbbād, whose work *al-Risāla fī'l-hidāya wa'l-ḍalāla* covers the phenomenon of *mutashābih* ayas in the Qur'an, does not refer to the epistle, nor is mention made of al-Ḥasan's views on the interpretation

of the key Qur'anic ayas which are discussed in it; in Mourad's estimation the ayas mentioned in the *Risāla* would fit into the type of materials expounded upon in the *mutashābih* genre. On the basis that al-Ṣāḥib was a close confidant of ᶜAbd al-Jabbār, whose *Faḍl al-iᶜtizāl* refers to the *Risāla* (p. 225), it is concluded that the *Risāla* was probably not in existence before al-Ṣāḥib's death in 385/995.

Additionally, the exegesis of key Qur'anic ayas such as (Q. 7:179; Q. 3:178; and Q. 28:8), which are explained by the author of the *Risāla* in a way which obviates any perceived predestinarian bent, does not, according to Mourad, surface in later Muᶜtazilī, Zaydī and Shīᶜī commentaries (pp. 226–8). Mourad also offers the interesting observation that ᶜAbd al-Jabbār probably had his own suspicions about the very authenticity of the *Risāla*, although it should be said that they did not prevent him from citing the text (p. 228).[59] Supplementary evidence cited by Mourad against the authenticity of the *Risāla* dwells on the dating of the line of poetry quoted in the epistle and structural affinities between al-Rassī's text and the *Risāla*. Summarising his findings, Mourad states that the *Risāla* is much later than the first/seventh century and was not the work of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. He emphasises that the *Risāla*'s arguments are far too sophisticated to have emanated from the historical periods in which al-Ḥasan lived as they anticipate the *uṣūl* controversy and the notions of *ᶜadl* and *jabr* as ruminated over in the later literature. In Mourad's estimation, proposing a provisionally early date for the *Risāla* is problematic because it would predicate that it had 'laid down the Qadarīs and *Ahl al-ᶜAdl*'s response for centuries to come; they; in effect, added nothing to what is in the epistle' (p. 237). But to suggest that the epistle, regardless of its dating, comprises many of the pertinent constructs, discussions and theoretical nuances germane to the subject of free will and predestination would seem to be an overstatement; that the text covers confined aspects of the relevant arguments on predestination possibly explains why it made little impact upon the concomitant debates on the theodicy. Mourad confirms that no sources prior to the end of the fourth/tenth century attest to the existence of the *Risāla*. More critically, he contends that the *Risāla* was influenced by al-Rassī's text and therefore must have appeared after it: the epistle echoes the schisms of the third/ninth century and the late third/ninth century respectively. As to the person who drafted the *Risāla*, Mourad believes that a Muᶜtazilī theologian in the late fourth/tenth century was responsible for this. Regarding the purpose of this exercise: the attribution of the *Risāla* to al-Ḥasan would firstly confirm that he was a Qadarī and secondly lend support and legitimacy to the Muᶜtazilī doctrine of free will (p. 237). As to the question of why al-Ḥasan was selected as the epistle's author, Mourad states that he was a celebrated figure in Basra and his two students Wāṣil b. ᶜAṭāᵓ and ᶜAmr b. ᶜUbayd (d. 144/761) were perceived as being the founders of the Muᶜtazilī movement. The reasoning here is that although this idealised view of early Muᶜtazilism may not represent incontrovertible historical fact, it was accepted as a reflection of reality by those within the tradition: it is posited

that al-Ḥasan's personage would appositely demonstrate that the Muᶜtazilī movement had impeccable historical roots. The *Risāla* is of course addressed to the Umayyad caliph ᶜAbd al-Malik b. Marwān and Mourad argues that he was selected due to his being the most suitable contemporary as the ruling caliph: 'he symbolised Umayyad power and was a contemporary of al-Ḥasan' (p. 238). The view that ᶜAbd al-Jabbār could have had a hand in forging the epistle is briefly pondered; Mourad argues that ᶜAbd al-Jabbār studied with the Muᶜtazilī and Zaydī theologian Abū ᶜAbd Allāh al-Baṣrī (d. 369/979) and had several Zaydī students. His works also endorse 'the legitimacy of early Zaydite *imāms*'.[60] Ultimately, Mourad admits that the likelihood of ᶜAbd al-Jabbār having forged the epistle is doubtful, although he acknowledges that it probably originates from his milieu (p. 238). In Mourad's view the epistle represents a summary of Zaydī theology on the doctrine of predestination.

This volume includes some meticulously compiled appendices: Mourad has commendably catalogued all the quotations used in his work and included the original Arabic texts from which these quotations are derived. This alone is a valuable collection of materials which will serve as a convenient and practical reference source. The second appendix contains the *Risāla fī'l-qadar* as collated from two separate manuscript copies; the first of these is the Tehran manuscript (1022), which is compared in the footnotes with the Köprülü manuscript (1589).[61] This is followed by the version of the *Risāla* cited in ᶜAbd al-Jabbār's *Faḍl al-iᶜtizāl wa-ṭabaqāt al-muᶜtazila*. Finally, brief biographical entries covering the political and religious inclinations of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī's students are provided. Interestingly, two of the Qur'anic ayas quoted in the first version of the *Risāla fī'l-qadar* appear to be incorrect or indeed anomalous: Q. 2:155–7, which reads *niᶜma* instead of the canonical *raḥma* (p. 290); and Q. 3:8, which also reads *niᶜma* instead of *raḥma* (p. 297). I was unable to identify them in the classical literature on non-canonical *variae lectiones*.

In summary, this book has certainly drawn attention to the issue of the biographical manipulation of the historical figure of al-Ḥasan within the wider contexts of theology and Ṣūfism; the sheer range of materials covered is impressive. Mourad's bone of contention has been that the reports and dicta associated with al-Ḥasan were selectively filtered to deliver an ascetic and austere figure on the basis that a disproportionate amount of these materials was both 'contradictory and irreconcilable'. However, whether this would warrant entirely severing al-Ḥasan's link with early expressions of *zuhd* and the nascent ascetic tradition is open to discussion, although this has not been the principal argument of this work. Intriguingly, even Mourad admits some of the reports regarding his life must be genuine, noting that the legacy of al-Ḥasan as a teacher and exemplar 'probably originated with his piety and charisma' (p. 240); he also states that al-Ḥasan 'must have been a celebrated figure during his lifetime'. But Mourad's point is that there is no way of establishing which of the plethora of biographical reports associated with

al-Ḥasan can be considered authentic. Particularly controversial, in his opinion, has been the relentless expansion of al-Ḥasan’s ‘posthumous legacy’ as it was used as an instrument of legitimisation and sanctification by rival theological and mystical movements. Mourad makes the claim that late medieval and modern scholarship has been somewhat misled by the illusory image of al-Ḥasan presented by the earlier medieval sources; in his view this has led to the controversial impression that he was the founding father of asceticism’s mystical complement. Mourad has focused on the fact that the inflated image of al-Ḥasan emanated from the endeavours of Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī and the Sālimiyya who portrayed themselves as heirs to his legacy, intimating that he was the founder of mysticism and mystical knowledge: his name was incorporated into the mystical *salāsil* devised by this movement. Mourad does speak of a myth being created around the persona of al-Ḥasan and points out the fact that his students went on to play important roles in the formation of religious trends: other later authors such as Abū Nu^{c}aym al-Iṣfahānī are said to have ingenuously contributed to perpetuating this exaggerated image. Yet, it seems reasonable to argue that there is little evidence to suggest that the inflated historical figure of al-Ḥasan had any material effect upon the synthesis of substantive concepts and constructs articulated within the wider context of Islamic mysticism. Perhaps the more serious implications of Mourad’s arguments relate to the process of biographical magnification and the resort to pseudepigraphy and false ascription which were used for the purposes of sanctification and legitimisation. His simple point is that using such embellished materials to propose theories about the development of mysticism in early Islam would in be injudicious.

In the field of theology, Mourad has argued that al-Ḥasan was a Qadarī in terms of his theology and that both the Mu^{c}tazilīs and the Shī^{c}īs claimed him as one of their own companions. Yet, as we have seen, his thought as gleaned from his putative works played no substantial part in their doctrinal arguments and deliberations. Thus, although Mourad refers to the legitimising function of this material associated with him, it seems to have had little impact in real terms upon the discourse of classical theology. Within the context of Sunnism, Mourad indicates that initially al-Ḥasan’s students were responsible for attributing to him a range of anecdotes, sermons and correspondence which had been aimed at bolstering his orthodox pedigree: ‘when they did not find enough material to support their views, they made it up’, he remarks. There is certainly a profusion of reports associated with his lifetime, and as Mourad consistently maintains ‘we cannot declare all the material on al-Ḥasan in medieval scholarship to be inauthentic, yet it is not possible to verify with any degree of certainty the authenticity of any particular item’, and, he comments, ‘we know only, broadly, that he was a Qadarite, known for his piety and for his involvement in some political events of his day’ (p. 243). Again, the reports cited by Mourad in relation to al-Ḥasan and his leaning towards to predestinarian doctrines can be construed as

revealing his actually relinquishing this inclination (p. 166). Paradoxically, perhaps the jockeying for position among the aforementioned theological movements, as far as their claiming al-Ḥasan is concerned, would seem to underscore the reality of his reputation as a charismatic and pious figure, although, in Mourad's view, the inflated image of this figure may have added to its value. Regarding the epistles ascribed to al-Ḥasan, Mourad has made the compelling case that he was not the author of a number of these, most notably the famous *Risala fī'l-qadar*. Such texts were redolent of an intellectual environment and setting far removed from the historical period in which al-Ḥasan resided; again, the actual impact of the epistle upon the debates and controversies associated with free will was absolutely negligible, a point to which Mourad concedes. Nonetheless, Mourad's detailed analysis of the historical background within which the theological discourse of the epistle was conceived is discerning. The issue of authenticity allows Mourad to emphasise the inappropriateness of using materials speciously ascribed to al-Ḥasan to form conclusions about the historical development of theological and ascetic constructs during Umayyad rule. Finally, on the issue of pseudepigraphy and its pervasiveness within the classical Islamic tradition, Mourad takes the position that not only was it a widespread phenomenon in medieval Islam, but also that it was used to gain legitimacy for ideas and doctrines, although whether it was successful in achieving this goal of legitimacy is another matter. In exploring the complex issue of al-Ḥasan's legacy through the corpus of materials ascribed to him, Mourad makes a valuable contribution to gauging key aspects of the medieval discourse of theology and Ṣūfism; and, while doing so, his work has shed new light on a seminal figure from the early Islamic tradition.

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NOTES

1 This is touched upon in pp. 48–9 of this text: see especially the reference to the *Kitāb al-ʿilāl wa-maʿrifat al-rijāl* of Ibn Ḥanbal; see also al-Dhahabī, *Siyār aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, ed. Shuʿayb Arnaʾūṭ and Maʾmūn al-Ṣāghirjī (25 vols, Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risāla, 1990), vol. 4, p. 572; Ibn Taymiyya, Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm, *Minhāj al-sunna al-nabawiyya fī naqḍ kalām al-shīʿa al-qadariyya*, ed. Muḥammad Rashād Sālim (10 vols, Riyadh: University of Muḥammad b. Suʿūd, n.d.), vol, 8, p. 45 f. Ibn Taymiyya dismisses the suggestion that al-Ḥasan was a companion of ʿAlī or that they had ever met.

2 For discussions regarding the authenticity of the materials which emanate from the early periods of the Islamic tradition, see Herbert Berg (ed.), *Method and Theory in the Study of Islamic Origins*, Islamic History and Civilization, Studies and Texts, 49 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003). See also Norman Calder, *Studies in Early Muslim Jurisprudence* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993); Michael Cook, 'The Origins of *Kalām*', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 43:1 (1980), pp. 32–43; Michael Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Claude Gilliot, 'The Beginnings of Qurʾānic Exegesis' in

Andrew Rippin (ed.), *The Qurʾān: Formative Interpretation* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1999), pp. 1–27; Andrew Rippin, 'Studying Early *Tafsīr* Texts', *Der Islam* 72:2 (1995), pp. 310–23; Andrew Rippin, '*Tafsīr Ibn ʿAbbā*s and Criteria for Dating Early *Tafsīr* Texts', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 18 (1994), pp. 38–83. For contrasting perspectives see Harald Motzki, 'Dating the So-Called *Tafsīr Ibn ʿAbbā*s: Some Additional Remarks', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 31 (2006), pp. 147–63; Kees Versteegh, *Arabic Grammar and Qur'anic Exegesis in Early Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1993); Gregor Schoeler, *The Oral and the Written in Early Islam*, tr. Uwe Vagelpohl, ed. James Montgomery (London: Routledge, 2006). Also relevant to issues of transmission and redaction are Andreas Görke, *Das Kitāb al-amwāl des Abū ʿUbaid al-Qāsim b. Sallam: Entstehung und Uberlieferung eines früh-islamischen Rechtswerkes* (Princeton NJ: Darwin, 2003); and J.J. Witkam, 'Establishing the Stemma: Fact or Fiction?', *Manuscripts of the Middle East* 3 (1988), pp. 88–101.

3 The essence of Schoeler's thesis regarding the Islamic system for the dissemination of knowledge relates to the perceived format of early literary texts: he argues that one has to draw a distinction between aides-mémoires (lecture notes: *hypomnēma* pl. *hypomnēmata*) and, in contradistinction, fixed texts (*syngramma* pl. *syngrammata*). Schoeler's judgement is that fixed texts only came into being in the second half of the second/eighth century (see Schoeler, *The Oral and the Written*, at pp. 30–3, pp. 40–3, pp. 58–60, and pp. 83–5). He sees the *Kitāb* of Sībawayhi (d. 177/793) as representing the first fixed text produced by the Arabo-Islamic sciences, although the traditional lecture system employing modes of transmission such as *samāʿ* ('audition') and *qirāʾa – ʿarḍ* ('review') were still retained to disseminate such texts. The crux of Schoeler's thesis is that oral and written means for the transmission of knowledge were integrated in the early Islamic tradition. And, that there existed a dislike of reliance upon the written word alone; knowledge that was transmitted orally was considered more accurate. Similar reservations are found in the philosophical traditions of antiquity. On the subject of authenticity, it has been stated that Schoeler's hypothesis has 'implications for the vexed and controversial issue of authenticity' as far as the early Islamic sources are concerned. Schoeler sees his work as being broadly concerned with the issue of authenticity as opposed to simply exploring the oral and written character of the transmission of knowledge (Schoeler, *The Oral and the Written*, p. 14). James Montgomery (also at p. 14) takes the view that Schoeler's thesis provides the best basis for broaching the issue of authenticity as it 'will best account for all the available evidence'.

4 See Schoeler, *The Oral and the Written*, pp. 72–3; cf. Abdelfattah Kilito, *The Author and His Doubles: Essays on Classical Arabic Culture*, tr. Michael Cooperson (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2001).

5 See Berg, *Method and Theory*, specifically Chase Robinson's article entitled 'Reconstructing Early Islam: Truth and Consequences', pp. 101–33; Fred Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981); Patricia Crone and Martin Hinds, *God's Caliph: Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). Also, see Hugh Kennedy, *The Armies of the Caliphs: Military and Society in the Early Islamic State* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001); Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates: The Islamic Near East from the Sixth to the Eleventh Century* (this edn London: Longman, 1986); Albrecht Noth, *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition*: *A Source-Critical Study* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1994); Jan Retsö, *The Arabs in Antiquity*: *Their History from the Assyrians to the Umayyads* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003); Martin Hinds, 'Kūfan Political Alignments and their Background in the Mid-Seventh Century A.D.', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 2 (1971), pp. 346–67. See also Hugh Kennedy, 'Change and Continuity in Syria and Palestine at the Time of the Moslem Conquest', *ARAM* 1:2 (1989), pp. 258–67. For a more general discussion of the background to the conquests see Jonathan Berkey, *The Formation of Islam*, *Religion and Society in the Near East 600–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). Mourad reasons that the Muslim

community's desire to assert its own distinctive religious identity together with crises resulting from the early civil wars had an enormous impact on the projection of images of the new faith. Intriguingly, this same argument has been used by Todd Lawson to define attitudes to the doctrine of Christ's crucifixion in the early Islamic tradition (Todd Lawson, *The Crucifixion and the Qur'an: A Study in the History of Muslim Thought* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2009).

6 See the survey of the genesis of the biographical genres in Kevin Jaques, *Authority, Conflict, and the Transmission of Diversity in Medieval Islamic Law* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), pp. 10–17. This work takes up the cudgels of the arguments developed by Tarif Khalidi in *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). Within certain sub-disciplines of *ᶜīlm al-rijāl*, an elaborate repertoire of terms was introduced to facilitate the ranking of individual narrators. See Ibn Khallād al-Rāmhurmuzī's *al-Muḥaddith al-fāṣil bayn al-rāwī wa'l-wāᶜī*, edited by M. al-ᶜAjjāj al-Khaṭīb, 3rd edn (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1404/1984). See also Gautier Juynboll, 'Early Islamic Society as Reflected in its Use of *isnāds*', *Le Muséon* 107:1 (1994), pp. 152–94. Cf. Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *al-Jarḥ wa'l-taᶜdīl* (5 vols, Hyderabad: Maṭbaᶜat Jamᶜiyya Dāᵓirat al-Maᶜārif al-ᶜUthmāniyya, 1941–53). The author's introduction to this text, *Taqdimat al-maᶜrifa*, has been the subject of a study by Eerik Dickinson in his *The Development of Early Sunnite Ḥadīth Criticism: the Taqdima of Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī* (240–327/854–938) (Leiden: Brill, 2001). Important earlier *rijāl* texts included al-Bukhārī, Muḥammad b. Ismāᶜīl, *Kitāb al-tārīkh al-kabīr* (8 vols, Hyderabad: Maṭbaᶜat Jamᶜiyya Dāᵓirat al-Maᶜārif al-ᶜUthmāniyya, 1360–84/1941–64). See also the introduction to Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ* published in Ṣāliḥ b. ᶜAbd al-Azīz al-Shaykh (ed.), *al-Kutub al-sitta*: *mawsūᶜat al-ḥadīth al-sharīf* (Riyadh: Dār al-Salām, 1999), which comprises the six canonical collections of traditions (pp. 675–7). See also the discussion of the importance of the *isnād* in Ibn Khallād al-Rāmhurmuzī's *al-Muḥaddith al-fāṣil bayn al-rāwī wa'l-wāᶜī*, pp. 414–16. Elsewhere I have incorrectly referred to him as an Andalusian scholar, but he is of course from Rāmhurmuz, a village in al-Ahwāz, Khuzistān: see my review article of Schoeler's *The Oral and the Written* in the *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 10:1, pp. 98–124, at p. 115.

7 G.R. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry and the Emergence of Islam: From Polemic to History*, Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). The central thesis of Hawting's work is that the polytheism predicated of the ancient Arabs was exaggerated in later sources. The reasoning is that the Qur'anic references to polytheists were essentially arguments among different groups of monotheists, but these were misconstrued within the later Islamic tradition.

8 Thus, it is argued that in the field of theology, figures such as Maᶜbad al-Juhanī (d. *c.* 81/700) and Ghaylān al-Dimashqī (d. *c.* 125/743) were, in Mourad's view, discredited because of 'the accusation that they had learned the free-will doctrine from a Christian'; one must bear in mind that the authenticity of these kinds of reports is disputed and Mourad has already used his introduction to underline the tendentious nature of the earliest available sources: their portrayal of early Islam is shaped by the doctrinal, political and social exigencies of ensuing historical periods (p. 13).

9 Mourad uses the example of *Alf layla wa-layla* to illustrate his point, remarking that the stories were of Indian/Persian origin, yet they were infused with popular Islamic vocabulary and imagery (Mourad, *Early Islam*, p. 11). On p. 12 it is stated that citations associated with major Biblical and pre-Islamic figures and sages were edited or revised to reflect a distinctly Islamic tone and language. He adds that reports attributed to early Muslim figures were recycled from the rich Hellenistic/Near Eastern/Persian/Indian reservoir of wisdom literature. Michael Cook has argued that the 'raw materials' of Islamic culture are 'for the most part old and familiar', suggesting that it 'is in the *reshaping* of these materials that the distinctiveness and interest of the phenomenon resides' (Cook, 'The Origins of *Kalām*', p. 43).

10 See pp. 6–7 of Mourad, *Early Islam*, and the reference to Chase Robinson's *Islamic Historiography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 50–4, especially p. 51.

11 A similar theme is tackled in Steven C. Judd's 'Ghaylān al-Dimashqī: The Isolation of a Heretic in Islamic Historiography', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 31:2 (1999), pp. 161–84, which is cited by Mourad. Judd argues that Ghaylān was a victim of incremental isolation in the historical sources. He takes the view that this was due to Ghaylān being labelled a deviant by his Umayyad opponents. Later on his perceived heretical status was thoroughly magnified in the sundry historical sources and reports. Ghaylān was closely associated with scholars who were deemed, much later, to be key figures of the Islamic tradition. It could be argued that these individuals were initially discredited not for the sources of their doctrine on free will but rather due to their political activities as opponents of the Umayyads. They were never able to discard the negative tag as a consequence of their insurrectional activities.

12 Interestingly, it is the lack of early archival source material that led John Wansbrough to promote a concerted literary exegesis of extant texts. Wansbrough pursued the argument that historical 'fact' furtively resides in the countenance and schema of the extant literary texts. These extant sources were used by him to hypothesise as to how and why later perceptions of the early tradition were formulated, thereby informing conclusions about the periods in which the actual texts were composed. See John Wansbrough, 'Res Ipsa Loquitor: History and Mimesis', reproduced in Berg, *Method and Theory*, pp. 3–19.

13 Mourad later states that the Khārijīs, the Murjʾīs, the Jahmīs, the Qadarīs, the Predestinarians, the Muʿtazilīs, the Shīʿīs, the Sunnīs and the mystics all claimed to 'represent, guard, and continue the "real" tradition of the Prophet Muḥammad'. He adds that it cannot be that all of their claims are authentic. They were all seeking legitimisation for their respective groupings; but the fact remains that Mourad is referring to these early periods and groups through the later heresiographical literature and theological materials. By his own estimation such material betrays only tendentious data about the early movements.

14 Ibn al-Ashʿath led an army dispatched by the Umayyad governor al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf (d. 95/714) on a taxing military expedition to Sistān in the east. Al-Ḥajjāj's constant interference in the conduct of this campaign, together with disquiet among the members of the expedition, led to a full-scale rebellion, resulting in Ibn al-Ashʿath marching his men back to Iraq and taking control of Kufa. The rebellion was supported by many of the religious elite, including the *qurrāʾ*: see Ibn Kathīr, Abū'l-Fidāʾ Ismāʿīl, *al-Bidāya wa'l-nihāya*, ed. A. Mulḥim, A. ʿAṭwī, F. Sayyid, M. Nāṣir al-Dīn and A. ʿAbd al-Sātir (8 vols in 2, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1986), vol. 5, part 9, pp. 37–9; and Ibn al-Jawzī, Abū'l-Faraj Jamāl al-Dīn, *al-Muntaẓam fī tārīkh al-umam wa'l-mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Qādir Aṭāʾ and Muṣṭafā ʿAbd al-Qādir Aṭāʾ (18 vols, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1992), vol. 6, p. 318–9, and vol. 7, pp. 7–10. See also Mustafa Shah 'The Quest for the Origins of the *qurrāʾ* in the Classical Islamic Tradition', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 7:2 (2005), pp. 1–35, at pp. 7–8.

15 See Mourad, *Early Islam*, pp. 36–9. Despite the popularity of this revolt, a coalition of Ibn al-Ashʿath's forces was eventually defeated by al-Ḥajjāj at Dār al-Jamājim in 82/701, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa'l-nihāya*, vol. 5 (part 9), pp. 43–5.

16 Depending on what was meant by the term 'cleansing', this claim does appear to be somewhat incompatible with the approach to authentication that is traditionally associated with Ibn Ḥanbal,

17 See Mourad, *Early Islam*, p. 49, and also note some of the arguments regarding Ibn Ḥanbal's attitude to the use of traditions classified as being weak in Ibn Taymiyya. See Abdul Hakim al-Matroudi, *The Ḥanbalī School of Law and Ibn Taymiyya: Conflict or Conciliation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 59–60.

18 These include 'concealing a flaw in an *isnād* to the effect that a narrator would omit the name of his authority, citing a higher figure in a chain of transmission, thus creating the impression that direct contact had occurred between the two'; in other examples *tadlīs* relates to the omission or concealment of a direct source. There is also a type of *tadlīs* in which a narrator would refrain from clearly identifying the source of a particular narration. See al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Kitāb al-kifāya fī ᶜilm al-riwāya* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ᶜIlmiyya, 1988), pp. 355–71. Some aspects of this are discussed in John Burton, *An Introduction to the Tradition* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), pp. 112–3. Also, see Ibn al-Ṣalāh al-Shahrazūrī's text on the sciences of traditions and the translation by Eerik Dickinson entitled *An Introduction to the Science of the Ḥadīth* (*Kitāb Maᶜrifat anwāᶜ ᶜilm al-ḥadīth*) (Reading: Garnet Publishing Limited, 2006). Also see Zayn al-Dīn al-ᶜIrāqī's *Fatḥ al-mughīth*, pp. 66–147. Interestingly, Ibn Isḥāq, the author of the famous biography of the Prophet is accused of *tadlīs*; namely a tendency to conceal his source when narrating certain reports.

19 It is also noted that he was associated with *irsāl*, which is translated by Mourad as 'transmitting *ḥādīths* from individuals he had not met' (p. 47), but again the *ḥadīth al-mursal* is best defined as one in which the Successor narrates a Prophetic tradition omitting the Companion link. Later traditionist scholarship specialised in tracing back the full *isnād*. See al-ᶜIrāqī, Zayn al-Dīn, *Fatḥ al-mughīth sharḥ alfiyyat al-ḥadīth*, ed. Ṣalāḥ ᶜUwīḍa (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ᶜllmiyya, 1993), p. 66; al-Suyūṭī, Jalāl al-Dīn, *Tadrīb al-rāwī fī sharḥ taqrīb al-Nawawī*, ed. ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb ᶜAbd al-Laṭīf (2 parts in 1, Cairo: Dār al-Turāth, 1972), pp. 195–205. Mourad cites the fact that Juynboll had concluded that individuals were falsely claiming to have had heard traditions on his authority; Gautier Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition: Studies in Chronology, Provenance and Authorship of Early ḥadīth*, Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilisation (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 50–1.

20 See the entry on the Sālimiyya by Louis Massignon in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn.

21 See Alexander Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism: A Short History* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), at pp. 10–13 of this work, also p. 14, p. 15, p. 16, p. 18, p. 27, and p. 36; Frederick De Jong and Bernard Radtke (eds), *Islamic Mysticism Contested: Thirteen Centuries of Controversies and Polemics* (Leiden: Brill, 1999). For a more general survey of Ṣūfism's historical development, see Ahmet Karamustafa, *Sufism: The Formative Period* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

22 See the forthcoming work by Gavin Picken on *Spiritual Purification and Islam: The Life and Works of al-Muḥāsibī* (Routledge: London, 2010) in which the origin of this practice is discussed.

23 His introduction does allude to this when discussing *Kitāb al-zuhd wa'l-jihād* by Ibn al-Mubārak (Mourad, *Early Islam*, p. 12). See also Michael Bonner, 'Some Observations Concerning the Early Development of *jihād* on the Arab-Byzantine Frontier', *Studia Islamica* 75 (1992), pp. 5–31. It is even countenanced that the biography of al-Ḥasan was selectfully tailored by figures such as Ibn al-Mubārak (d. 181/797) and Ibn Ḥanbal (and his son) to stress his piety and asceticism (p. 47).

24 The primacy of Prophetic evidences is critical in Ibn Ḥanbal's attitude to precedent and authority: see al-Matroudi, *The Ḥanbalī School of Law*; and Christopher Melchert, *Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal* (Oneworld: Oxford, 2005), pp. 64–6.

25 Mourad does state that al-Sarrāj mentions al-Ḥasan on only three occasions and that the only contextual link with mysticism or asceticism that he implies of this figure relates to his seeing a '*ṣūfī* while performing the (one wearing wool) circumambulation of the *Kaᶜba*' (Mourad, *Early Islam*, p. 97). Again, one wonders whether this is sufficient proof to dismiss his ascetic pre-eminence.

26 al-Sulamī, Abū ᶜAbd al-Raḥmān Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn *Kitāb ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya: texte arabe avec une introd. et un index par Johannes Pederson* (Leiden: Brill, 1960), p. 5. Similarly,

Ibn Khallikān's *Wafayāt al-aʿyān* intentionally excluded biographies of the Companions in his work.

27 The former figure was the author of *al-ʿArbaʿīn fī shuyūkh al-ṣūfiyya* and the latter the famous *Risāla*.

28 al-Qushayrī, ʿAbd al-Karīm, *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya*, ed. Khalīl al-Manṣūr (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2001), p. 21.

29 See Ibn Taymiyya, Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm *Majmūʿ fatāwā shaykh al-Islam*, ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Qāsim (30 vols, Riyadh: Maṭbaʿat al-Riyāḍ, 1961–74), vol. 5, p. 475, in which doctrines associated with the Sālimiyya are discussed in the context of Ibn ʿAsākir's refutation of a work by Abū ʿAlī al-Ahwāzī, one of the movement's members who composed a critique of al-Ashʿarī. The Sālimiyya had espoused the view that the physical letters and sounds of the Qur'an were eternal (*azalīya*); See al-Ashʿarī, Abū'l-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Ismāʿīl, *Maqālāt al-islamiyyīn*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd (2 vols, Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1987), vol. 2, p. 234; Ibn Taymiyya, *Minhāj al-sunna al-nabawiyya*, vol. 2, pp. 360–1. They were also vehement critics of Ibn Kullāb and al-Ashʿarī, composing *mathālib* works directed against them (see Ibn Taymiyya, *Minhāj al-sunna al-nabawiyya*, vol. 2, p. 499).

30 The distinction between asceticism and mysticism is not always evident in the arguments; but it is likely that Mourad uses the term mysticism when speaking of al-Makkī's identifying the origin of his doctrines: '[w]e trace his footsteps and follow his path. From his lamp we take light. We have transmitted from him, master (*imām*) to master (*imām*), this {doctrine of mysticism} with the consent of God Almighty' (Mourad, *Early Islam*, p. 99).

31 See the entry on the Sālimiyya by Louis Massignon in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Sālim was the inspiration for this school; he and his son Aḥmad were pupils of Sahl al-Tustarī (d. 282/896). The 'real doctrine of the school should be sought in the work of Makkī'; this is because neither father nor son left any work (Massignon, art. Sālimiyya). For more on the Sālimiyya, see Ibn al-Jawzī, *Talbīs Iblīs*, ed. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. Ismāʿīl and Masʿad ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Saʿdānī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1998).

32 Again, the implication is that statements exist in which al-Ḥasan condemns mysticism (as opposed to asceticism) in Ibn Saʿd's *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, Ibn Qutayba's *ʿUyūn al-akhbār* and al-Jāḥiẓ' *al-Bayān wa'l-tabyīn* (Mourad, *Early Islam*, p. 105).

33 Throughout this book Mourad tends to use the term 'mysticism' in a very broad sense.

34 Mourad suggests that esoteric knowledge (*ṭarīq al-bāṭin*) is 'referring to mysticism'.

35 One of these is the *Waṣīyat al-nabī li-Abī Hurayra*, which dealt with instructions on proper piety and worship. Mourad does state that he has not looked at the whole range of works attributed to al-Ḥasan especially those relating to Qur'anic commentary and variant readings (p. 17).

36 Joseph van Ess, 'Early Development of Kalām' in G.H.A. Juynboll (ed.), *Studies on the First Century of Islamic Society* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1982), pp. 109–23, see pp. 114–5. Also Daniel Gimaret, art. 'Muʿtazila' in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn; Joseph van Ess, 'Political Ideas in Early Islamic Religious Thought', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 28:2 (2001), pp. 151–64.

37 Joseph van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. 3. jahrhundert Hidschra* (6 vols, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1991–5), see vol. 2, p. 48f; cf. Joseph van Ess, *Anfänge muslimischer Theologie. Zwei antiqadaritische Traktate aus dem ersten Jahrhundert der Higra*, Beiruter Texte und Studien, Bd. 14 (Beirut: in Kommission bei Franz Steiner Verlag, Wiesbaden, 1977); Tilman Nagel, *The History of Islamic Theology: From Muhammad to the Present*, tr. Thomas Thornton (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener, 2000). Also of interest is Florian Sobieroj's article, 'The Muʿtazila and Sufism' in De Jong and Radtke, *Islamic Mysticism Contested*, at pp. 68–92.

38 The Arabic passages can be consulted on p. 270 and are identified as C7 and C8 respectively.

39 See al-Bukhārī, Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl, *Khalq afʿāl al-ʿibād wa'l-radd ʿalā'l-Jahmiyya wa-aṣḥāb al-taʿṭīl*, 2nd edn (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risāla, 1987). Note p. 7 in which Ḥammād's student is rebuked for believing in the doctrine of a created Qur'an. There are numerous other examples in the text. See also the idea of a *maqāl*: as in al-Ashʿarī, Abū'l-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Ismāʿīl, *Maqālāt al-islamiyyīn* and *al-Ibāna ʿan uṣūl al-diyāna*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd (Beirut: Maktabat Dār al-Bayān, 1999); also, Ibn Fūrak, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan, *Mujarrad maqālāt al-shaykh Abī'l-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī: exposé de la doctrine d'al-Ashʿarī*, ed. D. Gimaret (Beyrouth: Dar el-Machreq, 1987); Richard McCarthy, *The Theology of al-Ashʿarī: The Arabic Texts of al-Ashʿarī's Kitāb al-Lumaʿ and Risālat Istiḥsān al-khawḍ fī ʿilm al-kalām* (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1953).

40 There existed within Sunnī orthodoxy a number of fine doctrinal distinctions regarding the conceptual confines of the creed of *qadar*. Sunnī theologians were agreed that God was the sole creator of all man's acts, including both good or evil and that God's sovereign will governed all such acts. Disagreements occurred concerning whether God bestowed individuals with an innate capacity and will of their own (*istiṭāʿa* and *qudra*), allowing them to perform acts for which they merited either reward or punishment. The argument is that moral responsibility and accountability are not to be relinquished in the wake of this doctrine, which, in essence, was a declaration of God's absolute omnipotence. The formulation of the doctrine of *kasb* by al-Ashʿarī furnished the construct that God was not only the creator of all acts, but also that the capacity to carry out an act did not exist prior to the execution of that act; it is created by God at the exact time of the act being performed; it had no effective efficacy over the object of its power. Later Ashʿarī theologians were compelled to revise the doctrine due to its being excessively deterministic in substance. See the discussions in al-Juwaynī, ʿAbd al-Malik b. ʿAbd Allāh, *Kitāb al-irshād ilā qawāṭiʿ al-adilla fī uṣūl al-iʿtiqād*, ed. M.Y. Mūsā and A.A. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānijī, n.d.) and his *al-ʿAqīda al-Niẓāmiyya*, ed. Muḥammad al-Zubaydī (Beirut: Dār al-Nafāʾis, 2003). There is a translation of the *Kitāb al-irshād* by Paul Walker: *A Guide to Conclusive Proofs for the Principles of Belief* (*A Translation of al-Juwaynī's Kitāb al-Irshād ilā qawāṭiʿ al-adilla fī uṣūl al-iʿtiqād*) (Reading: Garnet Publishing, 2000). Al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944) argued that while God was the creator of man's acts, man possessed his own capacity and will to act. Man was therefore the true author of his acts despite their being subject to God's will. Evil acts did not occur with the pleasure of God. al-Māturīdī, Abū Manṣūr, *Kitāb al-tawhīd*, ed. Fathalla Kholeif (Cairo: Dār al-Jāmiʿāt al-Miṣriyya, n.d.), pp. 215–6, p. 221, p. 256, and p. 287. See also Ulrich Rudolph, *al-Māturīdī und die sunnitische Theologie in Samarkand* (Leiden: Brill, 1997). Ibn Rushd and ʿAbd al-Jabbār composed lengthy diatribes of *kasb*; see Ibn Rushd, *al-Kashf ʿan Manāhij al-adilla fī ʿaqāʾid al-milla*, ed. Muḥammad ʿĀbid al-Jābirī (Beirut: Markaz Dirāsāt al-Waḥda al-ʿArabiyya, 1998), pp. 186–92; Michael Schwarz, 'The Qaḍī ʿAbd al-Gabbār's Refutation of the Ashʿarite Doctrine of Acquisition (*kasb*)', *Israel Oriental Studies* 6 (1976), pp. 229–63. Leading Sunnī theologians such as al-Māturīdī, Ibn Ḥazm, Ibn al-Jawzī, Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim equated the doctrine of *kasb* with the 'harsh' determinism of the Jabariyya.

41 Helmut Ritter, 'Studien zur Geschichte der islamischen Frömmigkeit: I. Ḥasan al-Baṣrī', *Der Islam* 21:1 (1933), pp. 1–83. Other scholars also persuaded of the text's authenticity included Obermann and Schwarz: see Julian Obermann, 'Political Theology in Early Islam: Ḥasan al-Baṣrī's Treatise on *Qadar*', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 55:1 (1935), pp. 138–62; Michael Schwarz, 'The Letter of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī', *Oriens* 20 (1967), pp. 15–30.

42 See van Ess, *Anfänge muslimischer Theologie*, pp. 28–9; also van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, vol. 2, p. 47; Joseph Schacht, *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*,

2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 74; Mustafa Al-Azami, *On Schacht's Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1994), pp. 121–6. The letter is analysed from the context of traditionist criticism which sees Al-Azami question its ascription to al-Ḥasan. He also refers his readers to Mustafa Azami, *Studies in Ḥadīth Methodology and Literature* (Indiana: American Trust Publication, 1977), p. 22.

43 Al-Rassī's work is examined in some detail by Mourad in order to present his unique theory for the dating of the *Risāla fī'l-qadar*. On a separate note, one does sense that the main thrust of Juynboll's argument regarding the *Risāla* is to question Wansbrough's position concerning the design of the text. Gautier Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition*, pp. 50–1; and John Wansbrough's review of van Ess, *Anfänge muslimischer Theologie* in the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 43:2 (1980), pp. 361–3; Joseph van Ess, 'Umar and his Epistle Against the Qadariyya', *Abr-Nahrain* 2:12 (1971), pp. 19–26; John Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 91f., and pp. 160–3.

44 Regarding the epistle's reference to the term *al-salaf*, which was deemed suspicious, Mourad adopts the revised view of van Ess: namely, that this sort of terminology was redolent of the theological literature of the later tradition. Despite this point, one cannot preclude the possibility that this sort of phraseology was employed in the early tradition.

45 Michael Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma*, pp. 117–23, esp. p. 120. Cook had spoken of the fact that a *ḥadīth* is quoted in the epistle on p. 121. This is later mentioned by Mourad (p. 200).

46 See the review of Basil Collins (tr.), *The Best Divisions for Knowledge of the Regions: A Translation of Aḥsan al-taqāsīm fī maᶜrifat al-aqālīm*, Great Books of Islamic Civilization (Reading: Garnet Publishing, 2001) in the *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 4:2 (2002), pp. 82–8; although there are instances in which this term is used: see Ibn ᶜAsākir's citation of a statement made by al-Ashᶜarī on his deathbed in which he uses the term *abṭalū* (Ibn ᶜAsākir, Abū'l-Qāsim ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥasan, *Tabyīn kadhib al-muftarī fīmā nusiba ilā'l-imām Abī'l-Ḥasan al-Ashᶜarī* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ᶜArabī, 1991), p. 149.

47 One wonders if the doctrinal position articulated in the *Risāla* needs to be located within the compass of difficulties that a rigorous interpretation of the doctrine of predestination had created; and, in effect, that the epistle was trying to produce a synthesis of *qadar* which was less rigid. See Hasan Qasim Murad, '*Jabr* and *qadar* in Early Islam: A Reappraisal of Their Political and Religious Implications' in Wael Hallaq and Donald Little (eds), *Islamic Studies Presented to Charles J. Adams* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), pp. 117–32. Cf. Patricia Crone, *Medieval Islamic Political Thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), pp. 35–6. See also van Ess, 'Early Development of Kalām'; Harry Austryn Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalām* (Cambridge MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1976).

48 It is fascinating, although probably irrelevant, that Gregor Schoeler used the distinction between aides-mémoire (*hypomnēma*) and fixed texts (*syngramma*), along with the nature of the lecture system in the early tradition, to explain why al-Khalīl b. Aḥmad's authorship of the lexicon *Kitāb al-ᶜayn* was queried by his Basran contemporaries.

49 Elsewhere, it should be noted that I inadvertently suggested that the *Risāla* was first included in Abū Nuᶜaym al-Iṣfahānī's *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*; of course, it is his putative correspondence with ᶜUmar b. ᶜAbd al-ᶜAzīz which is preserved in this work and not the *Risāla* (Mustafa Shah, 'Trajectories in the Development of Islamic Theological Thought: The Synthesis of Kalām', *Religion Compass* 1:4 (2007), pp. 430–54, at p. 435. Mourad confirms that it is in the biographical dictionary of leading Muᶜtazilīs, *Faḍl al-iᶜtizāl*, that ᶜAbd al-Jabbār quotes the epistle while discussing the life of al-Ḥasan and that another later Muᶜtazilī scholar, al-Ḥākim al-Jushamī (d. 494/1101), cites the work when covering the entry on al-Ḥasan in his *Sharḥ ᶜUyūn al-masāʾil*.

50 Mourad is referring to works such as *al-Mughnī fī abwāb al-tawḥīd wa'l-ᶜadl*, *Kitāb sharḥ al-usūl al-khamsa* and *al-Muḥīṭ bi'l-taklīf*.

51 In the introduction to this chapter Mourad makes mention of the fact that one expanded version of Ibn al-Nadīm's *Fihrist* actually lists this epistle under the title *Kitāb ilā ᶜAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān fī'l-radd ᶜalā al-qadariyya*. Mourad remarks that this may be a later editorial addition to the *Fihrist*.

52 Mourad, *Early Islam*, p. 177; see ᶜAbd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī, *Kitāb uṣūl al-dīn* (Istanbul: Madrasat al-Ilāhiyyāt bi-Dār al-Funūn, 1928), p. 307 in which he mentions *aʾimmat al-dīn fī ᶜilm al-kalām*.

53 Mourad, *Early Islam*, pp. 177–8 and ch. 3, p. 121. He does note that both Wilferd Madelung and van Ess questioned the authenticity of the ascription of this text to al-Rassī, confirming the seemingly protracted nature of arguments about the authenticity of the sources from early and later periods. In this regard Michael Cook once famously referred to 'the indefinite tolerance of the source-material for radically different historical interpretations' (Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma*, p. 156).

54 Abrahamov claims the text is correctly ascribed: Mourad mentions that he believes that al-Rassī was influenced by al-Ḥasan's *Risāla* (Mourad, *Early Islam*, p. 219).

55 It is obvious that there are disagreements about whether he was influenced by the Muᶜtazila: Madelung questioned the influence while Abrahamov, who also believed that the *Risāla* influenced al-Rassī, affirmed this.

56 The sentence in the epistle supposedly uttered by ᶜAbd al-Malik, asking al-Ḥasan for the basis of his argument, 'Did you learn what you say from one of the companions of the messenger of God, or is it an opinion (*raʾy*) of yours or something that you find in the Qur'an?', does not appear to be overwhelmingly theoretical in countenance or evocative of an imposing debate on the topic (Mourad, *Early Islam*, p. 220).

57 John Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 91f., and p. 161.

58 Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies*, pp. 91f., and p. 161.

59 It would be incorrect to suggest that the *lām al-ᶜāqiba* ('*lām* of consequence') was not an accepted 'tradition' or explanation in Basra; it was the case that within the early tradition (more specifically the periods covered by Mourad) grammarians were known for their eclectic adoption of grammatical constructs. Mourad has already included a quotation from al-Jushamī's text in which al-Akhfash, Quṭrub, al-Mubarrad and al-Zajjāj, who are all 'technically' Basrans (at least as far as the later tradition is concerned), accept that Q. 7:179 includes an instance of this particle (see p. 226). See also al-Zajjājī, *Kitāb al-Lāmāt*, ed. Māzin Mubārak, 2nd edn (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1985), pp. 119–21: al-Zajjājī mentions that the Kufans called this particle the '*lām al-ṣayrūra*', while Q. 28:7 is cited as comprising an example of *lām al-ᶜāqiba* by al-Zajjājī as he explains that the particle refers to an eventual consequence.

60 Previously Mourad has reported that it was a Muᶜtazilī theologian who drafted the original epistle and that the claim that al-Ḥasan was a *qadarī* 'would help the Muᶜtazilites settle in their favour the debate over who borrowed from whom the theology of free will' (Mourad, *Early Islam*, p. 237).

61 Three manuscripts of the epistle are known to exist. Two of these are in Istanbul and one in Iran. See Mourad, *Early Islam*, pp. 179–80.