Book Reviews

The Oral and the Written in Early Islam. By Gregor Schoeler. Translated by Uwe Vagelpohl, edited and introduced by James E. Montgomery. Routledge Studies in Middle Eastern Literatures. London: Routledge, 2006. Pp. 248 + viii. £80.00.

This volume comprises a selection of articles which examine the subject of orality and literacy in the early Islamic tradition. The question of whether scholarship associated with the traditional sciences of learning was transmitted and preserved orally or through written sources has significant implications for the whole debate about the authenticity of the early Islamic literary sources, figuring prominently in academic attempts to chart the historical features and development of the early Islamic tradition. The six articles in this volume were originally published in German between the years of 1981 and 2000, reflecting a sustained engagement with the subject by Gregor Schoeler. In the preface to this book he makes the point that works published in German have 'a virtually imperceptible impact on Anglo-American scholarship' and that as a result his 'research has exerted little impact on the debate conducted within the tradition' (p. viii). Despite these remarks, Schoeler's work has long attracted the interest of scholars engaged in exploring issues associated with literacy in the early Islamic tradition. The collective publication and translation of these articles are part of an effort to introduce his work to a wider readership. The text's editor, James Montgomery, who was instrumental in advancing this project, has accordingly furnished a detailed introduction to this volume in which he outlines the development of the literary sciences associated with the early Islamic tradition, while also providing a brief literature review. The introduction also summarises the theoretical thrust of the arguments which underpin the various articles in this volume. Schoeler has taken the opportunity of providing addenda to his articles in which criticisms, comments, and reactions to his work are briefly considered. In addition a glossary of the major terms and technical phrases which occur in the main body of the articles is included. It is ambitiously hoped that the work will be accessible to 'scholars not familiar with Islamic studies but with an interest in the oral and the written' (p. 6).

The first article in this volume tackles the subject of the transmission of the sciences in early Islam, exploring whether the materials which constituted the core of classical compilations were derived from oral or (pre-classical) written sources. The classical texts Schoeler was referring to included the *Kitāb al-muwaṭṭaʾ* of Mālik ibn Anas (d. 179/796), the *Kitāb al-maghāzī* of Ibn Isḥāq (d. 150/767), the *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections of both al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870) and Muslim (d. 261/875), *the Taʾrīkh al-rusul waʾl-mulūk* of al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), and, even the celebrated *Kitāb al-aghānī* of Abūʾl-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī (d. 356/967). Two renowned scholars, Nabia Abbott and Fuat

Sezgin, had, through their painstaking research, argued that written antecedents had been in circulation and were utilised by these later sources: Nabia Abbott's seminal studies of early Umayyad papyri and manuscript evidence had led her to conclude that an incremental written tradition had existed;[1] while Sezgin outlined a method for the reconstruction of the supposed 'written' materials which he felt served as the sources of later compilations.[2] Schoeler relates that his interest in the whole subject of transmission was kindled by the various reactions to the publication of Fuat Sezgin's *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums* in which his method was confidently outlined (p. 28).[3] Interestingly, positivist approaches to the sources were to go on and dismiss not only the existence of early literary materials, but also the textual integrity of many of these later works.[4] Nevertheless, according to Sezgin, it was possible to reference these later extant compilations to earlier written antecedents as opposed to purely oral sources. In his view the biographical tradition's frequent ascription of tracts and treatises to luminaries from these very early periods was reliable and it was entirely reasonable that an exclusively written tradition existed from the time of the Prophet. In the words of Schoeler, 'with the work of these two scholars, earlier claims about a largely oral transmission of the Arabo-Islamic sciences up to the time of the major compilations seemed to have been laid to rest'. However, he noted that the steady stream of studies which sought to test Sezgin's claims showed that putative texts such as the *tafsīr* attributed to the exegete Mujāhid (d. 104/722) and the Book of Raids (*Kitāb al-ghārāt*) ascribed to Abū Mikhnaf (d. 157/774) were either subsequent arrangements and recensions or simply citations and extracts found in later works; these were not original texts in the fixed sense of the word. Schoeler was concerned by the fact that studies of works extant solely in later divergent versions 'have uncovered a high degree of discrepancy between those different versions', suggesting that Sezgin's claims about being able to reconstruct old sources were proving to be unjustified (p. 29). Even studies of the sources of literary texts such as Abū'l-Faraj's *Kitāb al-aghānī* pointed to the possibility that an oral tradition was the original source of some of the materials found in these works. This impasse prompted Schoeler to devise a hypothesis which, on the basis of all the available primary sources, would help to unravel the intricate mechanisms governing the transmission of knowledge in the early tradition. This hypothesis was inspired by a statement made by the nineteenth-century Austrian Arabist Alors Sprenger, who had drawn attention to the need to 'distinguish between notes intended as aides-mémoire or lecture notes, and published books'. It was Schoeler's belief that the subtle application of the distinction highlighted by Sprenger would help resolve the issue of whether seminal texts such as the *Ṣaḥīḥ* compilations of al-Bukhārī and Muslim; the *fiqh* literature before the *Muwaṭṭaʾ* of Mālik; the historical works of Ibn Isḥāq along with al-Ṭabarī, and the *Kitāb al-aghānī* of Abū'l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī were actually preceded by antecedents in the form of written texts; or whether scholarship before these periods 'shunned book and paper', relying exclusively upon oral modes of transmission.

Schoeler emphasises that the traditional methods of teaching and instruction in the early Islamic tradition combined both oral and written processes and that the dissemination of knowledge was principally pursued through the system of lectures and conventional teaching practices. Mentors as well as students made use of written materials, although the overall impression is that these had a largely internal function within the environment for learning and teaching as students took and shared lecture notes. The system of lectures accentuated the importance of knowledge being 'heard' in terms of a student listening to the lecture of his mentor (or indeed the latter's representative). Lecturers may have relied upon written materials when delivering lectures, although it was also common for mentors to recount details from memory. This method is referred to as *samāʿ* (audition); while the terms *qirāʾa* (recitation) or *ʿarḍ* were used to connote a process whereby a student read from written notes or from memory to his mentor who would then proceed to scrutinise and, where appropriate, correct his student (p. 30). Schoeler briefly mentions a number of the other modes of transmission such as *wijāda* (lit. finding traditions in works) and *kitāba* or *mukātaba* (receiving written traditions), noting that these were considered less reliable than the former mechanisms of conveying knowledge.[5] One only needs to consult the numerous books on *ʿulūm al-ḥadīth* in order to gauge some sense of the sophistication of the modes of transmission refined by early scholarship for the dissemination of knowledge. Definitions of the types of transmission are meticulously defined in these works.

It is Schoeler's view that through the traditional framework for the dissemination of knowledge not only were scholars revising, refining, and reviewing their 'notes' and 'teachings' over a period of time, but that numerous students were engaged in editing and collating the materials of their mentors, leading to the emergence of variants when such materials were transmitted. Within this milieu, even in instances where scholars produced fixed and definitive works, although this was not necessarily the norm, the prevailing processes of transmission meant that different versions of these materials could often appear: students would produce variant records, while mentors frequently revised the presentation of their material (pp. 32–3). Such processes confirmed that both authors and their transmitters played critical roles in the shaping of written materials, but the essence of Schoeler's argument is that both forms of oral and written transmission were essentially complementary channels used for the preservation and authentication of knowledge. In these early periods the exclusively written word was never considered an assurance of authenticity but rather knowledge transmitted through the established lecture system by methods such as *samāʿ* and *qirāʾa* was consistently deemed much more reliable, and this state of affairs shaped attitudes to the adoption of the written word as a medium for disseminating knowledge and learning. One might add here that within the field of Ḥadīth studies scholars were often reported as stressing the

importance of *aḥādīth* being acquired from *ᶜulamāʾ* and not solely from written sources (*ṣuḥuf*).[6] Within a similar context statements such as 'do not take knowledge from the *ṣuḥufiyyīn*' and 'a *ṣuḥufī* should not be allowed to issue edicts for people, nor should a *muṣḥafī* teach them readings (*qirāʾa*)' would appear to be aimed at questioning the authority of the autodidact. The understanding was that knowledge acquired through the traditional lecture systems could be subjected to additional forms of scrutiny and review supervised by a mentor, although reports of this nature are undeniably set against a prevalent background of literacy within the tradition. On a related note Schoeler reasons that Muslim scholars 'perhaps even as late as the second/eighth and third/ninth centuries, often did not give their work a definite, fixed shape' (p. 33). Written notes and records were employed, but scholars did not 'leave behind or edit books in the sense of final, revised redactions of their material'. The inference is that the idea of a fixed text was still in its infancy: a rise in the number of works which were given definite form only occurred in the third Islamic century (p. 34). Variations in presentation, recording, and indeed transmission likewise had an impact upon the fixed form of texts.

Schoeler suggests that antecedents which appear to have served the Islamic models for the transmission of knowledge included the system of authentication practised in Jewish circles in the Talmudic era; the teaching practices prevalent in the world of late antiquity; and, most interestingly, the procedures perfected by narrators for the transmission of poetry in the pre-Islamic era. One of the attractive features of Schoeler's hypothesis is that it explains why literary evidence of scholarship from these earlier periods is so scarce yet the levels of scholarship which one finds in the extant works are somewhat advanced. In the introduction James Montgomery argues that Schoeler's hypothesis has 'implications for the vexed and controversial issue of authenticity' in the context of the early tradition (p. 14). Even Schoeler sees his work as being more concerned with the issue of authenticity as opposed to the oral and written character of the transmission of knowledge. However, it is apparent that 'sceptical' as opposed to 'sanguine' academics could quite easily point out that the arguments à propos the authenticity of the later extant sources are not specifically addressed within Schoeler's treatment, despite its attempt to work with all the available evidence of the tradition. The reports and anecdotes often referred to by Schoeler to illustrate the historical reception and redaction of literary texts within the early tradition, together with biographical reports about scholars and their students, are invariably derived from late sources. The design of these sources would concern sceptical scholars who would object that such reports are presenting presupposed and somewhat contrived images of the past,[7] and would argue that much of this material is the product of salvation history. Therefore, despite presenting a theory for defining the continuum which binds the oral and the written tradition with the aim of reconciling

'diametrically opposed points of view', the question of the historical value of the materials is not directly addressed (p. 29).

A parallel in this respect can be seen in the arguments over the emergence of grammatical terminology within the early Arabic linguistic tradition. Kees Versteegh attempted to trace its development using texts which were ascribed to earlier luminaries of Qur'anic exegesis. Questioning the relevance of Versteegh's methodology, Andrew Rippin made the point that it was unfeasible to seek to determine the historical provenance of technical terminology using literature whose own chronological constitution was open to question.[8] Nonetheless, it is reasonable to argue, as Montgomery does, that Schoeler's hypothesis is one 'which will best account for all the available evidence' (p. 14), particularly within the context of defining notions of literacy and orality in early Islam. One senses that Schoeler's theory is essentially about how the identification of the established modes and practices for the dissemination of learning can help review issues such as authenticity and authorship; the form, content and dissemination of this literature are his primary concern.[9]

The second chapter in this volume continues with the theme of the transmission of the traditions of learning in early Islam, although its focal point relates to those disciplines in which the use of the *isnād* mechanism is either discarded or less frequent and it is the linguistic sciences which form the subject of this review. However, before proceeding, Schoeler underlines some of the characteristics common to the late traditions of antiquity and the Islamic tradition in the transmission of knowledge. He remarks that in the late Alexandrian philosophical tradition there were instances in which written records existing in the form of lecture notes did subsequently emerge as fixed literary texts; this is despite the fact that such works were never intended for publication in the fixed sense of the word (p. 46). Indeed, Schoeler does refer to the view put forward by a number of recent scholars that the 'exegetical teaching texts of the Alexandrians are for the most part lecture notes written down later'. One such example is the lecture notes of Ammonius Saccus (fl. *ca* 490 AD) on the *Metaphysics*; the notes were subsequently collated by Asclepius (fl. 525 AD) and produced under the title *The Commentaries of Asclepius from the Mouth of Ammonius*. The critical distinction provided by the Greek terms *hypomnēma* (pl. *hypomnēmata*) and *syngramma* (pl. *syngrammata*) is introduced by Schoeler to illustrate this process of transmission and its manifestation within Islamic contexts. The former related to private notes or aides-mémoire used as mnemonic aids in lectures or conversations; while, the latter term denoted a literary text whose definitive form was intended to be much more stylistically formal; namely, a fixed text (p. 46). According to Schoeler, the *Tafsīr Warqāʾ ʿan Ibn Abī Najīḥ ʿan Mujāhid* can be viewed in a similar vein (p. 47). Works circulating under the names of students were actually the revised and even supplemented transmissions of a teacher's materials which had been originally presented in lectures. However, it should be said here that this does not preclude

the possibility that texts intended to be definitive works (*syngrammata*) were in circulation at this time. Admittedly, Schoeler doubts whether the late Alexandrian teaching system placed as much emphasis on *samāᶜ* as its Islamic counterpart; additionally, its use of *asānīd* was extremely rudimentary. Nevertheless, it is the idea of precedents which interests Schoeler, as such basic methods and procedures of transmission could have been adopted by Muslim scholarship for the dissemination of knowledge. He muses on the idea that external (Jewish and Hellenistic) as well as internal (pre-Islamic conventions for the transmission of poetry) influences may have impacted upon the development of the Islamic teaching system, particularly through the agency of converts (*mawālī*), although one suspects that precedents for such modes of transmission are probably endogenously derived. Sezgin's *Geschichte* has already anchored post-Islamic conventions for the transmission of knowledge to pre-Islamic antecedents.[10]

Schoeler asserts that even when texts took on a definitive form (*syngramma*), such as the *Kitāb* of Sībawayhi, it was invariably the case that the medium of *qirāʾa* was used to disseminate its contents: namely, the text was read out by a student in the presence of a mentor. In the case of the *Kitāb* it was Sībawayhi's students and friends who transmitted its contents; *majālis* (sessions) and *ḥalaqāt* (scholarly circles) played a key role in the transmission of knowledge. Schoeler's line of reasoning is that in the grammatical tradition, just as in the field of early philology, the works which were often ascribed to luminaries of the tradition such as al-Aṣmaᶜī (d. 213/828), Abū Zayd al-Anṣārī (d. 215/830), Abū ᶜUbayda (d. 207/822) and Abū ᶜUbayd ibn Sallām (d. 224/838) were preserved in the form of written notes or materials recorded by students and it was through the medium of *qirāʾa* that they were subsequently transmitted.

Schoeler records that the convention of supporting an individual *ḥadīth* by the citation of an *isnād* was soon applied to the transmission of whole texts in fields of learning such as Ḥadīth, *fiqh* and *tafsīr* (indeed even *lugha* and *kalām*). The practices refined by the scholars of Ḥadīth and the importance they attached to the trusted methods of *samāᶜ* and *qirāʾa*, also left their mark on the procedures adopted for the transmission of materials within the later medico-philosophical teaching tradition. The debate between the autodidact Ibn Riḍwān (d. 453/1061) and his Christian nemesis Ibn Buṭlān (d. 458/1066) on the subject of preferred conventions for learning is used to highlight the impact of these conventions within associated disciplines. Ibn Buṭlān had spoken of the value of oral instruction by teachers, contending that it was 'easier to understand than something learnt from books' (p. 58). Ibn Riḍwān had allegedly written a book suggesting that 'learning the (medical) art from books is preferable to that with teachers' (p. 59).[11] In Schoeler's view this whole episode illustrates the pervasive influence of the practices defined within the traditional Islamic sciences upon related fields of learning.

The third chapter in this work offers an overview of the use and function of writing and publishing in early Islam. Schoeler accepts that the writing of contracts, letters, treaties, transactions and sundry records had a pre-Islamic provenance. Such literary practices and conventions were inevitably continued in the post-Islamic periods. Schoeler claims that references in the biographical sources suggesting that the written terms of the truce of Ḥudaybīyya were placed in the Kaʿba are not insignificant, arguing that such practices have precedents in both antiquity and the Oriental tradition in which important records and pacts were stored in places deemed revered (pp. 63–4). In the field of ancient poetry the implication is that the entwining of oral and written processes was likewise prevalent. In the early periods poetry, which was intended for oral recitation and dissemination, was not only preserved but it was additionally customary for its narrators (*rāwī*, pl. *ruwāt*) to attempt to improve and refine the aesthetic qualities of the poems they transmitted. Schoeler does appear to acknowledge that during these early periods, written records of substantial poetry collections did exist; however, like some of the so-called 'books' in circulation it is his view that they were intended to serve as aides-mémoire. Similarly, that certain poets are reported to have frowned upon the use of pen and paper is viewed by Schoeler as conversely confirming that such practices were widespread (p. 69). Inherent in these observations is the idea that the transmission of knowledge during these early periods, whatever the context of the discipline, entailed intricate oral and written processes, although 'written' in such instances often referred to 'notes' intended for private use. Even in cases where scholars were commissioned to write texts such as the historical work of Ibn Isḥāq and the anthology of poems collected by al-Mufaḍḍal al-Ḍabbī (d. 164/780), the materials in question did not survive in a fixed and stable format; later scholars had recourse to the works through a network of intermediate students. In the case of Ibn Isḥāq's *Kitāb al-maghāzī* it was transmitted among generations of students through the system of lectures, although 'parallel transmissions which are now available in the extant recensions sometimes differ substantially' (p. 71).

Sībawayhi's *Kitāb* is recognised by Schoeler as one of the first fixed books of its kind; its dissemination was possible through the traditional framework of the lecture system, although the transmission of this text was not dependent upon 'audited' sessions alone (p. 72). Schoeler believes that the epistle associated with the *Kitāb* (its first seven chapters) was circulated as a separate text. Michael Carter, on the other hand, claims that there is no proof that such a work was ever circulated independently of the *Kitāb*.[12] Schoeler attempts to underline the intellectual achievement of the *Kitāb* by comparing it with the *Maʿānī al-Qurʾān*, a grammatical commentary structured around the text of the Qur'an, 'authored' by Sībawayhi's Kufan contemporary, al-Farrāʾ (d. 207/822). Schoeler highlights references in the biographical literature which state that the *Maʿānī al-Qurʾān* was originally disseminated through the

traditional system of lectures; this is done in order to draw attention to the exceptional nature of Sībawayhi's achievement as the author of a fixed text. Nonetheless, this should not be used to deflect from the possibility that al-Farrāʾ could also have been the author of a book in the fixed sense of the word; and one would need to bear in mind that the *maʿānī al-Qurʾān* writings belonged to an entirely different genre namely, the grammatical explication of *qirāʾāt* and their linguistic justification and defence: to contrast Sībawayhi's *Kitāb* with the *Maʿānī al-Qurʾān* is not quite appropriate.[13] Still, Schoeler's principal point is that Sībawayhi's *Kitāb* is the first fixed text of its kind, but it is worth noting that al-Farrāʾ is identified as the author of a number of other texts and among which is the *Kitāb al-ḥudūd*, a work that appears to have been a formal grammatical treatise (*syngramma*). The text has not survived but its contents are set out in Ibn al-Nadīm's *Fihrist*.[14] The text, originally commissioned by al-Maʾmūn (*reg.* 198/813–218/833), was revered within the Kufan grammatical tradition: it is reported that the Kufan al-Thaʿlab (d. 291/904) read al-Farrāʾ's *Kitāb al-ḥudūd* at the age of eighteen and that by the age of twenty-five he had memorised all of al-Farrāʾ's literary legacy to the extent that he was able to relate the individual dicta to their places in the original texts.[15] The biographical reports also refer to the prominence of Salama ibn Āṣim (d. 270/883) as a key transmitter of al-Farrāʾ's literary legacy.[16] The plethora of works ascribed to luminaries such as al-Farrāʾ and his mentor al-Kisāʾī (d. 189/804) would seem to indicate that the production of more formal works in the fixed sense of the word might have an earlier provenance than implied by Schoeler. Al-Farrāʾ supposedly had recourse to al-Kisāʾī's written works and, as mentioned by Kinga Dévényi, he even refers to one of his works in the *Maʿānī al-Qurʾān*.[17] It seems reasonable to infer that the selected genre in which an author was writing actually governed the final format of that work: thus texts on orthography (*hijāʾ*) and orthographical differences among codices (*ikhtilāf al-maṣāḥif*) would presumably be suited to a fixed text format (*syngramma*). Biographical sources state that among the works composed by al-Farrāʾ was a text on *Ikhtilāf al-maṣāḥif* and a tract entitled *al-Maqṣūr wa'l-mamdūd*.[18] Such forms of writing appear to have an early provenance within the tradition of linguistic thought, although it is indisputable that the lecture system played an influential role in the transmission of knowledge.[19] And, there are further reports which speak of texts being composed on topics such as the enumeration of verses in codices.[20] One would have expected such texts to have adopted a *syngramma* format; thus the suggestion that Sībawayhi's *Kitāb* is the first fixed text is debatable.

Finally, at the end of this chapter (p. 73), Schoeler briefly refers to the composition of theological epistles and creeds including the *Risāla fi'l-qadar* ascribed to al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728) and the *Kitāb al-irjāʾ* said to have been composed by Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyya (d. *ca* 100/718). However, he makes no reference to the arguments which persist about the authenticity of these texts, with the view being

advanced that they are the products of pseudepigraphic processes. Joseph van Ess and Michael Schwarz may have conceded an early date for the epistle, but other scholars such as John Wansbrough, and more recently Suleiman Mourad, propose a much later date for the text's origin.[21] However, it is evident that Schoeler is not specifically concerned with epistolary works, despite the fact that they remain important for gauging the prevalence of literacy in the early tradition. Moreover, the references in the biographical sources to these types of works are prolific.

Regarding the text of the Qur'an, Schoeler maintains that its evolution into a fixed written text 'anticipated the process leading to literacy as the dominant medium for the majority of the genuinely Islamic sciences' (p. 73). He accepts that the idea of the Qur'an as a proper fixed book was entertained during the Prophet's lifetime, referring to its experiencing two forms of publication: official master copies and the oral versions disseminated by readers, who may well have had recourse to written records. Schoeler does tend to accentuate the early readers' association with the oral publication of the Qur'an, yet, as briefly mentioned above, readers of the Qur'an were responsible for developing the genres of scholarship associated with adding diacritics and verse markings to codices; enumerating the number of ayas in codices; even collating the orthographical differences among authorised codices; and defining conventions regarding pauses and points of inception in the recitation of the text. Such forms of scholarship presuppose a physical engagement with the written word as these readers integrated both written and oral means of preserving the sacred text.

When discussing accounts of the collection of the Qur'an, Schoeler speaks of the relation between the *rāwī* and the *qāriʾ*, as reported by Edmund Beck: the former recited the poetry of their predecessors, while the latter read the revelation bestowed on the Prophet. The implication is that poets enjoyed substantial freedom in the transmission and presentation of poetical materials; likewise, readers (*qurrāʾ*) may have felt that a similar license was available to them and this could have resulted in different transmissions arising among readers regarding the form of the Qur'an text. Schoeler does mention that such attitudes to the revealed word of God must 'have been scandalous'.[22] The situation led to ʿUthmān's intervention and his sanctioning an official version of the text (p. 76). The view taken here is that this official copy disrupted the other form of Qur'anic publication (oral recitation) practised by readers who considered the *riwāya bi'l-maʿnā* (transmission of the sense of the word) to be quite valid. Schoeler points to the examples of the popularity of Ibn Masʿūd's codex in Kufa, and the practice of one companion, Anas ibn Mālik (d. *ca* 93/710–11), who replaced a word in an aya of the Qur'an with its synonym in one reading. Whether the nature of variance is as acute as suggested by Schoeler is doubtful; furthermore, the function of the *rāwī* of poetry cannot serve as an analogue for the activities of the *qurrāʾ*; such a comparison evidently fails to appreciate the liturgical value of the sacred word; this lay at the heart of disagreements concerning *lectiones*. There must

have existed a much more precise hierarchical framework of authority used to determine the authenticity of readings for many of the listed differences among these readings appear to be altogether slight.

On this last point, John Wansbrough has argued that the nature of variance among the *qirāʾāt* was infinitesimal, leading him to deduce that the collection reports were designed to fortify perceptions of a fixed canon. He stated that the *amṣār* codices (metropolitan or indigenous) did not display the 'differences either among themselves or from the ʿUthmanic recension which are alleged to have provoked the editorial measures attributed to the third caliph'.[23] He added that codices such as those ascribed to Ibn Masʿūd were 'not genuinely independent of the ʿUthmanic recension'. One might add that despite recognising the minor nature of variance among readings, Wansbrough's analysis underestimates the imposing significance of *sacra lingua* which would have explained why such concerns about infinitesimal differences were voiced. On the other hand, Schoeler does reason that despite the imposition of the virtually fixed ʿUthmānic codex, which had the effect of restricting the vestiges of freedom readers previously enjoyed, early Qur'an readers continued to exercise confident license when it came to disputed dialectal forms found in the Qur'anic text. However, one needs to bear in mind that one is essentially dealing with an opposition of sorts between readers and aspiring grammarians; and that the former were essentially adhering to a system of *ikhtiyār* (the synthesis of readings from an authenticated pool of sources). Thus the selection of the readings themselves (even the renowned seven) was predicated upon this hierarchy of precedents. The class of grammarians had adopted a Procrustean approach to readings, based on their models of ʿ*Arabiyya*. The shift towards the consolidation of readings has its roots in this state of affairs; it was a way of countering 'aspiring' grammarians who had sought to promote peculiar readings established through reference to rudimentary models of grammar. Surprisingly, Schoeler makes no mention of the use of the device of *iʿtibār* ('implicit recognition') employed by early Kufan readers to circumvent consonantal variants as manifested in the codex of Ibn Masʿūd.[24] The device of *iʿtibār* was an indispensable tool of an orally based tradition of reading; it would seem to confirm the immense importance attached to the codices sanctioned by ʿUthmān.

In assessing the historical roots of the discipline of *qirāʾa* as a genre of writing, Schoeler comments that scholars such as Bergsträsser, Pretzl and Beck were clearly aware that references to *nusakh* and *kutub* in the early tradition did not imply published literary books but rather private notes and records. This significant point is used to highlight one of the conceptual shortcomings of Sezgin's *Geschichte*: despite its achievement, it failed to distinguish between the notion of *syngramma* and *hypomnēma*; nor did it allude to the distinction (p. 79). Schoeler propounds the view that proper books did not yet exist in the first century and a half of the tradition, but he does sense that written notes and records were privately employed in these early

periods. It appears that scholars from the tradition were aware of the distinction between fixed texts (*syngramma*) and lecture notes or aides-mémoire (*hypomnēma*) and the references to the different forms of writing materials would appear to substantiate that fact.[25]

Having assessed Sezgin's remarks regarding the putative *Kitāb fī'l-qirāʾāt* ascribed to both Yaḥyā ibn Yaʿmar and al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, as cited in Ibn ʿAṭiyya's *Muqaddima* and the view that it was 'the oldest title known to us', Schoeler explains that 'we have so few reports about such a predecessor to Ibn Mujāhid's book' (the famous *Kitāb al-sabʿa*) (p. 82); in this context Schoeler was trying to assess the possible role of al-Ḥajjāj (d. 95/714) in the standardisation of the Qur'an. Yet, notwithstanding the disputes about the historical nature of the so-called *Kitāb fī'l-qirāʾāt*, it should be stressed that there are numerous references to compilations of this nature upon which Ibn Mujāhid's text appeared to be modelled: Khalaf ibn Hishām al-Bazzār (d. 229/844), Muḥammad ibn Saʿdān (d. 231/847), Yaḥyā ibn Ādam, Ḥafṣ ibn ʿUmar al-Dūrī (d. 246/860) and Aḥmad ibn Jubayr (d. 258/872) are mentioned as having composed treatises collating Qur'anic readings of Kufan, Basran and Ḥijāzī provenance.[26] A number of these sources are cited in the *Kitāb al-sabʿa*, including the *Kitāb al-qirāʾāt* of Abū ʿUbayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām and the text of al-Wāqidī (d. 207/822). The issue would be whether such works were *syngramma* or indeed *hypomnēma* in terms of their physical format and intended to serve as aides-mémoire.

Schoeler concludes this article by emphasising the critical point that within the early Islamic tradition, there was an inherent mistrust of writing; this mistrust was absent in the *Jāhiliyya* period (p. 83). The tradition instinctively relied upon oral mechanisms of authentication; the perception was that writing possessed a contingent value. This itself is seen as an indication of why testimony in addition to *isnād* was considered so important within the religious tradition, bringing into focus the idea that 'searching' for early written sources in order to establish the authenticity of the later literature misreads the reality of opposition to writing. It is shown that within the Greek philosophical tradition and Judaism similar reservations held sway (pp. 83–4). Thus, even though writing finally claimed victory as the medium for the transmission of knowledge in such circles, Islam continued to aspire to the ideal (or the fiction) that the transmission of knowledge should theoretically remain oral.

The fourth contribution in this work is in fact a review article of Michael Zwettler's *The Oral Tradition of Classical Arabic Poetry: Its Character and Implications*. Zwettler's own work was an attempt to apply a modified version of the Parry/Lord theory of oral-formulaic composition to pre- and early Islamic poetry. The three principal features spoken of by exponents of the oral poetry theory included the formulaic character of poetry; its scarcity of enjambment; and its stereotypical themes. And it was these features that Zwettler set out to locate (p. 89).[27] The *Muʿallaqa* of

Imruʾ al-Qays was analysed in order to demonstrate its formulaic character; while regarding the scarcity of enjambment, the claim was made that the ancient *qaṣīda* resembles Homeric poetry and that stereotypical themes could be identified in the images, motifs and scenes of the ode. Schoeler critically rejects the application of this theory to the pre- and early Islamic *qaṣīda*, arguing that it is unfeasible: he remarks that the idea itself is based on a flawed conceptual grasp of the ancient Arabic *qaṣīda*, adding that it incorrectly presupposes that all formulaic poetry is oral (p. 91). The obvious distinctions in style between ancient poetry and oral-formulaic poetry are not properly recognised. Furthermore, Schoeler contends that the suggestion that written texts were structured with a view to oral rendition is also mistaken. Schoeler even shows that the technique of improvisation, which plays a key role in the theory of oral-formulaic composition, has an entirely different countenance in the *qaṣīda* tradition with its being attested in the production of shorter poems (p. 94). Moreover, this leads to the recognition that in respect of the great classical poems only in exceptional instances were they improvised; such poems were seldom the result of impromptu composition. Schoeler draws attention to a statement in the *Kitāb al-bayān wa'l-tabyīn* of al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/868–9) in which reference is made to the celebrated pre-Islamic poets al-Ḥuṭayʾa and Zuhayr ibn Abī Sulmā, who are reported to have spent a whole year improving their poetic compositions. Intriguingly, one might add here the fact that 'paragons of eloquence' would continually revise a poem (*yunaqqiḥ al-qaṣīda*) or speech over the period of a year before venturing further alterations in the quest to achieve perfection is often highlighted by classical scholarship in order to accentuate the inimitability of the Qur'anic diction in that its composition was instantly and matchlessly sublime.[28] Further arguments germane to the composition and structure of the *qaṣīda*; its narrators, transmitters, and modes of transmission; plagiarism and authenticity; variations and the role of the *rāwī* are used to draw attention to problems inherent in Zwettler's interpretation of the sources. The article conclusively demonstrates the unfeasibility of applying the theory of oral-formulaic composition to the ancient Arabic *qaṣīda* and the subsequent course taken by the debates on this issue is explored in the addenda. In this section he comments that 'since the end of the 1980s, there evolved a broad consensus also in Arabic studies that attempts by Zwettler and Monroe to apply the Parry/Lord theory to the ancient Arabic *qaṣīda* genre have failed' (p. 105).

The subject of the transmission of Ḥadīth and the debate concerning opposition to the writing of traditions in early Islam forms the focus of the fifth article included in this work. Opening with a quotation from Joseph Horovitz, who stated that '*ḥadīth* and Qur'an relate to each other as oral and written doctrine do in Judaism' (p. 111), Schoeler speaks of there originally being animated opposition to this view within the field of Islamic studies with individuals such as Ignaz Goldziher describing it as being 'misguided' and 'wrong'. It is incidentally noted that both Goldziher and Sprenger

had spoken of the early existence of written materials not in the sense of fixed texts but rather as scripts and notes of a private nature.[29] Schoeler was of the view that the analogy between Islam and Judaism referred to by Horovitz was valid, pointing to a qualified distinction drawn in Judaism between the Bible or (written Torah) and the Oral Torah. Goldziher had rejected the analogy proposed by Horovitz on the assumption that oral doctrine in the form of the teachings of the Talmud (Mishnah and Gemarah) and the accompanying Midrash works were 'originally transmitted through the centuries in an exclusively oral tradition' (p. 112). Schoeler states that this understanding was mistaken as scholars now accept that there exists plenty of evidence showing that written records of these 'oral' sources had existed in the form of *hypomnēma*. Added to this was the fact that there had never been any formally decreed prohibition against writing down oral doctrine. It was the case that within Judaism 'only the Bible was a *syngramma*' and that 'it was supposed to be read out from the written page and not recited from memory in the synagogue'. Thus, argues Schoeler, to all intents and purposes the distinctions governing the written format of the forms of scripture that operated within Judaism (*syngramma* and *hypomnēma*) were replicated in the Islamic tradition as far as the Qur'an and the Ḥadīth were concerned, confirming that Horovitz's analogy was apposite (p. 112). Moreover, even the formalities and procedures taken into account in the transmission of 'oral doctrine' were very similar.

Horowitz reasoned that the *isnād*, which became such a pivotal instrument of Ḥadīth criticism, was based on a model used within Jewish schools in the Talmudic period (Amoraean era). Schoeler sees this view as being plausible, highlighting Gautier Juynboll's findings which posit that the *isnād* was introduced during the second civil war (61/680–73/692) (p. 113).[30] It is argued that there would have been sufficient numbers of converts who were able to promote the use of this device. It should be noted that James Robson's study of the *isnād* suggested a somewhat earlier date for its inception; his dating would render the influence of converts much less critical.[31] Schoeler believes that parallel developments in both the Jewish and Islamic cultures accounted for the resort to the *isnād*: namely, the desire to invoke authority.

According to Goldziher, the documented aversion to the writing of Prophetic traditions reflected a much later debate within the Islamic community. For Goldziher, the impact of this debate was largely theoretical, having little effect upon the practical activities of scholars engaged in the field of preserving and codifying the Prophetic traditions. Schoeler comments that in Judaism the issue was not debated. Thus technically speaking, the prohibition against the writing down of the Torah never needed to be revoked (p. 114). It is generally accepted that redactions of the Mishnah were possibly based on the *hypomnēmata* of students and that its 'publication' (or promulgation) took place in an oral form with teaching methods

being structured around this format. Despite the existence of such records, Schoeler's point is that the early collections of the Mishnah, although having been produced from written sources, were not publications in the fixed sense of the word. The reasoning is that the 'taught material had grown to such proportions that publication in "book form" could no longer be delayed'. He refers to the final redaction of the Talmud appearing 500 CE or later.

Having looked at distinct patterns which accompanied the subtle shifts towards the production of works of a more formal nature within Judaism, Schoeler turns his attention to the issue of the development of Ḥadīth literature. In the background to Schoeler's treatment of the question is whether pre-classical *muṣannaf* works of the second/eighth centuries existed in written form. One needs to bear in mind that Sezgin had originally dismissed the notion that opposition to writing had ever existed, although, as stated in the third article in this volume, Schoeler believes that Sezgin had incorrectly reasoned that the identification of early written antecedents would supposedly buttress arguments à propos the authenticity of the classical *muṣannaf* works because they were effectively based on these antecedents. Schoeler's view is that within the Islamic tradition attitudes to the methods of achieving authenticity were more complex. He is not implying that written sources were not ever utilised, as he consistently refers to the use of lecture notes and records (*hypomnēma*), but rather that opposition to their use remained deep-rooted, at least theoretically speaking.

Scholarship among traditionists in the Iraqi cities of Basra and Kufa is highlighted to illustrate the aversion to the use of written texts. The case of the Basran traditionist and theologian Saᶜīd ibn Abī ᶜArūba (d. 156/773) is viewed with particular significance as he is credited in the *awāʾil* literature as being one of the earliest authors of a *muṣannaf* work. Schoeler avers that in Basra and Kufa the oral promulgation of traditions together with their memorisation was highly valued such that scholars like Saᶜīd, despite having written records (*hypomnēmata*), refrained from using them in public; oral sources were viewed as being infinitely more reliable. The same is said of the Basran Maᶜmar ibn Rāshid (d. 154/770) who, when in Yemen where, according to Schoeler, the opposition towards to the use of written materials was less pronounced, made use of his books (*hypomnēmata*). Schoeler notes that with the emergence of the capital Baghdad as the new centre of Ḥadīth studies, 'recitation from memory was gradually abandoned' and the opposition to writing dissipated (p. 116).

The parallels between Judaism and Islam in terms of the standard opposition to writing and the use of lecture notes and aides-mémoire were considered to be striking. For Schoeler the key issue remains: why did Jewish and Muslim scholars insist (at least in theory) on the transmission of knowledge by memory? The traditional Islamic sources mention a number of factors in this regard: the fear that the Ḥadīth might be confused with the word of God; the concern that it might distract from sacred

scripture; the belief that the written word was essentially transient; and, the fear that such materials could fall into the hands of those 'unauthorised' (lacking the required learning to deal with the materials) (pp. 117–8). He remarks that classical Islamic scholarship was able to reconcile the profusion of traditions which referred to conflicting early attitudes towards the writing of traditions, expediently explaining way any perceived contradiction inherent in these materials. More significantly, Schoeler attempts to account for the general construct of opposition to writing down traditions by referring to a theory initially expounded upon by Goldziher relating to the 'aspect of tendency', which we shall turn to shortly. However, one needs to bear in mind that Goldziher had argued that it was not possible to express even a tentative view as to which parts of this large corpus of Ḥadīth represented the original core of authentic material. Additionally, he insisted that it was difficult to determine which of these *aḥādīth* 'date back to the generations immediately following the Prophet's death' and that 'closer acquaintance with the vast stock of traditions induces sceptical caution rather than optimistic trust regarding the material brought together in the carefully compiled collections'. Thus the whole issue of opposition is viewed by him as emanating from a much later stage in the study of traditions. Goldziher had proposed several solutions to explain the hostility to writing, including the view that pious believers were concerned that they 'might unintentionally but still through their own fault alter the original wording of a tradition'; of course, this view was superseded as later on Goldziher associated the fabrication of most of the traditions with a pious elite who were opposed to the Umayyads.[32] One final explanation Schoeler forwarded spoke of 'the aspect of tendency' (the suppression of traditions inimical to one's viewpoint): this in turn led to the view that the old legal *ra'y* schools (advocates of personal opinion who were supposedly renowned for their pursuit of an unfettered and rational exposition of the legal sources) believed that the existence of written materials was a hindrance to the free development of the law and its interpretation and that is why they objected to the codification of traditions; he mentions that large numbers of jurists and judges were among the ranks of the early opponents of a written tradition (p. 119).[33] One problem with this view is that the so-called *ahl al-ra'y* (proponents of personal opinion) is an ambiguous label in the context of the early tradition; and, as Schoeler is highly aware, enumerated among the *ahl al-ra'y* are scholars who were advocates of the codification of traditions.[34]

Furthermore, there is no proof that the existence of a corpus of written materials would have impinged upon the so-called free development of the law in the manner suggested by Goldziher. Indeed, all the evidence suggests that even the later *muṣannaf* collections were arranged to present a stock of materials which were then subjected to critical synthesis and interpretation in the context of being used to establish legal paradigms and conventions. Whether such materials had been available orally or in written format had little bearing on the manner in which they were interpreted. The

processes associated with the analysis of traditions ultimately determined their applied legal import, particularly as far as advocates of the so-called *ahl al-ra'y* are concerned. Even if one considers the succeeding *muṣannaf* genre of writings such as the works of Abū Dāwūd (d. 275/889), al-Tirmidhī (d. 279/892), al-Nasā'ī (d. 303/915) and al-Dārimī (d. 255/869) the presentation of conflicting traditions within single sections of chapters within these works shows that the authors in question were bringing together sources for jurists to evaluate and reflect upon.[35] Jurists could exercise discretion and preference when weighing up the legal efficacy and bearing of traditions. Schoeler then moves on to combine Goldziher's observation regarding 'the aspect of tendency' with the idea in Judaism that the opposition to writing was developed on the basis that the oral doctrine should not be 'unified, definitive, and final'. This allowed the law to be flexible and subject to modification and qualification (p. 120). He believes that the Islamic reservation against writing was formulated with similar considerations in mind. Again, the presumption that a written corpus of traditions had the potential to impede the flexibility of the oral doctrine is not fully demonstrated by the facts.[36] Even if one were to accept the general thrust of Goldziher's explanation, which Schoeler claims 'seems not to be unfounded', why would it restrict the codification of traditions whose legal import was negligible? Particularly those traditions which deal with theological, ethical, and non-legal exegetical matters (p. 119)? One might also add to this that elsewhere Schoeler propounds the view that oral teaching was considered a trusty medium for the dissemination of knowledge; the point he seems to emphasise in his hypothesis is that oral transmission was not fluid or even less accurate and reliable than written modes of dissemination. So the issue is not so much determined by the oral or written nature of the sources but rather by their applied interpretation.

Schoeler accepts that the use of written sources for private notes and records was unaffected by this construct of opposition. Notwithstanding the existence of an inherent opposition to the recording of *aḥādīth*, he asserts that in the Iraqi milieu and Medina this hostile attitude was significantly accentuated by antagonism towards the Umayyads and their efforts to codify the traditions. The move towards codification is said to have commenced during the caliphate of ʿUmar II (*reg*. 99/717–101/720) as biographical anecdotes ascribed to al-Zuhrī (d. 124/742) intimate that a general aversion to the writing of tradition was in place around this time. According to Schoeler, the Umayyads' desire to codify traditions represents an attempt to impose a more fixed and hence rigid corpus of law, and reflected an antagonism between Iraq and Syria; it is subsequently assumed by Schoeler that the codification of the law would have restricted flexibility and, to an extent, the ability to manipulate the scriptural sources. Schoeler concludes that the debate 'came into full swing only around the turn of the first to the second century (720 AD) and lasted for several decades' and that it originated with traditions disapproving of the practice of writing *aḥādīth* being circulated (p. 125). Identifying the Common Link (CL) in the *asānīd* of

these traditions, Schoeler reasoned that most of these narrators were almost exclusively from Basra, Kufa and Medina, adding that the emphasis upon the transmission of *aḥādīth* from memory was one of the manifestations of the opposition to the Umayyad efforts to codify the traditions.[37] Iraqi cities are said to have hosted individuals who excelled in this regard. Schoeler points to the possibility that outside Syria, particularly in Basra, Kufa and Medina, people were reluctant to accept *aḥādīth* 'codified and disseminated under Umayyad control' (pp. 126–7).

Schoeler propounds the argument that people feared allowing religious and political groupings, as well as scholars, to follow the Umayyad example of spreading their own Ḥadīth collections, thereby providing rallying points for schismatic and sectarian movements, on the basis that such acts would have irreparably destroyed the unity of the new religious tradition (pp. 126–7). Even if one were to accept this explanation, it presumes that the putative Umayyad collection of traditions was entirely sectarian in its conception.[38] Indeed, given the general thrust of the arguments propounded by Schoeler, one would have expected the Umayyads to have been in favour of maintaining a flexible oral tradition, rather than encouraging the codification of Ḥadīth. Consequently, it is difficult to substantiate the argument that the desire to retain flexibility was a key factor behind certain scholars' wanting the Ḥadīth preserved as an exclusively oral teaching; or that it was hostility against the Ummayad project to codify the Prophetic traditions that accentuated this construct of opposition.[39] Ultimately, approaches to the interpretation of sources, be they oral or written, govern the very nature of laws.

Schoeler states that the dissemination of *aḥādīth* advocating the written recording of traditions took place mainly during the second century, proposing that the opposition to the codification of traditions was 'weaker in urban centres far removed from Syria such as Mecca and Sanaa than in Iraq or Medina', although opponents of writing could be found in Mecca (p. 128). Schoeler does not believe that the proponents of writing in the second century were simply supporters of the Umayyads, but rather that they were reacting to the Iraqi and Medinese aversion to writing. The reasoning is that advocates of writing were most probably pragmatists 'who refused to take part in the game of transmission from memory, either because they possessed a *ṣaḥīfa*, had a bad memory, or for some other reason' (p. 129). It is also argued that from the middle of the second century AH, Iraqis were among their ranks. And, that gradually, developments in the third/ninth century indicate that moves to put traditions into written form were now set in motion.

It is worth mentioning at this juncture the extended article by Michael Cook on the subject of hostility to the writing of tradition in early Islam.[40] Schoeler acknowledges in the addenda to his own article that they are in agreement on many points but that Cook himself speaks of there being 'substantial disagreements'. Cook argued that

a Jewish origin lay at the heart of the Muslim tradition of orality (scripturalism) and opposition to writing, observing that both Islam and Judaism shared the same epistemological conception of an oral tradition which existed alongside written scripture.[41] His position was that hostility to writing was not restricted to Basra and Kufa but had existed as a basic construct in all the major centres of learning including Yemen, a point that Schoeler later conceded (p. 141).[42] For Cook the prevalence of scripturalism was a feature of the early second century. Schoeler's attempt to identify an Umayyad nexus in the debates regarding hostility to writing was challenged by Cook, who objected that traditions which speak of the Umayyad desire to 'shackle knowledge' were inauthentic and therefore using such dicta to develop arguments about the history of opposition was flawed.[43]

Cook maintained that the concept of an oral tradition was effectively borrowed by Muslims from Judaism and that the concomitant debates which ensued in the Judaic tradition were likewise imported into the Islamic tradition. He argues that a clue to this was the fact that the *aḥādīth* on the subject often connected Jews with the writing down of 'oral teachings': that the *aḥādīth* record that they were rebuked on the basis that the practice of writing down traditions deflected attention from the uniquely revealed text; and that this was something Muslims were encouraged to avoid.[44] Cook concluded that the similarities between Judaism and Islam are not trivial and that the distinction between Scripture and Tradition made by both religions was likewise common (the epistemological ranking of the components of an authoritative heritage). The hostility to the writing of an oral tradition is shared, although it was eventually surmounted in Judaism. Cook subscribes to the view that in Islam the opposition was overcome because of the sheer volume of the Ḥadīth materials which confronted Muslims; this supposedly compelled them to relinquish any opposition they harboured regarding the use of written sources.[45] However, it seems more likely that within the Islamic tradition the altogether vague nature of opposition to the recording of traditions meant that such hostility was easily circumvented and within a shorter space of time, as it is evident that the recording of traditions was a widespread practice. One might mention in this respect the statement of the Andalusian scholar al-Rāmahurmuzī (d. 360/970–1) who reports that some scholars of traditions permitted the writing down of *aḥādīth* on condition that they be erased once the materials contained in them were memorised; this was identified as representing a third approach (*madhhab*) as far as attitudes to writing down traditions were concerned.[46] In related disciplines of learning such as Arabic linguistic thought, scholars were already reviewing the materials in *aḥādīth* and subjecting them to various forms of lexical paraphrase and grammatical analysis. The codification of such materials would have logically preceded such processes.[47] Within these early periods opposition to the codification of traditions was becoming academic in the loose sense of the word. One parallel that can be mentioned in this respect is the subject of the interpretation of Qur'anic ayas which

were designated as being *mutashābihāt* ('parabolic'/'ambiguous'). Classical exegetes had supposedly spoken of a quasi consensus concerning the need to refrain from the exegesis of such ayas; nevertheless, this apparent opposition seldom resulted in exegetes refraining from proffering opinions regarding the import of ayas designated as being *mutashābih*. This realisation led both Harris Birkeland and Nabia Abbott to argue that any opposition to the exegesis of *mutashābihāt* ayas reflected a much later development.[48] One could draw on this explanation to argue that despite there being theoretically documented opposition to the writing down of traditions, it did not restrict the activity.

Finally, Schoeler moves on to analyse a number of the *asānīd* which occur within the context of this article. These include *aḥādīth* which either refer to the hostility to writing or indeed those which approve of the practice of codifying traditions. He concludes that hostility to the written recording of traditions was unlikely to have been articulated by the Prophet and that it cannot be ruled out that the prohibition was already pronounced in the first/seventh century by some Medinese companions, although one hastens to add that the issue of why these individuals were prompted to take a hostile stance remains unresolved. Additionally, Schoeler recognises that the prohibition against writing was disseminated during the period of the first generation of Successors and that this occurred in Basra and Kufa. He adds that 'during the second generation of Successors (second quarter of the second/eighth century) in Medina, it was projected backwards to the Prophet' (p. 137). Schoeler then attempts to trace the historical trajectories of the discussions on the subject of the prohibition and approval of writing Prophetic traditions (p. 140). He postulates that Successors credited Companions with *aḥādīth* probably in reaction to the predominant (theoretical) consensus not to write down traditions. This is presumed to have occurred in the first quarter of the second/eighth century in Mecca and Yemen. He also posits that in the same period there were other Successors who credited Companions with views against writing traditions in Basra, Kufa and Mecca. This was in reaction to the growing practice of writing down traditions, although it was also driven by the wish to counter Umayyad efforts to codify them. Thus, according to the general thrust of Schoeler's arguments, the whole debate was a later development, set against the context of an acute mistrust of writing; the Umayyads' project to codify traditions would have supposedly reinforced this mistrust. In an earlier article Schoeler had spoken of this dislike being rooted in the Qur'an (p. 83, p. 85). However, within this later hypothesis the desired flexibility provided by an oral body of law consequentially resulted in there being an overall opposition to writing.

The last chapter in this volume returns to an issue briefly touched upon in an earlier article: namely, the issue of who is the author of the *Kitāb al-ᶜayn*, the first and oldest dictionary of Arabic.[49] Within the classical Arabic linguistic tradition, authorship of the work was disputed, although it was generally acknowledged that the work was

linked with the Basran luminary al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad (d. 160/777 or 175/791). The lexicon employs a highly sophisticated arrangement of its lemmata based on a system of phonetic permutations (*al-taqlībāt al-ṣawtiyya*).[50] The introduction to the *Kitāb al-ʿayn* speaks of the wish to devise a system of entries which would encompass the entire language of the Arabs. Ibn al-Nadīm (d. 380/990) reports that the lexicographer Ibn Durayd (d. 321/933) spoke of the appearance of this lexicon in Basra around 248/862.[51] It is reported that none of al-Khalīl's peers mentions the work, nor had they transmitted its contents. Included among his peers were al-Naḍr ibn Shumayal (d. 203/819), al-Aṣmaʿī and Yūnus ibn Ḥabīb (d. 183/799–800). Later generations of Basrans had reservations about the attempts to link al-Khalīl with the book. These included Abū Ḥātim al-Sijistānī (d. 255/870), Ibn Durayd, al-Azharī (d. 370/980), Ibn Jinnī (d. 392/1002), Abū ʿAlī al-Qālī (d. 356/967) and al-Zubaydī (d. 379/989). However, there existed a general consensus within the tradition that al-Khalīl probably devised the general theoretical framework for the lexicon, but that it was ultimately completed and supplemented by his student al-Layth ibn Muẓaffar (d. 200/815–16), although mention is also made of errors in the text for which this latter figure was held responsible.

Schoeler reviews a number of academic studies of the *Kitāb al-ʿayn*. The first of these was the 1926 work of Erich Bräunlich, who accepted that while al-Khalīl merited being called the intellectual creator of the work and the architect of its astute arrangement, it was al-Layth ibn Muẓaffar who actually completed and redacted the work (p. 143). Basing his conclusions on the complete manuscript of the text in Berlin, Stefan Wild confirmed many of the findings of Bräunlich, including the view that that al-Layth ibn Muẓaffar played a prominent role in the text's composition. Arab academics such as ʿAbd Allāh Darwīsh, Mahdī al-Makhzūmī and Ibrāhīm al-Samarrāʾī, having worked on editions of the text, had espoused the view that the entire work along with its innovative system of entries was the conception of al-Khalīl and that al-Layth's role had been that of a transmitter, despite the fact that the classical biographical tradition had cast doubts on al-Khalīl's association with the text (p. 144). Schoeler also looked at the work of the Polish Arabist Janusz Danecki, who was of the view that al-Khalīl was neither the intellectual inspiration behind this work nor was he its author. Danecki noted that in the earliest extant work of Arabic grammar (Sībawayhi's *Kitāb*), which has a section devoted to phonetics, al-Khalīl's views are hardly mentioned; yet, in comparison the *Kitāb al-ʿayn* is replete with superior phonetic constructs which al-Khalīl is supposed to have devised. Had Sībawayhi been aware of these advanced concepts, he would have referred to them in his *Kitāb*, particularly as Sībawayhi mentions al-Khalīl's grammatical opinions on numerous occasions.[52]

Danecki was of the view that the citations from al-Khalīl in the *Kitāb al-ʿayn* were forged by al-Layth and that the indigenous tradition was clearly aware of the

controversy for it refused to acknowledge the Baṣran al-Khalīl as the text's author.
The late Rafael Talmon reviewed these issues in depth in a work which analysed the
grammatical teachings of the *Kitāb al-ʿayn*.[53] Schoeler confirms that Talmon's
findings were largely consistent with those of Bräunlich and Wild; namely, that the
inspiration behind the work's general theoretical framework was al-Khalīl; and that he
evidently collaborated with the text's redactor, al-Layth, in the composition of entries,
while also coming up with its unique systematic arrangement. Talmon observed that
the general biographical information specific to al-Khalīl was actually derived from
materials cited in the text of the *Kitāb al-ʿayn*. He also demonstrated that the
numerous grammatical teachings ascribed to al-Khalīl in Sībawayhi's *Kitāb* could be
readily traced to the *Kitāb al-ʿayn*, confirming that large parts of the dictionary
reflected al-Khalīl's grammatical teachings. Schoeler identifies a number of
shortcomings in Talmon's study. Firstly, he failed to address the issue of why the
indigenous linguistic tradition refused to acknowledge al-Khalīl's authorship of this
work. Schoeler reasoned that a close reading of the text would surely have revealed to
these scholars the respective contributions made by al-Khalīl and al-Layth. Secondly,
Schoeler mentioned Bräunlich's observation that al-Khalīl is never referred to in the
early Arabic linguistic tradition as a scholar of lexicography, noting that Talmon did
not address this concern; and thirdly, nor has Talmon explained why Sībawayhi failed
to quote his mentor in the *Kitāb* on phonetic issues.

The hypothesis developed by Schoeler in the separate articles regarding the distinction
between fixed compilations (*syngrammata*) and lecture or private notes (*hypomnē-
mata*), together with his own findings on the nature of the transmission of knowledge
in the early tradition, is invoked to resolve the issue of who was the text's true author.
He employs the same hypothesis to unravel the mystery as to why a number of al-
Khalīl's peers doubted not only his association with the text, but also his pre-eminence
as a lexicographer and philologist (p. 144). Schoeler concluded that 'al-Khalīl had
begun to write a proper book for *readers*, more particularly for dictionary users', a fact
supposedly unheard of in his time (p. 151). Scholars before Khalīl's time used 'to
transmit their knowledge in the form of lectures or discussions with their students in
majālis (sessions) and *ḥalaqāt* (scholarly circles)' (p. 151). Lecturers used written
notes as mnemonic aids and their students often took written notes. Works written
during this period, particularly the *muṣannaf* type works, were intended for
presentation within the framework of the lecture system: 'they lacked an independent
literary life' (p. 150). Materials from these works were cited in later works; and some
were even preserved through later transmissions and revisions. They were then
transmitted in writing by way of manuscript (p. 152). It was the case that later
transmitters made additions to al-Layth's redaction of the *Kitāb al-ʿayn*, 'a customary
practice in the Islamic transmission system'. But the point accentuated by Schoeler
is that these works were *hypomnēmata* in terms of their original format and

distinguished from the type of *syngrammata* texts of the later period such as Sībawayhi's *Kitāb*. With this in mind, the paucity of references to the philological thoughts of al-Khalīl in the works of individuals such as al-Aṣmaʿī, Abū Zayd al-Anṣārī, Ibn Qutayba, Abū ʿUbayda and Abū ʿAmr al-Shaybānī is interpreted by Schoeler as proof that this figure did not hold any lectures on the materials of the *Kitāb al-ʿayn*. His contention is that the work was not transmitted through the conventional system of lecture courses, but it was taught to a single student, al-Layth, before being transmitted in writing by way of manuscript (p. 152). Hence, early scholarship was not aware of al-Khalīl's enterprise in the field of philology. He had begun to write the text, but his students were unaware of the lexical issues that he had thus far reviewed. Due to the text being transmitted well after the death of its architect, even Sībawayhi was apparently unaware of its contents.

One would have to object that it does seem altogether strange that al-Khalīl should have elected to keep the contents of the work and the innovative phonetic ideas associated with it to himself and al-Layth. The idea that his general philological thoughts were never shared with figures such as Sībawayhi and al-Aṣmaʿī remains quite astonishing. Biographical literature does suggest that al-Khalīl, like his linguistic peers, spent time in the Bedouin regions acquiring philological and dialectal data; his fellow linguists were undoubtedly aware of his interest in such subjects as they sat with him in the various *ḥalaqāt*.[54] It is inconceivable that creative phonetic ideas and lexicographical interests were not discussed with his peers.[55] Thus, scholarly exchanges on dialectal and requisite phonetic issues must have taken place, particularly if al-Khalīl was pondering composing the *Kitāb al-ʿayn*. An alternative reason for the Basrans' supposedly eschewing the philological musings of al-Khalīl, if indeed this was the case, must be sought.

It should be stated here that while Schoeler has confirmed as well as qualified the findings of Bräunlich, Wild and Talmon and dismissed the arguments propounded by Danecki, it is through his own hypothesis of the distinguishing features of the transmission and dissemination of knowledge in the early Islamic tradition that this critical appraisal has been achieved. He suggests that the modern Arab editors of the *Kitāb al-ʿayn* 'were not sufficiently familiar both with the characteristic features of the Arabo-Islamic transmission through lecture courses and with modern European source-critical methods' and that they did not 'fully recognise the difference between "intellectual creator" on the one hand and "author" or "redactor" on the other' (p. 162).[56] This statement does appear to be a little striking but Schoeler explains that they were 'overwhelmed by the sheer genius of al-Khalīl's design, they wrongly concluded that the work shaped according to this design, "a landmark not only in Arabic lexicography, but in the history of lexicography", must have been written in its entirety by al-Khalīl' (p. 162). As far as the classical linguistic tradition is concerned the doubts raised among luminaries about the ascription of the whole of the text to

al-Khalīl appear to have been well-founded; medieval scholars too mostly accepted that the conceptual framework of the work was devised by al-Khalīl, distinguishing it from the editorial enterprise and redactional endeavours of al-Layth. It is also interesting to note that even those individuals who criticised the *Kitāb al-ᶜayn*, questioning its ascription to al-Khalīl, went on to compose commentaries on the text. This is true of al-Zubaydī and Abū ᶜAlī al-Qālī: the former was the author of an abridgement of the work (*Mukhtaṣar Kitāb al-ᶜayn*); while the latter composed the *Kitāb al-bāriᶜ*, an exposition of the text.[57] It is with this study of the *Kitāb al-ᶜayn* that this book concludes. Schoeler argues that he has successfully explained and demonstrated why early and classical scholarship entertained such doubts about the authorship and contents of the work. In his final judgement al-Khalīl was not the author (compiler or redactor) of the extant *Kitāb al-ᶜayn*; but he also adds that it is evident that he was the book's 'intellectual creator and large parts of the work are based on his teachings' (p. 162). He takes the position that al-Khalīl actually began the lexicon and that written fragments by the Basran exist in the introduction and the main body of the extant work. Finally, Schoeler confirms that it was al-Layth who 'executed, redacted, and finished the *Kitāb al-ᶜayn*', although subsequent additions were ventured. He therefore, must be regarded as the text's author, adding that in the history of the Arabo-Islamic sciences it is Sībawayhi's *Kitāb* which has the honour of being the tradition's first book in the fixed (*syngramma*) sense of the term.

Schoeler's work together with the theories upon which it is based clearly makes a unique contribution to modern scholarship's attempts to appreciate the intricate processes which played an important role in the dissemination of learning in the Islamic tradition and the emergence of early Arabic literature. The collective publication and translation of Schoeler's research must therefore be welcomed. Moreover, the hypothesis he has proposed concerning the distinction between lecture notes or aides-mémoire (*hypomnēmata*) and fixed texts (*syngrammata*) will help scholarship broach certain aspects of the issue of authenticity as far as the authorship and subsequent transmission of literature is concerned. Those of a sceptical persuasion will probably be more concerned with the subjective content of the early sources and their effective design. Nevertheless, James Montgomery is seemingly justified when he states that Schoeler has offered a hypothesis 'which best accounts for all the available evidence'. Scholars and individuals engaged in researching the early Islamic sciences and the dissemination of literature and ideas will have to take into account the broad conclusions offered by Schoeler's work; this is sufficient testimony to his academic achievement.[58]

MUSTAFA SHAH

NOTES

1 Nabia Abbott, *Studies In Arabic Literary Papyri, I: Historical Texts* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1957). See also Nabia Abbott, *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri II, Qurʾānic Commentary and Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1967); Nabia Abbot, *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri III, Language and Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1972).

2 Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums* (9 vols. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1967–84), vol. 1, pp. 82ff: see also Ignaz Goldziher, *Schools of Koranic Commentators*, ed. and tr. Wolfgang H. Behn (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), with an introduction on Goldziher and Ḥadīth from '*Geschichte des Arabischen Schrifttums*' by Fuat Sezgin.

3 See also Schoeler's preface to this volume, p. vii; S.M. al-Samuk, 'Die historischen Überlieferungen nach Ibn Isḥāq. Eine synoptische Untersuchung' (Frankfurt, Main: unpublished PhD thesis, 1978); M. Fleischammer, *Die Quellen des Kitāb al-Aghānī*, *Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, 55:2 (Wiesbaden: n.p., 2004); Leon Zolondek, 'The Sources of the *Kitāb al-Aghānī*', *Arabica* 8 (1961), pp. 294–308; Leon Zolondek, 'An Approach to the Problem of the Sources of the *Kitāb al-Aghānī*', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 19 (1960), pp. 217–34. Also see Paul Heck, 'The Epistemological Problem of Writing in Islamic Civilization: al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī's (d. 463/1071) *Taqyīd al-ʿilm*', *Studia Islamica* 94 (2002), pp. 85–114. Ella Landau Tasseron, 'New Data on an Old Manuscript: An Andalusian Version of the Works Entitled *Futūḥ al-Shām*', *al-Qanṭara* 21 (2000), pp. 361–80.

4 Michael Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Norman Calder, *Studies in Early Muslim Jurisprudence* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993); Herbert Berg, *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam: The Authenticity of Muslim Literature from the Formative Period* (London: Curzon Press, 1999).

5 See ʿAbd al-Raḥīm ibn al-Ḥusayn al-ʿIrāqī Zayn al-Dīn, *al-Taqyīd waʾl-īḍāḥ li-mā uṭliqa wa-ughliqa min muqaddimat Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1993), pp. 157–89; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Kitāb al-kifāya fī ʿilm al-riwāya* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1988). Regarding the former work see pp. 159–205. *Wijāda* refers to a transmitter disseminating the written text or notes of an individual whom the transmitter has not necessarily met or studied with; higher forms of transmission were preferably regulated through license and permission (*ijāza*) (pp. 187–9), while the term *mukātaba* denotes instances where a scholar would himself write down some materials for an absent student, or indeed have them dictated for him. It would also cover instances in which a scholar would actually write the materials down himself and hand them to that very student (pp. 185f). Some forms of this transmission were endorsed via *ijāza*. In this particular article Schoeler has not elaborated on the forms of license nor indeed the full range of the modes of transmission. See the translated introduction from *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums* in Goldziher, *Schools of Koranic Commentators*, pp. xvii–xviii; *wijāda* is defined as 'a person obtains the right of use of a book or hadīth, irrespective of whether it is contemporary or old, if he comes into the possession of the copy of the last transmitter'. See Muḥammad Siddiqi, *Hadīth Literature: Its Origin*, *Development, Special Features*, revised by Tim Winter (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1993), pp. 86, for definitions.

6 This is a statement attributed to the famous Medinan Jurist Mālik ibn Anas and cited by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī in his *Kitāb al-kifāya fī ʿilm al-riwāya* in the section which deals with rules pertaining to transmission and its requisites (*Bāb al-kalām fī aḥkām al-adāʾ wa-sharāʾiṭhi*) (see pp. 162–3). Intriguingly, later texts which explore *taṣḥīf* associate it with errors stemming from the inaccurate addition of diacritical markings to texts (*iʿjām*). See for example, Abū Aḥmad al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-ʿAskarī, *Sharḥ mā yaqaʿ fīhi al-taṣḥīf waʾl-taḥrīf*, ed. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Aḥmad (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat Muṣṭafā al-Bābī, 1963); al-ʿAskarī, *Taṣḥīfāt al-muḥaddithīn*, ed. Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Shāfī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1988). See also al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī's *Taqyīd al-ʿilm*, ed. Yūsuf al-ʿIsh, 2nd edn (n.p: 1974), pp. 49–60. The section discusses reasons for the prohibition of the writing of traditions.

7 Herbert Berg, 'The Implications of, and Opposition to, the Methods and Theories of John Wansbrough', *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 9:1 (1997), pp. 3–22. See also Gregor Schoeler, 'Reconstructing the Earliest *sīra* Texts: the *Hijra* in the Corpus of ʿUrwa ibn al-Zubayr', *Der Islam* 82 (2005), pp. 209–20.

8 Andrew Rippin, Miszellen: 'Studying Early Tafsīr Texts', *Der Islam* 72:2 (1995), pp. 310–23; Kees Versteegh, *Arabic Grammar and Qur'anic Exegesis in Early Islam* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993). Also see Kees Versteegh, 'Grammar and Exegesis: The Origins of Kūfan Grammar and the Tafsīr Muqātil', *Der Islam* 67:2 (1990), pp. 206–42.

9 We should add that elsewhere Schoeler has highlighted a crisis among academics regarding research on the life of the Prophet and indeed the earliest extant literary sources. He refers to there being on the one side extensive trust in the overall integrity of the core of primary sources as advocated by individuals such as Fuat Sezgin and to an extent Montgomery Watt; while in contradistinction, there are others such as John Wansbrough, Patrica Crone and Michael Cook who reject the genuine historical accuracy of the traditional sources. The suggestion is that by discovering a 'middle-way', the stalemate which pertains in this area of scholarship might be resolved, enabling a satisfactory advancement of research in this area. Unfortunately such a strategy is hardly likely to convince sceptical scholarship who have little confidence in the historical integrity of the available literary sources used to forge this middle-way. See Gregor Schoeler, 'Foundations for a New Biography of Muhammad: the Production and Evaluation of the Corpus of Traditions from 'Urwah B. Zubayr' in Herbert Berg (ed.), *Method and Theory in the Study of Islamic Origins*, Islamic History and Civilization: Studies and Texts, 49 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2003), pp. 21–8; Herbert Berg, 'Competing Paradigms in the Study of Islamic Origins: Qur'an 15:89–91 and the Value of *isnāds*' also in Berg, *Method and Theory*, pp. 259–90, p. 290.

10 See Ignaz Goldziher, *Schools of Koranic Commentators*, pp. xviii–xix.

11 J. Schacht and M. Meyerhof, *The Medico-Philosophical Controversy between Ibn Buṭlān of Baghdad and Ibn Riḍwān of Cairo* (Cairo: The Egyptian University, 1937).

12 Michael Carter, *Sībawayhi*, Makers of Islamic Civilization Series (London and New York: Oxford University Press and I.B. Tauris, 2004), p. 39. See also Geneviève Humbert, *Les voies de la transmission du Kitāb de Sībawayhi* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995); G.N. Atiyeh (ed.), *The Book in the Islamic World: The Written Word and Communication in the Middle East* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995).

13 The pitfalls of contrasting the form and content of Sībawayhi's text with al-Farrāʾ's work are set out by Michael Carter in 'Writing the History of Arabic Grammar', *Historiographia Linguistica* 21:3 (1994), pp. 385–414. See also Jonathan Owens, *Early Arabic Grammatical Theory: Heterogeneity and Standardization* (Amsterdam: John Benjamin B.V., 1990), p. 214f. Schoeler notes al-Farrāʾ's *Maʿānī al-Qurʾān* was originally disseminated through the system of lecture courses, at least that is what the biographical sources state.

14 Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, ed. R. Tajaddud, 3rd edn (Beirut: Dār al-Masīra, 1988), pp. 73–4. Cf. Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Zubaydī, *Ṭabaqāt al-naḥwiyyīn*, ed. Muḥammad Abū'l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1973), p. 147.

15 Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Zubaydī, *Ṭabaqāt al-naḥwiyyīn*, ed. Muḥammad Abū'l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1973), p. 137. Cf. Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt ʿalā anbāh al-nuḥāt*, ed. Muḥammad Abū'l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (4 vols. Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, 1956), vol. 1, p. 138.

16 Salama ibn ʿĀṣim is reported to have transmitted both the *Maʿānī al-Qurʾān* and the *Kitāb al-Ḥudūd*, having been present when the texts were dictated. One reads of him reviewing the content's of both works with al-Farrāʾ. See al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, vol. 2, pp. 56–7. The

version of the *Maʿānī* currently available is linked with a second transmitter: Muḥammad ibn Jahm (see Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, vol. 5. p. 620).

17 Kinga Dévényi, 'al-Farrāʾ and al-Kisāʾī: References to Grammarians and Qurʾān Readers in the Maʿānī al-Qurʾān of al-Farrāʾ' in Kinga Dévényi and Tamas Ivanyi (eds), *Proceedings of the Colloquium on Arabic Grammar* (Budapest: n.p., 1991), pp. 159–76, p. 159. Abū Zakariyyāʾ Yaḥyā ibn Ziyād al-Farrāʾ, *Maʿānī al-Qurʾān*, ed. M. Najjār and A. Najātī (3 vols. Cairo: n.p., 1980).

18 Abū ʿAbd Allāh Yaʿqūb ibn ʿAbd Allāh Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ* (5 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1991), vol. 5, p. 621. Abū Zakariyyāʾ Yaḥyā ibn Ziyād al-Farrāʾ, *al-Maqṣūr waʾl-mamdūd*, ed. Mājid al-Dhahabī (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risāla, 1983). In the case of al-Farrāʾ we are informed that most of his literary legacy was transmitted by his student Salama ibn ʿĀṣim. Al-Zubaydī, *Ṭabaqāt al-naḥwiyyīn*, p. 138. The Kufan reader Yaḥyā ibn Ādam (d. 203/818) reports that the specific readings of the Kufan reader ʿĀṣim ibn Abīʾl-Najūd (d. 127/744) were kept in *kurrāsa* (note) form for some 40 years.

19 Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī, *Maʿrifat al-qurrāʾ al-kibār*, ed. M. Jād al-Ḥaqq, 1st edn (2 vols. Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥadītha, 1968), vol. 1, pp. 137–8. Cf. Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Dimashqī ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyat al-nihāya fī ṭabaqāt al-qurrāʾ*, ed. Gotthelf Bergsträsser and Otto Pretzl (2 vols. Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Saʿāda, 1935), vol. 1, p. 348. Cf. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 40.

20 Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, p. 40. Needless to say, the issue here is whether these bibliographical and biographical reports which contain references to various texts are reliable.

21 See Mustafa Shah 'Trajectories in the Development of Islamic Theological Thought: the Synthesis of Kalam', *Religion Compass* 4:2 (July 2007), pp. 430–54, pp. 434–6; John Wansbrough's review of *Anfänge muslimischer Theologie: zwie antiqadaritische Traktate aus dem ersten Jahrhundert der Higra*, Beiruter Texte und Studien, Bd. 14 (Beirut: in Kommission bei Franz Steiner Verlag, Wiesbaden, 1977) in *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. See also John Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 91f. and pp. 160–3. Helmut Ritter, 'Studien zur Geschichte der islamischen Frommigkeit: I. Ḥasan al-Baṣrī', *Der Islam* 21 (1933); Julian Obermann, 'Political Theology in Early Islam: Ḥasan al-Baṣrī's Treatise on Qadar', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 55 (1935), pp. 138–62; Michael Schwarz, 'The Letter of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī', *Oriens* 20 (1967), pp. 15–30. Suleiman Ali Mourad, *Early Islam between Myth and History* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2006), p. 238. G.H.A. Juynboll argues for an early date for the text, yet he doubted whether al-Ḥasan was the text's author. Mourad assumes that Juynboll's views on the epistle were made on the basis of the absence of *aḥādīth* in the text; but this is not clear from Juynboll's remarks as he was critically addressing Wansbrough's treatment of the text's design and his references to the debate about *uṣūl* (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.

22 The glossary has defined a Qur'an reader as 'one of the seven scholars who advocated his own version ('reading') of the text of the Qur'an' which subsequently became sanctioned as authoritative' (p. 167). This definition requires qualification for the versions of readings (*qirāʾāt*) were sourced from a pool of readings established by earlier authorities. They were therefore exercising *ikhtiyār* (a synthesis of selection). This would also extend to phonological traits such as *idghām* (*iddigām*/assimilation), *fatḥ* (opening of the 'a' vowel; as well as lifting the *yāʾ* to *alif*), *madd* (elongation), *iḍjāʿ* (*imāla*) (inclining or fronting of the 'a' to 'i' or *alif* to *yāʾ*), *al-rawm* ('slurring' of the final vowel), *al-ishmām* (providing a scent of the u-sound at pausal junctures), *taḥqīq al-hamza* ('giving the *hamza* its full

articulation'), *kināya* (the articulation of pronouns), and *yāʾāt al-ʾiḍāfa* (the pronunciation of possessive suffixes formed in the first person singular). In fact these points are raised in the introduction to the *Kitāb al-sabʿa*. The suggestion that such individuals are advocating their own versions is less than accurate. See the entry on *qirāʾāt* in Kees Versteegh (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics* (4 vols. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2008), vol. 4, pp. 4–9.

23 Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies*, pp. 44–5.

24 Edmund Beck, 'Studien zur Geschichte der Küfischen Koranlesung in den Beiden Ersten Jahrhunderten', *Orientalia* 17 (1948), pp. 326–55. Cf. Kees Versteegh, *Arabic Grammar and Qur'anic Exegesis in Early Islam* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993), p. 39; Mustafa Shah, 'Exploring the Genesis of Early Arabic Linguistic Thought: Qur'anic Readers and Grammarians of the Kūfan Tradition – Part I', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 5:1 (2003), pp. 47–78.

25 François Déroche, *Islamic Codicology: An Introduction to the Study of Manuscripts in Arabic Script*, tr. Deke Dusinberre and David Radzinowicz, ed. Muhammad Isa Waley (London: al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, 2006); Muhammad Maraqten, 'Writing Materials in Pre-Islamic Arabia', *Journal of Semitic Studies* 43:2 (1998), pp. 287–310. Jonathan Bloom, *Paper before Print: The History and Impact of Paper in the Islamic World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001); Sheila Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007).

26 Mustafa Shah, 'The Early Arabic Grammarians' Contributions to the Collection and Authentication of Qur'anic Readings: The Prelude to Ibn Mujāhid's *Kitāb al-sabʿa*', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 6:1 (2004), pp. 72–102; Claude Gilliot, 'Creation of a Fixed Text' in Jane Dammen McAuliffe (ed.), *Cambridge Companion to the Qur'an* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 41–57; Fred Leemhuis, 'From Palm Leaves to the Internet' in Jane Dammen McAuliffe (ed.), *Cambridge Companion to the Qur'an* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 145–61.

27 Michael Zwettler, *The Oral Tradition of Classical Arabic Poetry: Its Character and Implications* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1978). See M. Parry, 'L'Épithète traditionnelle dans Homère: Essai sur problème de style homérique' (Paris: unpublished PhD thesis, 1928); A.B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960); J.T. Monroe, 'Oral Composition in Pre-lslamic Poetry', *Journal of Arabic Literature* 3 (1972), pp. 1–53; Malcolm Lyons, *The Arabian Epic: Heroic and Oral Story Telling* (3 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); J.N. Mattock, 'Repetition in the Poetry of Imru al-Qays', *Transactions of the Glasgow Oriental Society* 2:24 (1971), pp. 34–50; Peter Heath, 'Lord, Parry, Sīrat ʿAntar, Lions', *Edebiyāt* 15 (1984), pp. 149–166; Amidu Sanni, 'On *taḍmīn* (enjambment) and Structural Coherence in Classical Arabic Poetry', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 52:3 (1989), pp. 463–6; Amidu Sanni, 'Again on "*taḍmīn*" in Arabic Theoretical Discourse', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 61:1 (1998), pp. 1–19. See also Federico Corriente, 'From Old Arabic to Classical Arabic through the Pre-Islamic Koine: Some Notes on the Native Grammarians' Sources, Attitudes, and Goals', *Journal of Semitic Studies* 21 (1976), pp. 62–98.

28 See the chapter on *iʿjāz* in Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī ʿulūm al-Qurʾān* (2 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifa, n.d.), vol. 2, p. 152.

29 Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies* (*Muhammedanische Studien*), ed. S.M. Stern, tr. C.R. Barber and S.M. Stern (2 vols. Atherton, Chicago, New York: Aldine Publishing Company, 1971), vol. 2, pp. 181–8, p. 182. Goldziher believed that when it came to the codification of the traditions, literacy was in the ascendancy throughout the early periods. In Cook's work cited below mention is made of the fact that Goldziher refused to countenance the issue of Jewish influences upon Islam and preferred to speak of parallels, although Cook mentions that in this instance he even refused to speak of parallels (p. 509).

30 Gautier Juynboll, 'The Date of the Great *Fitna*', *Arabica* 20 (1973), pp. 142–59. See also Gautier Juynboll, 'Muslim's Introduction to His *Ṣaḥīḥ*. Translated and Annotated with an Excursus on the Chronology of *fitna* and *bidaʿa*', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 5 (1984), pp. 263–311.

31 James Robson, 'The *Isnād* in Muslim Tradition', tr. Glasgow University Oriental Society, reproduced in Harald Motzki (ed.), *Ḥadīth: Origins and Development* (Aldershot: Variorum, 2004). See also Michael Lecker, 'Zayd b. Thābit, "A Jew with Two Sidelocks": Judaism and Literacy in pre-Islamic Medina (Yathrib)', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 56:4 (1997), pp. 259–73; Harald Motzki, 'The Question of the Authenticity of Muslim Traditions Reconsidered: A Review Article' in Herbert Berg (ed.), *Method and Theory in the Study of Islamic Origins*, Islamic History and Civilization: Studies and Texts, 49 (Leiden, Boston: E.J. Brill, 2003), pp. 211–57; Berg, 'Competing Paradigms'. Also, see Harald Motzki, 'The Author and his Work in the Islamic Literature of the First Centuries: The Case of ʿAbd al-Razzāq's *Muṣannaf*', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 28 (2003), pp. 1–31.

32 Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, vol. 2, pp. 42–3.

33 The inference is that there existed an antithesis between the *ahl al-raʾy* and *ahl al-ḥadīth* (strict traditionalists). It is worth mentioning that Joseph Schacht had already argued that the presumed antithesis between these groups was misconstrued (see his *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950), part 1, chapters 6 and 9).

34 Christopher Melchert, 'Traditionist Jurisprudents and the Framing of Islamic Law', *Islamic Law and Society* 8:3 (2001), pp. 383–406.

35 John Burton, *An Introduction to the Tradition* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), pp. 124–9. The nexus between derived law and Ḥadīth is clearly set out in al-Tirmidhī's work entitled the *Kitāb al-jāmiʿ*; in his final chapter (the *Kitāb al-ʿilal*) he offers some fascinating insights into the goals of such works. Legal objectives were also a distinctive feature of the works of al-Bukhārī, Muslim and Ibn Abī Shayba (d. 235/849). See also Christopher Melchert, 'Traditionist Jurisprudents', p. 388; Scott Lucas, 'Where are the Legal Ḥadīth? A Study of the *Muṣannaf* of Ibn Abī Shayba', *Islamic Law and Society* 15:3 (2008), pp. 283–314.

36 Schoeler does not discuss the evolution of the early *musnad* type of Ḥadīth works: the collection of traditions which were either alphabetically arranged or ordered according to the merit of the Companion listed in the *isnād*. Juynboll mentions that the Kufan Yaḥyā ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd (d. 228/847) was one of the first individuals to compile a *musnad*, but one wonders whether the individual *masānid* which make up the larger collections have an earlier provenance (see Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition*, pp. 22–4). Biographical reports intimate that Ibrāhīm al-Ḥarbī (d. 285/898), a Kufan figure known for his stern religiosity, is reported to have collated some 27 *masānid*, which appear to have been shorter individual records of the traditions associated with individual Companions; Ḥarbī is said to have had in his possession 12,000 volumes on *lughāt* and *gharīb* which he had personally transcribed! He is reported to have advised his daughter to sell these works should she ever experience hardship (on this, see Abū ʿAbd Allāh Yaʿqūb ibn ʿAbd Allāh Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ* (5 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1991), vol. 1, p. 78; Jalāl al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-wuʿāt fī ṭabaqāt al-lughawiyyīn waʾl-nuḥāt*, ed. Muḥammad Abūʾl-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (2 vols. Beirut: Maktabat al-ʿAṣriyya, 1964), vol. 1, p. 408; Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Taʾrīkh Baghdād* (14 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.), vol. 5, p. 33; R. Marston Speight, 'Some Formal Characteristics of the *musnad* type of *ḥadīth* Collection', *Arabica* 49 (2002) pp. 376–82.

37 Michael Cook questioned the validity of dating traditions using the Common Link (Michael Cook, 'Eschatology and the Dating of Traditions', *Princeton Papers in Near Eastern Studies*

1 (1992), pp. 23–47). The seeds of the theory were tentatively sewn by Schacht in *The Origins*, and it was in this text that he spoke of the emergence of legal thought (and traditions to substantiate doctrine) during the late Umayyad period; the work of Juynboll over subsequent years fleshed out the theory in numerous interrelated articles, introducing new terms such as 'Partial Common Link', 'divers', and 'spiders' to highlight different features of the CL phenomena. It should be noted Cook was concerned that the so-called mass fabrication of *isnād* to conceal the fact that certain traditions were only supported by one or more single strand *asānīd* meant that dating traditions on the basis of the (CL) was futile. Cook believed that traditionist literature preserves substantially authentic materials from the second half of the second century, adding that 'if handled carefully it can tell us a good deal about the first half of that century, but it is not in general usable as evidence for a period anterior to that' (Michael Cook, 'The Opponents of the Writing of Tradition in Early Islam', *Arabica* 44 (1997), pp. 437–530, p. 490). See also Harald Motzki's 'Dating Muslim Traditions', *Arabica* 52:2 (2005), pp. 204–53. Juynboll has dismissed Cook's objections. Andreas Görke has outlined some of the key prerequisites required when using the Common Link to date traditions, while also highlighting the problems inherent in using materials which refer to apocalyptic events; see Andreas Görke, 'Eschatology, History, and the Common Link' in Herbert Berg (ed.), *Method and Theory in the Study of Islamic Origins*, Islamic History and Civilization: Studies and Texts, 49 (Leiden, Boston: E.J. Brill, 2003), pp. 179–208, and his reference to Paul J. Alexander, 'Medieval Apocalypses as Historical Sources', *The American Historical Review* 73 (1968), pp. 997–1018. The most recent defence and use of the Common Link features is set out in the introduction to *Encyclopaedia of Canonical Ḥadīth* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2007), edited by G.H.A. Juynboll. The work is geared towards identifying the originators of traditions which are comprised in the main canonical collections. Scholars consistently point to the fact that there is a difference between identifying the individual responsible for the dissemination of the traditions and the historicity of the material identified in that tradition. The best survey of the different perspectives is provided by Harald Motzki in his introduction to *Ḥadīth: Origins and Development* (Aldershot: Variorum, 2004) along with Harald Motzki, 'Quo vadis Ḥadīth-Forschung? Eine kritische Untersuchung von G.H.A. Juynboll: "Nafiᶜ the mawlā of ibn ᶜUmar; and his position in Muslim Ḥadīth literature"', *Der Islam* 73 (1996), pp. 40–80 and pp. 193–231. See also Halit Ozkan, 'The Common Link and its Relation to the *madār*', *Islamic Law and Society* 11:1 (2004), pp. 42–77; Jonathan Brown, 'Critical Rigor Vs. Juridical Pragmatism: How Legal Theorists and Ḥadīth Scholars Approached the Backgrowth of *isnāds* in the Genre of ᶜ*ilal al-Ḥadīth*', *Islamic Law and Society* 14:1 (2007), pp. 1–42.

38 The matter turns on the issue of the interpretation of traditions and the distinction between traditions (*aḥādīth*) and the legal teachings which are derived from them. These points have already been raised above. See Abdul Hakim al-Matroudi, *The Ḥanbalī School of Law and Ibn Taymiyya: Conflict or Conciliation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 10–13; also the discussions in Christopher Melchert, *Ahmad ibn Hanbal* (Oneworld: Oxford, 2005), pp. 66–81, esp. pp. 66–9, pp. 78–9. Also see S. Spectorsky, 'Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's *Fiqh*', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 102 (1982), pp. 461–5. See also Joseph Kister, 'Lā taqraᵓū 'l-Qurᵓāna ᶜalā muṣḥafiyyīn wa-lā taḥmilū 'l-ᶜilma ᶜanī l-ṣaḥafiyyīn': Some Notes on the Transmission of Ḥadīth', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 22 (1998), pp. 127–62.

39 On a somewhat related note, it has been argued that the traditionist and jurist Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855), who actually approved of the codification of Prophetic traditions (as far as written notes were concerned), had been averse to the compilation of legal texts. However, the indication is that Ibn Ḥanbal wanted to foster among his followers the ability to pursue an attentive gauging of the original sources of law; and thereby avoid dependence on the derived opinions of individuals. This approach was viewed as being a shield against the practice of *taqlīd*, the 'flexibility' which is provided by this position is not the corollary of a quest to manipulate or circumvent the sources of law. The Ḥanbalī school of jurisprudence emerged as a

result of the efforts of numerous students who recorded his legal opinions and statements in the form of *masāʾil* (legal responsa); these were used not only to determine inductively his general principles of law, but also to furnish the school with a corpus of legal materials. Ibn Ḥanbal was aware that students were codifying his *masāʾil* and making use of them. The fourth century scholar Abū Bakr al-Khallāl (d. 311/923) collated the various *masāʾil* texts authored by Ibn Ḥanbal's students such as al-Athram (d. 260/874) and al-Kawsaj (d. 251/865). These were subsequently pored over in order to present a detailed synthesis of the general legal methodology employed by Ibn Ḥanbal.

40 Michael Cook, 'The Opponents of the Writing of Tradition in Early Islam', *Arabica* 44 (1997), pp. 437–530, reproduced in Michael Cook, *Studies in the Origins of Early Islamic Culture and Tradition* (Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 2004), part 10, pp. i–iii, pp. 437–530, esp. pp. 489–91; Gregor Schoeler, 'Mundliche Thora und Ḥadīth im Islam, berlieferung, Schreibverbot, Redaktion', *Der Islam* 66 (1989), pp. 213–51; Geo Widengren, 'Oral Tradition and Written Literature among the Hebrews in the Light of Arabic Evidence, with Special Regard to Prose Narratives', *Acta Orientalia* 23 (1959), pp. 201–62, p. 238.

41 Michael Cook, 'The Opponents', p. 501.

42 Michael Cook, 'The Opponents', p. 442, p. 476. Furthermore, Cook observed that traditions which are in favour of writing always presuppose a background of hostility and that the traditions on opposition are set in the context of a literate people who are asked to abstain from writing (p. 495). Cf. Alan Jones, 'The Word Made Visible: Arabic Script and the Committing of the Qurʾān to Writing' in Chase F. Robinson (ed.), *Texts, Documents and Artefacts: Islamic Studies in Honour of D.S. Richards*, Islamic History and Civilization: Studies and Texts, 45 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2003), pp. 1–16. In the context of historical works, see also Chase Robinson's *Islamic Historiography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 23–5. The implication is that such writers were operating against a backdrop of opposition to writing.

43 Michael Cook, 'The Opponents', pp. 493–5. Schoeler has responded to this criticism in the addenda, pp. 140–1.

44 It is accepted by scholars that the *aḥādīth* were a critical source for classical Muslim scholarship's theoretical construction of all aspects of the religious tradition that came to represent Islam.

45 Michael Cook, 'The Opponents', p. 522. The nature of the tradition was that there were no internal structures in place to foster the preservation of the oral tradition; the *madrasa* was not invented. Cook suggests that the shift to written methods of preservation became absolutely imperative; the advanced state of the disciplines of philology and grammar helped facilitate the accurate preservation of their tradition. See J.C. De Moor (ed.), *Modern Exegesis and the Literary Conventions of Ancient Israel* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1998).

46 Ibn Khallād al-Rāmahurmuzī, *al-Muḥaddith al-fāṣil bayn al-rāwī waʾl-wāʿī*, ed. M. al-ʿAjāj al-Khaṭīb, 3ʳᵈ edn (n.p.: Dār al-Fikr, 1404) p. 382. Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī speaks of this representing a third *madhdhāb* à propos *tadwīn*: see *Tadrīb al-rāwī fī sharḥ taqrīb al-Nawawī*, ed. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb ʿAbd al-Laṭīf (2 vols. Cairo: Dār al-Turāth, 1972), vol. 2, p. 65.

47 See the chronology of the *gharīb al-ḥadīth* genre cited in the *Fihrist* of Ibn al-Nadīm, p. 51, p. 58, p. 59, p. 61, p. 62, p. 68, p. 74, p. 75, p. 78, p. 82, p. 89, p. 96, p. 119, p. 127, p. 287. For example, Ibn al-Nadīm lists Abū ʿAmr al-Shaybānī (d. 213/828), al-Farrāʾ, Quṭrub (d. 206/821), Abū ʿUbayda (d. 215/830), al-Aṣmaʿī and Abū Zayd al-Anṣārī as authors of *gharīb* works. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī's entry on Abū ʿUbayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām includes a digest of the *gharīb* genre by Ibn Durustawayhi (Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Taʾrīkh Baghdād* (14 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.), vol. 12, p. 405f). We should add that Cook and Schoeler operated on the 'assumption that large amounts of the traditions are likely to be fabricated'. Cook even states that Schoeler was more inclined to accept the

authenticity, or at least the early date, of traditions than I am' (Cook, 'The Opponents', p. 490 and n. 479).

48 Leah Kinberg, '*Muḥkamāt* and *mutashābihāt* (Koran 3/7): Implications of a Koranic Pair of Terms in Medieval Exegesis', *Arabica* 35 (1988), pp. 143–72; Jane Dammen McAuliffe, 'Text and Textuality: Q. 3:7 as a Point of Intersection' in I.J. Boullata (ed.), *Literary Structures of Religious Meaning in the Qur'an* (London: Curzon Press, 2000), pp. 56–76; Ella Almagor, 'The Early Meaning of Majāz and the Nature of Abū ʿUbayda's Exegesis', *Studia Orientalia Memoriae D.H. Baneth Dedicata* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1979), pp. 307–26; Harris Birkeland, *Old Muslim Opposition Against the Interpretation of the Koran* (Oslo: n.p., 1956). Many of these articles are reproduced in Andrew Rippin (ed.), *The Qur'ān: Formative Interpretation* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1999). The Qur'an states that those who are perverted dissipate their energies seeking to grapple with the profundities of these ayas; but only the Almighty and those firm in knowledge comprehend their import (Q. 3:7). It was the opinion of some scholars that only the Almighty was aware of their import. However, the various *lectiones* associated with this verse did allow alternative opinions to be expressed. Wansbrough sensed a measure of simplicity in Abbott's approach, he argued that reports detailing widespread opposition to *tafsīr* had a canonising role: his view was that opposition to exegesis sustains the impression of a fixed body of scripture. See Wansborough, *Quranic Studies*, p. 158.

49 Pp. 51–4. Schoeler has translated Abū ʿUbayda's *Majāz al-Qur'ān* as 'The Book of Figurative Language in the Qur'ān'. This should be translated as 'The Book of the Explanatory Language of the Qur'ān'. Neither metaphor nor figurative language is the principal concern of this work; and the suggestion is that the term had yet to emerge as a *terminus technicus*. Ibn Taymiyya, in his critique of the concept of *majāz*, had emphasised the point that classical jurists, including many celebrated Ḥanbalī luminaries such as Abū Yaʿlā and Ibn ʿAqīl had accepted its incidence in Arabic, emphasising that Ibn Ḥanbal had endorsed this concept. Ibn Taymiyya dismisses this, arguing through reference to Abū ʿUbayda's *Majāz al-Qur'ān*, that in these earlier contexts the references to *majāz* had little connection with metaphor or figurative language. See Mustafa Shah, 'The Philological Endeavours – Part I', pp. 27–46; Mustafa Shah, 'The Philological Endeavours of the Early Arabic Linguists: Theological Implications of the *tawqīf–iṣṭilāḥ* Antithesis and the *majāz* Controversy – Part II', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 2:1 (2000), pp. 44–66; ʿAbd al-Qādir ibn Badrān al-Dimashqī, *al-Madkhal ilā madhhab al-imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risāla, 1981). Heinrichs has argued that the term connotes explanatory rewriting, see W. Heinrichs, 'On the Genesis of the *ḥaqīqa majāz* Dichotomy', *Studia Islamica* 59 (1984), pp. 111–40.

50 Al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad al-Farahīdī, *Kitāb al-ʿayn*, ed. M. Makhzūmī and I. Samarrāʾī (8 vols. Baghdad, Beirut: n.p., 1980–5). See Karin Ryding (ed.), *Early Medieval Arabic: Studies on al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1998).

51 Muhammad Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, ed. R. Tajaddud, 3rd edn (Beirut: Dār al-Maṣīra, 1988), p. 48. See also See Ramzi Baalbaki, '*Kitāb al-ʿAyn and Jamharat al-Lugha*' in Ryding (ed.), *Early Medieval Arabic*, pp. 44–62. Cf. Zubaydī, *Ṭabaqāt al-naḥwiyyīn* (Jalāl al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Suyūṭī, *al-Muzhir fī ʿulūm al-lugha wa-anwāʿihā*, ed. M.A. Jād al-Mawlā, A.M. al-Bajāwī, M.A. Ibrāhīm (2 vols. Cairo: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Kutub al-ʿArabiyya, 1970), vol. 2, pp. 77–92).

52 Michael Carter, *Sībawayhi*, Makers of Islamic Civilization Series (London and New York: Oxford University Press, I.B. Tauris, 2004), p. 27f; also Gerard Troupeau, *Lexique-index du kitāb Sībawayhi* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1976). Yūnus is cited in the *Kitāb* of Sībawayhi some 217 times as an authority on grammatical issues.

53 Rafael Talmon, *Arabic Grammar in its Formative Age, Kitāb al-ʿAyn and its Attribution to Khalīl Ibn Aḥmad* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997); Rafael Talmon, *Eighth-Century Iraqi Grammar: a Critical Exploration of Pre-Khalīlian Arabic Linguistics* (Winona Lake Indiana: Harvard Semitic Publications, 2003).

54 Kamāl al-Dīn Abū'l-Barakāt ibn al-Anbārī, *Nuzhat al-alibbāʾ: fī ṭabaqāt al-udabāʾ*, ed. Ibrāhīm al-Samarrāʾī (al-Zarqāʾ: Maktabat al-Manār, 1985), p. 59. Similar reports are found in al-Khaṭīb's *Taʾrīkh Baghdād* and Yāqūt's *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*.

55 The Kūfan al-Kisāʾī, who is said to have studied with al-Khalīl, is reported to have been advised by him to seek out the language of the Bedouins of Ḥijāz, Najd and Tihāma; al-Kisāʾī supposedly travelled to these areas, compiling philological records.

56 On the contrary, these modern scholars would have been aware of the so-called *ṭuraq taḥammul al-ʿilm* which were in place in the classical tradition.

57 Incidentally, the Kufan philologist al-Mufaḍḍal ibn Salama authored a critique of the *Kitāb al-ʿayn* which was refuted by the Basran Ibn Durastawayhi (d. 346/958).

58 Given the involved nature of the arguments expounded upon in these articles, it is impressive that Uwe Vagelpohl has managed to achieve such an accomplished translation.

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In a well-known *ḥadīth*, the angel Gabriel asks the Prophet about the three key dimensions of Islam. The first two relate to the pillars of ritual practice and core doctrines. In response to the third question, about *iḥsān*, the Prophet describes it as worshipping God as if you see Him, and if you do not see Him, then, the Prophet declares, know that He sees you. From this third dimension (the spiritual domain which exists even if unseen), Ṣūfism emerged as an integral part of the religious heritage of Islam. Ṣūfism is, as the *ḥadīth* suggests, primarily about the believer's relationship with God beyond official duties and beliefs. Thus, God, even if wholly unlike His creation, is somehow present to it and intimately engaged with it, even if mysteriously so. This idea, however, raises a number of theological challenges, underscoring the fact that the theological project in Islam is not limited to definitions about the nature and qualities of the transcendent God but also includes the need to account systematically for His relationship with existence, especially human existence.

Sufism and Theology draws attention to this overlooked but very important aspect of theological reflection in Islam as played out in diverse ways over the centuries. It is common to think about theology in Islam simply as *kalām* (dialectic theology) whereby the representatives of Islam's various sects defend their creedal definitions. However, Ṣūfism demands reflection that goes beyond apologetics to what could be called systematic theology, religious reflection on 'the whole', i.e. God and existence. This collection of articles very helpfully illustrates how Ṣūfism is actually part and parcel of the theological spectrum of Islam, and that at a time when, in contrast to earlier Orientalist assumptions, we now better understand how integrally related it is to Sharīʿa as well.