

Book Reviews

The Ḥanbalī School of Law and Ibn Taymiyya: Conflict or Conciliation.

By Abdul Hakim al-Matroudi. Culture and Civilisation in the Middle East Series. London and New York: Routledge, 2006. Pp. 282. £60.00.

The figure of Ibn Taymiyya looms large within the tradition of Ḥanbalī legal thought. Yet, the nature of his affiliation to this school of jurisprudence has long been a point of contention in classical biographical literature with the opinion often expressed that despite impressively attaining absolute status as a jurist, he remained closely aligned with the school of Ḥanbalī law and its traditions of legal thought. Attempting to shed light on the complexities which underpin Ibn Taymiyya's relationship with this school, the work under review not only assesses the substantial nature of his contribution to the school's legal discourse, principles, and methodology, but also scrutinises key points of departure underlining the intricacies of his traditionalist attitude towards the synthesis of the sources of Islamic law and their interpretation. In the process the book provides a valuable digest of the history of the Ḥanbalī school of jurisprudence in both its classical and modern contexts, outlining the major sources of literature utilised within the school together with the theoretical framework within which its orthodox credentials were forged. Despite the fact that Ibn Taymiyya is of course renowned for his strict theological orthodoxy, with this text one gets a real sense of the magnitude of his contributions to the field of Ḥanbalī jurisprudence and the rigour and authority with which this was determinedly accomplished.

The first chapter in this text provides historical sketches of the lives of the two figures whose legal legacies and thought lie at the core of this book's focus: Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855) and Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328). Citing the traditional biographical sources, Matroudi remarks that in his early career Ibn Ḥanbal studied with some of the leading luminaries of the science of tradition (*ahl al-ḥadīth*) such as Hushaym (d. 183/799), Sufyān ibn °Uyayna (d. 198/814) and °Abd al-Razzāq al-°San°ānī (d. 211/826). It is noted that he was trained in rational forms of juridical thought associated with the so-called *ahl al-ra'y* (advocates of speculative reasoning in approaches to the interpretation of law);¹ traditional scholarship has identified this rational form of juridical thought with luminaries of the Ḥanafī tradition such as Abū Yūsuf (d. 182/798), with whom Ibn Ḥanbal studied jurisprudence and Ḥadīth (p. 6). Despite the fact that a number of biographical reports mention Ibn Ḥanbal's having committed to memory some of the principal treatises composed by jurists affiliated to the *ahl al-ra'y*, Matroudi mentions that he developed a preference for the 'method of *Ahl al-Ḥadīth*', adducing the statement of Ibn Taymiyya who spoke of the fact that 'although Ibn Ḥanbal was from al-Baṣra, he did not follow the method of this region

in studying law; rather he adhered to the method of *Ahl al-Ḥadīth*' (p. 6). Referring briefly to the infamous episode of the *mihna* from which Ibn Ḥanbal is commonly viewed to have emerged as a champion of Sunnī orthodoxy, Matroudi argues that Ibn Ḥanbal's reputation as a scholar of distinction and a pillar of piety was established well before this event.²

Matroudi next considers some of the arguments concerning the issue of whether Ibn Ḥanbal was acknowledged among his peers as an esteemed jurist, which was a moot point for some classical writers. Both al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) and, much later, al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ (d. 544/1149) are reported as having viewed him as being principally a scholar of Ḥadīth.³ Indeed, al-Ṭabarī's seminal work, entitled *Ikhtilāf al-fuqahā'*, which offers a miscellany of juridical views expressed by the leading jurists up to his age, included none of Ibn Ḥanbal's legal opinions.⁴ The view that Ibn Ḥanbal was not taken seriously as a jurist has been touched upon within modern academic scholarship: Wael Hallaq has alluded to the fact that Ibn Ḥanbal could hardly be said to have approached the rank of individuals such as Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 150/767), Mālik ibn Anas (d. 179/795), and al-Shāfiʿī (d. 204/820); and that this was accepted by many of his own key students. Hallaq here cites a statement made by the Ḥanbalī jurist Najm al-Dīn al-Ṭūfi (d. 716/1316), who remarked that Ibn Ḥanbal was concerned exclusively with 'Ḥadīth and its collection'. Rejecting the inference that classical scholarship had dismissed his importance as a jurist, Matroudi draws attention to the fact that notable contemporaries who were acquainted with Ibn Ḥanbal's scholarship, such as the famous traditionist al-Nasāʾī (d. 303/915), spoke of his combining knowledge of both traditions and jurisprudence.⁵ He argues that some classical scholars might have entertained doubts about Ibn Ḥanbal's status as a jurist due to the fact that he did not author a specific work on jurisprudence, and claims that this created the impression that he was not particularly concerned with the subject. Quoting from a statement by Ibn Qayyim (d. 751/1350), who reports that Ibn Ḥanbal was utterly averse to the authorship of books, Matroudi stresses that negative attitudes towards the authorship of works were in the ascendancy among scholars of Ibn Ḥanbal's traditionalist persuasion.⁶

On a somewhat related note, the issues of literacy, orality and the transmission of knowledge within the early Islamic tradition have been the subject of a number of studies by Gregor Schoeler. He has made the point that, in the early years of the Islamic tradition, the exclusively written word was not deemed to be an assurance of authenticity as far as the transmission of knowledge was concerned, noting that learning transmitted through the established lecture system by methods such as *samāʿ* and *qirāʾa* was believed to be so much more trustworthy. 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'.⁷ Interestingly, on the subject of the well-documented aversion to the codification of the Ḥadīth, which was apparently

predominant in places such as Kufa and Basra, Ibn Ḥanbal did prefer scholars of Ḥadīth to make use of written notes and aides-mémoires when transmitting traditions.⁸ On the other hand, his mentor, Hushaym, is reported to have said that those who do not know the Ḥadīth by heart cannot be enumerated among the scholars of tradition.⁹ As Matroudi states, despite encouraging the use of written notes for the transmission and preservation of Ḥadīth, Ibn Ḥanbal believed that 'jurisprudential opinions should not be recorded' (p. 10).¹⁰ His belief was that this would foster a profound appreciation of the founding 'sources of legislation'. The suggestion is that such a circumspect grasp of these sources could not be achieved simply through written means; and therefore his not authoring a text on jurisprudence should not be used to question his standing as a jurist. This stance does, however, raise the question of why many among his contemporary peers did choose to compile legal works. Moreover, it is probably the case that the controversy regarding Ibn Ḥanbal's standing as a jurist has its origins in the debates concerning attitudes towards the synthesis of law; indeed, Matroudi himself has already emphasised the fact that Ibn Ḥanbal adhered to the method of the *ahl al-ḥadīth* in his approach to jurisprudence. Nevertheless, as far as Matroudi is concerned, the historical evidence shows that Ibn Ḥanbal's status as a jurist is indisputable. On the subject of the texts attributed to Ibn Ḥanbal, Matroudi lists works such as the famous *Musnad*, *Faḍā'il al-ṣaḥāba* and *al-'Ilal wa-ma'rifat al-rijāl*; he also mentions the *Jawābāt al-Qur'ān* and *al-Radd 'alā al-Jahmiyya*, although doubts remain regarding the ascription of this latter work.

In providing a brief survey of the historical foundations of Ḥanbalī jurisprudence, Matroudi draws specific attention to the importance of the genre of *masā'il* literature. These *masā'il* works preserved the panoply of legal opinions proffered by Ibn Ḥanbal on various legal topics. Despite Ibn Ḥanbal's own opposition to the practice of recording his legal views and opinions, a number of his students went on to compile such texts (p. 11). The genre was critical to the emergence of the Ḥanbalī school of jurisprudence as the materials in these *masā'il* texts were inductively poured over by later scholarship and used to define the juridical methodology applied by Ibn Ḥanbal in his approach to the scriptural sources.¹¹ It has recently been stated that although the *masā'il* literature do not purport to be the very writings of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, they 'seem much truer to life than books from other schools'.¹² Scholars who collated the legal opinions and discussions of Ibn Ḥanbal included al-Athram (d. 260/874), al-Kawsaj (d. 251/865) and Ibn Ḥanbal's sons, 'Abd Allāh and Ṣāliḥ.¹³ Matroudi does highlight the importance of the efforts of Abū Bakr al-Khallāl (d. 311/923) who actually performed the task of collating the various *masā'il* texts compiled by Ibn Ḥanbal's students. Hallaq's observation regarding the accomplishments of al-Khallāl is somewhat relevant to this discussion. He claims that Ibn Ḥanbal 'had never interested himself in law *per se*, and when he did occasionally deal with legal issues, he did so in a marginal and tangential manner'.¹⁴ Hallaq insists that al-Khallāl

‘essentially transformed Ibn Ḥanbal into the author of a methodologically cogent legal doctrine that sustained all later doctrinal developments’. In his view the emergence of the Ḥanbalī school represents a feature of ‘authority construction’, in which the doctrines of the reputed founders of a tradition were ‘disassociated from those of their predecessors, but also expanded to include the juristic achievements of their followers’. Matroudi provides an entirely different perspective, contending that although the efforts of al-Khallāl were critical to the formation of the Ḥanbalī tradition, the definitive tenor of the legal discourse derived from Ibn Ḥanbal crucially furnished the school with its own unique tradition; and this was reflected in both its corpus of positive law and its synthesis of the principles of jurisprudence. To underline this point he adduces the statement of Ibn Taymiyya who remarked that ‘al-Khallāl was not thoroughly conversant with all of Aḥmad’s jurisprudential *masā’il*’, implying that the corpus of legal material bequeathed by the school’s eponym was more extensive than hitherto perceived. Matroudi ends this section by reviewing the historical spread of the school.

Turning his attention to Ibn Taymiyya and his place within the tradition of legal thought, Matroudi notes that he came from a family of distinguished jurists: his grandfather al-Majd and his father °Abd al-Halīm were both leading Ḥanbalī luminaries. The political and social unrest which followed the Mongol invasions resulted in the family leaving Ḥarrān and settling in Damascus (p. 15). Notably, Ibn Taymiyya studied with scholars of all the predominant traditions of jurisprudence, but it was during his youth that he was trained in Ḥanbalī legal thought. In this context, Matroudi does mention that during these unsettled times, ‘intolerance and conflict were common among the dominant religious schools of thought’ (p. 15). He also refers to the fact that during the early years of his career, Ibn Taymiyya had excellent relations with the ruling Mamlūks and his counsel was often sought by al-Nāṣir (d. 741/1341) (p. 17). However, this state of affairs soon changed as he clashed on theological issues with opponents who were often members of the judiciary and influential state officials. One particular clash with the authorities was triggered by Ibn Taymiyya’s authorship of *al-Risāla al-ḥamawiyya* and a further text *al-Risāla al-wāsiṭiyya*, in which rigorous defences of traditionalist approaches to dogma and doctrine were set out (p. 18). These epistles censured the resort to figurative treatments of dogmatic topics associated with Ibn Taymiyya’s theological opponents the Ash‘arīs. The historical background of the issues at stake are not examined by Matroudi, although he clearly stresses that in his writings Ibn Taymiyya continually invoked an orthodox substrate which underpinned his own arguments. He also refers to there being disagreements on a range of legal and ritual topics which helped fuel the controversies and disputes between Ibn Taymiyya and his opponents. One of these disputes stemmed from Ibn Taymiyya’s views on the religious legitimacy of visiting shrines, while the other resulted from his arguments over the efficacy of casual oaths

and the practical status of the intended triple divorce, a matter which brought him into conflict with his Ḥanbalī peers (p. 20).¹⁵ Matroudi tends to see the essence of the antipathy between Ibn Taymiyya and his opponents as emanating not only from disagreements concerning jurisprudence and theology but also because his stature as a scholar aroused 'a degree of envy and antagonism on the part of some of his contemporaries' (p. 20).¹⁶ This may well be the case, although it seems safe to conclude that tensions resulting from differences concerning theological issues between the Ash'arīs and their traditionalist opponents do lie at the core of a number of the controversies in which he was involved. The roots of this hostility have their origin in the earlier tradition and represent an ongoing struggle for expressions of orthodoxy within the confines of Sunnism.

It is no surprise that this course of events had such a dramatic impact upon the life of Ibn Taymiyya even though, as Matroudi remarks, many of his distinguished contemporaries were prepared to come to his defence. Included among them is the esteemed Shāfi'ī scholar Ibn Daqīq al-ʿĪd (d. 702/1302), and no less a figure than al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348), who, despite disagreeing with him on key issues, described him as being an absolute *mujtahid* whose 'mistakes should be excused'. With this in mind, Matroudi categorically questions the authenticity of a treatise entitled *al-Naṣīḥa al-Dhahabiyya ilā Ibn Taymiyya*, which al-Dhahabī is said to have authored criticising Ibn Taymiyya (p. 22); Donald Little has argued that the ascription is reliable,¹⁷ a conclusion he reaches in an article which uses *al-Naṣīḥa al-Dhahabiyya* to evaluate the famous remarks of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa (d. 779/1377) regarding Ibn Taymiyya's state of mind.¹⁸ The rest of this chapter lists Ibn Taymiyya's literary legacy, including works in the field of jurisprudence and *uṣūl al-fiqh*. Matroudi notes that al-Dhahabī spoke of his authoring some '4,000 *kurrāsa* (small booklets) or some 5,000 *mujallad* (volumes)' (p. 24). Such prolific authorship would seem to confirm the extent of his contribution to classical legal discourse in general, and more specifically the Ḥanbalī school, although underpinning many of these compilations lies Ibn Taymiyya's quest for independent legal reasoning unshackled by loyalties to individual schools of legal thought. Matroudi believes that this is reflected in the ethos which marked Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's own juridical methodology. This symmetry in legal perspectives would seem to extend to both individuals' attitude to theological issues.

The basic principles of Islamic law according to both Ibn Ḥanbal and Ibn Taymiyya are the subject of a comparative study in Chapter Two of this book. Given that Ibn Ḥanbal did not author a work outlining his own principles of law, it was the rich stock of *masā'il* compilations which were inductively probed by his students in order to flesh out and reconstruct the theoretical bases of his legal methodology. Thus, as early as the third/ninth century scholars such as al-Athram were already attempting to 'infer' the general legal principles applied by Ibn Ḥanbal (p. 33).¹⁹ However, it is the compilations of leading scholars such as Ibn Abī Ya'ālā (d. 526/1132), Ibn

Tamīm (d. 675/1276) and Ibn Qayyim which are referenced by Matroudi for their definitions of Ibn Ḥanbal's *uṣūl*. Although Ibn Ḥanbal accepted the same sources of law acknowledged by the other mainstream legal schools: namely, the Qur'an, the Sunna, *ijmā'* and *qiyās*, Matroudi points out that among Ḥanbalī jurists there existed stark differences regarding the precise identification and classification of these sources of law, particularly as far as the concepts of consensus (*ijmā'*) and analogical reasoning (*qiyās*) were concerned (pp. 36–8). The contentious point for modern scholarship is the position taken by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal on the authority of analogical reasoning: Hallaq and Melchert maintain that Ibn Ḥanbal continued to harbour reservations concerning the resort to this legal device despite countenancing certain exceptions, and that he adopted an anti-rationalist approach to the interpretation of law.²⁰ Matroudi offers a more nuanced qualification of Ibn Ḥanbal's attitude to such methodologies and concepts,²¹ and goes on, later in this chapter, to demonstrate that Ibn Taymiyya was clearly of the view that the legal ethos of the Ḥanbalī school of jurisprudence and its eponym was anchored to a thoroughly orthodox treatment of the Qur'an and Sunna; moreover (pp. 41–3), it flowed from the *uṣūl madhhab al-Madīna (ahl al-ḥadīth)*. Matroudi argues that Ibn Taymiyya applied the same methodological approaches to the sources of law adhered to by Ibn Ḥanbal and therefore he was essentially a 'dependent absolute *mujtahid*', which, within the hierarchy of distinguished Ḥanbalī scholars, places him among the ranks of luminaries such as Abū Ya'la (d. 458/1066), Ibn 'Aqīl (d. 515/1119) and Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb (d. 636/1236).

Matroudi is keen to point out that Ibn Taymiyya's adoption of Ibn Ḥanbal's theoretical approach to the sources of law was not a result of slavish adherence to this individual or indeed the legal school that developed around him. But, rather, it was inspired by the view that in Ibn Taymiyya's judgement, Ibn Ḥanbal's methodology had meticulously encapsulated the most orthodox approach to the interpretation of the law and one with which the pious ancestors would have been in agreement. As Matroudi notes, Ibn Taymiyya insisted that the Ḥanbalīs had 'fewer disagreements among themselves than those of any other schools of law' (p. 41). Interestingly, even at junctures in which Ibn Taymiyya found himself to be at variance with the school on issues of interpretation, such differences were never viewed as being the consequence of disagreements with the school's eponym, but rather with later scholarship's reading of Ibn Ḥanbal's position on given points of law and sundry methodological procedures; or, that conflicting narrations on the authority of Ibn Ḥanbal utilised by later scholarship lay at the source of this discord (pp. 48–9). Nonetheless, disagreements with the opinions and rulings of Ibn Ḥanbal did occur. Matroudi indicates that in such instances it was often the case that these differences resulted from Ibn Ḥanbal's being unaware of certain narrations on given subjects, while on other occasions Ibn Ḥanbal could not have known that specifically cited traditions

which he had relied upon were subsequently proved by scholarship to be inauthentic.²²

Revision and modification play a significant part in Ibn Taymiyya's contributions to Ḥanbalī legal thought both in the areas of *uṣūl* and positive law, and these areas are explored in considerable depth in Chapters Three and Four. The rigorous nature of Ibn Taymiyya's scrutiny of the school's legal methodology and discourse is reflected in the criticisms he directed at al-Khallāl, whom he claimed omitted many of the *masā'il* ascribed to Ibn Ḥanbal (p. 56). One might add here the observation that, on the contrary, Ibn Qayyim appeared to be of the view that as a result of al-Khallāl's endeavours only a little of Ibn Ḥanbal's legal materials were lost.²³ Other figures singled out by Ibn Taymiyya include al-Khiraqī, who is said to have been the source of incorrect rulings subsequently ascribed to Ibn Ḥanbal, and Abū Ya'ālā, whose legal opinions were subjected to criticism by Ibn Taymiyya; additionally, the legal rulings and statements proffered by luminaries from the later tradition were authoritatively subjected to scrutiny. Matroudi's key point is that a spirit of revision and clarification determined Ibn Taymiyya's contributions to Ḥanbalī jurisprudence. The fact that Ibn Taymiyya was such an observant and perceptive authority on the legal sources and principles of the school would appear to confirm that the *uṣūl* ascribed to Ibn Ḥanbal were more elaborate than hitherto recognised by scholars such as Hallaq: indeed, Ibn Taymiyya does not seem to have questioned the efficacy of the actual processes through which Ibn Ḥanbal's *uṣūl* were inferred. Topics highlighted by Matroudi to exemplify Ibn Taymiyya's appraisal of the school's theoretical apparatus include consensus; the use of weak traditions; the phenomenon of metaphor in language; the *mujtahid* and issues of correctness and error; the division of the Sharī'c along the lines of *uṣūl* and *furū'*; comprehension of texts; Islamic law and the Arabs; *maṣlaḥa*; the definition of *ra'y*; the postponement of the clarification of a ruling; issues pertaining to *taqlīd*; and corrections of misunderstandings of other schools of law by Ḥanbalī scholars.

Matroudi shows that many of the objections raised by Ibn Taymiyya apropos these key theoretical issues were based on the view that Ibn Ḥanbal's stance on such subjects was misconstrued by later Ḥanbalī scholars. The claim by some Ḥanbalī jurists that Ibn Ḥanbal permitted the use of weak traditions as a source of law is an excellent case in point (pp. 59–60). Ibn Taymiyya contended that while Ibn Ḥanbal's sources of law do refer to the contingent use of weak traditions, the technical compass of the term *ḍa'īf* did not connote weakness in the technically derived sense that marked the term's usage in later Ḥadīth terminology. The argument is that prior to al-Tirmidhī (d. 279/892), who introduced the terms *ṣaḥīḥ*, *ḥasan* and *ḍa'īf*, scholars divided traditions into *ṣaḥīḥ* and *ḍa'īf*. Thus, Ibn Ḥanbal was referring to a different category of tradition which would in effect be classed in the later tradition as being *ḥasan*. Matroudi does then have to deal with the fact that a recent study has shown that

the term *ḥasan* was used by Ibn al-Madīnī (d. 234/848), al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870) and even Ibn Ḥanbal, however, he argues that fine distinctions between the earlier and later import of the term *ḥasan* do not impinge upon the validity of the arguments made by Ibn Taymiyya (p. 61).

The incidence of metaphor in the language of Arabic is likewise an issue on which Ibn Taymiyya claimed that Ibn Ḥanbal's views had been misinterpreted. Matroudi maintains that linguistic issues do have a significant impact upon the manner by which scriptural sources are interpreted in both legal and theological contexts. However, one senses that the arguments which Ibn Taymiyya espouses on the subject of denying the existence of metaphors in the language of the Arabs were principally driven by theological as opposed to juridical imperatives. Discourse on the incidence of metaphor, which had later become associated with obviating anthropomorphic imagery predicated of God, appears to go back to Ibn Ḥanbal's use of the term *majāz* in the treatise which is ascribed to him entitled *Kitāb al-radd ʿalā Jahmiyya wa'l-Zanādiqa*.²⁴ Ibn Taymiyya seized on the fact that at that time when Ibn Ḥanbal used the term *majāz* it did not connote metaphor: the early grammarians' use of this term confirmed this much.²⁵ Despite this fact, scholars such as Abū Yaʿlā, Ibn ʿAqīl and Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb all referred to Ibn Ḥanbal's employment of this term to sanction their view that metaphors do occur in the Qur'an and the language of the Arabs. As Matroudi shows, Ibn Taymiyya's arguments regarding the import of this term, particularly in the context of the technical terminology of Arabic linguistic thought, are compelling, but one has to accept that later Ḥanbalī scholars did not revise their position.²⁶ Nevertheless, these sorts of examples illustrate the assiduousness with which Ibn Taymiyya engaged in the treatment of topics of this nature. Deliberations on the topic of metaphor belong to a protracted debate in which Ibn Taymiyya's contribution to the discussions forms a subsequent part of that discourse, and this is a point that Matroudi underscores.²⁷

On a somewhat related note, when considering whether it was permissible to divide the Sharīʿa into *uṣūl* and *furūʿ*, a division rejected by Ibn Taymiyya but adhered to by most jurists, Matroudi notes that this binary categorisation of the Sharīʿa is effectively acknowledged by Ibn Taymiyya in a number of his later treatises (pp. 69–72). Matroudi maintains that this possibly indicates that Ibn Taymiyya changed his opinion on the subject, although he also acknowledges that there may have been practical reasons for accepting this division: namely that Ibn Taymiyya felt it necessary to entertain discussions on the subject with his peers whose writings were replete with references to this epistemic category.²⁸

While the previous chapter focused on Ibn Taymiyya's contributions to theoretical issues within the sphere of the principles of law, Chapter Four looks at 'clarifications and corrections' made by Ibn Taymiyya to both the corpus of Ḥanbalī *fiqh* and

methodological conventions and terminologies adopted within the school. Matroudi selects seven areas of law to illustrate the magnitude of Ibn Taymiyya's contributions, thereby underlining his status as a 'dependent absolute *mujtahid*'. These include innovation (*bid'ā*); *hiyal* (legal stratagems); the use of precaution and piety; incorrect legal opinions; jurisprudential terminology; jurisprudential rules; and narrations. Matroudi contends that such contributions demonstrate the resolve with which Ibn Taymiyya was prepared to question his Ḥanbalī peers whenever he felt that their legal opinions could not be reconciled within the spirit of legal orthodoxy defined by what he perceived was the authenticated Prophetic Sunna, a point emphasised throughout this book. Matroudi provides us with some insightful glimpses into his general philosophy: for example, when Ibn Taymiyya acknowledged that juridical inaccuracies and inconsistencies existed in the corpus of Ḥanbalī *fiqh*, his resourceful approach was to insist that these stemmed from opinions and doctrines which were erroneously assimilated into the school's legal discourse: they were therefore the result of methodological and theoretical oversights by scholars who were under the impression that they were operating within the general legal philosophy of the Ḥanbalī school (pp. 93–4). This permits Ibn Taymiyya to contend that Ibn Ḥanbal was seldom the source of juridical differences or indeed incorrect rulings (see p. 93, but also p. 109 and p. 126). As Matroudi demonstrates, the tenor of Ibn Taymiyya's argument is forthright: later Ḥanbalī scholarship had to be held to account for misconstruing responsa and inaccuracies in the processes of ascribing legal views to Ibn Ḥanbal.

While reviewing the subject of innovation, Matroudi does emphasise the point that according to Ibn Taymiyya its incidence was more prevalent in matters relating to acts of worship as opposed to dogmatic issues, but that, equally, the Ḥanbalī school was less prone to innovation than the other schools of jurisprudence (p. 94). A strict attitude to the interpretation of the sources symbolised Ibn Taymiyya's relationship with the Ḥanbalī school and indeed the other traditions of jurisprudence. He was only prepared to defend the school if its stance could be reconciled within the spirit of legal orthodoxy championed by the pious ancestors. Accordingly, it was this spirit of orthodoxy which had to be applied not only in assessing the sum and substance of the legal teachings of the Ḥanbalī school of law but that of all the other schools. This outlook is evident in Ibn Taymiyya's criticism of the practice of physically articulating intentions before acts of worship, a practice which a number of prominent Ḥanbalī and Shāfi'ī scholars sanctioned (p. 95f.). Perhaps this sums up the central argument of this book: namely, that the central authority of the construct of authenticated Prophetic Sunna was purposefully enshrined within the paradigmatic legal framework developed by both Ibn Ḥanbal and Ibn Taymiyya; and, that this construct governed both figures' attitudes towards interpreting law.

The tenacity with which Ibn Taymiyya was prepared to champion orthodoxy is best exemplified by Matroudi's discussion of the controversy which followed his issuing

an edict on the subject of travelling for the purpose of visiting graves. Ibn Taymiyya had made the case that if such visits sought to remind the believer of the reality of the hereafter, they were unquestionably recommended, but to visit such locations with the sole intention of venerating the graves of those buried there could not be justified. Ibn Taymiyya adduced Prophetic dicta which expressly prohibited this practice and felt that the act itself was tantamount to polytheism.²⁹ Discussions regarding the permissibility of visiting the Prophet's grave were soon brought into the various arguments (p. 97). Ibn Taymiyya regarded these visits as being equally reprehensible, particularly if their select purpose was to seek benediction (*al-tabarruk*). The cudgels of his arguments on this issue were enthusiastically taken up by Ibn Qayyim.³⁰ Ibn Taymiyya found himself in conflict with many of his jurist peers, including leading Ḥanbalī scholars, and it was his position on this issue which was later used to secure his detention. Matroudi argues that ideological opponents of Ibn Taymiyya certainly exploited the episode to denounce him and his defenders. Classical biographical literature is replete with accounts of this affair and its aftermath.³¹

Having shown that Ibn Taymiyya was prepared to criticise his Ḥanbalī peers for approving of legal devices and concepts such as the use of *ḥiyal* and *al-iḥṭiyāt wa'l-wara'* ('precaution and piety'), Matroudi looks at the fascinating issue of incorrect rulings which Ibn Taymiyya claimed were present in Ḥanbalī *fiqh*. Authoritatively, Ibn Taymiyya was always able to explain why there existed such a large body of conflicting opinions within the Ḥanbalī school (pp. 108–9). However, while the topics chosen by Matroudi reveal the influence that Ibn Taymiyya was able to exert on the various debates, to an extent, they also coincidentally show that a number of Ḥanbalī luminaries were prepared to challenge consistently points of law which had been defended by Ibn Taymiyya.³² The reference to the sale and replacement of endowments provides an apposite example (pp. 113–4). Ibn Taymiyya took the view that it was permissible to sell or replace endowments without taking into account the aspect of yield; while Ḥanbalī scholars had stressed that replacing endowments was only permissible in instances when the yield was unfruitful. The former view was defended by a student of Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn Qāḍī al-Jabal; but he was vehemently criticised by the famous Jamāl al-Dīn al-Mardāwī (d. 769/1367), who stated that such a ruling was contrary to the general principles applied within the Ḥanbalī school and even composed a refutation devoted to the question (p. 114). Obviously, Matroudi's point is that the opinion outlined by Ibn Taymiyya, along with many other similar revisions, was given currency within the later Ḥanbalī tradition as a valid perspective of the school, which was certainly receptive to engaging in such discussions. The chapter moves on to explore the jurisprudential terminology of the Ḥanbalī school; jurisprudential rules; narrations attributed to Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and shown by Ibn Taymiyya to be incorrect; and, finally, actual narrations of Ibn Ḥanbal proved by Ibn Taymiyya to be incorrect. The ensuing analysis confirms that Ibn Taymiyya's

loyalties were not purely determined by the methodology, procedures and legal rulings defined by the Ḥanbalī school, but rather by an adherence to what he believed to be an orthodox explication of the Qur'an and the Prophetic Sunna. It is in this context that Ibn Taymiyya's fastidiously rigorous attitude to the sources of law has to be understood. Moreover, it also defined his relationship with the Ḥanbalī school.

In Chapter Five of this text Matroudi reviews Ibn Taymiyya's influence upon later generations of Ḥanbalī jurists. The individuals selected by Matroudi to highlight the extent of his influence within the later Ḥanbalī tradition are Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751/1350), Ibn Mufliḥ (d. 763/1362), al-Jurā'ī (d. 883/1478), al-Mardāwī, al-Ḥajjāwī (d. 968/1561), Ibn al-Najjār (d. 972/1564), al-Karmī (d. 1033/1623), al-Buhūti (d. 1051/1641), Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb (d. 1206/1791), al-Sa'dī (d. 1376/1976) and Ibn 'Uthaymīn (d. 1421/2000). Regarding the most prominent of Ibn Taymiyya's students, Ibn Qayyim, the case is made that despite the latter figure's reverence for his mentor and his view of him as being an outstanding scholar in the fields of theology, Ḥadīth and law, he did not slavishly emulate his teacher when dealing with legal discussions, a point also made by the Shāfi'ī scholar and traditionist Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (d. 852/1449) (p. 134). Matroudi reasons that Ibn Qayyim adopted the same analytical and independent approach to the synthesis of the sources of law advocated by his mentor and, as a result of this, he was often in disagreement with Ibn Taymiyya over a range of subjects (p. 135). Matroudi suggests that Ibn Qayyim was influenced in his jurisprudence by other prominent scholars, although his relationship with the Ḥanbalī school of law was very similar in nature to that of Ibn Taymiyya. Having said that, Matroudi is appreciative of the fact that Ibn Qayyim does not cite his shaykh that frequently, despite his evidently being influenced by him. The renowned Ibn Mufliḥ, who played a significant role in transmitting the legal legacy of Ibn Taymiyya, is shown to have occasionally disputed opinions and rulings reached by Ibn Taymiyya as well as questioning his use of proofs (p. 139). Indeed, on some issues he sided with the views adopted by certain Ḥanbalī scholars against those of his mentor. Matroudi reasons that such individuals were encouraged by Ibn Taymiyya to be independent in their juridical thought as long as they honoured the authenticated sources of law and applied valid approaches to their synthesis and exposition. His view was that independent reasoning is obligatory for those who possess the skill and ability to scrutinise the legal sources.³³ Within the framework of *ijtihād*, if the ruling of a scholar contravened incontrovertible evidence, then it had to be discarded. Even with later figures such as Ibn Mufliḥ and al-Mardāwī, there was a tendency to quote extensively the opinions of Ibn Taymiyya; yet, for these two scholars, his views do not appear to have had an impact 'upon their jurisprudential opinions' (p. 169). Matroudi concludes that the legal thought of Ibn Taymiyya became a major focal point for Ḥanbalī scholars, particularly as far as it was used to evaluate conventional positions on legal questions adopted within the school. Although it is interesting to note that,

according to the tables of citation included in this chapter, during the fourth/tenth and fifth/eleventh centuries, Ibn Taymiyya's opinions were not cited with the same frequency by Ḥanbalī scholars, nevertheless over ensuing centuries his work and thoughts enjoyed a resurgence, gaining greater currency in the writings of much later Ḥanbalī luminaries. His approach to legal thought was enthusiastically accentuated within the reform movement led by Muḥammad ibn °Abd al-Wahhāb, although one might add that this individual was influenced even more profoundly by the brand of theological orthodoxy advocated by Ibn Taymiyya.

The final chapter in Matroudi's work provides an in-depth examination on the subject of the 'intended triple divorce'. Ibn Taymiyya and his contribution to various aspects of Ḥanbalī legal discourse has been covered extensively in Chapter Four of this book; however, due to the clamour surrounding this issue, Matroudi decided to devote a chapter to its discussion, describing it as one of the 'most significant jurisprudential issues in the life of Ibn Taymiyya' (p. 171). Ibn Taymiyya clashed on the issue with some of the leading jurists of his era, including revered Ḥanbalī jurists, who argued that his legal opinion contravened the consensus among scholars, including the famous eponyms of the four classical schools of jurisprudence. The arguments concerning the 'intended triple divorce' were not concerned with the form of annulment in which a husband would pronounce the divorce of his wife three times separately and over three successive periods of waiting (*'idda*) without any revocation: scholars had agreed that this form of divorce was binding (p. 172). The points of contention surrounded the following types of divorce: (i) instances in which the divorce was expressed three times in a single sitting, using the phrase *anti ṭāliq thalātha*; (ii) instances in which the form of divorce was expressed using three pronouncements in a single sitting such as '*antī ṭāliq, antī ṭāliq, antī ṭāliq*'; or '*antī ṭāliq wa-ṭāliq wa-ṭāliq*' in which either the *wāw* or the *fā'* was used as a conjunction; and (iii) instances in which the divorce was pronounced at three different times, but using the *antī ṭāliq* formula once only. Ibn Taymiyya claimed that while many Ḥanbalī jurists accepted the view that these forms of 'intended triple divorce' were prohibited and reprehensibly innovative, despite the fact that the narrations linked to Ibn Ḥanbal appeared to be at variance, they recognised them as being legally irrevocable³⁴ and therefore binding. Ibn Taymiyya explained that such forms of triple divorce carried the efficacy of a single pronouncement and could not therefore be binding. He was perplexed by the fact that certain Ḥanbalī scholars were prepared to deem such procedures of divorce innovative and impermissible, yet they would still maintain that they were legally binding (p. 174). In Ibn Taymiyya's view this went against the logic of dividing the forms of divorce into permissible and impermissible types, and he swiftly dismissed the scriptural evidences adduced by his opponents, arguing that a closer reading of the sources showed that the testimony they were citing had been taken out of its proper context (p. 175).

Examining the issue of whether Ibn Taymiyya's position on this subject was in opposition to the consensus of Ḥanbalī scholars, Matroudi notes that Ḥanbalī sources suggested there was no disagreement regarding the issue within the school but that Ibn Taymiyya had implied that some Ḥanbalī scholars had previously questioned the efficacy of the triple divorce. Matroudi looks at legal sources which date back to the formative years of the Ḥanbalī tradition and later materials which follow in the wake of Ibn Taymiyya's intervention into the subject. He notes that in the *masā'il* texts, Ibn Ḥanbal adopts the view that the 'intended triple divorce has the effect of three separate divorces'; it was thus binding (p. 177). The school simply preserved this view. The impression is that if disagreements did occur, then they were concerned with whether such divorces could be classed as being innovative. Scholars still spoke of them being binding, as the *mukhtaṣar* of al-Khiraqī shows, and indeed the commentary on this text by Ibn al-Bannā (d. 471/1078); additionally, Ibn Qudāma's *ʿUmda* does not refer to there being any disagreement concerning the binding nature of the triple divorce (p. 177). For Matroudi this poses the question of whether any Ḥanbalī scholars actually subscribed to the view that the triple divorce was not binding. Ibn Taymiyya does mention that his grandfather al-Majd did take this view, yet, as Matroudi rightly concludes from his survey of the extant Ḥanbalī sources, this was not a view adopted by any of the school's luminaries. This leaves the inevitable question as to why Ibn Taymiyya would claim that some Ḥanbalī scholars queried whether the intended triple divorce was binding. Matroudi answers this in two ways: firstly, he suggests that it is possible that Ibn Taymiyya was alluding to the view of his grandfather, although it seems patently obvious that Ibn Taymiyya's reference to a second camp implies that he was invoking a body of earlier scholarship within the Ḥanbalī school. Secondly, Matroudi assumes that Ibn Taymiyya was not referring to actual scholars who may have held this opinion but rather to the hypothetical existence of counter-positions sustained via elaborate referencing to Ibn Ḥanbal's inferred principles of jurisprudence (pp. 178–9). One would have to say that this argument is less than convincing. Nonetheless, it is the case that Ibn Taymiyya did propose that Ibn Ḥanbal's view, which predicated that the intended triple divorce was prohibited yet binding, did contravene the general legal principles applied by this individual. Ibn Qayyim was to assert later on that given the seniority of Ibn Taymiyya within the Ḥanbalī school, his *qawl* (legal ruling) on the issue can justifiably be considered as one of the official positions of the school. Matroudi believes that Ibn Taymiyya was vindicated in maintaining that it was incorrect to state that consensus existed among all scholars regarding the binding nature of the triple divorce. Ibn Taymiyya was able to adduce the statements of many jurists outside the Ḥanbalī school who equated the triple divorce with a single pronouncement (p. 182). Matroudi sums up this chapter by stating that Ibn Taymiyya's contribution to the discourse on this subject had its impact upon later attempts to resolve this point of law: subsequent scholars such as al-Ḥarīrī (d. 803/1400), Jamāl al-Dīn al-Imām (d. 798/1396) and al-Dawālibī (d. 862/1458) all

endorsed his view. Although the Ḥanbalī legal sources uphold the view that the intended triple divorce ‘amounts to an irrevocable divorce’, a second opinion within the school was highlighted: this was the view advocated by Ibn Taymiyya and those who concurred with his reading of the sources. The issue of the intended triple divorce and Ibn Taymiyya’s stance on this issue appositely encapsulate his traditionalist and critical approach to jurisprudence. This remained one of the defining features of his contribution to Ḥanbalī juridical thought and legal discourse in general, overriding, whenever necessary, token loyalties to one specific school of thought.

To sum up, this book will serve as a critical reference work for scholars and researchers wishing to gauge the complexity of the legacy bequeathed by Ibn Taymiyya to classical Ḥanbalī legal discourse. It provides unique insights into the nature of this individual’s relationship with the Ḥanbalī school, showing that Ibn Taymiyya adopted Ibn Ḥanbal’s jurisprudence and its applied methodology for the basic reason that, in his judgement, they enshrined the most orthodox approach to the interpretation of the law. Even in instances when he adopted positions which conflicted with accepted legal opinions within the school, Ibn Taymiyya was able to argue that the inferred *uṣūl* of Ibn Ḥanbal substantiated his judgement. This very fact confirms the distinctly traditionalist streak which marks Ibn Taymiyya’s legal and indeed theological thought. Matroudi’s intimate knowledge and marshalling of the legal sources from the periods he covers are authoritative, and this is evident in the extensive range of legal themes and issues analysed in this book. His work is a welcome contribution to the library of academic studies on Islamic law.

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NOTES

1 The term encompasses an approach taken by more than one particular school of jurisprudence. See Wael Hallaq, *A History of Islamic Legal Theories: An Introduction to Sunnī uṣūl al-fiqh* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 1–4. The use of analogical reasoning (*qiyās*) became a defining feature of such schools.

2 It has been alleged that Ibn Ḥanbal capitulated under torture and that in the quest to construct a hierarchy of authority for Sunnī Islam, later Arabic biographical sources purposely exaggerated his role during the *miḥna*: see Michael Cooperson, ‘Ibn Ḥanbal and Bishr al-Ḥāfi: A Case Study in Biographical Traditions’, *Studia Islamica* 86 (1997), pp. 71–101; Michael Cooperson, *Classical Arabic Biography: The Heirs of the Prophet in the Age of al-Ma’mūn* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Nimrod Hurvitz, ‘Schools of Law and Historical Context: Re-examining the Formation of the Ḥanbalī *madhhab*’, *Islamic Law and Society* 7:1 (2000), pp. 37–64; Nimrod Hurvitz, ‘Who is the Accused? The Interrogation of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal’, *Al-Qanṭara* 22:2 (2001), pp. 359–73; Nimrod Hurvitz, ‘*Miḥna* as Self-defense’, *Studia Islamica* 92 (2001), pp. 93–111; Nimrod Hurvitz, *The Formation of Ḥanbalism: Piety into Power* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 2002). It should be noted that Michael Cooperson originally advanced the thesis that classical Arabic biography was used to enhance

the religious profile and status of Ibn Ḥanbal. Joseph van Ess pointed to the fact that Ibn Ḥanbal had capitulated under torture, referring to his being released from jail; other notable scholars remained in prison until the reign of al-Mutawakkil in 233/847. Cooperson has intimated that it is plausible that he may not have capitulated (Michael Cooperson, 'Two Abbasid Trials: Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq', *Al-Qanṭara* 22:2 (2001), pp. 375–93).

3 Wael Hallaq, *The Origins and Evolution of Islamic Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 159.

4 al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463/1071) made a number of stinging criticisms of the school's luminaries.

5 It is striking that a number of Ibn Ḥanbal's celebrated students who were active in the field of Ḥadīth studies were the authors of *sunan* and so-called *masā'il* works. For example, one of these figures, Abū Dāwūd (d. 275/889), was the author of a *Kitāb al-sunan* and he compiled a *Kitāb al-masā'il al-Imām Aḥmad*, a miscellany of Ibn Ḥanbal legal anecdotes and discussions. One could argue that the form and content of the *sunan* works were predisposed towards a theoretical synthesis of traditions, promoting an applied gauging of their legal import. Given Ibn Ḥanbal's influence upon scholars such as Abū Dāwūd and al-Nasā'ī, it seems implausible that Ibn Ḥanbal in his own right would not have been considered a jurist.

6 Abū 'Abd Allāh Shams al-Dīn ibn Qayyim, *I'lām al-muwaqqi'in 'an rabb al-'ālamīn*, ed. Ṭāhā 'Abd al-Ra'ūf Sa'īd (4 vols, Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1972), vol. 1, p. 28. Of course, it is the case that during the era of Ibn Ḥanbal the authorship of works in the fixed sense of the word was prevalent. In the field of Ḥadīth literature Ibn Ḥanbal was among those who advocated the written codification of traditions as opposed to reliance on memory alone.

7 Gregor Schoeler, *The Oral and the Written in Early Islam*, tr. Uwe Vagelpohl, ed. and intr. James E. Montgomery, Routledge Studies in Middle Eastern Literatures (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 33. The basic construct of hostility to the recording of Ḥadīth is particularly prominent in this respect and has been poured over in the research of Schoeler, Michael Cook and Joseph Kister; see 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), (pp. i–iii), pp. 437–530; Joseph Kister, 'Lā taqra'ū l-Qur'āna 'alā muṣḥafīyyīn wa-lā taḥmilū 'l-'ilma 'anī l-ṣaḥāfiyyīn: Some Notes on the Transmission of Ḥadīth', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 22 (1998), pp. 127–62. Schoeler does import the issue of hostility towards the codification of traditions into the legal implications of this hostility. He claims that jurists wanted to retain greater flexibility in the interpretation of the legal sources, arguing that the *ahl al-ra'y* were keen to avoid working within the framework of a fixed corpus of materials. The suggestion is that it would restrict the free development of the law.

8 Schoeler, *The Oral and the Written*, p. 116 and p. 126.

9 Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn 'Alī al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Kitāb al-kifāya fi 'ilm al-riwāya* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1998), p. 228.

10 Schoeler, *The Oral and the Written*, p. 119.

11 See also Susan S. Spector, 'Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's *Fiqh*', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 102 (1982), pp. 461–5; cf. Michael Cook, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Cook defines the *masā'il* as *responsa*, pp. 87–144.

12 See Christopher Melchert, *Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal* (Oneworld: Oxford, 2005), see pp. 59–81, esp. pp. 75–9. He notes that they were much more consistent than the 'putative works' ascribed to al-Shāfi'i. Melchert has greater confidence in the *masā'il* collections as 'reflecting accurate transcriptions of what Aḥmad said than in the early works of the other legal schools'.

13 Hallaq, *The Origins*, p. 160.

14 Hallaq, *The Origins*, p. 160. Cf. George Makdisi, 'Hanbalite Islam' as included in his *Religion, Law and Learning in Classical Islam* (London: Variorum, 1991); Christopher Melchert, 'The Adversaries of Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal', *Arabica* 46 (1997), pp. 234–53.

15 This is explored in the final chapter of this book. The contribution of Ibn Taymiyya to aspects of law were explored by Henri Laoust in *Contribution à une étude de la méthodologie canonique de Takī al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Taymiyya*' (Cairo: Imprimerie de l'Institute français d'archéologie oriental, 1939).

16 These points are likewise stressed in Abū Zahra's seminal text on the life and works of Ibn Taymiyya, *Ibn Taymiyya: ḥayātuhu wa-ʿaṣruhu wa-arāʾuhu al-fiqhiyya* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-ʿArabī, 1991), pp. 47–52. See also Melchert, *Aḥmad*, esp. pp. 75–9.

17 Donald Little, 'Did Ibn Taymiyya Have a Screw Loose?', *Studia Islamica* 41 (1975), pp. 93–111, p. 102 and pp. 104–8. See also Caterina Bori, 'A New Source for the Biography of Ibn Taymiyya', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 67:3 (2004), pp. 321–48, pp. 327–8.

18 Biographical and legal treatises were also used by scholars to reconstruct Ibn Ḥanbal's applied principles of law.

19 This statement is actually quoted from a later text: namely the *manāqib* text of Ibn al-Jawzī. Cf. p. 208 of this text.

20 Hallaq, *The Origins*, p. 159.

21 Ibn Qayyim states that *qiyās* was only used in the event of there being no other alternative source, see *Iʿlām*, vol. 1, p. 32. Matroudi reviews this on pp. 32–3.

22 Cf. Abū Zahra's discussion of a somewhat related discussion of theological issues in *Ibn Taymiyya*, pp. 66–9.

23 Ibn Qayyim, *Iʿlām*, vol. 1, p. 73.

24 Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Radd ʿalāʾl-Jahmiyya waʾl-Zanādiqa*, ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-ʿUmayra (Riyād: Dār al-Liwāʾ, 1977). For theological studies of Ibn Ḥanbal and the Ḥanbalīs see Stefan Leder, 'Charismatic Scripturalism: The Ḥanbalī Maqdisīs of Damascus', *Der Islam* 74 (1997), pp. 279–304; Arthur Arberry, 'A Ḥanbalī Tract on the Eternity of the Qurʾān', *Islamic Quarterly* 3 (1956), pp. 16–41; Hans Daiber, 'The Creed (ʿAqīda) of the Ḥanbalite Ibn Qudāma al-Maqdisī' in Wadād al-Qāḍī (ed.), *Studia Arabica et Islamica, Festschrift for Iḥṣān ʿAbbās on His Sixtieth Birthday* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1981), pp. 105–25; Hans Daiber, 'The Qurʾān as a 'Shibboleth' of Varying Conceptions of the Godhead: A 12th century Ḥanbalite-Ashʿarite Discussion and its Theological Sequel in the Protocol of Ibn Qudāma al-Maqdisī' in Ilai Alon, Ithamar Gruenwald and Itamar Singer (eds), *Concepts of the Other in Near Eastern Religions* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994), pp. 249–95; S. Jackson, 'Ibn Taymiyyah on trial in Damascus', *Journal of Semitic Studies* 39:1 (1994), pp. 41–85.

25 For an excellent summary of this, see Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Bahādir ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Zarkashī, *al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ fi uṣūl al-fiqh*, ed. ʿAbd al-Qādir al-ʿĀnī, 2nd edn (6 vols, Kuwait: Wizārat al-Awqāf waʾl-Shuʾūn al-Islāmiyya, 1992), vol. 2, p. 197; Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm ibn Taymiyya, *Kitāb al-imān* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1983), pp. 82–6.

26 Mustafa Shah, 'The Philological Endeavours of the Early Arabic Linguists: Theological Implications of the *tawqīf-iṣṭilāḥ* Antithesis and the *majāz* Controversy – Part I', *Journal of Qurʾanic Studies* 1:1 (1999), 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 Qurʾanic 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

°Abd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī (Beirut: Muḥassasat al-Risāla, 1981). The best overview of the concept is provided in Wolfhart Heinrichs, 'Contacts between Scriptural Hermeneutics and Literary Theory in Islam: The Case of *Majāz*', *Zeitschrift fuer Geschichte der Arabisch-Islamischen Wissenschaften/Majallat Ta'rikh al-°Ulūm al-°Arabiyya wa'l-Islāmiyya* 7 (1992), pp. 253–84. It should be noted that although Matroudi has mentioned the *Musawwada* and discussed the work's arrangement (p. 28 and p. 207), as far as the contribution of each author is concerned, he has not provided the relevant bibliographical data in his source of references.

27 For details of this text see p. 28 of this book and p. 207. One notes that in the text entitled *al-Musawwada fī uṣūl al-fiqh*, which conflates the views of al-Majd, °Abd al-Ḥalīm and Ibn Taymiyya, the arguments concerning the incidence of metaphor in the language of the Arabs are a key part of the book's epistemological preliminaries. See *al-Musawwada fī °uṣūl al-fiqh* (Cairo: Maṭba°at al-Madani, 1969).

28 See Abū Zahra's review of a somewhat related discussion of theological issues in his *Ibn Taymiyya*, pp. 228–9.

29 The practices of the Ṣūfis who had encouraged *ziyārāt* (visitation) to the tombs of saints and religious luminaries also concerned Ibn Taymiyya. See Abū Zahra's argument in *Ibn Taymiyya*, pp. 272–9.

30 Abū °Abd Allāh Shams al-Dīn ibn Qayyim, *Ighāfat al-lahfān min maṣā'id al-shayṭān*, ed. Ṭāhīr °Abd al-Ra'ūf (2 vols, Cairo: Fayṣal °Isā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, n.d.), vol. 1, pp. 211–52; cf. Aḥmad ibn °Abd al-Ḥalīm ibn Taymiyya, *Iqtidā' ṣirāt al-mustaqīm mukhālifa aṣḥāb al-jahīm*, ed. Ṭāhā °Abd al-Ra'ūf Sa'd (Cairo: Dār Iḥyā' al-Kutub al-°Arabiyya, n.d.), pp. 282–405. Even modern writers such as Abū Zahra, who was a defender and admirer of Ibn Taymiyya disagreed with him on aspects of this issue. See Abū Zahra, *Ibn Taymiyya*, pp. 274–5.

31 See Abū Fidā' Ismā'il ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa'l-nihāya*, ed. A. Muḥim, A. °Aṭwī, F. Sayyid, M. Nāṣir al-Dīn and A. °Abd al-Sātīr (8 vols, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-°Ilmiyya, 1986), vol. 8 (part 14), pp. 141–6. Also see his entry in Aḥmad ibn °Alī ibn Ḥajar °Asqalānī, *al-Durar al-kāmina fī a'yān al-mi'a al-thāmina*, ed. Muḥammad Sayyid Jād al-Ḥaqq (5 vols, Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥadītha, 1966). vol. 1, pp. 154–70. See especially pp. 155–61.

32 This is a point which is apparent in the ensuing chapter, pp. 133–70.

33 One only needs to examine the issue of 'who is permitted to imitate others in *shar'ī* rulings' to gain a sense of Ibn Taymiyya's position on *mujtahids* and *ijtihād* (pp. 84–9).

34 See Muwaffaq al-Dīn Abū Muḥammad ibn Qudāma, *al-Mughnī fī fiqh al-imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal al-Shaybānī* (13 vols, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1985), vol. 7, pp. 277–85.



Mufradat al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. By Abū °Alī al-Ḥasan ibn °Alī ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ahwāzī. Edited and introduced by °Umar Ḥamdān. Amman: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1427/2006. Pp. 617. List price not available.

Mufradat Ibn Muḥayṣin al-Makkī. By Abū °Alī al-Ḥasan ibn °Alī ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ahwāzī. Edited and introduced by °Umar Ḥamdān. Amman: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1428/2007. Pp. 447. List price not available.

The editing of manuscripts on the textual history of the Qur'an and the science of variant readings (*°ilm al-qirā'āt*) has increased in the last few decades, providing scholars with access to hitherto inaccessible material and ample opportunity for

scholarly studies on the oral and textual transmission of the Qur'an. In this context, Omar Hamdan's recent editions of al-Ahwāzī's *Mufradat al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī* and *Mufradat Ibn Muḥayṣin al-Makkī* are most appreciated and worthy of notice. Since Hamdan gives the same account of al-Ahwāzī in the two edited texts, both of which are written by the same author (al-Ahwāzī) and have been edited by the same editor (Hamdan), I will discuss first the editor's account of al-Ahwāzī, included in his introduction to both editions (with some minor differences), before moving on to discuss his treatment of *Mufradat al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī* and *Mufradat Ibn Muḥayṣin al-Makkī*, and concluding with a look at the manuscript used for both editions.

Referring to diverse historical and *qirā'āt* sources, the editor offers an almost identical biography of the author al-Ahwāzī (d. 446/1055) in both volumes, including an extensive account of his contribution to the science of Qur'anic variant readings, his travels to centres of Qur'anic scholarship, his scholarly character and reputation, his students and the dissemination of his teachings. In addition, Hamdan provides a list of al-Ahwāzī's works. These works – mostly on *qirā'āt*, but including other topics as well – amount to sixteen texts, some published, others only extant as manuscript, and others still lost or unidentified. Among these cited works are *Mufradat al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī* and *Mufradat Ibn Muḥayṣin al-Makkī*, of which an edition is provided in the two books under review here, which contain the readings of the two respective readers arranged according to the order of the suras in the *muṣḥaf*. Both *mufradāt* contain instances which are reported to have differed from the canonical reading of Abū °Amr ibn al-°Alā° al-Baṣrī (d. 154/771), one of the seven Qur'an readers. Hence the title '*mufrada*': works dedicated to individual Qur'an readers.

The *Mufradat al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī* comprises two parts, the first of which contains three sections. Sections One and Two are extensive biographies, the first of the author al-Ahwāzī (pp. 9–104) and the second (pp. 105–80) of the Qur'an reader in question, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728). Section Three is a description of the edited manuscript (pp. 181–94). Part Two is an annotated and thorough edition of *Mufradat al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī* (pp. 195–573). The text is supplemented by four useful indices, and is generally free of print errors.

Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī is one of the earliest and most renowned readers of the Qur'an, and is included among the famous fourteen Qur'an readers. Born in Medina during the caliphate of °Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 23/644), al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī met and learned from many of the Prophet's companions and later became one of the founding figures of Islamic tradition. In his introduction to this figure, Hamdan offers an extensive account of his life and legacy. After providing a list of the biographical accounts and contemporary studies (in Arabic and in European languages) about him (pp. 112–17), the editor then proceeds to give a lengthy description of his scholarly contributions,

arranged according to subject. These subjects include his *qirāʾa* (pp. 117–20) and his exegetical output (pp. 120–5). We are informed that al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī's reading is primarily known to us through *tafsīr* and philological works, and is scattered throughout the *qirāʾāt* literature. We are fortunate, however, to have available an edition of the *Mufradat al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī* compiled by al-Ahwāzī, which is a work dedicated solely to the reading preferences of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī arranged according to the order of the suras in the *muṣḥaf*. Concerning his exegetical activity, the editor draws our attention to the abundant number of *riwāyāt* attributed to al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī in the *tafsīr* sources and the need for a critical study of these *riwāyāt*. The introduction also treats briefly his Ḥadīth activities and (pp. 126–8) mentions some of the problematic issues related to his transmission of Ḥadīth, such as his *tadlīs* (concealment of the name of a transmitter or source in an *isnād*) and *irsāl* (the omission of the transmitter between a successor and the Prophet in an *isnād*). Other topics addressed in the introduction include a list of recent studies about his legal contributions (pp. 129–30), his asceticism (*zuhd*) (pp. 131–3), his theological ideas (pp. 133–6), his mastery of the Arabic language and his eloquence in speech (*faṣāḥa*) (pp. 138–44).

In addition, the editor treats the *isnād* of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī's reading, upon which al-Ahwāzī depends. Dividing the *isnād* into two parts – one linking al-Ahwāzī to al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (containing three transmitters) and the second linking al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī to the Prophet (containing two transmitters) – the editor gives a valuable account of each transmitter and his place in the *qirāʾāt* literature (pp. 151–65). His examination of the *isnād* is followed by a section in which the editor introduces the teachers and students of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (pp. 165–72), providing material for future studies about the scholarly communities and networks in which al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī contributed. Lastly, the editor discusses the so-called *Muṣḥaf al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī*, the alleged codex attributed to him (currently held in Istanbul) and cites reasons why it is inauthentic (pp. 172–6).

The *Mufradat Ibn Muḥayṣin al-Makkī* comprises two parts, the first of which contains three sections. Sections One and Two are extensive biographies, the first, again, of the author al-Ahwāzī (pp. 9–100) and the second (pp. 101–78) of the Qur'an reader in question, Ibn Muḥayṣin al-Makkī (d. 123/741). Section Three is a description of the edited manuscript (pp. 179–90). Part Two of the book is an annotated and thorough edition of *Mufradat Ibn Muḥayṣin al-Makkī* (pp. 191–405). As with the edition of *Mufradat al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī*, the text is supplemented by four useful indices, and is generally free of print errors.

Although Ibn Muḥayṣin was a prominent reader in the late first century and beginning of the second century, he nevertheless hardly appears in later sources. His absence from the sources has meant that not a great deal of attention has been paid to his

contributions to the *qirāʾāt*, despite the fact that he was a prominent reader and came from an important centre of learning, Mecca. Hamdan provides a philologically erudite investigation of the confusion around his name found in the sources (pp. 102–14), followed by an account of the scholarly generation to which he belonged, which included such figures as Ibn Kathīr, Ḥumayd ibn Qays al-Aʿraj, al-Aʿsam and Yazīd al-Barbarī, the former being the oldest and most esteemed (pp. 114–19), and a discussion of his excellence in Arabic (pp. 119–21). Following this the editor investigates the reasons behind the marginalisation of Ibn Muḥayṣin’s reading. The primary reason, according to Hamdan, is that Ibn Mujāhid (d. 324/936) did not include it in his famous Seven Readings but rendered it uncanonical (*shādhah*), and thus Ibn Muḥayṣin’s reading was neither recited nor transmitted. Ibn Mujāhid’s position toward Ibn Muḥayṣin’s reading was generally accepted by the majority of later scholars, many of whom marginalised it, while some included it in their collections of uncanonical readings (such as Ibn Jinnī (d. 392/1002) in his *al-Muḥtasab fiʾl-shawādhah*). However, as Hamdan points out, several scholars defended Ibn Muḥayṣin’s reading, such as al-Andarābī (d. after 500/1107) in his *Kitāb al-īdāh fiʾl-qirāʾāt*. Some even attempted to establish the transmission of Ibn Muḥayṣin’s reading; these included Abū ʿAlī al-Mālikī (d. 438/1047) in his *al-Rawḍa*, al-Ahwāzī (d. 446/1055) in his *Mufrada*, and Sibṭ al-Khayyāt (d. 541/1146) in his *al-Mubhij*. The great interest in the reading of Ibn Muḥayṣin which arose in the centuries following Ibn Mujāhid’s *Kitāb al-sabʿa* and consequently led to a wave of *qirāʾāt* works which included Ibn Muḥayṣin’s reading in the *qirāʾāt* literature was most probably a reaction from those scholars who rejected the marginalisation of Ibn Muḥayṣin’s reading due to Ibn Mujāhid’s favoured seven. The author’s exploration of the reception of Ibn Muḥayṣin’s reading is elaborate and well-documented (pp. 121–44).

As with the *Mufradat al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī*, the *isnād* of the reading of Ibn Muḥayṣin is examined by giving an account of each transmitter according to the available literature (pp. 144–53). This is followed by a listing of his teachers (p. 153) and students (pp. 154–63), which is certainly useful for any prosopographical analysis of the reader’s scholarly community. In comparison to Ibn Makkī’s acknowledged engagement in the *qirāʾāt*, his Ḥadīth activity is however meagre. The editor manages to find only six ḥadīths in the available sources which mention his participation in their transmission (pp. 163–76). The *tafsīr* reports attributed to him are similarly scanty (*pace* Hamdan, only two, see p. 176).

Both texts under review here are based on the same manuscript authored by al-Ahwāzī himself, and housed in the Arabic manuscript collection at the al-Aqṣā mosque in Jerusalem (31–70–1: *ʿUlūm Qurʾān – Mufradat Ibn Muḥayṣin*; 28–70–2: *ʿUlūm Qurʾān – Mufradat al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī*). As Hamdan was unable to find any copies of this text in the available manuscript catalogues, he has had to rely solely on the

al-Aqṣā Mosque manuscripts for his editions. The edited text is equipped with an apparatus in the margin which contains references to verse enumeration, Qur'anic readings, Ḥadīth material and discussions in the *tafsīr* literature, making the edition a rich source for further comparative work. And, to make up for the absence of additional manuscripts with which to collate the al-Aqṣā Mosque manuscript, the editor compares what is known from other sources about the readings of Ibn Muḥayṣin and al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī with al-Ahwāzī's text in the marginal footnotes. Each volume is supplemented by several useful indices (e.g. names of persons mentioned in the text, instances of agreement between the readers in question, Arabic sources, and non-Arabic sources used for the edition).

If there were to be a criticism of these editions, it would concern their separate publication. I would have liked to see both texts printed together in two volumes as this is how they were found in the manuscript used for the edition and this was perhaps the original intention of the author, al-Ahwāzī. However, this preference does not have an effect either on the merits of these editions or on the efforts exerted by the editor. The value of these books lies in their importance for researchers of Qur'anic studies, Arabic linguistics, and dialectology. With recent growing interest in the textual history of the Qur'an, these editions are without a doubt a valuable contribution to the field.

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The Qur'an: An Encyclopedia. Edited by Oliver Leaman. London and New York: Routledge, 2006. Pp. xxv+771. £125.

The Blackwell Companion to the Qur'ān. Edited by Andrew Rippin. Blackwell Companions to Religion. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006. Pp. xiii+560. £85.00.

These two works, both of which are intended as introductory companions to the Qur'an and its interpretation, state similar aims on their flyleaves: of making the Qur'an accessible to 'anyone who wishes to read and understand the Qur'ān as a text and a vital piece of Muslim life' (*The Blackwell Companion*), and presenting 'a powerful one-volume resource covering all aspects of the text and its reception' (*The Qur'an*). However, within the stated boundaries of providing a compendium that is aimed primarily at the non-specialist reader (*The Blackwell Companion* states that it includes an initial section designed for the 'first-time reader' and *The Qur'an* that it 'assumes no previous knowledge of the Qur'an, Islam or Arabic'), they differ quite significantly in approach and content.

The Blackwell Companion presents a compendium of thirty essays divided into five sections, accompanied by a general bibliography, an 'Index of People, Places and Topics' and an 'Index of Qur'an Verses'. The first section, 'Orientation', consists of three essays ('Introducing' by Tamara Sonn, 'Discovering' by Christopher Buck, and 'Contextualising' by Abdullah Saeed) which are intended as general introductions to the Qur'an and its reception. These first three chapters are indeed introductory, however they provide a comprehensive, if at times necessarily simplified, overview and the references included in the 'Further Reading' section that concludes each chapter cover a generally pertinent representation of recent academic approaches (for example, in the initial article by Tamara Sonn readers are referred to works by Mawdudi, Wansbrough, Izutsu, Cragg, Fazlur Rahman and Montgomery Watt).

Part II, 'Text', includes ten essays on 'Linguistic Structure' (Salwa M.S. El-Awa); 'Patterns of Address' (Rosalind Ward Gwynne); 'Language' (Mustansir Mir); 'Poetry and Language' (Navid Kermani); 'Foreign Vocabulary' (Michael Carter); 'Structure and the Emergence of Community' (Angelika Neuwirth); 'Sacrality and Collection' (Aliza Shnizer); 'Written Transmission' (François Déroche); 'Context: Muḥammad' (Herbert Berg); and 'Context: 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb' (Avraham Hakim). As should be evident from the titles alone, the first five chapters in this section all deal with the physical aspects of the Qur'anic text itself, while the latter five discuss the reception of the Qur'an, its status as a sacred Book, and its arrangement and transmission.

As Rippin himself comments in his preface, the choice of material in Part III ('Content') initially seems to be rather eclectic: 'God' by Andrew Rippin and 'Prophets and Prophethood' by Uri Rubin seem completely logical, as does the inclusion of 'Moses' by Brannon Wheeler. 'Argumentation' (Kate Zebiri), 'Knowing and Thinking' (A.H. Mathias Zahniser), 'Sex, Sexuality and the Family' (Khaleel Mohammed) and 'Jihād' (Reuven Firestone) are not necessarily such straightforward choices, but do deal with some of the prevalent issues under general discussion today, and (as Rippin points out) relate to key concepts integral to an understanding of the Qur'anic message. Part IV, 'Interpretation', likewise, could be accused of not providing as exhaustive a treatment as it might of the issue at hand, but there is a clear progression to the chapters: 'Hermeneutics: al-Tha^labī' by Walid Saleh, 'Stories of the Prophets' by Marianna Klar, 'Ṣūfism' by Alan Godlas, 'Rūmī' by Jawid Mojaddedi, and 'Twelver Shī^ʿī *Ta^ʿwīl*' and 'Ismā^ʿīlī *Ta^ʿwīl*' both by Diana Steigerwald. The contents of the final section, Part V 'Application' ('Exegetical Sciences' by Jane Dammen McAuliffe; 'Theology' by Binyamin Abrahamov; 'Jurisprudence' by A. Kevin Reinhart; 'Contemporary Ethical Issues' by Leah Kinberg; 'Narrative Literature' by Roberto Tottoli; and 'Recitation' by Anna M. Gade) however, seem an entirely logical progression in the overall discussion of the Qur'anic text.

As may be clear from the brief survey of contents above, although the initial chapters are intentionally introductory, many of the later essays are pitched at a more complex level. The production values are high, and the volume is well presented.

In contrast to the chapter format of *The Blackwell Companion, The Qur'an: An Encyclopedia* takes (not altogether surprisingly, given its title), encyclopaedic form. Intended to bridge the gap between the 'highly scholarly' and 'rather skimpy elementary books' (p. ix), *The Qur'an* comprises around 350 entries. While there are contributions from some 43 scholars, intended according to the introduction to provide comparing and contrasting views from varied backgrounds and persuasions, a number of authors have contributed particularly: most notably the editor himself, Rafik Berjak, Brannon Wheeler, Nevad Kahteran, Stefan Wild and Colin Turner have all written multiple entries. In addition to an alphabetic listing of entries, name, and subject indices, the main body of the text is, as with *The Blackwell Companion*, supplemented with a general bibliography and a 'Qur'anic Passages Index'. (The two volumes also share a number of common authors: Tamara Sonn provides entries here on 'ASBAB AL-NUZUL', 'CALENDAR', 'COMPANIONS OF THE CAVE', 'PARENTS' and 'TAQLID'; Andrew Rippin on 'CYBERSPACE AND THE QUR'AN', 'HALAL/AHALLA', 'HARRAM/HARRAMA' and 'WASWAS'; Marianna Klar on 'DREAMS' and 'ISM/ISMA'; Abdullah Saeed on 'REVELATION', 'RIBA' and 'RIDDA AND THE CASE FOR DECRIMINALIZATION OF APOSTASY'; and Brannon Wheeler on 'AD', 'ADAM', 'ASBAT', 'AYYUB', 'DAWUD/DA'UD', 'DHU AL-KIFL', 'DHU AL-QARNAYN', 'ELISHA', 'HARUN', 'HUD', 'IBRAHIM', 'IDRIS', 'ISMA'IL', 'ISRA'ILIYYAT', 'JALUT', 'LUT' (but not 'LUT'S WIFE' which has a separate entry by Kecia Ali), 'MUSA' (likewise, there is a separate entry for Moses' mother and sister by Kecia Ali), 'NUH', 'SALIH', 'SULAYMAN', 'TABUT', 'TALUT', 'TUBBA', 'UZAYR', 'YA'JUJ WA MA'JUJ' and 'YUNUS'.) In terms of subject matter, entries generally (but not exhaustively) fall into various categories: those dealing with significant exegetes ('AHMAD B. HANBAL', 'MAWDUDI, SAYYID ABUL A'LA', 'SAYYID QUTB'), personages ('HARUN', 'MUHAMMAD', 'ALI IBN ABI TALIB') and places and events ('GHADIR KHUMM', 'BADR'), specific issues ('SCIENCE AND THE QUR'AN'), terminology and words ('KALAM/KALIMA/KALLAMA', 'NASKH', 'MATA'), aspects of the *muṣḥaf* ('LANGUAGE AND THE QUR'AN', 'MECCAN AND MEDINAN SURAS AND THE QUR'AN') and discussion of Qur'anic and wider Islamic concepts ('MANSLAUGHTER', 'SABR', 'ISHQ').

While entries are relatively brief, the length can vary widely – for example 'MATA' (p. 395) has an entry of sixteen lines, and 'JIHAD/JAHADA' twenty (although this latter entry is cross-referenced to 'QITAL' (p. 520) and 'WAR AND VIOLENCE' (pp. 686–92), also by Asma Afsaruddin), while 'TRANSLATION AND THE QUR'AN' (pp. 657–70), and 'MUHAMMAD' (pp. 419–28) have a much more

lengthy and detailed exposition. Furthermore, although there is a general bibliography, many entries also include references for further reading and/or cross references to related entries.

In terms of presentation, *The Qur'an* contains a number of typographical errors – for example p. xii cites *BSOAS* as an abbreviation for the *Bulletin of the School of Asian and African Studies*, as opposed to the *School of Oriental and African Studies*, and the entry for 'ABU BAKR' (p. 7) has 'isra'Atiq' apparently as one word and missing the *hamza* – and editorial inconsistencies, such as the fact that (on p. 8) 'qira'at' in the entry for 'ABU HANIFA, NUMAN B. SABIT' is not glossed while 'ra'y' and 'qiyas' are (although there is an entry for 'QIRA'AT', this is a cross-reference which refers the reader to entries for 'HAFIZ' and 'INIMITABILITY'). We also have, for example, 'ALI IBN ABI TALIB' but 'AL-NAJJAR, AL-HUSAYN B. MUHAMMAD', and 'DHU AL-QARNAYN' but 'ABU'L HUDAYL AL-ALLAF'. Furthermore, it is not entirely clear why some entries have not been integrated – for example 'ABU LAHAB' and 'ABU LAHAB'S SIGNIFICANCE' would seem to be better combined into a single entry.

Beyond the obvious differences in approach and content, *The Blackwell Companion* and *The Qur'an* also seem to vary in their editorial agenda – although Leaman's introduction to *The Qur'an* is very brief, it is noticeable that he focuses on the issue of religious background in setting out his vision for this volume, making the point that 'contributors to this volume come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Some are Muslims, some are not, and some have no religious beliefs whatsoever ... The authors come from all doctrinal backgrounds and readers should expect to find a wide variety of views in this book ... What this volume represents is very much interpretation and commentary, *tafsir* in Arabic, an attempt at understanding the text of the Qur'an' (p. ix). This, in addition to the inclusion of the quotation *Peace to all who follow guidance* (Q. 20:47) in the title pages somehow gives the impression that this is a work which is trying to cater to the interested faithful as well as to the outsider (the flyleaf refers to the current 'public debate' about the Qur'an, much of which is not based in 'knowledge and understanding of the book') and this appears to be carried through in some of the entries. For example, the entry on 'EDUCATION AND THE QUR'AN' seems to be more a discussion of the perceptions of conflict between 'secular' and 'religious' education in the here and now which contrasts 'Western' modes of learning with 'Islamic' traditions of education than of, for example, the impact of the Qur'an on education past and present, or an outline of what a Qur'anic education is. This focus on modern 'popular' issues and concerns presumably also lies behind the choice of entries such as 'RIDDA AND THE CASE FOR DECRIMINALIZATION OF APOSTASY' and its related entry for 'RADD/IRTIDAD AND THE JUSTIFICATION OF THE CRIMINALIZATION OF APOSTASY'. In contrast, *The Blackwell Companion* presents itself squarely in the mould of the American and

European academic tradition of Qur'anic Studies, but positions itself as addressing an audience 'who may have little exposure to the Qur'ān beyond a curiosity evoked by the popular media' (p. x): Chapter Two makes this very explicit in its discussion of why 'the Qur'ān can and should be taught in the university' (p. 20), an essay which advances the idea that the Qur'an 'is required reading for religious, political, cultural and global literacy ... a democratic as well as academic exercise' (p. 34–5).

In short, these works appear to be designed with very different criteria in mind. This is perhaps most obviously noticeable in the different ways in which they tackle issues of transliteration: *The Qur'an* eschews transliteration completely (with the exception of *hamza* and *'ayn*) while *The Blackwell Companion* contains full transliteration. While both are companion volumes that fill gaps in the literature currently available, *The Qur'an* will for the most part be useful as a quick reference tool for the general reader, and *The Blackwell Companion* is a well-considered set of articles that, although taking a more academic approach, remains accessible.

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The Cosmos of Arabic Calligraphy: The Works of Fuad Kouichi Honda.
By Kouichi Honda. Tokyo: Hakusuisha, 2006. Pp. 149. ¥ 9800+tax.

Prior to the publication of this work, only two other major works on Arabic calligraphy have been published in Japan: *Anmāt al-khatt al-ʿArabī* and *The Art of Islamic Calligraphy*.¹ The former was edited by Sagenji Yoshida, a Japanese Muslim born in 1925 who studied Islamic design in Egypt, Italy and France as an overseas research employee of the Ministry of Education between 1970 and 1971.² This book, published in 1975, includes about twenty pieces of calligraphic works created by the author, a brief explanation of Islam, the history of the Arabic alphabet, an introduction to the styles of Arabic calligraphy, and discussions of works by Arab calligraphers. As for the author's pieces presented in this volume, most of these are composed with a brush, rather than the traditional pen. Furthermore, Yoshida carved out his own artistic niche in that the shaping of his letters takes different forms to the traditionally defined modes of Arabic calligraphy. *The Art of Islamic Calligraphy* is a full translation of *Fann al-khatt* published by the Research Centre for Islamic History (IRCICA) in Istanbul.³ In addition to the translation itself, which introduces the history of Arabic calligraphy and presents 192 works with commentary, the translator, Kouichi Honda, includes separate sections in which he gives explanations of the various forms of Arabic calligraphy, relevant technical terms, and a brief introduction to major aspects of Islam, Arabic grammar and so on.

While the above-mentioned books mainly introduced works by Arab calligraphers, the work under review here, *The Cosmos of Arabic Calligraphy*, comprises a collection of 35 large works (including his *ijāza*, on which he wrote the *basmala*) and 10 smaller pieces by the Japanese calligrapher, Kouichi Honda. Honda is currently professor at Daito Bunka University (Japan) where he teaches Arabic, and is also the president of the Japan Arabic Calligraphy Association (JACA) founded in 2006.⁴ He has previously written several Arabic primers on the Arabic alphabet and language, in addition to an Arabic-Japanese dictionary and a Japanese-Arabic Dictionary.⁵ In *The Cosmos of Arabic Calligraphy* he sets out to outline the history of Arabic calligraphy, and its tools. The text is accompanied by illustrative photographs, and he provides samples of the eight calligraphic styles (giving the *basmala* in *naskh*, *thuluth*, *ruqʿa*, *dīwānī*, *Fārisī*, *jarī dīwānī*, *Hijāzī* and *Kūfī* styles/scripts, each composed in his own hand) in addition to a table which presents each of the letters of the Arabic alphabet, likewise in each of the eight scripts.

Fuad Kouichi Honda has followed an intriguing path to his realisation of his interest in Arabic calligraphy. Born in Tokyo in 1946, he majored in Arabic language at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, following which he went to Saudi Arabia as an interpreter and coordinator for a Japanese firm making maps for the Kingdom's Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources. Whilst there, he came across Arabic calligraphy, and when he saw a Saudi Arabian scribe writing place-names on a blank map, asked him for instruction and began to study calligraphy with him every night after work. On his return to Japan he continued to pursue this interest in calligraphy, and, in 1990, was awarded an encouragement prize by the jury of the Second International Arabic Calligraphy Contest in Turkey. In 1996, he was chosen as one of the world's top five contemporary Arabic calligraphers at a Kuwaiti government festival. Then, in 2000, Hassan Chelebi, a Turkish master, whose private instruction by correspondence he took for twelve years, awarded Honda an *ijāza* in Arabic calligraphy.

Honda's identifying signature is that he cuts off *tadhīb* (illumination), that is, geometric design, floral design or arabesque design around the letters, in order to bring the beauty of each letter to the fore: according to him the Arabic letters do not need any illumination around them as their beauty is intrinsic in their form. His works are groundbreaking from this point of view, although when he writes letters he never departs from the strict traditional rules of Arabic calligraphy, a form which has already been developed to sophistication. The pieces included in the book, the majority of which are Qur'anic verses, demonstrate his particular approach. For example, in the first piece entitled 'Blue Desert' he depicts all the *ayas* of *Sūrat Luqmān* which describe the Creation (i.e. Q. 31:10, *He created the heavens without any visible support, and He placed firm mountains on the earth – in case it should shake under you – and He spread all kinds of animals around it. We sent down water from the sky,*

with which We made every kind of good plant grow)⁶ in surging blue sand waves. The second and third pieces are 'Nebula of Letters' 1 and 2 which express Q. 24:35–46 and Q. 40:57–67 respectively. In these, *ayas* such as *God is the Light of the heavens and earth* (Q. 24:35) or *The creation of the heavens and earth is greater by far than the creation of mankind, though most people do not know it* (Q. 40:57) flow in whirls in the dark silent cosmos. 'The Face of God' 1, 2 and 3 (all of which are owned by the British Museum) are acute isosceles triangles, formed as if to pierce the heavens, within which the text of Qur'anic *ayas* are inscribed, including Q. 2:115, *the East and the West belong to God: wherever you turn, there is His Face. God is all pervading and all knowing*; Q. 28:88, ... *there is no god but Him. Everything will perish except His Face. His is the Judgement and to Him you shall all be brought back*'; and Q. 55:26–7, *everyone on earth perishes, all that remains is the Face of your Lord, full of majesty, bestowing honour*.

The majority of the book is authored in Japanese, however translations for the piece titles and information regarding the *ayas* are provided in both English and Arabic, as are individual chapter titles and Honda's biography. In addition to this, his essay 'The Arts of Arabic Calligraphy and Me' is made available to the English reader in translation, as is an Arabic introduction entitled '*Indamā yafraḥ al-alwān*' penned by one of his friends. Also included is an English introduction, 'The Calligraphy of Fuad Honda'. I hope therefore that non-Japanese speaking readers will take this book into their hands and discover Honda's artistic world for themselves.

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NOTES

1 Sagenji Yoshida, *Arabia-Moji no Bi (Anmāt al-khaṭṭ al-‘Arabī)* (Tokyo: Japan Muslim Association, 1975); Kouichi Honda, ed., tr. and comment., *Isuramu Shodō Gējutsu Taikan* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1996).

2 Prior to this he graduated from Tokyo Fine Arts School in 1947, and rejoined as staff in 1949.

3 *Fann al-khaṭṭ* (Istanbul: The Research Centre for Islamic History, 1990).

4 Its website 'The world of Arabic calligraphy' can be found at <http://alqalam.jp>, but is only in Japanese.

5 Kouichi Honda and Tadaaki Ishiguro (eds), *Pasupōto Shokyū Arabiāgo Jiten* (Tokyo: Hakusuisha, 1997); Kouichi Honda and Ehab Ahmad Ebeid (eds), *Pasupōto Nihongo-Arabiāgo Jiten* (Tokyo: Hakusuisha, 2004).

6 All translations of the Qur'anic *ayas* rely on M.A.S. Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an: A New Translation by M. A. S. Abdel Haleem* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).