> final authority of Christian faith as does Scripture. We do not believe that the writings of Ellen White may be used as the basis of doctrine. (www.whiteestate.org/issues/scripsda.html; accessed September 20, 2011)

**4. Jehovah's Witnesses.** Jehovah's Witnesses developed out of the teaching activities of Charles Taze Russell (1870–1916), who was influenced by the restorationist and millenarian teachings of the 19th century. Russell inspired the "Bible Students" movement to study and established the Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society, Pittsburgh, Pa., in 1881, to study and promote through publication efforts his views on the end times. The entire Protestant canon of Scripture is considered the inspired, inerrant word of God, rejecting the divine inspiration of the deuterocanon/apocrypha. Their view of Scripture differs little from many Protestant churches of the 19th century, including an emphasis on the "infallible Word." But the authoritative explanation of the Bible, in a series of *Studies in the Scriptures: "Millennial Dawn"* by Russell and his immediate successor, Joseph Rutherford, are treated as the fully authoritative exegesis of the Bible. Rutherford predicted that 1925 would mark the beginning of the millennium, but when that failed to materialize, resulting in the "1925 Disappointment," the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society was transformed into the Jehovah's Witnesses. Many of their doctrinal distinctive marks developed at that time.

**5. The Church of Christ, Scientist.** The Church of Christ, Scientist (popularly known as Christian Science) marks its beginning with the publication of *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* (first edition 1875) by the founder, Mary Baker Eddy (1821–1910). Eddy's teaching does not reflect any interest in millenarian concerns, but her health crisis in 1866 led her to read in the Bible examples of spiritual healing. Her own spiritual healing prompted her to develop her beliefs in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*. It is taught that:

> Christian Science is both a religious teaching and a Bible-based system of spiritual healing. The Bible is central to Christian Science. Its psalms, stories, and especially Christ Jesus' teachings and healings, form the basis of Christian Science and its system of spiritual healing. (http://christianscience.com/)

Weekly Bible lessons discuss passages from the Bible and *Science and Health*, providing an exposition of the Christian Science understanding of biblical texts. Regarding inspiration, Eddy says in *Science and Health* (319):

> The divine Science taught in the original language of the Bible came through inspiration, and needs inspiration to be understood. Hence the misapprehension of the spiritual meaning of the Bible, and the misinterpretation of the Word in some instances by uninspired writers who only wrote down what the inspired teacher had said. A misplaced word changes the sense and misstates the Science of the Scriptures …

Except for the Shakers, these groups continue to thrive and grow. They have been able to transition beyond the death of their charismatic leaders, in part by granting their unique literature an authoritativeness that goes beyond the traditional Protestant canon.

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## V. Islam

In the context of the Western monotheistic (or "Abrahamic") religions, the term "canon" refers to a closed textual corpus of undisputed authority for the community disposed to grant that corpus the status of revelation. In Islam, this idea most obviously applies to the Qurʾān, a collection of 114 discrete chapters (or *sūra*s) that Muslims believe constitutes the final and perfect divine revelation to humanity. Unlike either the OT or the NT, both of which were assembled from diverse sources spanning decades or centuries, the qurʾānic canon is usually understood to have originated with serial revelations made to a single individual, the prophet Muḥammad, during his 22-year mission. Further, scholars tend to accept the traditional Muslim claim that the authoritative collection of those revelations, the *muṣḥaf,* was established relatively quickly and painlessly not long after the prophet's death, in contrast to the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, which achieved their canonical shape through gradual and occasionally contentious processes. Nevertheless, despite the relatively rapid and generally undisputed collection and publication of the canonical Qurʾān less than twenty-five years after Muḥammad's death, debates pertaining to the integrity of the canon, what constitutes the canonical, and how the qurʾānic canon relates to other supposedly canonical texts have perennially surfaced in Islamic culture.

**1. The Canonical Text and its Discontents.** Though the idea that divine providence guarantees the completeness and integrity of the Qurʾān has been prevalent throughout most of the history of the Muslim community, this does not seem to have always been the case. Orthodox Islamic tradition

holds that the Qurʾān was revealed to Muḥammad gradually and was subsequently disseminated in his community through a variety of means. Oral transmission was supposedly at times reinforced through the production of rudimentary *aides mémoire* scribbled on diverse materials at hand. Though these early fragments were of rather limited utility in a largely illiterate community, they eventually took on great importance, inasmuch as they are often held to have provided some of the earliest written witnesses to what became the Qurʾān. These early fragments, along with more formal transcriptions, seem to have been collated in the recension of the authoritative version of the text, which took place either in the caliphate of Abū Bakr (r. 632–34 CE) or that of ʿUthmān (r. 644–56 CE), or possibly both (the sources on this process are somewhat vague and contradictory, as well as relatively late). Notably, older traditions credit other companions such as ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib and ʿAbd Allāh ibn Masʿūd with even earlier attempts to assemble a complete qurʾānic text.

Some modern scholars have challenged the standard account, claiming different origins for the *textus receptus*, universally known as the "ʿUthmānic recension." Many of the alternative models of the emergence of the Qurʾān posit that the first codex might have appeared in Muḥammad's own time; theories of this sort range from that of Bell, who sees the extant text as reflecting an incomplete understanding of Muḥammad's original draft, to that of the now-notorious "Christoph Luxenberg," who perceives the text as a palimpsest of an older Syriac hymnal appropriated by Muḥammad. What most of the revisionist accounts take for granted, however, is the idea that the *textus receptus* handed down by Muslims for some 14 centuries is essentially identical to that known to the primitive community. Though this dovetails with the "orthodox" conception that has prevailed in the Muslim community itself, there survives a significant body of evidence that many early Muslims believed that some qurʾānic verses or even whole chapters were either lost or altered after the death of the prophet.

Sunnīs, and many Western scholars as well, have often connected this view with the Shīʿa, who putatively assert that verses supporting the claim of the Imāms of the *ahl al-Bayt* ("the family of the prophet"), whom the Shīʿa revere, to leadership of the community were deliberately excluded in the process of redaction or were expurgated from the canonical Qurʾān. However, as both Modarressi and Marcinkowski have shown, the attribution of such a belief to the Shīʿa appears to be groundless. Modarressi has conjectured that the claim that the Qurʾān is incomplete actually originated with Sunnī partisans who wished to discredit ʿAlī's efforts to collect the Qurʾān as a failure. As the final recension of the scripture came increasingly to be associated with the caliph ʿUthmān instead, Sunnīs reversed these allegations and asserted that only the Shīʿa would dare to make such a heretical claim, even though many Shīʿī authorities were at pains to deny it.

To complicate the issue still further, there is substantial evidence from the early tradition that some of Muḥammad's companions, for example the aforementioned Ibn Masʿūd, possessed qurʾānic texts that did in fact differ in substantial ways from the ʿUthmānic codex. These alternative texts were forcibly suppressed with the promulgation of the authoritative *muṣḥaf*, though the version of Ibn Masʿūd in particular survived in quotations in the commentary literature, often cited as a supplement to the established system of variant readings or *qirāʾāt*, though it was not itself enshrined as part of the standard system of variants codified in the 10th century. (The main difference between the *muṣḥaf* supposedly possessed by Ibn Masʿūd and the authoritative *qirāʾāt* is that the latter provide alternative vocalizations of the consonantal text, while the former actually seems to preserve a marginally different text; this assumes, of course, that the surviving quotations of this alternative *muṣḥaf* are genuine, though their authenticity has been seriously questioned.)

**2.** *Naskh*: The Permeability of Canonical Scripture. Somewhat paradoxically, while Muslims have adopted the principle of the absolute integrity of the *textus receptus* practically as an article of faith, another doctrine, that of *naskh* or "abrogation," suggests that the qurʾānic canon is in some way *juridically* permeable. Some legal passages of the Qurʾān abrogate others that were revealed earlier, and so while the abrogated verse still remains part of scripture, the regulation itself no longer applies (that is, *tilāwa* or recitation is maintained, though the *ḥukm* or ruling it expresses is suspended). This in itself is hardly problematic, but more challenging to the generally held conception of canonicity are situations where a legal ruling is maintained as qurʾānic though the verse enshrining it is not actually contained in the *muṣḥaf* (thus, the *ḥukm* is maintained although the *tilāwa* is seemingly suspended). Thus, it appears that the canonical authority bestowed on the Qurʾān occasionally extends beyond the physical bounds of the *muṣḥaf* itself; this is not considered contradictory in Muslim tradition. Mention should also be made here of the phenomenon of the *Ḥadīth qudsī,* a type of transmitted report that attests to particular divine utterances handed down on Muḥammad's authority that were likewise not part of the actual qurʾānic corpus. While Muslim tradition maintains formal and practical distinctions between qurʾānic *sūra*s and these other important witnesses to divine speech, this phenomenon suggests that the revelatory word in Islam was not absolutely constrained by the bounds of canonical

scripture, but could be manifest in other forms as well.

**3. Canonical Tradition and the Sunna.** The concept of extracanonical revelation in Islam becomes even more clear when we consider the fact that in Sunnī Islam there are not one but *two* universally authoritative "canons," even though only one of those bodies of literature is properly scriptural *per se*. In Sunnism, definitions of ethics, personal conduct, and devotional praxis (*sharīʿa*, which goes far beyond the bounds of what we generally mean by "law") may often have some more or less specific basis in qurʾānic prescriptions, but the latter usually tend to furnish only general standards and fundamental principles. Islamic law is far more frequently based on the *sunna*, the paradigmatic example set by Muḥammad's own prescriptions and practice, and the main vehicle for preserving and communicating the *sunna* over the generations has been the Ḥadīth literature. (A similar body of literature is preserved by the Twelver Shīʿa, who ascribe a comparable degree of authority to reports handed down from the Imāms.)

While the origin and development of the concept of *sunna* as the basis for normative practice has received significant scholarly attention for some time, the process through which the classic collections of tradition became canonical – especially the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*, the works of al-Bukhārī (d. 870 CE) and Muslim (d. 875 CE), by far the most preeminent of the "Six Books" venerated by Sunnīs – has been investigated far less frequently. As Brown has recently shown, the canonization of the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* from the 9th to the 11th century not only enshrined these two works as the indispensable foundation of the *sunna* and set standards of rigor and authenticity by which all other collections would be judged, but it also established a common ground for discussions of hermeneutical and jurisprudential methodology between rival legal and philosophical schools.

**4. Qurʾānic Integrity and the Disputed Canons of the** *Ahl al-Kitāb*. Finally, it is worth mentioning that throughout their history, Muslims have often drawn a polemical distinction between the perfection and integrity of the Qurʾān and the incompleteness and corruption of the canonical texts of other scriptural communities, the *ahl al-kitāb* or "people of the book." The claim of scriptural corruption (*taḥrīf*) is partially based on a prejudicial evaluation of content: for example, the more apologetic portrayal of Israelite figures such as Aaron or David in the Qurʾān reflects the abiding concern for prophetic reputation found among many late antique communities, whereas the explicit attribution of wrongdoing to these prophetic forerunners in the older stories found in the Jewish and Christian bibles obviously reflects a less developed prophetology. But Muslim spokesmen readily interpreted 'slanderous' narratives such as the account of the Golden Calf in Exod 32 or the story of David and Bathsheba in 2 Sam 11 as proof of the distortion of true revelation by the Jews and Christians. In such cases, the corrupt canon of rival communities is established as a rhetorical counterpoint to the perfect, uncompromised, and unimpeachable integrity of the Qurʾān.

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## VI. Literature

The idea of a "canon" of literature is based on an implicit analogy with the various canons or lists of sacred books in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic religious traditions. But the literary canon is an ideal concept, not an actual phenomenon; it has no table of contents. Canons are associated with schools, but a list of specific books belongs only to the looser, less prescriptive literary anthology or course reading list. The assumption behind the literary canon itself is that well-educated people tacitly agree on what counts as "the best that has been known and thought," as Matthew Arnold put it, in imaginative writing. But T. S. Eliot, whose literary authority succeeded Arnold's in the first half of the 20th century among English and American readers, acknowledged that the "tradition" or "classics," terms he preferred to "canon" for the highest order of literature, were open to new talent – which would then reconfigure tradition and the classic from a new vantage point.

The notion of a literary canon in the later 20th century has been based on the inchoate idea of a Western tradition of "great books" descending from ancient Greece, a concept which has been increasingly challenged by the growth of a global or international perspective on literature, as well as new appreciation of the diversity or multi-ethnic character of the literature of most modern states and languages. This perception led to the so-called "canon wars" of the 1980s and '90s, waged across universities and humanities funding agencies in Europe as well as the U.S., in which the ideological