AN

Introduction

to the

Science of the Ḥadīth

Kitāb Maʿrifat anwāʿ ʿilm al-ḥadīth

Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ al-Shahrazūrī

Translated by Dr Eerik Dickinson
Reviewed by Professor Muneer Faried

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In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful

FOREWORD

The interrelationship and interaction of human cultures and civilizations has made the contributions of each the common heritage of men in all ages and all places. Early Muslim scholars were able to communicate with their Western counterparts through contacts made during the Crusades; at Muslim universities and centres of learning in Muslim Spain (al-Andalus, or Andalusia) and Sicily to which many European students went for education; and at the universities and centres of learning in Europe itself (such as Salerno, Padua, Montpellier, Paris, and Oxford), where Islamic works were taught in Latin translations. Among the Muslim scholars well-known in the centres of learning throughout the world were al-Razī (Rhazes), Ibn Sīna (Avicenna), Ibn Rushd (Averroes), al-Khwārizmī and Ibn Khallīlīn. Muslim scholars such as these and others produced original works in many fields. Many of them possessed encyclopaedic knowledge and distinguished themselves in many disparate fields of knowledge.

In view of this, the Center for Muslim Contribution to Civilization was established in order to acquaint non-Muslims with the contributions Islam has given to human civilisation as a whole. The Great Books of Islamic Civilization Project attempts to cover the first 800 years of Islam, or what may be called Islam’s Classical Period. This project aims at making available in English and other European languages a wide selection of works representative of Islamic civilisation in all its diversity. It is made up of translations of original Arabic works that were produced in the formative centuries of Islam, and is meant to serve the needs of a potentially large readership. Not only the specialist and scholar, but the non-specialist with an interest in Islam and its cultural heritage will be able to benefit from the series. Together, the works should serve as a rich source for the study of the early periods of Islamic thought.

In selecting the books for the series, the Center took into account all major areas of Islamic intellectual pursuit that could be represented. Thus the series includes works not only on better-known subjects such as law, theology, jurisprudence, history and politics, but also on subjects such as literature, medicine, astronomy, optics and geography. The specific criteria used to select individual books were these: that a book should give a faithful and comprehensive account of its field; and that it should be an authoritative source. The reader thus has at his disposal virtually a whole library of informative and enlightening works.

Each book in the series has been translated by a qualified scholar and reviewed by another expert. While the style of one translation will naturally differ from another as do the styles of the authors, the translators have endeavoured, to
the extent it was possible, to make the works accessible to the common reader. As a rule, the use of footnotes has been kept to a minimum, though a more extensive use of them was necessitated in some cases.

This series is presented in the hope that it will contribute to a greater understanding in the West of the cultural and intellectual heritage of Islam and will therefore provide an important means towards greater understanding of today’s world.

May God Help Us!

Muhammad bin Hamad Al-Thani
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This series of Arabic works, made available in English translation, represents an outstanding selection of important Islamic studies in a variety of fields of knowledge. The works selected for inclusion in this series meet specific criteria. They are recognized by Muslim scholars as being early and important in their fields, as works whose importance is broadly recognized by international scholars, and as having had a genuinely significant impact on the development of human culture.

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The work of translating these texts has been entrusted to a group of professors in the Islamic and Western worlds who are recognized authorities in their fields. It has been deemed appropriate, in order to ensure accuracy and fluency, that two persons, one with Arabic as his mother tongue and another with English as his mother tongue, should participate together in the translation and revision of each text.

This series is distinguished from other similar intercultural projects by its distinctive objectives and methodology. These works will fill a genuine gap in the library of human thought. They will prove extremely useful to all those with an interest in Islamic culture, its interaction with Western thought, and its impact on culture throughout the world. They will, it is hoped, fulfill an important role in enhancing world understanding at a time when there is such evident and urgent need for the development of peaceful coexistence.

This series is published by the Center for Muslim Contribution to Civilization, which serves as a research centre under the patronage of H.H. Sheikh Muhammad bin Hamad al-Thani, the former Minister of Education of Qatar who also chairs the Board of Trustees. The Board is comprised of a group of prominent scholars. These include His Eminence Sheikh Al-Azhari, Arab Republic of Egypt, and Dr Yousef al-Qardhawi, Director of the Siraj and Sunnah Research Center. At its inception the Center was directed by the late Dr Muhammad Ibrahim Kazim, former Rector of Qatar University, who established its initial objectives.

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TRANSLATOR’S INTRODUCTION

‘Uṣūl al-ḥadīth (or ‘ilm al-ḥadīth, uṣūl al-ḥadīth, etc.) is the broad designation which includes all of the various disciplines making up the study of hadith. Among the works in this field are certain guidebooks which attempt to summarize the entire range of this material to allow students to understand the terminology of the collectors of hadith and to validate the methods of these collectors. Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (773/1372–852/1449) presents a brief survey of the history of this sub-genre in the introduction to his Nuzhat al-naẓr, his commentary on his own Nukhdhat al-fikar.

The ancient and modern experts had many works about the terminology of the hadith scholars. Among the first to compose a work on this subject was the judge Abū Muhammad al-Rāmahurmuzi. His book was al-Muḥaddith al-fāsiḥ. However, he was not thorough. Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥakīm al-Nasabī [was another one of the first] but he did not revise and properly arrange [the material]. Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣbahānī followed him. He did make a supplement (mustakhraj) to the book of al-Ḥakīm al-Nasabī, but he left some things for his successors. Abū Bakr al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī came after them. He composed a book he called al-Kifayā on the rules of transmission and another on the guidelines of transmission which he called al-fāmūs li-‘ādāt al-shaykh ma‘l-sāmī. Few were aspects of ḥadith on which he did not compose a monograph. As Abū Bakr b. Nuqta’i put it, “Everyone who is fair knows that the scholars of hadith after al-Khaṭīb are dependant on his books.” Some

1 For a brief discussion of this genre, see the article “‘Uṣūl al-ḥadīth” in The Encyclopedia of Islam (2nd ed., Leiden, 1953 ff.). The most thorough treatment of the development of this literary genre remains William Marçais’ introduction to his translation of Nawawī’s al-Ṭair ibn-al-Thawr al-ṣayf al-maṣafat wu la al-Nawawī, which originally appeared in instalments in Journal Asiatique and was later issued as a separate volume under the title Le Tarikh de en-Nawawī (Paris, 1902).
4 Kitāb Ma‘ṣafat wu la al-ḥadīth, ed. al-Sayyiid Muḥammad Hanayn (Cairo, 1937).
5 Kitāb al-Kifāya li-‘ilm al-risāla (Hyderabad, 1357).
6 (Beirut, 1417/1996).
came after al-Khaṭīb and took a share of this knowledge. Al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ composed a short book which he called al-Imām8 and Abū Ḥāfaẓ al-Mayyānī [that is al-Mayyānish] wrote a pamphlet which he entitled Mā lā yusulū al-muhaddith jahānū.8

With the perspective given to him by the passage of two centuries, Ibn Ḥajjar al-ʿAqlīlānī regards Kitāb Maʿrūfīyah innā l-ṣimāl l-badīḥīth, more popularly known as the Mughaddima, of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ al-Shahrazūrī as the most influential work on the study of hadith: “The people took it up and followed its method. The versifiers, epitomizers, supplementers, abridgers, critics and proponents of it are innumerable.” Library catalogs bear witness that for the next few centuries the belief prevailed that the market could always bear another synopsis, in either verse or prose, of the contents of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ’s work. Indeed, it would be no exaggeration to say that for this day most traditional ḥadīth scholarship is directly or indirectly based on this one work.

Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ al-Shahrazūrī

The career of Taqī al-Din Abū ʿAmr Uthmān b. Abū ʿAlamān al-Shahrazūrī was shaped to a remarkable degree by the political currents of his age. He was

8 Al-Imām all-muʿrūfī uṣūl al-rūḥīyya wa-taṣagūr al-ṣīmīn, ed. al-Sayyid Ahmad Saq (Cairo, 1383/1980).


8 A number of the sources claim that Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ was born in the town of Shahrazūr itself.


12 By virtue of the tutelage of his father, Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ united the “Iṣqaṭ” and “Khartūsī” streams of Shi`ism. The genealogies of these traditions are discussed in Abū Shāmāh, Ṣibqāt Qahtāb al-Munāmma bi-taraqq id-dīn al-aṣwad min Māqūl al-Raqī al-Munawwarā, 4 vols (Cairo, n.d.), 2:28–31 and Nawāwī, Taḥqīq al-ṣīmīn waʾl-Qāhirī, ed. (Cairo, n.d.), 1:1(18–19).


He established a number of charitable foundations in Irbil, including a school of hadith named the Muzaffartya. He also financed good works in Mecca and Medina and contributed to the construction of the main mosque of the Hanbalites in the Damascene suburb of al-Salihiya.

Ibn al-Salih continued his education in Mosul, which by this time was one of the last outposts of the Zangids, a dynasty which originated in northern Iraq and had controlled Syria and Egypt until the advent of the Ayyubids. There, Ibn al-Salih, before “his mustache sprouted,” tackled the popular manual of Iraqi Shafism, Abû Ishâq al-Shirbini’s al-Mahadîdhab fi ‘l-fursî, under the tutelage of Ibn Samîn (523/1129–588/1192). The pinnacle of his early academic career was reached when he became a teaching assistant of ‘Imâd al-Dîn b. Yûnus (535/1140–608/1211), the leading Shafite scholar of the city.

There was great interest in hadith in northern Iraq at this time. The most famous member of the Zangid dynasty, Nûr al-Dân, founded the world’s first school of hadith in Damascus, the Dâr al-hadith al-Nûrîa, in 566/1170. Schools of hadith had also recently been founded in Irbil and Mosul. Therefore, Ibn al-Salih’s interest in the subject of hadith was probably awakened at an early age. It should be noted that even in this era the study of hadith was not a normal element of the curriculum of the typical student of law. Commentators had occasion to deplore the ignorance of hadith of legal scholars. We are told that in general the only hadith the jurists knew were the ones cited in their legal manuals and these were often viewed as unauthentic by the specialists.17

After his time in Mosul, Ibn al-Salih made a lengthy journey to the major scholarly centers of the East, including Baghdad, Nishapur, Marv, Qazwin and Hamdan. Despite its crucial importance, this period of his life is particularly obscure and we know little more than the names of the teachers he met. Individuals like Ibn al-San’âni (537/1143–618/1221), Fârîwî (ca. 522/1128–608/1212) and al-Mu‘ayyad (or perhaps al-Mu‘ayyid) al-Tûsî (524/1130–617/1220) are now nothing but placeholders in obscure insâds, but in their day they enjoyed international prestige because they had comparatively short insâds. Their prominence is reflected in the fact that their reports are the only ones for which Ibn al-Salih quotes the insâd in extenso in the Mağaddîma.

The first time we hear of Ibn al-Salih in the Ayyubid lands, where he would spend the rest of his life, is when he was appointed to the professorship of the Asadiya law school in Aleppo. Presumably he took the reins of this Shafite school shortly after the death of his predecessor in 608/1211. It appears that he did not occupy the position very long and he may have left as early as 1173.20 The reason for this is nowhere specified, although we may assume that his departure was amicable since the post remained in the hands of his family.

What Ibn al-Salih did next is unclear. Dhababi asserts that he studied in Damascus around 613/1216, a terminus post quem apparently established by the death of the judge Ibn al-Ḫchecki (520/1126–614/1217), who is said to have been one of his teachers. We next find Ibn al-Salih taking up the professorship of the al-Salîhiya law school in Jerusalem in 615/1218, in the wake of his predecessor who had been ousted by the Ayyubid prince al-Mu‘azzamīn aṣ-Ṣâda in Damascus for protesting his decision to legalize the sale of wine.21 The al-Salîhiya had been established by Saladin in 388/1192 in the Church of St Anne and it was the first Ayyubid foundation after they captured the city from the Crusaders.22 It is described as one of “the exalted positions in the kingdom of Islam,”23 and Ibn al-Salih seems to have been successful in his tenure there and may have comfortably continued there indefinitely. As it turned out, he taught there scarcely a year before the Crusades intervened. Al-Mu‘azzamīn found himself incapable of protecting the city, so to decrease its military value he ordered the dismantling of its walls. Despite many protests, the demolition began on 1 Muḥarram 616/19 March 1219 and this led to a mass exodus from the city. Ibn al-Salih joined the “great mob” who “abandoned their possessions and belongings and dispersed in every direction throughout the area.”24 Unexpectedly, Ibn al-Salih found himself out of work and on his way to Damascus.25

The Ayyubid prince al-Mu‘azzamīn was given control of Damascus in 394/1198. He first ruled in the name of Saladin’s son al-ĆAziz and then in the name of his own father, the brother of Saladin, al-Ćâlî. Al-Mu‘azzamīn took over in his own name upon his father’s death in 615/1218. He stands as one of the more spectacular figures of Islamic history. A scholar of certain attainments, he was determined to place his personal mark on the intellectual life around him. His most enduring legacy may be the book ascribed to him, The Missile Hitting Its Mark in al-Khitbāt’s Letter (al-Ṣâha al-maṣūfî fi-kitâb al-Khitbât), a polemical tract refuting the attacks against Abû Ḥanîfa (d. ca. 150/767) made by the Shafite

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17 For this individual and his family, see Halim, Avventura, 188-9.
21 Dhababi, Siyar, 23-142.
22 Nûrî, Dîrî, 1:33.
24 Ulâyymi, Um. 2:41.
25 Ulâyymi, Um. 1:402.
26 Aswâq (Tahâqî, 133) and Ibn Khâtîb (Tahâqî, 2:857) claim that Ibn al-Salih did not settle in Damascus until 630. I can think of no way to account for this obviously incorrect statement.
27 Published as Kithâb al-Radd ‘alâ Abî Bakr al-Khitbî al-Baghdadi (Cairo, 1351/1932).
Al-Mu'āẓamān's Hanafiyya is a mystery both in its origin and its form. He, and his son following in his footsteps, were the only Hanafīṣ in a dynasty that was otherwise Shāfi'ī. When asked how he alone in his family happened to be a Hanafiyya, he flippantly replied, "Do you not wish that there be a single Muslim among you?" He studied Hanafi law under Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ḥāṣrī (546/1151-636/1238), the most prominent Hanafi of his time in Damascus, and composed, with the help of a ghostwriter, a commentary on Shāhānī's al-Jāmi' al-kabīr, a standard work on Hanafi law. However, in the increasingly conservative spirit of his age, al-Mu'āẓamān seems to have later moved toward a purer Hanafiyya centering on the school's epistemology; one is tempted to say, a fundamentalist Hanafiyya. He commissioned a work called al-Tadhkira, a ten-volume digest of the doctrines of Abū Hanīfa stripped of the accretions of his students and later followers. Sībī b. al-Jawzī (581/1185 or 582-654/1236) tells us that "he was never separated from this book, whether on a journey or at home. He read it continuously and wrote on the back of each volume, "Ia b. Abī Bakr b. Ayyūb [al-Mu'āẓamān] has completed learning [this volume]." His missionary zeal led him to found a Hanafi law school, the Mu'āẓamānta, in the Hanbalite enclave of al-Salibiyya in 621/1224. His activities in the realm of the Arabic language were less provocative. He sponsored a great lexicographical compilation based on a number of earlier works. Not content to savor his pleasures in private, he paid cash prizes to students who had mastered certain grammatical and lexicographical texts, which did temporarily stir up some interest in these books.

Al-Mu'āẓamān's reign was an age of relative liberalism. Jews and Christians were allowed to hold public office and build additions on their houses of worship. Wine was legalized so that it could be taxed. The so-called "sciences of the Ancients" (for example, philosophy and Logic) were cultivated and al-Mu'āẓamān himself was a friend of the speculative theologian Amidtī (551/1156-631/1234). What al-Mu'āẓamān could not bring himself to tolerate was the strict literalism advocated by some of the local Hanbalī scholars and their restive followers. The profile of the Hanbalīs in Damascus had been considerably heightened in 551/1156 by arrival of Hanbalī refugees fleeing the Crusaders from the area around the Palestinian village of Jamātā. Their common origin as well as their close family ties gave the immigrant Hanbalīs a cohesiveness which allowed them to exert far greater influence than their numbers warranted. Their migration to the Damascus suburb of al-Salibiyya, which began in 553/1158, only served to prolong and strengthen their unity, which, one imagines, would have rapidly broken down if they had continued to live in the midst of the greater Damascene society. In al-Salibiyya they created a vigorous Hanbalī intellectual life which would hardly have been augured by the group's rural origin. Two of the greatest names in Hanbalism emerged from this milieu, Ibn Qudāmah (541/1147-600/1223) and ʿAbd al-Ghani b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb (541/1146-600/1203). Despite their suburban exile, the Hanbalī scholars continued to play a role within the city walls. Al-Mu'āẓamān was eventually obliged to grant the Hanbalīs a miṣrāb of their own in the Umayyad Mosque, the religious center of the city. This became their base for menacing the local Ash'arīs. Fakhr al-Dīn b. ʿAskārī (550/1155-600/1223), Ibn al-Salībi's unhappy predecessor at the Salibiyya in Jerusalem, had retired to Umayyad Mosque. As an Ash'arī, he was obliged to make circuitous detours to avoid walking near the Hanbalīs for fear that they would commit an outrage on his person.

Al-Mu'āẓamān's special antipathy for the Hanbalīs is illuminated by his famous showdow with the aforementioned ʿAbd al-Ghani in 595/1199. ʿAbd al-Ghani had traveled very extensively and it seems that no one with a religious text to transmit escaped his attention. A pathological troublemaker and career martyr, throughout his life we detect an eagerness to undergo a muḥāfa, or trial, like the one the imām Abū Hanjūf suffered at the hands of the ʿAbbāsīd caliph al-Maʾmūn and his successors, a subject he treated in a monograph. He chose Isfahan, the hometown of the Ash'arīs Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣbahānī

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30 Muḥāt al-zamān, 8(2):645.
32 Nūḥyānī, Dāirī, 2:580.
33 Sībī b. al-Jawzī, Muḥāt al-zamān, 8(2):647. Ḥājjī Khāliṣa says that the prince used to give money to students who mastered Shāhānī's al-Jāmi' al-kabīr and his al-Jāmi' al-yagīr, two works of Hanafi law, Kāshī al-zamān, 1:col. 568.
AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SCIENCE OF THE HADITH

(336/948-430/1038), as the place to point out the one hundred and ninety mistakes the latter committed in his Kitab Ma‘rifat al-Sa‘abiya. For this service, the local As‘harites almost killed him and he fled the city wearing only a loincloth. In Mosul he taught Qa‘yli’s Kitab al-Da‘if al-kuhr, which contains an uncomplimentary account of Abu Hanifa. In response, the local Hanafites rose up and had him put in prison. He would have been put to death had a quick-thinking friend not removed the objectionable pages from the book before his enemies could get their hands on it.

In al-Mu‘azzam’s Damascus, A‘bd al-Ghani chose the venue of the Umayyad Mosque to announce his anthropomorphic doctrines based on a literal reading of the Qur’an. Inevitably, this incited the non-Hanbalites and they carried their protest to al-Mu‘azzam and his Commander of the Citadel. A legal opinion was issued declaring A‘bd al-Ghani to be an unbeliever and innovator who was not to be left at large among the Muslims. When personally examined, A‘bd al-Ghani refused to back down. It was ordered that his midnight be smashed and the Hanbalites were evicted from the Umayyad Mosque. A‘bd al-Ghani must have thought that he had finally found his al-Ma‘mūn in al-Mu‘azzam. Alas, the prominent establishment Ḥanbalite al-Naṣḥī b. al-Hanbali (354/1159-634/1236) inopportune spoiled the tableau by raising a mob and threatening mayhem. At this point the army was called out to protect the Ḥanafite prayer area. Within hours the Ḥanbalites were allowed to resume their position in the Umayyad Mosque. A‘bd al-Ghani was obliged to seek martyrdom in Egypt, where he died in 600/1203 on the eve of another banishment.

This would not be a welcoming environment for Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ. Although his views were by no means as extreme as those of A‘bd al-Ghani – an innate conservatism kept him from indulging in the provocative positions of the most radical Ḥanbalites – they were markedly different from those of al-Mu‘azzam.

Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ was a traditionalist following a good doctrine. He abstained from the tendentious interpretation of the theologians. He believed in what was established by the texts. He did not go beyond the texts and he accepted their literal meaning. 43

According to a bit of gossip picked up in Mosul by Ibn Khallikān (608/1211-681/1282), who was himself a native of Irbil, Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ missed his chance early in life to fit into al-Mu‘azzam’s personal circle. As a youth he secretly studied Logic under the brother of one of his first teachers, Kamal al-Dīn b. Yūnus (551/1156-639/1242), a Shi‘īite prodigy of learning who taught Shaybānī to Ḥanafites, the Gospel to Christians and the Torah to Jews. He made no progress and when Kamal al-Dīn advised him, “People think well of you and they ascribe irreligion to everyone who studies this subject. You will spoil their opinion of you and not get anything out of this subject,” he was willing to drop it. 44 Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ would later sourly dismiss Logic as “pompous words which God has made superfluous for all sane people.”

Despite his ideological handicap, Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ did what he could to catch the princely eye in Damascus. In 620/1223 we find him among the students attending a lesson held to commemorate the interment of al-Mu‘azzam’s father in the Greater ʿAṣilā. He could not yet occupy one of the places of honor on either side of al-Mu‘azzam, but he did manage to maneuver himself into a prime position in the second rank, directly in front of him. 45 Sibt b. al-Jawzi refers to Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ’s predicament in his self-serving obituary of him. 46 Sibt, the grandson of one of history’s greatest Ḥanbalites, Abu l-Faraj b. al-Jawzi, had seen which way the wind was blowing and converted to Ḥanafism. He then succeeded extraordinarily in insinuating himself into the good graces of al-Mu‘azzam. He writes that Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ button-holed him at a shrine in a suburb park and asked him to intercede on his behalf with the prince: “Ask him to grant me a school!” Sibt says that at the time al-Mu‘azzam specifically disliked Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, but does not make clear whether this was because of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ’s generally conservative outlook or due to some particular offense on his part. Sibt claims that he kept after the prince and eventually reconciled him to Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ.

Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ’s networking finally paid off when he assumed the professorship of the Rahawīya in 622/1225. Nevertheless, a rather obscure incident reveals that even now his position remained vulnerable. The school’s founder was a wealthy merchant known as Ibn Rawḥa, who lived in the school. After his death in 623/1226 (or 622), the famous Sufi Ibn ʿArabī (560/1165-638/1240) and Abu l-Ḥasan Khazā‘il (ca. 547/1152-623/1226), the head of the shrine of ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn, Zayn al-Abīdīn, in Damascus, came forward and claimed that Ibn Rawḥa enjoined them “at night” – in the form of an apparition – to bear witness on his behalf for the removal of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ. This led to a complex series of events, which none of the sources cares to unravel. Involved seem to have been Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ’s refusal to allow the burial of the founder within the precincts of the school and some extremely restrictive stipulations placed on the running of the institution, which apparently could not be enforced. A provision forbidding Jews,
Christians and extremist Hanbalites from setting foot in it is cited. Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ weathered the storm and seems to have held the position until his death.\(^{45}\)

Al-Muṣʿẓẓam died in 624/1227 at the age of forty-seven and was succeeded by his son Dāwūd, who continued his policies. Two years later Dāwūd was pushed out by his uncle al-ʿAshraf. Although al-Muṣʿẓẓam and al-ʿAshraf were born only a day apart, rarely have brothers shown more marked contrasts. While the high-flying al-Muṣʿẓẓam was conversing with philosophers and philologists in the sunny gardens of Damascus, al-ʿAshraf was campaigning ceaselessly in the icy north, extending and defending the Ayyūbid domains. The acquisition of the sandal of the Prophet was his major cultural achievement. While visiting his nephew in the summer of 625/1228, it dawned on al-ʿAshraf that there was more to life than freezing and fighting and he resolved to take Damascus.\(^{46}\)

When he finally did, he immediately put his own stamp on the city. If al-Muṣʿẓẓam was al-Maʿmūn, al-ʿAshraf was al-Mutawakkil. Public morality was restored, non-Muslims were put in their place and the rational sciences were forbidden. Al-ʿAshraf renounced the sin taxes (if not the sins); wine was formally forbidden. The additions to the church of Maryam were torn down and the Christian superintendent of the treasury was humbled. As for the unholy pursuit of philosophy and science, Abū Shāma states,

Study of the sciences of the Ancients had become widespread during the last years of the reign of al-Muṣʿẓẓam b. Abī Bakr and in the reign of his son Dāwūd and that became more common until God extinguished it in the reign of al-ʿAshraf.\(^{47}\)

The great Aḥmad was put under house arrest, perhaps on the basis of a famous legal opinion given by Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ himself.\(^{48}\)

In this most congenial climate, Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ’s career took off. The year 628/1231 was particularly notable. This was when he made the pilgrimage to Mecca and became the first professor of the Inner (or Smaller) Shāfiʿīya.\(^{49}\) The founder of the school, Sitt al-Shām Zamurrud Khārūn, was one of the grand ladies of the Ayyūbid family. A sister of Saladin and al-ʿĀdil, she had blood ties to over thirty Ayyūbid princes. She devoted her life to good works and every year spent large sums of gold on potions and medicines which were produced in her house in the city and distributed to the populace. She had earlier founded a large school of Shāfiʿīī law outside of the city walls and before her death in 616/1220 she arranged to have her house, located near the Bimarstān al-Nūrī, converted into the school of Shāfiʿīī law where Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ taught.

Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ reached the peak of his career when al-ʿAshraf made him the first professor of the Dār al-ḥadith al-ʿAshrafiyya, one of the two schools of ḥadith founded by al-ʿAshraf. One of these, the ʿAshrafiya al-Barrānīyya, was located in the suburb of al-Ṣāḥbiyya and put under the control of the local Hanbalites.\(^{50}\) The inner ʿAshrafiya, where Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ taught, was located within the walls of the city of Damascus, near the main gate of the Cīṭādel and was given to the Shāfiʿīes. It was constructed on the site of the former home of the prominent general Sāmīr al-Dīn Qaṣmīn al-Nūrī (d. 596/1200), which al-ʿAshraf purchased in 628/1231 and renovated over the course of two years.\(^{51}\) The opening of the school in 630/1233 coincided with the arrival of the elevated ḥadith transmitter Ibn al-Ẓāhibī (d. 631/1234) from Baghdad, who was fitted by al-ʿAshraf during the month of Ramadan and presided over the recitation of Būkhārī’s Sahīḥ in the newly opened ḥadith school.

Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ died in his chambers at the ʿAshrafiyya on 25 Rabī’ II 643/19 September 1245, during the Khuṭṭārazīan and Egyptian siege of Damascus. The blockade caused a severe famine within the city and a number of prominent scholars were carried off. Nevertheless his funeral was very well attended. Ceremonies were performed in the Umayyad Mosque and the crowd followed the funeral procession to the city gate known as Bāb al-ʿFaraj. Inside of the gate, the ceremonies were re-enacted. Then a brave group of men hitched up their gowns and hastily delivered his remains to its burial site at the edge of the cemetery known as Maqābir al-Ṣūfīyya. In later years, his tomb was visited as a site of blessing and it was said that a prayer made there would be fulfilled.

The Muqaddima

Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ intended the Muqaddima to be a basic introduction to the study of ḥadith.

This book is an entryway into the study of ḥadith, an attempt to make clear its main and secondary issues and to explain the terminology, aims

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47 Abū Shāma, Dhakīl, 156.


49 Abū Shāma, Dhakīl, 146; Ibn Kathīr, Bahṣa, 129.

50 Ibn Shaddād, al-ʿĀṣiq al-khaṭṭāra: Dimashq, 232; Nuṣayrī, Darī, 1:301–13; Abūnawī, Muhkamaṭ, 43–9; Ulābī, Khūṭṭārī, 126–7. There seems to have been some confusion (see Ibn Shaddād, al-ʿĀṣiq al-khaṭṭāra: Dimashq, 241; Nuṣayrī, Darī, 1:277; Abūnawī, Muhkamaṭ, 47) as to whether it was the inner or Outer Shāfiʿīya where Ibn Ṣalāḥ taught, Ibn Khallīkān (Wafayat, 3:224) explicitly says that it was the Inner.


52 Nuṣayrī, Darī, 1:19–47; Abūnawī, Tanbīh, 10–12; Badrān, Mamlūkīmaṭ al-ṣaḥīḥ, 24–32; Ulābī, Khūṭṭārī, 75–7.
and concerns of its practitioners. Ignorance of these matters greatly
impairs a transmitter. This book is – God willing – worthy of receiving
attention before any other.33

The Muqaddima began as a series of individual lectures which were only later
placed in the present arrangement.34 In composing the Muqaddima, Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ
drew heavily on the works of most of his predecessors in the field and the final
product bears an especially strong resemblance to al-Ḥākim al-Nisābi’s Kitāb
Maṣrifat ʿulūm al-ḥadīth. Considering this, it should not surprise us to read
that at one point in his life Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ undertook to write a commentary on
al-Ḥākim’s book.35 We may safely surmise that the commentary, which he never
completed, grew into the Muqaddima. Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ made no attempt to conceal
his debt to al-Ḥākim. He gave his work, popularly known as the Muqaddima,
an almost identical title, Kitāb Maṣrifat ʿulūm al-ḥadīth,36 and adopted
al-Ḥākim’s concept of dividing the study of ḥadīth into a number of individual
categories (sing. nāsib), although he thoroughly reorders them and adds thirteen
new ones, bringing the total to sixty-five.

How can we explain the astonishing success of this work, since it clearly broke
little new ground in terms of its basic format? Where the Muqaddima did represent
more of a departure from its predecessors was in its style. Abū Bakr b. Musaddāt
(ca. 593/1196–663/1264) described how it appealed to contemporary eyes:

[Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ] composed a fright book on the sciences of ḥadīth and
followed a theoretical course in its laws. He used to favor reason over
reports (aithar) and analogy over anecdotes (khahar). In [this work] he
prepared principles of which no clear representation had [hitherto] been
made.37

Most notably he eschewed the ponderous habit of most of the writers on ḥadīth
of quoting earlier authorities at length. Writers on ḥadīth had hitherto been
averse to speaking in their own voice, adding only a sentence or two of their own
composition here and there to highlight the significance of the quoted material.
In addition to making their books long-winded and cumbersome, this taxed the
reader’s patience and attentiveness. Although the Muqaddima still includes a good
deal of quoted material, it does so much less than its predecessors. The easier
style probably contributed greatly to the popularity of the work.

33 Muqaddima, 436.
34 Ibn Eṣṣaṣcribes the deficiency he perceives in the arrangement of the book to this procedure;
Nasīc al-nasār, 5.
36 Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ knew the title of al-Ḥākim’s work to be Kitāb Maṣrifat ʿulūm al-ḥadīth, see
Muqaddima, 213.
37 Ibn Rāṭīf, Taṣāvīb, 132.
my gratitude to Professor Rosenthal. He has on occasions too numerous to mention allowed me to benefit from his vast expertise on questions both general and specific. To him I dedicate this translation.

Author’s Introduction

“Our Lord, give us mercy from You and grant us guidance in our affair.”

Praise – the most complete and highest praise – be to God, the Guide for those who seek His guidance, the Guardian of those who fear Him and the One who suffices for those who seek His approval. The most perfect prayers and blessings on our Prophet, the other prophets and the family of each so long as someone asks for His forgiveness and invokes His mercy. Amen! Amen!

The science of hadith is one of the best of the excellent sciences and one of the most beneficial of the useful disciplines. Manly and virile men – that is, thorough and complete scholars – love it and the only people who dislike it are contemptible and base. It is one of the sciences with the greatest relevance to the various other sciences, especially applied law (fiqh), which is the central science. For that reason, the errors of those writers on applied law who are unfamiliar with the science of hadith are numerous and the imperfections in the remarks of those scholars who forsake it are plain.

Formerly the stature of hadith was exalted. The throngs of hadith students were massive and the capabilities of the experts in the discipline and the transmitters of hadith were high. Through their living the different sciences of hadith were made vital, through their continued existence the branches of the various sub-disciplines of hadith were kept fresh and the abodes of hadith were occupied by its students. These students and experts have now died off and the sciences of hadith have been obliterated to such an extent that the practitioners in hadith are only a tiny band, few and weak in number. For the most part, in taking up hadith they are concerned with nothing more than hearing them heedlessly, and in recording hadith they do not expend more effort than to write them down defectively. They toss aside the various sciences of hadith through which the stature of hadith became exalted and they have made themselves remote from the bodies of knowledge which made it magnificent. Just when someone examining a difficulty in the science of hadith could hardly find anyone capable of explaining

1 Qur’an 18:10.
it and someone who wanted to pursue the science of hadith could hardly come across anyone knowledgeable in it, generous God (He is blessed and exalted and He deserves all praise) bestowed a blessing in the form of the book Kitāb Ma’rifat anna’ īmān al-hadīth (Knowledge of the Categories of the Science of Hadīth). This book divulged the hidden secrets of the science of hadīth, explained its stubborn difficulties, made firm its joints, set down its rules, illuminated its lineaments, clarified its rulings, detailed its subcategories and shed light on its principles, elucidated its branches and subsections, brought together its various sciences and benefits and tracked down its stray and valuable points. I beseech, entreat and humbly pray to God, the Great – in whose hand lie harm and benefit and granting and forbidding –, seeking His favor by every means and requesting His intercession in every way, that He make this book replete in that regard – and more replete – and that He make it ample for all of that – and more ample – and that He make the reward for it and the benefit of it great in this world and the next. God is near and He answers our prayers. I will have no success without God. Upon Him I rely and to Him I turn repentantly.

This is a list of the Categories of hadīth:

1. Sound hadīth (ma’rifat al-saḥīḥ min al-hadīth)
2. Fair hadīth (ma’rifat al-hasan minḥa)
3. Weak hadīth (ma’rifat al-ṣaḥīf minḥa)
4. Supported hadīth (ma’rifat al-muṣnad)
5. Uninterrupted hadīth (ma’rifat al-muttaqīf)
6. Raised hadīth (ma’rifat al-maṣīf)
7. Halted hadīth (ma’rifat al-muqatīf)
8. Cut-off hadīth, and they are different from interrupted hadīth (ma’rifat al-maṣīf wa-khuwa ghayr al-muqatīf)
9. Loose hadīth (ma’rifat al-mursaf)
10. Interrupted hadīth (ma’rifat al-muqatīf)
11. Problematic hadīth, and this is followed by the discussion of some subsidiary issues, including the ismād containing the word “sun” (from) and the suspension of hadīth (ma’rifat al-muṣdal wa-yu’dhi taṣṣūfi minḥa fi ’l-ismā al-muṣān al wa-yu’dhi al-muṣna kha fi ’l-ṣafīg)
12. Misrepresentation and the treatment of misrepresented hadīth (ma’rifat al-taṣlī al wa-ḥum al-mudallas)
13. Anomalous hadīth (ma’rifat al-shadrāh)
14. Unfamiliar hadīth (ma’rifat al-munkar)
15. Analysis, parallels and attestations (ma’rifat al-tibār wa-’l-mustāḥfāt wa-’l-šaḥādāh)
16. Additions of reliable transmitters and the treatment of them (ma’rifat ziyādāt al-thiqāt al wa-ḥum al-muqāmāh)
17. Isolated hadīth (ma’rifat al-ṣafād)
18. Defective hadīth (ma’rifat al-hadīth al-ṣuṣūlāḥ)
19. Disrupted hadīth (ma’rifat al-muṣṭarīf min al-hadīth)

20. Material interpolated into hadīth (ma’rifat al-mudāraj fi ’l-hadīth)
21. Forged hadīth (ma’rifat al-mardūḥ)
22. Mixed-up hadīth (ma’rifat al-muṣājāt)
23. The characteristic of those whose transmission is accepted and those whose transmission is rejected (ma’rifat yāfi’ al wa-man ṣafhala riwayatuhā wa-man tarīḫu riwayatuhā)
24. The methods of hearing and receiving hadīth, and this chapter includes an exposition on the forms of licensing and their treatment as well as the rest of the ways of taking up and receiving hadīth – it contains much information (ma’rifat kaysiyat wa-samā al-hadīth wa-tahammulha wa-ḥalf bayān anna’ al-taṣa wa-ṣuṣīmīna wa-sīrī wa-’l-taḥammul al-ṣaḥīh wa-’l-taḥammul al-ṣaḥīh īmān)
25. The writing of hadīth and the means of fixing and recording texts, and this chapter contains excellent information (ma’rifat kitāb al-hadīth wa-kaysiyat wa-ṣaṣīlīk wa-ḥalf ma’rifat muhamma ṭaṣīq)
26. The manner of relating hadīth, the stipulation regarding the conveyance of them and related matters, and this chapter contains many of the valuable points of this science (ma’rifat kaysiyat wāṣayt al-hadīth wa-shaṣīd adīḥīt wa-ṣaṣīlīk wa-ṣaṣīlīk ṭaṣīq wa-ṣaṣīlīk ṭaṣīq wa-ṣaṣīlīk ṭaṣīq)
27. Guidelines for the transmitter of hadīth (ma’rifat adīḥ al-mawadīh)
28. Guidelines for the student of hadīth (ma’rifat adīḥ al-mawadīh)
29. Elevated and low isnāds (ma’rifat al-insād al-ṣāfī wa-’l-mawadīh)
30. Famous hadīth (ma’rifat al-mawadīh min al-hadīth)
31. Rare and scarce hadīth (ma’rifat al-ṣaṣīh wa-’l-tazīc min al-hadīth)
32. Rare words in the hadīth (ma’rifat ṣaṣīh al-hadīth)
33. Enchained hadīth (ma’rifat al-muṣafal min al-hadīth)
34. Abrogating and abrogated hadīth (ma’rifat nākīb al-hadīth wa-muṣafālīh)
35. Misreadings in the isnāds and texts of hadīth (ma’rifat al-muṣafalīh min al-asār al-hadīth wa-muṣafālīh)
36. Contradictory hadīth (ma’rifat muḥkam al-hadīth)
37. Additions to cohesive isnāds (ma’rifat al-muṣafalīh min al-asār al-hadīth)
38. Hadīth with hidden looseness (ma’rifat al-muṣafalīh al-ṣaḥīh)
39. The Companions (God be pleased with all of them) (ma’rifat al-ṣaḥībah)
40. The Followers (God be pleased with all of them) (ma’rifat al-tabītīn)
41. Older people transmitting from younger ones (ma’rifat al-ṣaḥīh al-mawadīh ’an al-asārīn)
42. Symmetrical transmissions, and other instances of peers transmitting from one another (ma’rifat al-mawadīh wa-ṣaḥīh al-walā’ah min riwayat al-aṣrān ba’d al-hāl)
43. Brothers and sisters among scholars and transmitters (ma’rifat al-mawadīh wa-ṣaḥīh al-walā’ah min al-asārīn)
44. The transmission by fathers from their sons (ma’rifat riwayat al-ṭāḥr ’an al-ṭāḥr)
45. The opposite of that; that is, the transmission by sons from their fathers (ṭāḥr wa-ṣaḥīh al-walā’ah ’an al-ṭāḥr)
46. Those from whom two transmitters related, one early and one late, with a great difference between their date of death (muṣafāt man iḥtaraṣša fī l-rwāya ṣānba rāṣirīn muṣaṣṣadām wa-maṣṣa’akbhīr tashfaqāda mā hāya waṣṣāṣyīn).

47. Those from whom only a single transmitter related hadith (muṣafāt man lām yarw waṣṣa maṣṣa īlā ṣānba wāḥīd)

48. Those who are referred to by different names or varying epithets (muṣafāt man dāhara bi-ṣīmā mukhātāṣa wā muṣafāt maṣṣadāda)

49. Unique names of the Companions, transmitters of hadith and other scholars (muṣafāt al-muṣṣafāt min ʿasimā ʿalā ʾṣakhār wa-rwāti wa-l-ulamām)

50. Names and paidonymics (muṣafāt al-ṣīmā wa-l-kwan)

51. The paidonymics of those better known under their name, rather than their paidonymic (muṣafāt kuna l-muṣafāt bi-l-ṣīmā dāna l-kwan)

52. Nicknames of transmitters of hadith (muṣafāt al-aṣāb al-muṣṣadāt)

53. Homographic [names and gentilics] (muṣafāt al-muṣṣafāt wa-l-mukhātāṣa)

54. Homonymic [names and gentilics] (muṣafāt al-muṣṣafāt wa-l-mufarrajā)

55. A Category composed of the two previous Categories (muṣafāt yatārakhabū min ṣāḥiḥayn l-nawāṣṣa)

56. Transmitters resembling one another in name and lineage who are distinguished by the relative position of the names of the son and father (muṣafāt al-rwāti al-muṣṣadām fī l-im wa-l-nasab al-muṭamāyāzīn bi-l-taqālim wa-l-taʾṣīkh fī l-im wa-l-ṣab)

57. Those whose lineage refers to someone other than their father (muṣafāt al-muṣṣadāt ilā ghayr ʿaḥākim)

58. Gentilics the actual significance of which differs from the apparent one (muṣafāt al-anwāl al-ḥālāt bišāḥihā ʿalā khāfifā zabīkā)

59. Obscure references (muṣafāt al-muḥbāṣāt)

60. The dates of transmitters, including their deathdate and other relevant dates (muṣafāt tawārikh al-rwāti fī l-nawāṣṣa wa-ghayrihā)

61. Reliable and weak transmitters of hadith (muṣafāt al-thiqāt wa-l-ṣawāḥiḥ min al-rwāti)

62. Reliable transmitters who confused their hadith at the end of their life (muṣafāt man khālaṣṭa fī ʿaḥṣhīr ʿumrīsh min al-thiqāt)

63. The generations of transmitters and scholars (muṣafāt tabāqāt al-rwāti wa-l-ulamām)

64. Transmitters of hadith and other scholars who were clients (muṣafāt al-muṣṣafāt min al-rwāti wa-l-ulamām)

65. The residences and lands of transmitters (muṣafāt aṭṭāmin al-rwāti wa-baḥdaqām)

That is the last of the Categories but it is not the last of what is possible in that regard. The science of hadith can be divided into countless categories, since the states and characteristics of hadith transmitters and the states and characteristics of hadith texts are endless. Every one of these states and characteristics deserves to be mentioned separately and requires its own specialists - for each is a Category in its own right - but that would be an endless task. God is enough for us and an excellent protector.

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Know - may God enlighten you and me – that hadith, in the view of the scholars of this discipline, fall into the divisions of “sound” (ṣaḥīḥ), “fair” (ḥasan) and “weak” (badij). The sound hadith is a “supported” hadith (al-ḥadith al-nuṣrah), the isnaḍ of which coheres continuously through the transmission of one upright and accurate person from another up to its point of termination. The sound hadith can be neither “anomalous” (ṣhādik) nor “defective” (maṣla). These descriptions exclude the “loose” (naṣr), “interrupted” (muonaqī), “problematic” (maṣla) and anomalous hadith; the hadith containing an impairing defect (ṣilat), and the hadith the transmitter of which suffers from any variety of discreditation (ṣajra) – these are Categories which will be discussed below, God (He is blessed and exalted) willing. This is the hadith which is indisputably judged to be sound among the scholars of hadith.

Sometimes the scholars of hadith differ over the soundness of certain hadith, either because of their disagreement over whether these characteristics are found in them or because of their disagreement in stipulating the necessity of some of these characteristics, as in the case of the loose hadith. When they say, “This is a sound hadith,” what is meant is that its support (nuṣrah) is cohesive and it possesses the rest of the aforementioned characteristics. The standard of the sound hadith does not require that it be definite that the hadith is sound in reality, since this standard admits the hadith that a single upright transmitter is alone in relating and this type of hadith is not one of the reports (ṣahkhā) which the Community unanimously agreed to receive with acceptance. In the same way, when they say regarding a hadith that it is “unsound,” this is not a definite statement that it is actually a falsehood, since it may in reality be a truth. All that is meant is that its isnaḍ is not sound according to the aforementioned standard. God knows best.

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Some Important Notes

1. Sound hadith fall into the categories of “agreed upon” (muṣafāt laṣayhi) and “disputed” (muḥtahal filik), as was noted above, and they also fall into the categories of “well known” (mashhūr) and “rare” (gharīb), and categories in between. The grades of sound hadith vary in potency according to the degree that the hadith possesses the aforementioned characteristics upon which soundness is based. In view of this, sound hadith can be divided into innumerable subcategories. For this reason, we think it is better to refrain from judging any isnaḍ or hadith to be the absolutely sound, although a number of the authorities in hadith have ventured into that morass and their opinions were therefore contradictory.
We heard that Isâ b. Râhawayh said, "The soundest of all isnâds is Zuhri from Sâlîn from his father." We also heard something similar from Abîmâbîd b. Âhmâd b. Ibrahîm. We heard that Âmmâr b. Abî al-Fâllâs said, "The soundest isnâd is Muhammad b. Abî's from 'Abî from Abî."

We heard something similar from 'Abî b. Abî al-Madînî and this view was related from others as well. There are some who specify the transmitter from Muhammad b. Abî's, some making him Âyyub b. Sahkhîyânî and others Ibn Âwân. One of the things we hear from Yahyâ b. Ma'în is that he

1 Rûmana: In his Tabaqât al-fiqhâh al-Shâfi'iya (ed. Muhyî al-Dîn 'Alî Najîb, 2 vols, Beirut, 1413/1992, 1/77), Ibn al-Salâh explained that he used this term in the instances where he had an isnâd which for the sake of brevity he did not reproduce. For the vocalization of "ru'mâna," see 'Abî al-Ghant al-Nabûsî, I'dâh ma lâdunayn fî qarn al-muhaddithîn "ru'mâna," Maktûbat al-Asad (Damascus), no. 14133 ff., 290–318.

2 Abî Ya'qûb b. Râhawayh (or Râhîbît), 161/778–238/853 was one of the most important of the adherents of hadith of his era; EF, 3/902; Fust Sezgin, Geschichte des arabischen Schriftums, 10 vols. (Leiden, 1967–75), 1/109–10.

3 Abî Bâkîr Muhammad b. Muslim b. Shîhîh al-Zuhri (ca. 60/670–124/742) was an important figure in the history of hadith, Encyclopedia of Islam, 1st edn, 4 vols (Leiden, 1986–96), 4/1229–39; Sezgin, GÂS, 1/280–83.

4 Abî 'Umar (or Abî 'Abd Allah) 'Alîn (d. 160/776), the son of 'Abî Âlîh b. Âmar from Al-Qahtân, was famed for his piety; Dhihabî, Siyar, 4/457–67.

5 Abî 'Abd al-Rahmân 'Abd Allah was the son of the second Caliph 'Umar b. Al-Qahtân (r. 13/634–23/644). He died in 73/692 at over eighty years of age; EF, 1/534–35.

6 The abridgments of Abî 'Abd Allah 'Abd al-Mu'min Muhammad b. Abînâbân were published in a number of works and a very large collection of hadith, called "munâzâz" is ascribed to him; EF, 1/272–7; Sezgin, GÂS, 1/502–9.

7 Abî 'Hafîz 'Amr b. Abî al-Fâllâs was born around 160/776 and died in 249/863; Dhihabî, Siyar, 11/470–72.

8 Abî Bâkîr Muhammad b. Abînâbân from Al-Qahtân (ca. 33/653–110/729) was a Baṣrî authority in hadith whom later generations regarded as an expert in dream interpretation as well; EF, 3/947–8; Sezgin, GÂS, 1/633–4.

9 Abî Muslim (Abû b. 'Amr al-Sâlîmî (d. 72/691) was a well-respected Khâfiyyân scholar. There is a good deal of confusion concerning the various elements of his name; Dhihabî, Siyar, 4/40–4.

10 'Abî Abî al-Tâlib was one of the first men to convert to Islam and the son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad. He served as the fourth caliph from 35/656 until his assassination in 40/661; EF, 1/381–6; EF, 1/383–48.

11 Abî 'Umar 'Alî b. al-Madînî (161/777–234/849) was one of the greatest hadith critics of his generation. His judgements are preserved in his al-'Ulamî (ed. Muhammad Mustafâ al-'Aâmî, 2nd edn, Beirut, 1980) and in many later sources; Sezgin, GÂS, 1/108.

12 Abî Bâkîr Âyyub b. Abî Tâmâm Khayrân al-Sâlîmî (68/668–131/748) was a famed Baṣrî transmitter of hadith; Sezgin, GÂS, 1/87–8.

13 Abî Âwân 'Abd Allah b. Awn al-Mu'azzân (66/668–151/768) is a Baṣrî scholar of hadith renowned for his piety; Dhihabî, Siyar, 6/364–75.

14 The hadith criticism of Yahyâ b. Ma'în (158/775–233/847) is preserved in his Tabaqât (ed. Muhammad Nasîr Sayîf, 4 vols, Mecidiyeh, 1979), composed by his student 'Abâs b. Abînâbân (d. 271/884), and in a number of other works. Later authorities frequently cited his opinions; Sezgin, GÂS, 1/106–7.

15 Abî Muhammad Sulyâmîn b. Mûhrîn al-Ashîd (61/681–148/765), nicknamed al-'A'mâsî, was a prolific transmitter of hadith and expert on the Qur'an who taught in Al-Kûfah; EF, 1/431.

16 Abî 'Imrân 'Abd Allah b. Yazîd al-Nakhrî (ca. 50/668–ca. 96/715) was one of the most prominent of the early jurists of Al-Kûfah; EF, 9/921–2; Sezgin, GÂS, 1/403–4.

17 Abî Shâhî b. 'Alî b. Qasîs al-Nakhrî (d. ca. 62/682) was a prominent Kûfî legal scholar; Dhihabî, Siyar, 4/53–61.

18 Abî Bâkîr al-Qâhidîn Abî al-Bâlâbân b. Mus'ab al-Hudhâlî was an energetic teacher of the hadith of the Prophet who died in Medina in 32/653; Dhihabî, Siyar, 1/461–500.


20 'Abî b. al-Husayn b. 'Abî âl Tâlib (ca. 38/659–94/722), known as Zayn al-Abîdîn, was the fourth imam of the Twelver Shi'ites; EF, 1/489–90.

21 Abî 'Abd Allah al-Husayn was one of the beloved grandparents of the Prophet. His father was the Prophet's confidential and son-in-law 'Alî and his mother was Fâjîma. He died in the Battle of Karbala' in 61/680; EF, 3/667–5.

22 Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Rahmân al-Bâlâbânî (94/151–256/870) was the author of the most famous hadith collection, popularly known as Sahîh al-Bukhârî (published a number of times), and a number of other important works of hadith scholarship; EF, 1/1296–7; Sezgin, GÂS, 1/115–34.

23 Abî 'Abd Allah 'Abd al-Malik b. Anas al-Ashîdî (93/712–129/795) was the greatest scholar in the city of Medina during his lifetime and the epitome of the Malîkî law school. His views are preserved in his al-Mawqûf, which has reached us in a number of recensions; EF, 2/626–5; Sezgin, GÂS, 1/457–64.

24 Abî 'Abd Allah 'Abî (d. ca. 117/735), the client of 'Abîd 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar, was a prolific transmitter of hadith; EF, 7/874–6.

25 Al-Qâhidî al-Qâhidî (d. 429/1037) was a Shâfi'î polymath who is now best known for his heresiological work al-Farq bayn al-farqâ; Carl Brockelmann, Geschichte der arabischen Literatur, 2nd edn, 2 vols (Leiden, 1943–9), 1/482; Supplementband, 3 vols (Leiden, 1937–42), 1/666–7; EF, 1/1909; EF, 3/409–10.

26 Muhammad b. Idris al-Shâbî (150/767–204/820) was the epitome of the Shâfi'î law school and an influential figure in the development of Islamic legal thought; EF, 9/181–5; Sezgin, GÂS, 1/484–90.
2. When, in the personal hadith collections\(^{27}\) and other books which are in circulation, we encounter a hadith sound in regard to its isnād, but we do not find it included in either of the two Sahīhs or designated as sound in any of the other well-known and authoritative compositions (muṣannafāt) of the leaders in hadith; we do not presume to judge it conclusively as sound. These days it is no longer feasible for someone to apprehend sound hadith on his own by merely examining isnāds. This is because in every isnād of that kind of hadith you find among its transmitters someone who merely relied upon what was in his book in its transmission and lacked the level of retention, accuracy and exactitude stipulated for sound hadith. So, for the recognition of sound and fair hadith, the matter reverts to relying on what the authorities in hadith designated as such in their well-known and authoritative compositions, which have been rendered safe from alteration and corruption by the circumstance that they are widely known. The continuance of the chain of the isnād — by which this Community (may God augment its glory) has been distinguished — has become the principal reason for the circulation of isnāds apart from [those in the authoritative collections]. Amen!

3. Bukhārī — that is, Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muhammad b. Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī al-Jufrī, a client of the Jufrī tribe — was the first to compose a collection containing only sound hadith. Abū ʿUḥayyūn Muslim b. al-Haḍājī al-Nisabūrī al-Qushayrī\(^{28}\) — a member of the tribe of Qushayr — followed him. Although Muslim took hadith from Bukhārī and studied under him, he did share most of his teachers.\(^{29}\) The books of Bukhārī and Muslim are the soundest books after the august book of God [that is, the Qurʾān]. The statement we repeatedly heard from Shafiʿī (God be pleased with him) — and others related it with different wording — “I do not know of a more correct book of religious knowledge in the world than the book of Malik [that is, al-Muwaqqat\(^{29}\)]” was made by him before the books of Bukhārī and Muslim came into existence. The book of Bukhārī is the sounder of the two in regard to being a collection of sound hadith and also the more useful. There is nothing wrong with the statement we heard from the expert Abū ʿAlī al-Hāfiz

\(^{27}\) Ajzāʾ al-hadith: Taḥnānīwī defines just (pl. ajzāʾ) as “a book collecting the hadith of a single individual.” Kasabkhī’s ajzāʾi al-fistūn, 2 vols (Istanbul, 1117), 1:296. Students frequently gathered the hadith of a particular transmitter in this form to bring to his class for audition and occasionally these works found their way into general circulation. Some of the most renowned ajzāʾ are listed in Ḥājī Khalīfah, Kūshī, Iṣbah, Icsaḥ 583–90 and Muṣannaf Abū ʿAlī al-Kattānī, al-Musnad al-masjūṣa fi-haṣṣā nakbat kuthab al-asma al-muḥarraraṣa, 3rd edn (Damascus, 1383/1963), 86–94.

\(^{28}\) In addition to his Sahih (published several times), Muslim (d. 261/875) composed a number of important works on the study of hadith, several of which will be mentioned in the course of the present translation; EF, 7:491–2; Sezgin, G-I, 1:36–43.

\(^{29}\) From the fact that Muslim studied under Bukhārī, the scholars of hadith would as a matter of course have inferred that Muslim belonged to the generation after that of Bukhārī, rather than the same one, as was actually the case.

al-Nisabūrī\(^{30}\) (the teacher of the expert Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Hākim): “There is no book on earth sounder than the book of Muslim b. al-Haḍājī,” and there is nothing wrong with the doctrine of the North African scholars who prefer the book of Muslim to that of Bukhārī; if what is meant is that the book of Muslim is superior since no unsound hadith are mixed into it. After the introductory chapter of Muslim’s book, only sound hadith are enumerated in it and they are not coupled with hadith like those occurring in the chapter headings of Bukhārī’s book for which he did not provide isnāds meeting the standard stipulated for sound hadith. It does not necessarily follow from this that the book of Muslim is superior to the book of Bukhārī in what pertains to the essence of a book of sound hadith. If what is meant by these views is that the book of Muslim is sounder as a book of sound hadith, it redounds against whoever says it. God knows best.

4. Bukhārī and Muslim did not include all of the sound hadith in their Sahīhs and they did not take it upon themselves to do that. In fact, we often heard that Bukhārī said, “I put into Kitāb al-jāmiʿ (Comprehensive Collection; that is, his Sahih) only what was established as sound and I left out some sound hadith for fear of proximity.” We heard that Muslim said, “I did not place here” — that is, in his book, the Sahih — “all of the hadith I consider to be sound. I put here only those hadith they accepted unanimously.”\(^{31}\) He meant — and God knows best — that he only put in his book the hadith which in his opinion met the standards of the hadith unanimously regarded as sound, even if in the opinion of certain people some of these hadith do not appear to meet these standards.

The expert Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Akhram\(^{32}\) said, “Few are the well-established hadith that escape Bukhārī and Muslim,” — that is, in their books. One should say that they are not few. Al-Mustadrak ‘ala ’l-Saḥīḥayn (The Supplement to the Two Sahīhs) of Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥākim is a large book which includes a good deal of what escaped their notice. Even if an

\(^{30}\) Abū ʿAlī al-Husayn b. Abī al-Nasabūrī (277/900–349/960) was one of the great hadith scholars of his age and is best known, as this passage indicates, for being the mentor of al-Hākim al-Nisabūrī, Dhahabi, Siyar, 16:51–9.

\(^{31}\) Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muhammad b. Abī al-Nasabūrī (321/933–405/1014), also known as al-Hākim al-Nisabūrī and Ibn Hayyān, was one of the most prolific authors on the subject of hadith during the fourth/tenth century. Two manuals of hadith from his pen have survived. The larger, Kitāb Maʾrifat al-sulam al-hadith, Ibn al-Salih used as a model for the Muqaddima. His shorter manual, al-Mudakhkhal ila maʾrifat al-hadith, has been edited and translated by James Robson (London, 1953); EF, 3:382; Sezgin, G-I, 1:221–2; EF, 1:250–51.

\(^{32}\) Al-jamīʿ al-ḫalaf, 8 vols (Istanbul, 1329–33), 2:15 (K. al-Sahi).

\(^{33}\) The sources ascribe a number of works with interesting titles to Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muṣtafa b. Yaʿqūb b. Yūsuf al-Shaybānī al-Nisabūrī (248/864–344/955). Regrettably, none of them seems to have survived; Dhahabi, Siyar, 15:466–9.

\(^{34}\) 4 vols (Hildeshead, 1334–42).
argument may be made against Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Hākim regarding some of his hadith, many of his sound hadith remain untainted. Indeed, Bukhārī said, “I have one hundred thousand sound hadith and two hundred thousand unsound.” The total in his book Sahih is 7,275 hadith, including some repeated hadith. It has been said that with the omission of the duplicates the total is four thousand. In their opinion, however, this figure may include the accounts (zādkār) of the Companions and Followers, and often a single hadith related with two isnāds is counted as two hadith.

The augmentation of the sound hadith beyond the contents of the two books: those who seek this should obtain their additions from the hadith clearly designated as sound in one of the famous, authoritative compositions of the leaders in hadith – like Abū Dāwūd al-Siyāsī, Abū ʿUṣā al-Tirmīdī, Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Rājamī, Abū Bakr b. Khuzayma, Abū ʿAṣār al-Muṣārafa and others. For this, it is not enough that the hadith merely be found in the books of Abū Dāwūd, Tirmīdī, Nasāʾī and the rest of those who brought together sound and other hadith in their works. In the rarest, the mere presence of a hadith in the books of those of them who stipulate that the hadith they collect be sound – like the book of Ibn Khuzayma – does suffice. We regard in the same fashion the material found in the books providing versions of the hadith in the book of Bukhārī and the book of Muslim (God be pleased with them) with variant isnāds – like the

35 The antecedent of this pronoun appears to be those who provided the figure of four thousand.
36 In the broadest sense, the Companions (Sahabah) were the early Muslims who had contact with the Prophet, although the exact form of contact required was disputed. The Followers (Tābiʿūn) were the students of the Companions; see EF, 8:287–9 and 10:28–30. These two groups are discussed in depth below, in Categories 39 and 40.
37 Abū Dāwūd Siyāsī b. al-ʿAdwārī al-Siyāsī (202/817–275/899) was the compiler of the famous Kitāb al-Sunna (published several times); EF, 1:114; Sezgin, GAS, 1:149–52.
38 The hadith collection of Abū ʿUṣā al-Tirmīdī (270/883–279/892) is commonly called al-Tirmīdī al-sahih, although Ibn al-Salāḥ would prefer simply al-Tirmīdī. It is available in a number of editions; EF, 4:796–87; Sezgin, GAS, 1:154–9.
39 Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Rājamī Ahmad b. Shuʿayb al-Nasāʾī (215/830–303/913) was born in Nast in Khorasan and traveled extensively, collecting and teaching hadith, before settling in Egypt. His famous hadith collection is now known as Kitāb al-Sunna (published several times); EF, 7:948–9; Sezgin, GAS, 1:167–9.
41 Abū ʿAṣār al-Muṣārafa (306/919–388/995) composed a hadith collection named Kitāb al-Sunna (4 vols, Cairo, 1386/1966) and a number of other works concerning the study of hadith; EF, 2:136; Sezgin, GAS, 1:206–9.
42 Al-Ṭabarī al-Mudarrīsīj aṣaʿir kitāb al-Bukhārī wa-kitāb Muslim: Sahihār defined “ṣīḥah” – the term of the word later scholars preferred to tāḥrīr – as follows: “An expert takes, for instance, the Sahih of Bukhārī and he presents the hadith from it by one with his own isnāds, without stipulating for himself that the transmitters be reliable,” Taḥrīr al-Maqātīl, 1:39.

Books of Abū ʿAwāna al-Isāfīyīn, Abū Bakr al-Isāfīlī, Abū Bakr al-Barqūṭī and other works – which completes the abridged hadith and provides commentary on many of the hadith of the two Sahih. A considerable amount of this kind of material is found in al-Jāmiʿ al-Sahīḥayn (The Union of the Two Sahih) of Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥanāfīyī.

The expert Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Hākim occupied himself with augmenting the number of sound hadith beyond the contents of the two Sahih. He collected [the fruit of his research] in a book he called al-Mustadrak in which he placed the hadith not found in either of the two Sahih which he regarded as meeting the standard of the two teachers [that is, Bukhārī and Muslim] – that is, they had included material from the transmitters of the hadith in their books – or as meeting the standard of Bukhārī alone or that of Muslim alone. In addition, al-Hākim included the hadith that his own efforts led him to regard as sound, even if they did not meet the standard of either Bukhārī or Muslim. He is liberal in interpreting the standard of the sound hadith and free in applying it. It is best that we take a moderate position regarding him. We say: A hadith he reckons to be sound, if we do not find it regarded as sound by any other authority, is, even if it is not sound, a fair hadith to be cited as a proof and acted upon, unless a defect positively determining its weakness appears in it. In this respect, the Sahih of Abū Ḥātim b. Ḥibbān al-Bustī (God bless all of them) is similar to it. God knows best.

5. The books providing versions of the hadith in the book of Bukhārī or the book of Muslim (God be pleased with them) with variant isnāds: the authors of these books did not take it upon themselves to match Bukhārī and Muslim in regard to the exact wording of the hadith without addition or omission. This is

43 The book of Abū ʿAwāna al-Isāfīyīn b. Isāfīyīn al-Sīrāfī (d. 316/928) was named al-Munad al-muḥādharāt aṣaʿir Kitāb Muslim ʿin al-Hajjījī (published as Munad Abū Ḥātim, 2 vols, Hyderabad, 1362–3); Sezgin, GAS, 1:174.
45 Abū Bakr Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Barqūṭī (336/948–425/1034) was a teacher of al-Khiṭḥī al-Baghdadī; EF, 3:821. The title of the work referred to here seems to have been al-Jāmiʿ al-Sahīḥayn; see Haiji Khilīfī, Kāshīf, 1:col. 599.
46 Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muhammad b. Abū Naṣr al-Hanāfīyī (d. 420/1029–488/1095) was an Andalusi scholar who traveled to the East and died in Baghdad; Brocke, MGH, G, 1.413, Suppl., 1:578–9; EF, 3:571–4. For a description of his Jamiʿ, see Haiji Khilīfī, Kāshīf, 1:cols. 599–600.
47 Abū Ḥātim Muhammad b. Ḥibbān al-Bustī (ca. 270/884–354/965) was one of the greatest hadith scholars of the fourth/fifth century. His al-Munad al-ṣīḥah ʿin aṣaʿir al-ṣīḥah wa-ṣaḥīḥ Muslim al-ṣīḥah wa-ṣaḥīḥ Muslim was ghayr muṣārafa, but it was compiled by ihm fi umānīna ma-li al-maṣālik jārī fi nāṣīḥah, which was later rearranged by Abū al-ʿImr Abī al-Rājamī Ahmad b. Balbūn al-Fārisī (d. 739/1339) as al-Jāmiʿ al-Sahīḥayn al-Ḥibbān (ed. Shuʿayb al-ʿAmrīn, 18 vols, 1408/1988); EF, 3:797; Sezgin, GAS, 1:1189–91.
because in pursuit of elevation of isnād they related these hadith from sources other than Bukhārī or Muslim and thus some variation in wording occurs in them. This is also the case with the hadith authors included in their own independent compositions – like al-Sunan al-kabīr (Great Book of Sunna) of Bayhaqī, Shārī al-Sunnah (Explanation of the Sunnah) of Abū Muhammad al-Baghdawi and others – for which they say, “Bukhārī” or “Muslim” – “included it.” Nothing more may be inferred from that other than that Bukhārī or Muslim included the archetype (ṣiṣ) of that hadith, it being probable that there is a degree of variation in wording between the two versions. There may also be some variation in the meaning and I have in fact found some hadith in which there is a degree of variation in regard to the sense. When that is the case, you may not transmit a hadith from these books, saying, “It occurs in this form in the book of Bukhārī” – or “the book of Muslim” – unless you compare its wording [with the version given by either Bukhārī or Muslim to verify this] or the author who provides the version with the alternate isnād has said, “Bukhārī included it with this wording.”

These works differ from the abridgements of the two Sahīhs. The authors transmit in their abridgements the wording of the two Sahīhs, or that of one of them. However, one of these works, Ḥumaydī al-Andalūsī’s al-Fāṣb hayan al-Sahāḥayn, does include additional supplementary material for some of the hadith, as we mentioned above. Occasionally a person who does not know better transmits something he finds in this book as if it were from one or both of the Sahīhs, and he falls into error because it is one of these additions not present in either of the two Sahīhs.

Two benefits are derived from the aforementioned versions with variant isnāds of the hadith in the two books [that is, the Sahīhs of Bukhārī and Muslim]. The first is elevation of isnād. The second is the augmentation of the extent of the sound hadith by their additional words and their supplements to some of the hadith. The soundness of these additions is established by these variant versions, because these versions come with isnāds established in one or both of the Sahīhs and emanate from that well-established source.48 God knows best.

6. The hadith that Bukhārī and Muslim (God bless them) provide with an uninterrupted isnād in their books: these beyond a doubt represent the material they judged as sound. There is doubt about some of the “suspended” hadith (mu'allal); that is, the hadith with an isnād from the beginning of which one transmitter or more is omitted. The majority of these are in the book of Bukhārī; there are very few in the book of Muslim. We should say: These and similar hadith which contain an expression decisively and conclusively indicating their ascription to the person from whom they are “suspended” – for example,”The Messenger of God (Peace be upon him) said (qalā) such and such,” “Ibn ʿAbīs49 said such and such,” “Mujahīd50 said such and such,” “Aʿfān51 said such and such,” “Qānūn52 said such and such,” “Abū Hurayra53 related (rawā) such and such,” and similar expressions – are judged to be established as actually coming from that person. On the basis of all of these expressions, it is determined that the person to whom Bukhārī ascribed the hadith spoke and related [the text that follows]. Bukhārī would not have deemed it permissible to state this [that is, to use these unequivocal expressions] without qualification unless it was established in his view that the hadith came from the person to whom it is ascribed. If the transmitter from whom the hadith is suspended is not a Companion, the judgment regarding the soundness of the hadith depends on the cohesiveness of the isnād between that person and the Companion.

The phrases containing no decisive and conclusive indication in their wording – for instance, “Such and such was related from (ruʾiyat) ‘an (the Messenger of God (Peace be upon him), “Such and such was related from X,” “On this topic we find such and such from ‘an the Prophet (Peace be upon him),” and similar expressions: none of them contains any decisive indication establishing it as coming to the person to whom Bukhārī ascribed it, because expressions like these are also used with weak hadith. However, Bukhārī’s inclusion of this kind of hadith among the sound hadith provides an indication of the soundness of its archetype which one can be comfortable with and rely upon. (God knows best.) Indeed, few of Bukhārī’s suspended hadith fail to attain the standard of the sound hadith and in his book these are found in certain places in the headings

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48 Ulūm al-ishād: The fewer intermediaries mentioned in an isnād, the more “elevated” it was considered; see below, Category 29.
49 Abū Bakr Ahmad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī (384/994–458/1066) was an important Shiʿīte who wrote a number of works on hadith, including his al-Sunan al-kabīr (published as Katib al-Sunan al-kabīr, 10 vols., Hyderabad, 1344-55; Brockelmann, G.M., I, 146-7, Suppl., I, 635-18; EF, 13130).
50 Abū Muhammad al-Ḥusayn b. Māʿṣūd b. Muḥammad al-Baghdādī (433/1042–516/1122) was a pious scholar who worked hard to popularize the study of hadith. Shārī al-Sunnah (ed. Shūṭayb al-Armathūt and Muḥammad Zuhayr al-Shawārī, 16 vols., Damascus, 1390/1971) is one of his most famous works; Brockelmann, G.M., I, 144-7, Suppl., I, 630-22; EF, 1895.
51 Shafiʿī asserts that the madkhāli was obliged to select the versions of the hadith with isnād which were identical to the original ones for as many links as possible, unless there was a compelling reason not to do so; Fath al-Muṣṭafī, 1:39. It has been asserted (pace Ibn al-Salah) that the soundness of the isnāds of the alternate versions was confirmed only insofar as they were identical to those in the two Sahīhs; W. Marçais, Taqadd, 9, n. 3.
52 Abū ʿAbĪs ʿAbīl ʿAbbās b. ʿAbīs (d. ca. 680/687) was a Companion of the Prophet who was especially expert in the interpretation of the Qurʾān; EF, I, 140-41; Sezgin, G.A.S, 125-6.
53 Abū ʿAbĪs Mūṣīl b. Jaḥīl al-Madīkī (ca. 21/642–22/662) was best known as an expert in the Qurʾān; EF, 7, 2903; Sezgin, G.A.S, 1:209.
54 Abū ʿAbīs ʿAbīs b. Muḥammad al-Saffārī (ca. 134/751–220/835) was born in al-Baṣra and taught hadith in Baghdad; Sezgin, G.A.S, 1:102.
55 Abū ʿAbīs al-Rahmān ʿAbbās b. Muṣṣāma al-Qanūnī (ca. 130/748–221/836) was a long-time student of Māʾṣūm, Dihāshī, 5, 257-58.
56 The Companion Abū Hurayra al-Dawwādī (d. ca. 59/679) was a major transmitter from the Prophet. There is considerable controversy surrounding the other elements of his name; EF, I, 129.
of the chapters, not in the substance of the book and its prime subject matter as indicated by the title he gave it, al-żāmi‘ al-musnad al-ṣaḥīḥ al-muhīṭṣar min umūr Rūṣūl Allāh wa-sunnātih wa-aṣyā‘īmi‘ī (The Comprehensive Collection of Supported Sound Ḥadīths Summarized from the Actions, Practices and Battles of the Messenger of God).

The applicability of Bukhārī’s statement, “I put into Kitāb al-żāmi‘ only what was established as sound,” goes back to the distinction which we explained. The same is true of the applicability of the statement of the expert Abū Naṣr al-Wā‘lī al-Sijātī,57 “Scholars, the jurists and others, unanimously agree that if a man had sworn to divorce his wife if not all of the hadith related from the Messenger of God (Peace be upon him) in the book of Bukhārī were established as being authentically from him and said by him, there would no doubt about it: the man did not break his oath and the wife remains as before in his snare.” This is also true of the statement of Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Humaydī in his book al-żāmi‘ hayn al-ṣaḥāḥayn, “These two [that is, Bukhārī and Muslim] are the only old authorities (God be pleased with all of them) we found who clearly expressed soundness to us in all of what they brought together.” All of that refers to the substance and the prime subject of the book and the texts in the chapters, rather than the chapter headings and the like, because in some of these chapter headings there is material that is absolutely not sound. An example of this is Bukhārī’s chapter on the Ḥadīth concerning the thigh where he relates from Ibn ʿAbīs, Jarhād, and Muḥammad b. Jāshīn from the Prophet, “The thigh is one of the privy parts.” Another example is his remark in the first of the chapters concerning the major abomination, “Bahz b. Ḥakīm” said from his father from his grandfather from the Prophet, “God most deserves that one have shame before Him,” and this definitely fails to meet Bukhārī’s standard. For that reason, Ḥumaydi did not include it in his al-żāmi‘ hayn al-ṣaḥāḥayn. So note that, for it is significant yet not really apparent. God knows best.

57 The most important work of the anti-Abūṣarite polemicist Abū Naṣr ʿUbayd Allāh b. Saʿīd b. Hātim al-Wā‘lī al-Sijātī was al-ḥādīth al-hurūfī, in which he argued that the Qurān is unverified. He died in 444/1052 in Mecca; Dhahabī, Sīyar, 17/654–7.
59 As a child, the Companion Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Jāshīn al-Asād joined his family in emigrating to Ethiopia. After their return to Mecca, they emigrated to Medina; Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, Sīyar, 3:1737–4.

7. Since the question of the recognition of sound Ḥadīth ultimately reverts to the material the authorities included in their compositions which are responsible for declaring them to be sound, as mentioned above, the need to direct our attention to the subcategories of sound Ḥadīth is, as a consequence, urgent.

a. The sound Ḥadīth included by both Bukhārī and Muslim.

b. The sound Ḥadīth included only by Bukhārī, that is, as opposed to Muslim.

c. The sound Ḥadīth included only by Muslim, that is, as opposed to Bukhārī.

d. The sound Ḥadīth which meet the standard of both of them, but which were not included by them.

e. The sound Ḥadīth which meet the standard of Bukhārī, but which were not included by him.

f. The sound Ḥadīth which meet the standard of Muslim, but which were not included by him.

g. The Ḥadīth regarded as sound by others, but which do not meet the standard of either Bukhārī or Muslim.

These are the main subcategories. The highest is the first, and it is one which the scholars of Ḥadīth often call “agreed upon to be sound” (ṣaḥīḥ musta‘ṣafq ‘ulāṣīḥ). When they apply that term without qualification, they mean by it the agreement of Bukhārī and Muslim on it, and not the agreement of the Muslim Community. However, the agreement of the Muslim Community on it necessarily follows from the agreement of Bukhārī and Muslim and is concurrent with it, because of the agreement of the Muslim Community to receive with acceptance whatever Bukhārī and Muslim agreed upon. The soundness of this entire subcategory is definitely settled. Theoretical and certain knowledge63 occurs through it, contrary to the doctrine of those who deny this, arguing that their agreement does not in principle produce more than the presumption (ẓann) that the Ḥadīth is sound. They claim that the Muslim Community received this Ḥadīth with acceptance only because it is obliged to act on presumption, although presumption sometimes errs. Formerly, I had inclined toward this view and regarded it highly. Then it became clear to me that the doctrine we64 had chosen in the first place is the correct one, because the presumption of someone who is protected (ma‘ṣāf) from error is never wrong and the Muslim Community, when united by consensus (fi ʿmaktabah), is protected from error. For this reason, consensus based on someone’s personal endeavor (jithāhā) is a decisive proof, and

63 Al-ḥādīth al-ṣaḥīḥ: In discussing this passage, Ibn Ḥajar noted that al-ḥādīth al-ṣaḥīḥ differs from al-ḥādīth al-fārisī in that the former admits doubt while the latter does not. He equated yuṣṣīḥ with yuṣṣūf and interpreted it to mean that Ibn al-Salīl was asserting that these Ḥadīth possess an absolute level of soundness which renders comparisons between them impossible, a view which Ibn Ḥajar did not personally endorse; Nihāy, 1:379.
64 The reason for the shift from the first person singular to the first person plural is not clear.
most of the cases of the consensus of scholars are of that kind. This is a precious and useful point.

One of the ramifications of this is the doctrine that the hadith which either Bukhārī or Muslim is alone in including come under the heading of what is decisively regarded as sound because of the Muslim Community’s reception of each of their books with acceptance in the fashion detailed by us in the preceding paragraph. This applies to all but a few insignificant items which some of the critics among the experts of hadith – like Dārāquṭnī65 and others – have discussed. These are known to the scholars in this field. God knows best.

8. When it becomes clear, from what we said above, that the way to identify sound and fair hadith is now confined to the consultation of the two Sahīhs and other authoritative books, it will be seen that the course open to the student who wants to act on these hadith or cite them as a proof – if he is one of those permitted to act on hadith and cite them as proofs to a partisan – is to consult a copy of the text (ṣaḥīḥ) which he personally or someone else reliable has collated against numerous sound copies transmitted through several different channels. So through the collation, in conjunction with the ubiquity of these books and the improbability that they were intentionally changed or corrupted, he obtains confidence in the soundness of what those texts agree upon. God knows best what is correct.

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65 This is a reference to Dārāquṭnī's Kitāb al-Tatākkhī (published with al-Iṣbaṣīrī, Medina, 1397/1978).
1. The hadith is an individual whose suitability has not been confirmed: yet, this individual is not careless, prone to mistakes in what he transmits nor accused of falsehood in hadith; that is, he manifests neither the practice of deliberately lying in hadith nor any other reason for vitiating his integrity. In addition, it has become known that a text like that of the hadith or one similar to it has been transmitted through one or more different lines of transmission. In this way, the hadith is reinforced by the parallelism of someone else being in conformity with its transmitter with something like it or by another attestation to it; that is, the appearance of another hadith with a similar text. This way the possibility that it is anomalous or unfamiliar (mukhtasar) is excluded. The remarks of Tirmidhi concern this subcategory of fair hadith.

2. The hadith the transmitter of which is someone famous for veracity and honesty who, however, did not attain the grade of the transmitters of sound hadith, because he fell short of them in retention and exactitude: despite that, his state is superior to that of the transmitter whose hadith are counted as unfamiliar, if he is alone in transmitting them. For all of this, the hadith must [first] be considered to be secure from being defective (mu‘allaq), as well as secure from being anomalous or unfamiliar. The remarks of Khaṭṭābī concern the second subcategory of fair hadith.

What we have said brings together the scattered comments of those whose remarks on the fair hadith have come to our attention. It is as if Tirmidhi had mentioned one of the two categories of the fair hadith and Khaṭṭābī had mentioned the other, each of them limiting himself to what he regarded as problematic and passing over what he saw as unproblematic, or paying no attention to some aspects of it, overlooking them. (God knows best.) The preceding was an enumeration of the principal aspects of the fair hadith and we will now clarify the matter through a discussion of certain points worth noting and certain subsidiary issues.

1. The fair hadith falls short of the sound in that the standard of the sound requires that the integrity, accuracy and exactitude of all of the transmitters of the sound hadith be established, either by explicit transmission or by way of general acknowledgement, as we will explain, God (He is exalted) willing. That is not stipulated for the fair hadith. As stated above, the appearance of the hadith from several paths of transmission and the other conditions which were explained earlier do suffice in the case of the fair hadith.

7 Muṣāṭr literally means “veiled” and may be translated as “respectable.” Ibn Ḥajar equated mazār with maṣhāl al-ḥāl; Naḥḥāṣ al-muṣār, 87.

8 Abu ʿl-Muṭṭafar Manṣūr b. Muḥammad al-Sāmʿīn (426/1035–489/1096) was the grandfather of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ’s teacher Abu Saʿd al-Sāmʿīn; Brockelmann, G.A.I., 1:524, Suppl., 1:731.
3. If the transmitter of a hadith lags behind the grade of those who are retentive and exact—yet is widely known for veracity and respectability—and in addition to that his hadith was related through more than one line of transmission, the strength of the hadith is reinforced from both sides and that lifts his hadith from the grade of fair to the grade of sound.

An instance of this is the hadith of Muhammad b. `Amr from Abū Salama from Abū Hurayra that the Messenger of God (Peace be upon him) said, “Were it not that I would be imposing a burden on my Community, I would have ordered them to clean their teeth with a tooth-stick before every prayer.” Muhammad b. `Amr b. `Aqīqama was renowned for veracity and piety, but he lacked exactitude. So some regarded him as weak on account of his poor retention while others deemed him reliable because of his veracity and Augustness. Thus his hadith from this standpoint is only fair. When the circumstance that the hadith is related through other lines of transmission was combined with that, our fears about his poor retention vanished and that slight shortcoming was mended. So this isnād was established as sound and the hadith attained the level of the sound hadith. God knows best.

4. The book of Abū `Udā al-Tirmidhi (God bless him) is a fundamental document for the recognition of fair hadith. He is the one who referred to this category of hadith by this name and he used the term often in his Jāmāt. The term “fair” is also scattered throughout the remarks of some of his teachers and the members of the generation of scholars before him, like Ahmād b. Hanbal, Bukhārī and others.

The various copies of Tirmidhī’s book differ in his designations, “This is a fair hadith,” or “This is a fair and sound hadith (ḥadīth ḥasan saḥīḥ),” and the like. So it is best that you correct your copy of it against a batch of other copies and rely on what they agree upon.

Dhāraqṭun in his Sunan explicitly designates many of his hadith as fair and this designation also occurs often in the Sunan of Abū Dāwūd al-Siṣistānī (God bless him). We heard that he said, “I mentioned in my Sunan the sound hadith and those similar and close to them.” We also heard his remarks to the effect that he mentions for each topic the soundest hadith known to him. He said, “I have indicated those hadith in my book that contain a severe deblity. The hadith I do not say anything about are good (ṣāḥīḥ), and some are sounder than others.”

On this basis, the hadith which we find mentioned in his book without any designation—if they are not in either of the two Ṣaḥīḥs and no scholar who discriminates between the sound and the fair designates them as sound—we know to be fair in the opinion of Abū Dāwūd, although some of them may not be fair in the opinion of others and may not be included in the material which we have established the accuracy of calling “fair” in accordance with what has been said above. This is because—when the expert Abū `Ubayd Allah b. Manda related that he heard Muhammad b. Sa`d al-Bawārdī saying in Egypt, “It was Abū `Ubayd al-Rahmān al-Nasā`ī’s way to include the hadith of all of those transmitters who were not unanimously rejected.”—Ibn Manda himself added, “Abū Dāwūd al-Siṣistānī as well adopts the same course, including hadith having weak isnāds if he does not find anything else on the topic, because in his view they were stronger than the arbitrary opinions (rajīy) of men.” God knows best.

5. The author of the Maṣāḥīḥ (Lamps) (God bless him) came to divide his hadith into two categories, the sound and the fair. By “sound” he meant the hadith appearing in one or both of the Ṣaḥīḥs and by “fair” the hadith Abū Dāwūd [al-Siṣistānī], Tirmidhī and their peers included in their compilations. This is a usage unrecognized by others. The scholars of hadith do not consider the fair hadith to consist of that, for these books [that is, those of Abū Dāwūd al-Siṣistānī, Tirmidhī, and so forth] contain fair and other hadith, as has been made clear. God knows best.


Abu `Isa`ī an-Nasā`ī b. `Askū b. Manda (310/922–395/1005) was the author of several religious works; EF, 1:363.

Some have identified this Muhammad b. Sa`d al-Bawārdī as the Abū Manṣūr al-Bawārdī who is mentioned as an author of a work on the Companions by Ibn Hajar, al-Isāba fi Tanwīr al-Ṣāḥib, 4 vols. (Cairo, 1327), 1:3 and Sukhawī, Fīrāq, 161; see, for example, Kast, Rouda, 128.

Baghawi was the author of the collection of hadith without isnāds entitled Maṣāḥīḥ al-ṣanūn (ed. Ibrahim Muhammad Ramaḍān, 2 vols. , Beirut, n.d.). Despite Baghawi’s unique views (presented in the very brief introduction to the work), Maṣāḥīḥ was very popular and spawned considerable activity among later scholars; see Ḥājī Khadhāfī, Kusaḥ, 2nd ed. 1698–702.

Abū Dāwūd Sulaymān b. Dāwūd b. al-Jarīd al-Taṣlīṣī (133/750–283/818 or 204) was a famous hadith scholar in al-Baṣra; EF, 4/708; Sawsin, G. 43, 1:97–8.

Abū Muhammad `Ubayd Allah b. Mūsā al-Abīd (d. 213/829 or 214) is said to have been the first scholar in al-Baṣra to compose a masnad; Dīhākh, Sīyār, 9:553–7.

The very large masnad ascribed to Abū Ṣa`d b. Hanbal was published in six volumes (Cairo, 1311–13).


Abū Muhammad `Abd (or `Abd al-Hamīd) b. Ḥumayd al-Khaṭṭīb (al-Khāṭṭīb) was a prominent transmitter of hadith who died in 249/863. His Masnad has survived in the form
Darānī, Abū Ya’lī al-Muwāshīh,19 al-Ḥasan b. Sufyān,20 Abū Bākār al-Bazzār21 and similar works—do not reach the level of the Five Books—that is, the two Ṣaḥīḥ, the Sunan of Abū Dāwūd al-Siṣīṣṭānī, the Sunan of Naṣārī, the Fāms2 of Tirmidhī—and works similar to them in that the hadith appearing in them are suitable for citation as proofs in arguments and for being relied upon, unless they are designated otherwise. The custom of the compilers of the mawāniḍ was to include in the chapter (muṣnada) of each Companion all of his hadith they related, without restricting themselves to the hadith worthy of being cited as proofs. For this reason, the level of these mawāniḍ fell below the level of the Five Books, even if these mawāniḍ are highly esteemed on account of the augustness of their compilers. This is also true of the works arranged by subject based on these mawāniḍ. God knows best.

7. The statement of scholars, “This is a hadith sound from the standpoint of its isnād (ṣaḥīḥ al-isnād)—or “fair from the standpoint of its isnād (ḥasan al-isnād),”—is less than their saying, “This is a sound hadith”—or “a fair hadith”—because sometimes it is said, “This is a hadith sound from the standpoint of its isnād,” and the hadith is not actually sound on account of being anomalous or defective. However, when a reliable author says nothing more than that it is sound from the standpoint of its isnād and he does not go on to bring up a defect in it or impugn it, the presumption from this is that he judged it to be intrinsically sound (ṣaḥīḥ fi naṣīṣḥ) because the lack of a defect or reason for impugnment is what is initially presumed. God knows best.

8. The statement of Tirmidhī and others, “This is a fair and sound hadith (ḥadith ḥasan saḥīḥ) is problematic because the fair hadith is inferior to the sound, as was explained above. The conjunction of these two states in a single hadith is the conjunction of the negation and assertion of this inferiority. The answer here is that the expression concerns the isnād. When a single hadith is related with two isnād, one of them fair and the other sound, it may properly be called a “fair and sound hadith”; that is, it is fair in relation to one isnād and sound in relation to the other. However, it is not unheard of for someone to use that expression, meaning “fair” in its everyday sense—that is, what the soul inclines toward and the heart does not reject (that is, in the sense of “beautiful”)—rather than the technical meaning with which we are concerned, so be aware of that. God knows best.

9. There are some scholars of hadith who do not recognize fair hadith as a separate category, subsuming them in the types of sound hadith, since they are included in the types of hadith which may be adduced as proofs. The expert Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥakīm’s adherence to this doctrine is apparent from his remarks in his Taṣāwufūt and he indicates it also by calling the book of Tirmidhī the al-Fāms al-ṣaḥīḥ (The Comprehensive Collection of Sound Hadith). The expert Abū Bākār al-Khaṭībī also applied the name of “ṣaḥīḥ” without any qualification to Tirmidhī’s book and to the book of Naṣārī. The expert Abū Tāhir al-Shāfiʿī brought up the Five Books and said, “The scholars of the East and the West agree upon the soundness of them.” This is an instance of careless speech, for the authors of these books have clearly designated some of the hadith they contain as being “weak” (daʿīl), “unfamiliar” and other similar terms descriptive of weak hadith. Abū Dāwūd al-Siṣīṣṭānī in the passage we quoted above clearly indicated the division of the hadith in his book into sound and other kinds of hadith and Tirmidhī clearly distinguishes between the sound and the fair hadith in his book. If someone who does not deny that the fair hadith is inferior to the sound as described above calls a fair hadith “sound,” it is merely a case of a difference in expression rather than in sense. God knows best.

24 Abū Bākār Ahmad b. Abī b. Thabit (392/1002–463/1071), popularly known as al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, was one of the towering figures of traditional Islamic scholarship and his Taṣāwufūt Baghdādī (14 vol., Cairo, 1349/1931) is the finest classical biographical dictionary. Several of his other important contributions to the study of hadith will be mentioned in the course of this present work, Brockelmann, GAI, 1:400–401, Suppl., 1:502–4; EF, 4:1111–12.

25 Abū Tāhir Ahmad b. Muḥammad b. Ahmad al-Shāfiʿī was born around 722/1325 in Nishapur. After extensive travels, he settled in Alexandria in 1111/17, where he remained almost continuously until his death in 576/1180. During his lifetime he was the most important scholar of hadith in the western Islamic world; Brockelmann, GAI, 1:450, Suppl., 1:525; EF, 9:607–9.
Category 3

Weak Hadith

(Ma'rifat al-da'if min al-hadith)

Every hadith in which the traits of the sound hadith and the fair hadith mentioned above do not come together is a “weak” hadith. Abū Ḥātim b. Ḥibbān al-Busti went overboard in creating subcategories of weak hadith, coming up with forty-nine. What I gave here is a general rule for all of that.

The procedure for someone who seeks to expound at length on this topic is to take a particular trait of the sound or the fair hadith and make the hadith that lack that trait a separate subcategory of weak hadith – if there is nothing mitigating the absence of the trait in the fashion established in the Category of the fair hadith. He then should make the hadith that lack that trait in addition to another particular trait a second subcategory. Then he should make the hadith that lack that trait in addition to two other particular traits a third subcategory. He should continue in this fashion until he covers all of the aforementioned traits. Then he should go back and pick anew a trait other than the one he initially picked and make the hadith that lack it alone a subcategory. Another subcategory is comprised of the hadith that lack the new trait and another trait – and let the latter trait be different from the one he began with because it was already used in the subdivisions based on the lack of that first trait – and so on to the last of the traits. The last and lowest subcategory is composed of the hadith that lack all of the traits. For the traits that have special stipulations (shari'āt) do the same thing with their stipulations so that the subcategories are thereby further multiplied.

The subcategories of the weak hadith which have well-known special appellations are the “forged” (maqūl), the “mixed-up” (maqālih), the “anomalous” (shiddhī), the “defective” (mu'ta'allah), the “disrupted” (mutarfīth), the “loose” (mursal), the “interrupted” (muqā'īf) and the “problematic” (muqā'ūl). The explanation of these will appear in later chapters, God (He is exalted) willing. It will be noted in the Categories we will be presenting that they are general Categories of the Sciences of Hadith and not specifically Categories of the original system of classification, 1 which we have now completed. We beseech God (He is blessed and exalted) to make all-encompassing the benefit of this book both in this world and in the hereafter. Amen!

1 That is, the division of hadith into sound, fair and weak; see Ibn Hajar, Nadār, 1:504.