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IBN ḤIBBĀN AI-BUSTĪ’S (d. 354/965) CONTRIBUTION TO THE SCIENCE OF ḤADĪTH TRANSMISSION

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MIRKH

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of PhD Theology and Religious Studies

School of Critical Studies
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March 2017

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ABSTRACT

This research is based upon a collection of generally unutilized ḥadīth literature, and is not only concerned with a study of “authenticity” of the ḥadīth, but is also concerned with the science of ḥadīth transmission as advanced by the master critic, Ibn Ḥibbān al-Bustī (d. 354/965). Although the focus of modern ḥadīth scholarship has placed greater emphasis on transmitter evaluation of the second/eight and the third/ninth centuries, it still the case that a great part of the reliability of ḥadīth transmitter was not simply adopted by ḥadīth critics of the fourth/tenth century, as Ibn Ḥibbān has distinctly demonstrated. By scrutinizing Ibn Ḥibbān’s introduction to his al-Taqāsim wa al-Anwāʾ (“The Divisions and the Categories”) famously known as Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān, we are afforded a unique insight into the application of his transmitter evaluation, authentic ḥadīth criterion and the concept of khabar and sunna. As the title suggests, this was a very clear conception of the degree to which his work is a collection dealing with the body of ḥadīth by the divisions and the categories which are interpreted with legal theory.

Furthermore, there is no consensus on the topic of evaluating persona and it is not germane among Muslim scholars. Thus, we present a synopsis of the history of ḥadīth criticism until the time of Ibn Ḥibbān as well as the techniques that the early critics employed to determine the evaluation of transmitters. Even though a comprehensive analysis of whole of Ibn Ḥibbān’s biographical dictionary of impugned transmitters (namely Maʿrifāt al-Majrūhīn wa al-Dhuʿafāʾ min al-Muḥaddithīn) would be exceedingly beneficial, this study only concentrates on the introduction of the book. Our discursive approach has pointed out the state of disagreement of transmitter evaluation that occurred in the fourth/tenth century and the compelling contribution of Ibn Ḥibbān’s works to the subsequent literature on the science of ḥadīth transmission.

The final part of this study is concerned with some of the ways in which Ibn Ḥibbān has presented the biography of the Prophet and the early scholars in the Islamic tradition. The task involves a short analysis of the purposes, history, organization, total of figures, and basic strategies used in Ibn Ḥibbān’s biographical dictionaries. Apart from biographical material of reliable transmitters in the Ṣaḥīḥ, it manifests clearly that Ibn Ḥibbān’s approval of a transmitter is due to the inclusion both in Kitāb al-Thiqāt and Mashāhīr al-ʿUlamāʾ al-Aṃṣār. The ḥadīth transmitters whose biographies are contained in the Thiqāt and the Mashāhīr are thus presented as the successors of the Prophet through the arrangement of
"ṭabaqāt. In this manner, Ibn Ḥibbān could reveal of the genealogy of authority since both sources yield information of reliable transmitters who lived during a period of 300 years after the Prophet’s death.
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searching for meaning. “If learning the truth is the scientist’s goal, then he must make himself the enemy of all that he reads.”

wa mā tawfīqī illā bi’Llāh
AUTHOR’S DECLARATION

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this thesis is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Muhammad Fawwaz Bin Muhammad Yusoff
March 2017
NOTES ON TRANSLITERATION SYSTEM

The transliteration for Arabic used in thesis follows the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*:

Table 1: **Transliteration Table: Consonants and Tā’ marbūta**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Roman</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Roman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ب</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>ط</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ت</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>ظ</td>
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<td>th</td>
<td>ع</td>
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<td>ح</td>
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<td>d</td>
<td>ك</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ذ</td>
<td>dh</td>
<td>ل</td>
<td>l</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 2: Transliteration Table: Vowels, Diphthongs and Definite Article

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Roman</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ره</td>
<td>aء</td>
<td>مه</td>
<td>an</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>زى</td>
<td>uء</td>
<td>نى</td>
<td>un</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>َ</td>
<td>ى</td>
<td>ِي</td>
<td>in</td>
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<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ْا، ِ، َي، َا، َو</td>
<td>َُ</td>
<td>ِذ</td>
<td>aw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ِو</td>
<td>َُ</td>
<td>ِي</td>
<td>ay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ِي</td>
<td>َ</td>
<td>ِر</td>
<td>uww, ū</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ِي</td>
<td>َ</td>
<td>ِر</td>
<td>(in final position)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ِي</td>
<td>َ</td>
<td>ِي</td>
<td>iyy, ï</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>َ</td>
<td>ِي</td>
<td>ِي</td>
<td>(in final position)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### ABBREVIATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AH</td>
<td>After <em>Hijra</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CE</td>
<td>Common Era</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>Died</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fi.</td>
<td>Figure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n.d.</td>
<td>No date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no.</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opp.</td>
<td>Opposite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pl.</td>
<td>Plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lit.</td>
<td>Literally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sing.</td>
<td>Singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GAL</strong></td>
<td><em>Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GAS</strong></td>
<td><em>Geschichte des Arabischen Schrifttums</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The term *hijrī* refers to the lunar calendar that is used by Muslims in calculating dates. The word refers to the emigration of the Prophet from Muḥammad from Makkah to Madinah in 622 CE. On occasion in this work we have used the *hijrī* date, and on doing so have suffixed the letters AH as an indication thereof. We have also mentioned the same date using Common Era. We have used the following website to convert *hijrī* dates to Common Era: http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/ip/hijri.htm
INTRODUCTION

The study of ḥadīth scholarship, even if concentrating on matn (text), isnād (chain of transmitters), or even extracting the mode of life of the Prophet (Sunnah), has faced growing criticism. Many scholars of ḥadīth have no lack of confidence about the authenticity of this prophetic tradition, while others have thoughtfully sceptical. The discussion of the “authenticity” of ḥadīth, Arabic literature furnishes with a chain of transmitters for texts made about the past. Isnād seems to have existed casually in some literatures in the Pre-Islamic period, in an ambiguous custom, without attaching any importance to it. The isnād structure was also used – to some extent – in transmitting pre-Islamic poetry.¹

However, it was in the ḥadīth literature that its importance was highlighted until finally it was counted as a part of tradition of transmission. This system works when the transmitter states his source of fact; in turn tracing that narrative all the way back to the Prophet. The Prophet saying, deeds and tacit approval, as well as exalted character and physical appearance were carefully watched by his Companions and were recited by them with the help of each other until they had memorized them. In informing their fellows they would have naturally used sentences like ‘the Prophet looked like’, ‘the Prophet did so and so’ or ‘the Prophet said so and so’. It is also common practice that one of them who acquired the knowledge (ḥadīth) at second hand, while narrating the occasion to another man (third person), might have acknowledged his sources of information and might have given a complete explanation of the event. After the death of the Prophet, this method was widely used for the diffusion of the ḥadīth of the Prophet and it gave birth to the isnād.²

The ḥadīth is regarded meaningless in the absence of the isnād. Indeed, the isnād is said to be of vital importance to the religion, as was eloquently stated by Muḥammad b. Sīrīn (d. 110/728): “This knowledge is a religion, so consider from whom you get your religion.”³ Other proclamations in praise of the isnād were attributed to early Muslim scholars such as Sufyān al-Thawrī (d.161/777) who said: “The isnād is the believer’s weapon. Without his weapon with him with what will he fight?”⁴ Abdullāh b. al-Mubārak (d. 181/797) who emphasized the importance of the isnād once said: “The isnād is part of the religion. If it

³ Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, ed. Nażar Muḥammad al-Faryabī (Riyadh: Dār Tayba, 1426/2005), 8.
were not for the *isnād* anyone would say whatever he wishes to say.”\(^5\) In the meantime, *isnād* gave rise to a vast and genuine biographical information literatures, a unique Islamic achievement.\(^6\)

Hence, during the second/eight and third/ninth centuries, ḥadīth scholars like al-Ṭayālisī (d. 204/751), Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855), al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870) and Muslim (d. 261/875) made every effort to establish the core doctrine in the light of the Prophet’s teaching. They also assembled collections that were limited to reports that possessed explicit *isnād* going back to the Prophet. As asserted by Brown, these *sunan*\(^7\) and *sahih*\(^8\) collections “would have proven a very effective first line of defense against material entering the Islamic tradition from outside sources; Ibn Ḥanbal and other early transmission-based scholars paid no heed to material lacking an *isnād.*”\(^9\)

Basically, these collections consisted of thousands ḥadīths and every ḥadīth consists of two parts: the *matn* (text) and the *isnād* (the chain of transmitters). In order to understand the exact significance of the *matn*, and to test its soundness, it is necessary to know the meaning of the various expressions it contains, especially those which appear to be rare or obsolete, and also to learn its relation to the *matn* of other traditions, some of which may be either corroborated or contradicted by it.\(^10\) For another part, ḥadīth scholars have developed various important branches of learning which relate to the criticism of the *isnād*. It is necessary to know that the *isnād* contained transmitters, and so scholars developed criticism to assess the life, career and character of all individuals in the chain, what weight of reliability may be placed on them and also they created ways to examine contiguous transmission.\(^11\) These sources derived from various writings dealing with chronology (*tārīkh*), biography (*sīra*) and evaluation of transmitters.

Thus, one of the most important and wealthiest branches of *isnād* study is that known as ‘*ilm al-rijāl al-ḥadīth*, i.e. the biography of the transmitters of ḥadīth. While related to this

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\(^5\) Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 9.


\(^7\) A collection of ḥadīth that organized topically, and thus easily used as a legal reference, but also focused on Prophetic reports with full *isnāds*.

\(^8\) A collection of ḥadīth that devoted only to ḥadīths whose *isnāds* they felt met the requirements of authenticity.


research, ʿilm al-jarḥ wa al-taʿdīl, lit. ‘the discipline of impugning and approving’ or the evaluation of the ḥadīth transmitter is the sub-discipline of the field of biography which evaluates a general critical appraisal of the reliability of ḥadīth transmitters. This study has been developed among ḥadīth scholars from an early period and has been applied to isnād of ḥadīth in order to examine their validity and the reliability of transmitters.

The chronological, biographical and transmitter evaluation literature is extremely rich and someone has only to look at Tārīkh Baghdaḏ, Tahdīth al-Kamāl, or Lisān al-Mīzān to gain some impression of the extent of materials available. Some of these collections deal only with the transmitters’ names, teknonym, nickname (asmā’, kunyā, naṣab), while some of them contain biographical details of all narrators who may live in or visited a particular town, for example Damascus or Baghdad. In particular, early works on the evaluation of transmitter include the Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā of Ibn Saʿd (d.230/845), the Aḥwāl al-Rijāl of al-Jūzajānī (d. 259/873), and the massive al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr of al-Bukhārī. The evaluation of the discipline of impugning and approving transmitters usually appeared in conversation sessions among critics, or with their students but its decision was eventually systematically specified by master critics in encyclopaedias of evaluation of transmitters. Basically, they compare the aḥādīth of different students of a transmitter, or the statements of a transmitter at different times, or oral recitation and written documents and many others.

These works continued to fourth/tenth century and we can see that many scholars of this century reassessed and reviewed the evaluation made by earlier scholars. Alongside both Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 327/938) and Abū al-Ḥasan al-Dāruqūṭī (d. 385/995), Ibn Ḥībbān al-Bustī (d. 354/965) - a scholar from Bost - compiled at least two different books on evaluation of transmitters. As mentioned by al-Samʿānī (d. 562/1166), Ibn Ḥībbān undertook extensive journeys to study and collect all the data related to Islamic tradition containing the evaluation of transmitter from Tashkent to Alexandria.

Objectives of the Study

Accordingly, in the light of the above discussion, it is the aim of this study to analyse and expound on the specific aspects of Ibn Ḥībbān, regarded as one of the master critics to have contributed to the science of ḥadīth transmission in the fourth century of hijra/tenth century.

12 Lashkar Gah in Afghanistan nowadays.
It is an attempt to provide a comprehensive work on Ibn Ḥibbān’s methodology in authentication of ḥadīth and evaluating a transmitter. This study will rely mainly on his Ṣaḥīḥ, Kitāb al-Thiqāt and Kitāb al-Majrūḥīn min al-Muḥaddithīn which contains a wide range of transmitter background. These books are of primary concern for scholars in this field on the question of how to accept or reject ḥadīth by looking at the capability of the transmitter.

Apart from focusing on his method in approaching transmitters, a selection of his terminology as presented in his writings is also comparatively analysed within the context of ḥadīth critics at that time. Simultaneously, the origin, authorship and significance of the base work i.e. Kitāb al-Thiqāt and Kitāb al-Majrūḥīn min al-Muḥaddithīn as an alleged work by Ibn Ḥibbān is also discussed in detail. Ultimately, this leads to a more detailed account on the place and influence of these works on shaping the comprehensive literature of ḥadīth scholarship and its discourse, especially in the fourth/tenth century, and also their impacts in the years to come.¹⁴

**Significance of the Study**

Controversies surrounding the origin of Ibn Ḥibbān’s work on the evaluation of transmitter have been discussed superficially by academics, despite its popularity among Islamic scholarship and its important role in the development of ḥadīth studies and its discourse, particularly in the fourth/tenth century. The first published critical edition of Kitāb al-Thiqāt made by Muḥammad Abd al-Muʿīd in 1973 and there are three critical editions of Kitāb al-Majrūḥīn min al-Muḥaddithīn edited by scholars from India, Syria and Iraq. Concerning Ibn Ḥibbān’s other works on the biography of scholars; his Mashāhīr al-ʿUlamāʾ al-ʿAmṣār has been included in one of The Bibliotheca Islamica series books, a joint project of the Orient-Institut Beirut and German Oriental Society for the critical edition of Arabic texts.¹⁵ This book was meant to provide an abridgement of famous and reliable ḥadīth transmitters from six regions (Ḥijāz, ʿIrāq, Shām, Egypt, Yemen and Khurasān) between the second/eighth and fourth/tenth centuries.

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¹⁴ Among the first to compose a work on ʾilm al-ḥadīth (the science of ḥadīth transmission) i.e. the broad designation which includes all of the various discipline making up the study of hadith is al-Ḥākim al-Nisabūrī who is Ibn Ḥibbān’s student.

In this regard, it is also useful to note that despite the availability of a number of studies on Ibn Ḥibbān undertaken by present day researchers and historians, scholars have rarely attempted to combine his views and contribution to the field of impugning and approving ḥadīth transmitters. Thus we can say also that academic works relating to the ḥadīth methodology of Ibn Ḥibbān is a neglected area of Islamic studies. Existing studies and works concerning Ibn Ḥibbān in the religious sphere of Islamic scholarship are predominantly confined to his compilation Ṣaḥīḥ book. In fact, as far as we know, there is hardly found a comprehensive work discussing the issue of Ibn Ḥibbān ḥadīth transmitter evaluation which focuses and combines the Kitāb al-Thiqāt and Kitāb al-Majrūḥīn min al-Muḥaddithīn.

Therefore, in the light of intellectual history of Ibn Ḥibbān, the present study proposes that it was actually in the fourth/tenth century that there was a significant end-point in transmitter criticism, and one of its discourses took place through Kitāb al-Thiqāt and Kitāb al-Majrūḥīn min al-Muḥaddithīn of Ibn Ḥibbān. The reason for restricting this study to the work on the ḥadīth criticism is the argument against Ibn Ḥibbān in this field. Ibn Ḥibbān’s approach was somewhat different from his contemporaries as he sought to provide for each transmitter a short biography extending between one and three lines in length. The peculiar thing about his work was that he lumped together narrators belonging to different levels of their equity (‘adālah) and precision (dāḥt), making them all equal with regard to trustworthiness, not like other masters in this field. We also can find same individual of transmitters in the impugning book and the approving book simultaneously. In addition, he made evaluations of some transmitters whom he himself did not know except through their narrations.

Despite the fact that Ibn Ḥibbān’s most famous work called Ṣaḥīḥ usually considered the last work in the canonical ḥadīth books, ḥadīths collection still continued as well as the discussion on the evaluation of transmitter. Many modern studies on the evaluation of transmitter also have proven that it is a sophisticated discipline and we must thus cast this study more upon historical perceptions than on historical reality.  

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background, context and the history of Ibn Ḥibbān’s journey is certainly essential for appreciating the formation of Ibn Ḥibbān’s works on the evaluation of transmitter.

**Scope of Discussion**

Although a comprehensive study of all of Ibn Ḥibbān’s books on transmitter evaluation or *rijāl* criticism would be very valuable, the scope of this study circulates primarily around Ibn Ḥibbān’s methodology of the transmitter and its discourse based on his *Kitāb al-Thiqāt* and *Kitāb al-Majrūḥīn min al-Muḥaddithīn*. The introduction of Ibn Ḥibbān in both is vital important as the basis for discussion. The same is true for in his gigantic *Ṣaḥīḥ*, his *tārjama al-bāḥ* (title chapter) in the introduction represents his standpoint in ḥadīth scholarship and is aimed to provide a shield for ḥadīth collectors against their critics.

It is appropriate to note that the scope of the science of ḥadīth transmission as employed here is mostly restricted to ḥadīth scholars between second/eight and eight/fourteenth centuries and particularly Ibn Ḥibbān’s methods of selection and terminology which are reflected through an analytical study of conceptions related to ḥadīth criticism, evaluation of transmitter and relevant aspects of its technical disciplines. Ibn Ḥibbān’s student al-Ḥākim al-Nīsaburī, who composed the *Maʿrifat ʿUlūm al-Ḥadīth* and other scholars’ books on the technical discipline of ḥadīth collection and criticism, such as al-Rāmahurmuzī’s *al-Muḥaddith al-Fāsil*, Ibn Ṣalāḥ’s *Muqaddimah*, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī’s *Kīfāya*, al-Suyūṭī’s *Tadrīb*, Ibn Ḥajar’s *Nuzhat* and *Nukhbat*, provide the notion in which this science was developed.

As our examination reaches the view of scholars on Ibn Ḥibbān scholarship who are not primarily concerned with ḥadīth, Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ’s *Ṭabaqāt al-Fuqahāʾ al-Shāfīyya* and *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfīyya al-Kubrā* of al-Subkī provide the data concerned with members of Shāfīʿite jurisprudence including Ibn Ḥibbān. This will allow us to see most of the ḥadīth scholars are affiliated with Shāfīʿite jurisprudence. It is also of particular importance to note here that due to the sacred position of ḥadīth among Sunni scholars as authoritative religious material, only a very general discussion regarding its authenticity will be highlighted in this research. Following this, in accordance with the objectives, significance and scope this research is divided into five chapters as follows:

1. Chapter One undertakes a comparative analysis of ḥadīth scholars’ methodologies around third/ninth and fourth/tenth centuries as presented in their works, particularly
the six collections of al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Abu Dāwūd, al-Nasāʾī, al-Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah. Apart from the scholarly trend and prevalent religious notion at that time. It will highlight this generation’s contribution and role to the field of ḥadīth scholarship as well as the influence upon the next generation including Ibn Ḥibbān. It also aims to identify and analyse biographical dictionaries of ḥadīth transmitters in the time of Ibn Ḥibbān and his predecessors. This work mostly involves concentrating on scholarly collections of books and of the seminal research articles produced by contemporary academic scholarship on the subject of the historiography and ḥadīth literature of the five early centuries of hijra.

2. Chapter Two examines the life of Ibn Ḥibbān, the situation of his home town, the social and political situation around the third/ninth and fourth/tenth centuries which is carried out through an analytical and textual study of some biographical literature, such as the Tārīkh Baghdād of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādi, the Siyar Aʿlām al-Nubalāʾ and Tadhkirāt al-Huffāẓ of Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī. It also moves the discussion from Ibn Ḥibbān’s works to other scholar’s observations on Ibn Ḥibbān and his works. In relation to other Muslim scholar’s acknowledgement of him, it is observed that scholars from Shāfiʿite jurisprudence included him as one of their scholars. Concurrently, Ibn Ḥibbān long travels for knowledge are arguably the most ordinary and typical feature among ḥadīth scholars after leaving their hometown. Thus, we must cast various nets to trace Ibn Ḥibbān’s journey in order to reconstruct his biography.

3. Chapter Three discusses the scholarship of Ibn Ḥibbān in ḥadīth. His Ṣaḥīḥ will be discussed briefly and why it did not become one of the famous collections, despite the efforts of scholars like Ibn Taymiyya in his Majmūʿ Fatāwā, Ibn Kathīr in al-Bāʾith al-Hathīth and Zayn al-Dīn al-ʿIraqī in Taqyīd wa al-ʿĪdhāḥ who tried to raise up this work as a remarkable source for authentic ḥadīth.

4. Chapter Four focus on the evaluation of transmitter works of Ibn Ḥibbān. Thus, apart from the question of manuscripts and editions of Kitāb al-Majrūḥān min al-Muḥaddithīn, Ibn Ḥibbān purposes, structure, and method are also presented in the abstract summary of introduction to his books. This chapter is the central point of research as it provides a closer look on Ibn Ḥibbān as the master critic in the field of impugning and approving transmitters.
5. The final chapter is concerned with some of the ways in which Ibn Ḥibbān has presented the biography of Prophet and early scholars in Islamic tradition. The task involves analysing both theoretical and practical aspects of the establishing scholars by Ibn Ḥibbān which is due to the inclusion both in Kitāb al-Thiqāt and Mashāhīr al-ʿUlamāʾ al-ʿAmṣār. Both sources yield the datum of reliable transmitters who lived in three century-long periods using infrequently gradual terminologies and they certainly give us opportunity to investigate and compare his approach.

In addition to the book of the medieval scholars under discussion, numerous modern works by scholars in the related field in Arabic and English especially Goldziher, Schacht, Abbott, Rahman, Rosenthal, al-Albānī, al-Zahrānī, Juynboll, Nasr, Sezgin, al-ʿUmarī, Aʿzamī, Motzki, al-ʿAwnī, Melchert, Lucas, Brown and many others are undoubtedly crucial and incalculable for the accomplishment of this study. However, more importantly, this study perhaps can be measured by means of tracing and analysing the contribution of one of the scholars in Islamic Civilization. Ultimately, this research also aims to present Ibn Ḥibbān as a multi-disciplinary scholar and lay down a basis for the study of him and his contemporaries in further research.
CHAPTER ONE

BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARIES IN THE TIME OF IBN ḤĪBBĀN

The aim of this chapter is to identify and analyse biographical dictionaries of ḥadīth transmitters in the time of Ibn Ḥībbān and his predecessors. This work mostly involves concentrating on authoritative collections of books and of the seminal research articles produced by contemporary academic scholarship on the subject of the ḥadīth literature of the five early centuries of hijra. Since it is a very large topic, many things have to be omitted and what is selected is considered as canonical of the Muslim tradition. It seeks to elucidate the origin and motives, and to list biographical dictionaries written by scholars who died about Ibn Ḥībbān era, based on research in the ‘ilm al-ḥadīth (the science of ḥadīth transmission) books. In addition, this work will discuss an integral part of the subtopic in the science of ḥadīth transmission, in particular, that of the early ḥadīth scholars. This chapter, then, contributes to an understanding of which material was in circulation, and helps to discover the reason why a group of master ḥadīth critics were chosen and deemed authoritative in a particular time and place.

1.1 Ḥadīth Collections until the Time of Ibn Ḥībbān

In the last two decades, the collection of ḥadīth and the creation of the ḥadīth genre in the early Islamic period (roughly the first three centuries of Islam) is the best-studied area of ḥadīth literature. The questions about the authenticity, originality, authorship, provenance and the correctness of ḥadīth have appeared, and they have become of central importance to the study of Islam. One can look at Gustav Weil, Alois Sprenger, William Muir, Ignaz

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19 Kamaruddin Amin, “Muslim Western Scholarship of Ḥadīth and Western Scholar Reaction: A Study on Fuat Sezgin’s Approach to Ḥadīth Scholarship”, Al-Jami’ah: Journal of Islamic Studies 46, no. 2 (2008), 258.
Goldziher,\(^{23}\) Leone Caetani,\(^{24}\) Henri Lammens,\(^{25}\) Joseph Schact,\(^{26}\) Joseph Van Ess,\(^{27}\) John Wansbrough,\(^{28}\) Gautier H. A. Juynboll,\(^{29}\) Patricia Crone,\(^{30}\) Michael Cook,\(^{31}\) and Uri Rubin\(^{32}\) who debated ḥadīth as authentic materials for the historical reconstruction of the time of the Prophet. However, their approach to ḥadīth collections shall be dealt with exclusively since they represent different schools of thought on the historical reliability of the ḥadīth corpus.\(^{33}\) Jonathan Brown divides four stages of Western study of early Islam that are either chronologically or thematically distinct.\(^{34}\)

In the opinion of Seyyed Hossein Nasr, a number of Western scholars – foremost among them Goldziher followed by Wensinck, Guillaume, Schact, and others – have tried to apply the ‘historical critical methods’ developed in the nineteenth century to the collection of ḥadīth.\(^{35}\) Their work was based on the usually unstated premises that what is not found in written records is a later addition or fabrication. Therefore, they came to consider most of the canonically accepted ḥadīth of the Islamic community based upon its religious heritage and hence not authentic sayings, deeds or tacit approval of the Prophet.\(^{36}\)


\(^{36}\) Ibid.
In addition, the general belief in the late recording of ḥadīth and the oral transmitted for more than one hundred years was due to the information provided by the ḥadīth scholars themselves. Along with other information, Goldziher and Schacht conclude that the majority of ḥadīth are later inventions of the second/eight and third/ninth centuries that were back-projected to the Prophet and his Companions. Recent works by Cook, Schoeler and others have looked closely at the possible reasons for the opposition to writing down the ḥadīth. Examining reports mainly from al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdadi’s Taqiyyād al-‘Ilm and other sources, Cook scrutinizes the isnād and establishes that the opposition to writing down ḥadīth was prevalent in all major centers of early Islamic scholarship. Correspondingly, Schoeler concludes, “that opposition against codifying ḥadīth in Makkah and Sana’a, scholarly centers far away from Damascus, was much less strong than Iraq and Madinah.”

Some works such as Nabia Abbott, Muhammad Zubayr Siddiqi, Muhammad Hamidullah, Muṣṭafā al-Sibā‘ī, Muḥammad ‘Ajjāj al-Khaṭīb, ʿAbd al-‘Azīm Ibrāhīm Muḥammad al-Muʿṭīnī, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Dūrī, Akram Ḍiyāʾ al-Umārī, Muḥammad Maṭar al-Zahrānī, Fred Donner, David Powers, Fuat Sezgin, Muhammad Mustafa A’zami, Harald Motzki, Halit Ozken, and others have defended ḥadīth corpus against these critiques. According to Fuat Sezgin, the ḥadīth collections that were composed in the

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37 Mustafa A’zami, Studies in Early Ḥadīth Literature, 18.
38 Ignaz Goldziher, Kämpfe um die Stellung des Ḥadīth im Islam, 86-98; See also Joseph Schacht, Introduction to Islamic Law, 34; The Origin of Muḥammadan Jurisprudence, 57.
53 Mustafa A’zami, Studies in Early Ḥadīth Literature.
second or third century of Islam are the result of a reliable process of transmission. Hence, he famously argued that the Companions had already practised ḥadīth written activity since the time of the Prophet. The development of early ḥadīth literature took place in at least three phases; the writing down, collating the scattered records of ḥadīth, and the arrangements of ḥadīths by content in subdivided chapter from 125/742 onwards. He asserts that literary activity in 125/742 was already mature after ḥadīth transmission took place through eight methods from the very early days of Islam; Samāʿ, Qirāʿa, Ijāza, Munāwala, Kitāba or Mukātaba, Iʿlam al-Rāwī, Waṣiyya and Wijāda. Only the first two methods (samāʿ and qirāʿa) involved committing to memory, whereas the others, and often in practice even samāʿ and qirāʿa, involved written materials. He further maintains that he had discovered a number of early source texts on which the late compilations were based and proposed a method for the reconstruction of these sources.

Meanwhile Mustafa A’zami includes lengthy Arabic appendices of examples of such early ḥadīth writings and argues that the theory of the recording ḥadīth in the second/ninth century was the result of many misconceptions or misinterpretation of the words such as tadwīn, taṣnīf, and kitāba. He concludes that the Companions kept written records of ḥadīths, and most of the aḥādīths were transmitted in written form until the moment when they were included in the canonical collections. Hence A’zami classifies the literary activities into four categories;

1) The Companions’ writings.

2) The writings and works of the Successors who lived mostly in the first century of hijra.

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57 1. Kitāba al-ḥadīth (the writing down of the ḥadīth) in the time of the Companions and early Successors in the so-called sahiha.
2. Tadwīn al-ḥadīth (collating the scattered records of ḥadīth) in the last quarter of the first, and in the first quarter of the second century.
3. Taṣnīf al-ḥadīth (the arrangement of ḥadīths by content in subdivide chapter from 125/ onwards. Towards the end of the second century, ḥadīth were arranged according to the names of Companions, in books called al-musnad. See Fuat Sezgin, Geschichte des Arabischen Schrifttums, 55.

58 Fuat Sezgin, Geschichte des Arabischen Schrifttums, 58-62. See also Herbert Berg, The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam, 22.


60 See also Mustafa A’zami, Studies in Early Ḥadīth Literature, 19.
3) The scholars whose literary careers cover the later part of the first century as well as considerable period of the second century.\textsuperscript{61}

4) The scholars who were born between 70/689 and 110/728.\textsuperscript{62}

Muhammad Abdul Rauf classifies this era of the first and early second centuries as the age of \textit{sahīfa} (plu. \textit{suhuf}).\textsuperscript{63} However the original \textit{suhuf} of this age have been lost although a few secondary copies survived. Thirteen from fourteen papyri of Nabia Abbott’s \textit{Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri II: Quranic Commentary and Traditions} is concerned with the written transmission of ḥadīth based on a plethora of evidence such as Umayyad papyri fragments.\textsuperscript{64} These early papyri contain almost nothing in the way of ḥadīth content that is not to be found in the ḥadīth collections of the third century. That is to say, the \textit{matns} are not new, though the \textit{isnāds} are not usually those of the ḥadīth as it was later set down.\textsuperscript{65} Muhammad Hamidullah has published the \textit{Ṣaḥīfa} of Hammam b. Munabbih supposedly, the oldest preserved ḥadīth work and is believed to have been written around the mid-first/seventh century.\textsuperscript{66} He discovers some very early collections of ḥadīth preserved in the libraries of Berlin, Beirut and Damascus and presents ḥadīth collections which the famous Prophet’s Companion, Abū Hurayra (d. 58/677) had prepared for his pupil Hammam b. Munabbih (d. 101/719) with English translation. It is significant that Hammam introduces his text with the words: “Abū Hurayra told us in the course of what he related from the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[61] In this class, A’zami had listed all the scholars who were born up to or about 65/684, maintaining that the 35-year time and over before the end of the century was sufficient form them to begin their literary career in the later part of the first century.
\item[62] Ibid, 32.
\item[66] Muḥammad Hamidullah, \textit{An Introduction to the Conservation of Ḥadīth in the Light of the Ṣaḥīfa of Hammam ibn Munabhī}, (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 2003), 53.
\end{footnotes}
According to Jamila Shaukat, the collections of these compilers are termed in the sources variously.\(^7^6\) The most cursory look at the titles of these ḥadīth anthologies indicates the method applied by a particular compiler in his collection. A brief discussion of different types of ḥadīth collections which evolved in the first three centuries as follows, šaḥīḥa, risāla or kitāb,\(^7^0\) juʿa,\(^7^1\) arbaʿīn,\(^7^2\) muʿjam,\(^7^3\) amālī,\(^7^4\) aṭrāf,\(^7^5\) jamiʿ,\(^7^6\) sunan, muṣannafs, and musnad. She added it is quite difficult to say exactly which of these genres came first. These collections were primarily anthologies of ḥadīth rather than scholarly treatises. Muʿjam and arbaʿīn can be referred back to the end of the first century hijra, and aṭrāf as well can be traced back towards the end of the first century or the beginning of the second century of hijra. Whereas amālī in the second half of the second century.

Following Muhammad Abdul Rauf, Jonathan Brown adds some classification and discusses in detail the emergence of muṣannafs collections, the musnad era, and the šaḥīḥ and sunan movement as a ḥadīth collections genre in the first three centuries of hijra.\(^7^7\) During mid-second/eight century, the first organized works of Islamic scholarship, called muṣannafs or ‘books organized topically’ were arranged into chapters dealing with different legal or ritual questions.\(^7^8\) The best-known and earliest surviving of this type is al-Muwatta of Mālik b. Anas (d. 179/795) which Wael Hallaq has analyzed to find the date of its composition.\(^7^9\) Yasin Dutton treats al-Muwatta in extensive, which he focuses on an analysis of Mālik’s

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67 Ibid. For a more detailed discussion of Abū Hurayra as a ḥadīth transmitter, see Usman Ghani, Abū Hurayra’ a Narrator of Ḥadīth Revisited: An Examination into the Dichotomous Representations of an Important Figure in Ḥadīth with special reference to Classical Islam modes of criticism, (PhD Dissertation University of Exeter, 2011).

68 Muhammad Abdul Rauf, Ḥadīth Literature – 1: The Development of the Science of Ḥadīth, 272.


70 A risāla, also called a kitāb, being a collection of aḥadīth concerned with one particular topic.

71 Individual volume of a book.

72 A collection of forty aḥadīth usually relating to a variety subjects which may have appeared to be of special interest to the compilers.

73 A work dealing with various subjects and arranged after the names either of shuyūkh, cities or clans in alphabetically or chronologically.

74 A collection made by a student from the dictation of the shaykh.

75 A collection that contained only a part of ḥadīth.

76 A subdivision of muṣannaf


methods to derive judgements or legal rulings. Yasin does strongly argues that the last word regularly goes not to ḥadīth but to practice of Madina. Another famous muṣannaf written by Mālik’s student, Ḣādīth al-Razzāq al-Ṣanʿānī (d. 211/826) is made up eleven printed volumes. Harald Motzki focusses on this Muṣannaf where he looks at both the contents of the isnād and the matn to determine the plausibility of fabrication. However, Brown argues both of these works should be considered as early works of Islamic law when he indicates

If ḥadīth collections are characterized by a predominant focus on reports from the Prophet that include isnāds as a means for critics to verify their authenticity, then books like Muwaṭṭā’ and Muṣannaf of ‘Abd al-Razzāq are not technically ḥadīth collections. Both Mālik and ‘Abd al-Razzāq cite rulings of Companions and Successors more frequently than they cite Prophetic ḥadīths. But even when quoting the Prophet directly, the obsession with complete, unbroken chains of transmission that would characterize the classical period of ḥadīth collection is absent.

The emergence of the musnad in the late second/eight century is due to a focus on ḥadīth attributed to the Prophet himself, arranged according to the isnād. At least forty four musnads identified within the third/ninth century. Among the well-known musnads include those of Abī Dāwūd al-Ṭayālīsī (d. 204/818), of ’Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr al-Humaydī (d. 219/834), of Musaddad b. Musarhad (d. 228/843), the most famous is that of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855), of al-Ḥārith b. Abī Uṣāma (d. 282/896), of Abī Bakr al-

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80 Yasin Dutton, The Origins of Islamic Law: The Quran, the Muwaṭṭa and Madinan ’Amal, Culture, and Civilization in the Middle East (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1999).


83 Yasin Dutton, The Origins of Islamic Law: The Quran, the Muwaṭṭa and Madinan ’Amal, Culture, and Civilization in the Middle East (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1999).


85 Sulaymān b. Dāwūd b. al-Jurūd, Musnad Abī Dāwūd al-Ṭayālīsī, ed. Muḥammad b. ’Abd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī, (Markaz al-Buhūth wa al-Dirāsāt al-ʿArabiyya wa al-Islāmiyya, Dār Hijra, 1999). However, this musnad was not compiled in its present form by al-Ṭayālīsī himself, but by a ḥadīth scholar working in Khurasan at a later date. See Muḥammad Zubayr Siddiqi, Ḥadīth Literature Its Origin, Development & Special Features, 44.


Bazzār (d. 292/904-5), and of Abī Ya’lā al-Mawṣilī (d. 307/). Christopher Melchert published an article on Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal’s famous musnad that included editions, earlier studies, arrangement, dating, the number of ḥadīths, and what distinguishes it from the sahīḥ and sunan, in particular the Kutub al-Sitta (the Six Books).

In general, sahīḥ and sunan are the combination of the muṣannaf and musnad genre which organize topically and focus on ḥadīth with full isnāds. In this third/ninth century era, the sunan emerged earlier than the sahīḥ since among the earliest sunan are those of Sa`īd b. Mašūr al-Khurasānī (d. 227/842), and of `Abd Allāh b. `Abd al-Rahmān al-Dārimī (d. 255/869). The view that the wide increase of unauthentic ḥadīths although with isnāds led al-Bukhārī and Muslim to produce ḥadīth collections, famously known the Sahīḥayn devoted only to ḥadīths whose isnāds they felt met the requirements of authenticity. Tarīf Khalidi and Uri Rubin who were concerned with Islamic historiography and the development of the ḥadīth tradition have stressed that the Sahīḥayn represent the culmination of ḥadīth study. After the Quran, the Sahīḥayn are the most venerated books in Sunni Islam. Bukhārī’s and Muslim’s works were the first product of what Muhammad Abdul Rauf has termed as ‘the sahīḥ movement.’ Subsequently their works had influence on their students and contemporaries such as `Abd Allāh b. `Alī b. al-Jārud (d. 307/919-920), Muhammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), Ibn Khuzayma (d. 311/923), Abu Hafs `Umar al-Bujayrī al-Samarqandī (d. 311/924), Sa`īd b. Sakan (d. 353/964), and also Ibn Ḥibbān’s Sahīḥ is usually regarded as the last installment of this movement.

According to Muhammad Zubayr Siddiqi, some scholars were concerned with the greater importance of legal and doctrinal ḥadīths than historical dating, arguing the precise

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date of Prophet’s battles, for instance has no practical utility for a Muslim.98 This emphasis grew even more pronounced after the second half of the third century as can be seen in the remainder of Kutub al-Sitta namely Abu Dāwūd,99 al-Tirmidhī,100 al-Nasāʾī,101 and Ibn Mājah’s Sunan.102 James Robson has published a series of articles that devotes attention to studying the use and the transmission of each of these ḥadīth collections.103 He examines how these Sunan, like other books, was handed down to succeeding generations by chain of authority. In dealing with the transmission, he has been mainly dependent on variety versions of the recognized transmitter for those books. He comments on this transmission, and says

In the gospels as they stand we do not have the various elements of the sources separated out for us as we do through the isnāds of Muslim tradition, where, at least apparently, the transmission is traced back to the source.104

Moreover, for a ḥadīth to have probative value and to be included in the books, every transmitter in the isnād must be known for his/her reliability, and the biographical dictionaries comprise evaluations of the thousands of men and women who transmitted ḥadīth.105 Relying upon one of al-Dhahabī’s biographical dictionaries that is Tadhkirāt al-Huffāẓ, Scott Lucas figures out how al-Dhahabī articulates the evolution of the hadīth literature from the time of the Prophet to seventh/thirteenth century.106 Lucas is of the opinion that

The twenty-one ṭabaqāt structure of al-Dhahabī’s Tadhkirāt al-Huffāẓ answers this very question, as it describes the historical process of ḥadīth scholarship by carving a manageable number of ‘generations’ out of a seven-hundred-year period across a vast geographical area.107

1.2 The Beginning of the Biographical Dictionaries

98 Muhammad Zubayr Siddiqi, Hadith Literature Its Origin, Development & Special Features, 61.
107 Ibid.
Unquestionably, biographical dictionaries remain the major repository of information on the medieval Muslim scholars and they are vital for us in order to tease out what is of relevance to our understanding of that world.  

Marica Hermansen lists sīra, ʿtabaqāt, tadhkira, malfūzat, manāqib, certain ḥadith collections, faḍaʿ il, khaṣāʾis, and ʿilm al-rijāl as genres in the types of biographical dictionaries. The aforementioned draws attention to what constitutes the genre as a form which may be chosen, in order to convey information within a particular situation.

Whereas Waddad al-Qadi defined it as “a prose work whose primary structure is that of a series of biographies, regardless of the order in which these biographies succeed each other.” She elaborates further two categories of biographical dictionaries that fall into this definition. First, “general biographical dictionaries” which contain biographies of persons from all walks of life, professions, epochs, places, ranks, beliefs and so forth such as Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Šafādi’s (d. 764/1362) al-Wāfī bi al-Wafayāt and Ibn al-ʿImād al-Ḥanbašī’s (d. 1089/1678) Shadharāt al-Dhahab. Second are “restricted biographical dictionaries” which include biographies of individuals who share one common, yet specific, trait, as most frequently these learned persons belong to the same discipline of scholarship.

Title of books like Abū ʿAmr al-Dānī’s (d. 444/1052) Ṭabaqāt al-Qurrāʾ, Abū Ḥātim Muhammad b. Idris al-Rāzī’s (d. 277/890) al-Ṭabaqāt al-Tābiʿīn, Abū Nuʿaym al-ʿImād al-Ḥanbašī’s (d. 430/1038) Ḥilyat al-Awliyāʾ, Abū ʿĪsāq al-Shirāzī’s (d. 476/1083) Ṭabaqāt al-Fuqahāʾ, Ibn Sallam al-Jumāḥī’s (d. 232/846) Ṭabaqāt Fuhūl al-Shuʿarāʾ, Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Zubaydī’s (d. 379/989) Ṭabaqāt al-Naḥwiyīn wa-l-Lughawiyīn, Abū Sulaymān al-Sijistānī’s (d. 380/990) (Muntakhab) Ṣiwān al-Ḥikma, Yāqut al-Ḥamawī’s (d. 626/1228) Muʿjam al-ʿUdābāʾ indicate that successive generations of interpreters of the Qurʾān, transmitters of ḥadīth, sufis, jurists, poets, grammarians, philologists, philosophers, and compilers are included among the litterateurs.

Before analysing the various elements of the biographical dictionaries through an origin, motives, organizations, and contents, a word must be said about the term biographical dictionaries itself. Precisely in Arabic, there is no similar word equal to biography or biography dictionaries. Arabic terminologies related to biography include tarjama, sīra and

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111 Waddad al-Qadi, Biographical Dictionaries: Inner Structure and Cultural Significance, 94-95.
As mentioned by Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Ghanī, the use of tarjama tends to be restricted to shorter biography, while sīra was first used in literature for the biography of the Prophet Muḥammad, but this did not exclude its use for others. Along with rījāl, the term ūtabaqāt pl. of ūtabqa has been widely and frequently used to address the title of biographical dictionaries.

The technical term used for it was formed from the root t-b-q and the verbal noun of the third conjugation, ūtabaq. Lexicographers also find a similar meaning in the forms ūtabaq and ūtabq. In the Qurʾān it is mentioned four times in total, the term ūtabaq appeared twice in one verse in a temporal sense “laṭabaqan ūn ūtabaq (from plane to plane),” analogous things which follow each other. Other expression approximating the term ūtabaqāt is ūtabaq appear twice in separate verses in a spatial sense “sabʿa samāwāt ūtabqa (seven heavens in harmony),” lying above one another. In the ḥadīth, the Prophet used to supplicate for rain “Allāhumma asqina ghaythan mughīthan ūtabaqā (O Allāh bless us with rain that is reviving and accordingly),” occurring together in space or time or harmonious.

The semantic range of meaning suggests putting a thing upon, or higher in position comparable by this means. One says ūtabbaqā ṣaḥābu al-jawwā (the clouds covered the atmosphere), ūtaṭabaqā al-shayʿ āyn (the two things are similar, or identical); ūtaṭabaqu ālā al-amr (they agreed on something). Since ūtabaq or ‘cover’, is on top, thus the layer or level to which people belong is called ūtabaqāt. Considering the strata of people are various, the occurrence characterizing these strata are also called ūtabaqāt, as in the saying ‘fulān min al-dunyā ālā ūtabaqatin shattā’, so and so passes from one earthly state to another. Thence Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt is the “Book of classes” of characters arranged by “categories” and organised into “generations” of people. It also has been discussed in detail by Ibrahim

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112 Ibid, 95.
115 Ūtabaq, masculine indefinite noun as this term is somewhat ambiguous passage alluding to either the states of creation or the soul’s ascension to heaven. You shall surely ride stage after stage. The Qurʾān, 84:19.
116 Ūtabaq, masculine plural indefinite adjective as this term is connection with the seven seamless heavens. Who created seven layers. The Qurʾān, 67:3 and 71:15.
118 Ibid.
119 Ibid.
120 Ibid.
Hafsi and Adel Gamal who have articulated the semantic breadth of the word ṭabaqāt, which can mean class, value generation, merit, degree, and group, as well as hierarchy, covering, and all-embracing. These episodes of the kutub al-ṭabaqāt or biographical dictionaries form a durable chapter in the history of Islamic religious thought. Those works were produced from the early second century of the hijra until today, and this tradition continues and is typified in the unpublished biographical dictionary of the women scholars of ḥadīth by Akram Nadwi. It would be very difficult to fix an exact date for the first occurrence of biographical dictionaries as a historical work. However, it is generally considered that the first book of this genre was Ṭabaqāt Ahl al-‘Ilm wa al-Jahl written by Wāsil b. ‘Atā’ (d. 130/748). Unfortunately, of this figure, there remains nothing but a name and no appreciable fragments of his writing have survived to enable us to claim him as the first Muslim biographical dictionaries writer. The evidence used in support of this view comes from Ibn Khallikan’s entry of Wāsil b. ‘Atā’ and his works.

To some extent, the question on the origin is the product of the various orientations and opinions among scholars who addressed this topic. Franz Rosenthal relates the advent of biographical dictionaries to the development of history in the sense of a sequence of dated events when he states, “In many Muslim minds, history thus becomes synonymous with biography.” He also suggested that the genre division is “genuinely Islamic” and it is the “oldest chronological division which presented itself to Muslim historical thinking.” Like Rosenthal, Hamilton Gibb articulated that the biographical dictionary is “a wholly indigenous creation of the Islamic Community and it developed simultaneously in close association with historical composition.” His thesis anchors the origin of the biographical

123 Adel S. Gamal, The Organizational Principles in Ibn Sallam’s Ṭabaqāt Fuhūl al-Shu’arā’, 199. See also Scott Lucas, Constructive Critics: Ḥadīth Literature, and the Articulation of Sunnī Islam, 47.
127 Franz Rosenthal, A History of Muslim Historiography, 93; See also Scott Lucas, Constructive Critics: Ḥadīth Literature, and the Articulation of Sunnī Islam, 47.
genre in Arab culture and rejects the notion that it was a foreign import. Principally intending to criticise the Chinese tradition of writing about political history, he indicates,

The conception that underlies the oldest biographical dictionaries is that the history of the Islamic Community is essentially the contribution of individual men and women to the building up and transmission of its specific culture; that is these persons (rather than the political governors) who represent or reflect the active forces in Muslim society in their respective spheres; and that their individual contributions are worthy of being recorded for future generations.  

Tarif Khalidi also discusses the relationship between history and biographical dictionaries in his article “Islamic Biographical Dictionaries: A Preliminary Assessment.” He suggests the origin have been the offspring of the two Islamic disciplines of ḥadīth and tārīkh (history) and to have satisfied the need for accurate and trustworthy biographies of caliphs, military commanders, state officials and the like.

Taking up Otto Loth’s opinion, Heffening argued that the biographical dictionaries genre “owes its origin to the interest of the Arabs (in the pre-Islamic and early period) in genealogy (nasab) and biography” for the reason he did not believe that it could have had its origin in ḥadīth criticism. He added, here the Arabs interest with genealogical indices could easily be expanded to biographical collections, the concept of classes or categories was not employed exclusively for transmitters of prophetic traditions. For before books about classes of Qur’ān readers, legists, poets, and singers appeared as early as, if not earlier than, those of ḥadīth transmitters. Hence, the genealogical aspect of the biographical collections reflects the significance of lineage in general, and the relative importance of matrilineal and patrilineal ascription in particular, to the Arabs.

However, another analyst of the issue, Ibrāhīm Hafsi in an extensive article has responded to Heffening’s viewpoint. He argued that there is a possibility this genre does not owe its origin to ḥadīth studies, but its relationship with ḥadīth is obviously incontestable. Indeed to attribute the advent of this genre solely to the taste for genealogy seems difficult.

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132 Such nasab was not simply a tribal or communal concern since it extended also to horses, suggesting the chivalrous connotations of the subject. In general, nasab must be thought of first as an organizing principle, an epistemic instrument which relates history by arranging it in a family-tree structure. Secondly, nasab emphasizes the fuhul among both men and horses, which among other things meant ‘producers of progeny’. See Tarif Khalidi, Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period, 49.
The main objective was to convey to later generations its authentic purity and without modification as it was revealed through the Prophet. After listing the major biographical dictionaries based on historiographical framework (types of person and era), he then formulates his own classification of biographical dictionaries compilers as initiators, innovators or imitators.135

Nevertheless, the contemporary scholars concede the possibility that the second century hijra scholars have invented the tabaqāt; but there can be no doubt they adopted it for a specific purpose. Drawing from the Prophet’s ḥadīth, “scholars are the heirs to the Prophet,”136 the followers with a sense of responsibility take steps to collect and record as much as possible about the life of the Prophet, his Companions, and the succeeding generations.137 This led on to an interest in the ḥadīth scholars as a matter of course, developed in close association with isnād where at times ḥadīth scholars were criticised for making the isnād their major interest, rather than the substantive report transmitted. Muḥammad Zubayr Siddiqi asserts “the pursuit of ḥadīth [was] neither by the government and the many sectarian leaders, nor their own personal interests, but [was] ‘by the pure love of pure traditions’.”138

It follows therefore that the basic qualification for inclusion in the general run of biographical dictionaries is the contribution brought by the individual to the scholarship of the particular field in one aspect. On the other hand, the selection of the biographer is determined by the appropriate condition to which his concern is directed and this latter in turn established as a rule for the discipline.139 Hamilton Gibb argues that corresponding limitations continued to be observed as the practice of biography spread; while religious scholars continued to confine themselves to Qur’ān or ḥadīth, scholars, jurists, and other religious classes, men of letters compiled dictionaries of poets and writers, administrative officials’ dictionaries of viziers and secretaries, scientist and philosophers’ dictionaries of their own kind.140

135 Marica K. Hermansen, Survey Article: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Islamic Biographical Materials, 165.
137 Muḥammad ʻAbd al-Ghānī, Al-Tarājīm wa al-Sīyar, 6.
138 Muḥammad Zubayr Siddiqi, Ḥadīth Literature Its Origin, Development & Special Features, 39.
139 Sir Hamilton Gibb, Islamic Biographical Literature, 54.
140 Ibid.
As George Makdisi indicates the motive of the genre is when the theological movement arose in reaction to encounters with foreign systems of thought such as Christianity, non-theistic Greek thought, and others. This reaction brought about another, scholars of hadith felt the need to identify the lines of scholars who had legitimate authority to determine Islamic doctrine. Since the earliest organized disciplines in Islam were the sciences of hadith transmission, the early biographical works are oriented towards fulfilling their requirements both in general works and in the histories of particular cities and provinces. In turn this influenced the collection of biographical dictionaries on other classes of individuals investigating the Qur’an, law, Arabic language and so forth but it never totally deviated from the pattern linking it with the sciences of hadith. Seemingly the purpose of collection in different circumstance shows, as Albert Hourani states “the history of the Muslim community was essentially that of the unbroken transmission of truth and high Islamic culture.”

1.3 Biographical Dictionaries of Ḥadīth Transmitters

Throughout the history of biographical dictionaries of ḥadīth transmitters, there is a great difference in scope, plan, and detailed contents, according to the main theme of the compilers. This genre unquestionably is one of the fundamental sources of ‘ilm al-rijāl (the science of men), a method in the study of ḥadīth. Iftikhar Zaman in his article “The Science of Rijāl as a Method in the Study of Ḥadīths” shows how ḥadīth study based on ‘ilm al-rijāl is similar to the methods of scholars working within the classical style of ḥadīth study. He suggests the method of basing judgements on the qualities of transmitters by gathering variant versions of ḥadīth narrated by them is implicit in biographical dictionaries beginning from the middle of the second/seventh century.

Muḥammad Zubayr Siddiqi in the chapter of Biographical Dictionaries includes the chronology, biography and criticism as a literature which deals with ‘ilm al-rijāl. These types of literature later divided into “general” and “particular” works. Ibn Sa’d’s Ṭabaqāt

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142 Ibid.
143 Albert Hourani, The History of Arabic Thought (London: Faber and Faber, 2013), 165-166.
al-Kabīr, Bukhārī’s Three Histories, Ibn Abī Khaythama’s Ṭārīkh, Ibn Abī Ḥātim’s al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta‘dīl and other early works during the third/eighth centuries are categorised under the “general” rubric. Furthermore, biographical dictionaries of Companions, biographical dictionaries of particular towns or provinces, and biographical dictionaries of transmitters who belonged to schools of law are considered as "particular" biographical dictionaries.  

For early biographical dictionaries especially preceding the third/eighth centuries, it is hard to outline the arrangement and the structure of their contents, as prior to the first surviving work, Ibn Sa’d’s al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr have been lost. Given the importance of this valuable source for contemporary scholars, a considerable number of studies have investigated it. Possibly from Ibn Naḥīm’s famous book al-Fihrist we can determine at least two works that preceded it, namely al-Ṭabaqāt of Muḥammad b. ‘Umar al-Waqīdī (d. 207/822) and Ṭabaqāt man Rawā ‘an al-Nabī min Aḥṣābīhi of Haytham b. ‘Adī (d. 207/822). Fuat Sezgin points out Ibn Ḥajar’s (d. 852/1449) al-Isāba fī Tamyīz al-Šahāba in the entry of Umm ’Abd Allāh bt. Aws al-Anṣāriyya cited a ḥadīth that is credited to al-Mu‘āfā b. ‘Imrān’s (d. 185/801) Tārīkh al-Mawsil. However, coming out of the later works which were based on them, and which still exist, the general idea of this genre reasonably can be derived. As Siddiqi proposes, their contents consisted mainly of: short descriptions of the genealogies and dates of birth and death; some biographical matters; and

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146 They remain as general works, which are, include of general information of all transmitters, or at least of all the notable ones among them who were acknowledged to the author. This body of information supported mostly with names, paidonymics, nicknames and year of death. In addition, sometimes it provides birth date and place, teachers, travels, scholarly works, and the comments of other authorities about transmitters. During the period of hadith compilation, it endeavoured to include all possible information that would characterize the person so as to minimize the possibility of error in the transmission of a ḥadīth, by establishing whether a transmitter could have been a contemporary of another; and if contemporaries, whether their road had crossed; and if so, whether one could have received his information from the other; and if so, whether he was trustworthy, and so on. See also Mustafa A’zami, Studies in Early Hadith Literature, 7.

147 Muḥammad Zubayr Siddiqr, Hadith Literature Its Origin, Development & Special Features, 91-106.


149 Akram Diyā’ al-Umrān, Bahāthī ṭa Tārīkh al-Sunn, (Madina: Maktaba al-‘Ulūm wa al-Hikam), 75; Ibn Naḍīm, al-Fihrist, 111.

150 Ibn al- Naḍīm, al-Fihrist, 112.

a brief critique of their reliability, backed up with the opinions of important authorities and contemporaries.\textsuperscript{152}

Analysis of the format of Ibn Sa’d’s work demonstrates that all of the features mentioned above, as well as others, may be found. Ibn Sa’d begins his \textit{Tabaqāt} without an introduction; he writes a lengthy biography and history of the Prophet Muḥammad and earlier prophets, amounting to a quarter of the text. Immediately following the Prophet’s \textit{sīra}, there is what amounts to a description of objective:

“Naming those whom we have counted from the Companions of the Prophet, from the \textit{muhājirīn} and \textit{anṣār}, and those who lived after them from their offspring and their followers, of the people of knowledge (\textit{fiqḥ}), learning (\textit{ʿilm}), and transmission of ḥadīth, and what has come down to us about their names, genealogies, agnomens, and reports, class by class”\textsuperscript{153}

This description demonstrates a clear theme that he is aiming for. However, there is no clear indication of the structure and arrangement of the massive biographies of the Companions and the next generation who lived in the first two centuries of Islam. Roughly, he continues the next section with the classes of Companions; the Companions who delivered legal opinions in Madīna during the Prophet’s lifetime, who went to battle at Badr and their descendants, and who became Muslim before the conquest of Makka. The next generation, approximately one-half of the book, is devoted to those who transmitted ḥadīth from the Companions until his time.

Michael Cooperson states the importance of \textit{isnād}-based learning is clear in \textit{al-Tabaqāt al-Kabīr}, which is divided into sections corresponding to successive generations of ḥadīth transmitters.\textsuperscript{154} The difference between this work and previous ḥadīth works was the emphasis on the biographies of transmitters with little or no attention paid to the ḥadīth itself. Ibn Sa’d clearly adheres to the organisation of the \textit{musnad} and \textit{tabaqāt} as well in that the biographies of the Prophet, his Companions and those who followed them, are arranged by generations and geographic origin. There were many others in Ibn Sa’d’s generation whose reputation for scholarship and \textit{isnād} criticism was acknowledged by their peers and subsequent scholars. But Ibn Sa’d, who is quoted extensively by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī\textsuperscript{155}
was the first surviving work using the technique of ascribing information through a chain of transmitters predominantly employed by ḥadīth scholars.


Like ʿUmarī, Maṭar al-Zahrānī intends to list works but solely of biographical dictionaries in Sunnite ḥadīth studies. He uses ʿUmarī’s book as a framework of his studies when he lists and picks five sub-genres, included under the biographical dictionaries in the first five centuries. Crediting ʿUmarī as a source of reference in discussing accessible manuscripts, he informs readers whether the manuscripts have been edited, published, or studied by M.A and Ph. D students. Both ʿUmarī and al-Zahrānī do not divide biographical dictionaries into general and particular. However, they usually organize the available works under similar title order, so that, for example, they will gather all ṭabaqāt works together.

In view of this, among the ṭabaqāt genre mentioned by them are al-Ṭabaqāt of Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-Wāqidi (d. 207/822),158 Ṯabaqāt man Rawāʾ an al-Nabī min

156 Akram Ẓiyāʾ al-ʿUmarī, Buḥūth fī Tārīkh al-Sunna, 3; Abdul Rauf Zafar supplies a list of biographical dictionaries (extant or lost, published or unpublished) which divided into several categories in his article. See Abdul Rauf Zafar, “Transmission of Ḥadīth and Biography”, Islamic Quarterly, vol. 35, no.2 (1991).
157 Akram Ẓiyāʾ al-ʿUmarī, Buḥūth fī Tārīkh al-Sunna, 59.

Meanwhile, G.H.A. Juynboll argues that the ṭabaqāt evolved and there emerged a more and more specific writing-style among ḥadīth scholars from second/eight to ninth/fifteenth centuries. According to him, subsequent to the ṭabaqāt being arranged according to generations and place of residence, this genre was abandoned in favour of another arrangement, a gradually more strictly observed alphabetical order of transmitters. He added, that following the two works of Bukhārī’s Tārīkh al-Kabīr and Ibn Abī Ḥātim’s Kitāb al-Jarḥ wa Taʿdīl, biographers follow the information contained in already existing works. Eventually, this development came to a stalemate with the work of Ibn Hajar’s (d. 852/1449) Ṭahdīḥ al-Tahdīḥ, considered the most complete list of transmitters. However,

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162 Al-Sakhāwī, Faṭḥ al-Muqūthī, 4/502; Akram Diyaʾ al-ʿUmarī, Buḥūth fī Tārīkh al-Sunna, 76.
168 Akram Diyaʾ al-ʿUmarī, Buḥūth fī Tārīkh al-Sunna, 82.
this biographical dictionary limits the transmitter who occurs in six canonical scholar’s books.172

Understandably, this limited inclusion of transmitters after fifth/twelfth centuries were probably developed along with the canons as they became the common language for discussing the Prophet’s ḥadīth. Jonathan Brown analyses and focuses on how the two highest six canonical i.e. Sahīhayn which were controversial when they were written, acquired such prestige by the beginning of the sixth/eleventh century. The most important contributor to the process of canonisation was evidently Ibn Ḥibbān’s student al-Ḥākim al-Naysabūrī. These Sahīhayn were not just used to prove the authenticity of ḥadīth, but also to authoritatively shape the study of ḥadīth. Brown asserts latter scholars like Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī and Ibn Ṣālāḥ employ it to elaborate the tenets of ḥadīth transmission, criticism and its applications in deriving law.173

As mentioned earlier, each of biographical dictionaries in ḥadīth studies uses different methods for the inclusion the data. From the list books and the author year of death given by ‘Umarī and al-Zahrānī, we notice the change in writing style of biographical dictionaries as pointed out by Siddiqi, Juynboll and Brown. In Ibn Ḥibbān’s era, beside ṭabaqāt some scholars compose the biographies of the Prophet’s Companions like Abū al-Qāsim Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Baghwā’ī’s (d. 317/929) Mu’jam al-Ṣaḥāba and Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr’s (d. 463/1071) al-Istī‘āb fī Ma’rifa al-ʾAṣḥāb. Some deal exclusively with reliable or unreliable transmitters: The Kitāb al-Thiqāt of Ibn Ḥibbān and Kitāb al-Ḍu‘ājāfā’ wa al-Matrūkīn of al-Nasā’ī are examples. Some record only names, patronymics or nicknames; to this class belong the various works on al-Asmā’ wa al-Kunā, al-Kunā wa al-Asmā’ of Abū Bishr al-Dūlābī (d. 310/922) and the well-known Kitāb al-Ansāb of al-Sam’ānī (d. 562/1166). Still others contain biographical details of all transmitters who lived in or visited any particular town: examples include the Ṭabaqāt ‘Ulamā’ ʾIṣrīqiya wa Tūnis of Abū al-Arāb Muḥammad b. Tamīm al-Qayrawānī (d. 333/944) and others. After fifth/eleventh centuries as discussed above, biographers begin to restrict themselves to offering biographies of transmitters used in particular collections of ḥadīth, or in a group of collections. To this class belong a large number of works which deal with the lives of the transmitters on whom al-Bukhārī or Muslim, or the authors of all the six canonical works have relied.

1.3.1 Biographical Dictionaries on Transmitters of a Town or Province

Biographical materials of local towns arguably are a part of scattered Muslim historical compositions, and can only be perceived from an early period studying them with reference to other cultural activities and developments. To analyse them by themselves leads only to a fractional and ambiguous understanding of their origins and development. Ann Lambton in her paper Persian Biographical Literature suggests local histories, geographical dictionaries, chronicles, autobiographies, and others as the source of biographical materials. She further suggests the sense of loyalty to the region motivated the composition of biographical dictionaries. Approximately every important town had several biographers who collected the lives of every important transmitter or literary figure who lived or visited it. Makkah, Madinah, Basra, Kufa, Wāšīṭ, Damascus, Antioch, Alexandria, Kairouan, Cordoba, Mawsil, Aleppo, Baghdad, Isfahan, Jurjan, Bukhara, Merv, and other places all produced their own ranking scholars.

ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Dūrī’s work is a detailed study of the development of Arabic historiography from the first/seventh to fourth/ninth century. He suggests that Arabic historiography originated almost simultaneously in three centres or schools, Madinah, Kufa and Basra. The “Madinan School of History” reflected what al-Dūrī terms the “Islamic perspective” due to its focus on the life of the Prophet and the spread of Islam. These works materialized from the sīra/maghāzī scholars, for instance, ‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr (d. 94/712), al-Zuhūrī (d. 124/741), Musā b. ʿUqba (d. 141/758), Muḥammad b. Ishāq (d. 159/770), and al-Wāqidī (d. 207/822) maintained the critical standards of ḥadīth scholarship. Early works from this school were primarily of the sīra/maghāzī type, but several of them also turned their attention to the history of the umma-contained many biographies of Madinah’s people. The second perspective on historical writing developed out of the interest in the exploits and genealogies of the Arab tribes that is to say the “tribal perspective”. Kufa and Basra are famously known as two new garrison towns that were centres of tribal activity. While the conquest added new feats and great achievements to the tribal topics available for study, and in like manner, the founding of an Islamic empire opened up new horizons for

175 Ibid, 143.
178 Ibid.
179 Ibid, 22.
investigation. Among the tribes there quickly developed a spirit of partisanship (ʿaṣabiyya) for and pride in the particular garrison towns (amṣār) in which these tribes lived.180

Later, al-Dūrī suggests this regional history genre made its appearance in the third/ninth century.181 The word tārīkh in the title of a regional history may as well refer to a ṣabaqāt work. Only the express statement that a particular history was arranged alphabetically or according to ṣabaqāt permits a classification.182 The composition was an outgrowth of regional studies in ḥadith; these give the biographies of the ḥadīth scholars who grew up in these cities or lived there for a length of time, and present these biographies in ṣabaqāt form.183 Some of these works are largely concerned with the straightforward recounting of events out of a sense of devotion and pride for the region, although these usually also take account of the specialities and excellent qualities in question, its khaṣṣāʾiṣ and faḍāʾil.184

Meanwhile, Rosenthal distinguishes two main strains of regional historical writing: “secular” and “theological local historiography”.185 Proclaiming ḥadīth scholars, he proposes that early composition of this genre grew out of the need for an additional protection against the invention of spurious ḥadīth by determining the residence of transmitters. He also assumes it was favoured in its growth by the political rivalry between the various centres and schools of ḥadīth transmitters which were established in the cities of the Muslim territory. As reported in the name of the author of the Ṣabaqāt al-Hamadhāniyyīn, Ṣāliḥ b. Aḥmad (d. 384/994) says:

When religious scholarship has been cultivated in a place and scholars lived there in ancient and modern times, the students of ḥadīth and all those interested in ḥadīth should begin with a thorough study of the ḥadīth of their hometown and with acquiring a solid knowledge concerning the representatives of the science of ḥadīth there. After the students knows what is authentic and what is unauthentic in their ḥadīth, and is completely acquainted with the ḥadīth scholars in his city and their conditions, he may occupy himself with the ḥadīths of other places and with travelling in search of ḥadīth.186

180 ‘Abd al-ʿAzīz al-Dūrī, The Rise of Historical Writing Among the Arabs, 42.
181 Ibid, 71.
184 C E. Bosworth, “The Patricians of Nishapur: A Study in Medieval Islamic Social History” (Book Review) in Islamic Quarterly 18.1 (Jan 1, 1974), 47.
186 Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, Tārīkh Baghdād, Tārīkh Baghdad, ed. Bashshār ʿAwwād Maʿrūf, (Beirut: Dar al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 2001), 1/214; This passage is also translated by Franz Rosenthal in A History of Muslim Historiography, 144.
Abū al-Ḥasan Aslam b. Sahl who composed a work famously known as Bahshal’s (d. 292/904) third/ninth century *Tārīkh al-Wāṣit* is among the oldest preserved work of the type. According to the editor Kurkis ‘Awwād, there is only one manuscript of this work, which is incomplete; furthermore, a number of its leaves are out of order. However, the original concept and form of this work is well presented. *Tārīkh al-Wāṣit* goes rather briefly into a discussion of the origin, early history, border of the city and its surroundings, and later deals with those of its religious scholars who are connected with the author by isnād. The scholars grouped together according to their “generation” (*qarn*, instead of *ṭabaqa*, which was later on commonly used in this connection).

The first generation “are the Companion of the Prophet – those who served him, saw him, transmitted his ḥadīth, and heard him speak – who came to city of Wasit.” The Companions consist of four men and six women but their biographies contained very little datum. Bahshal continues the next section with the generation of second/eighth, third/ninth century until his time. They merely mentioned the name of the transmitter, his ḥadīth or aḥādīth, and those who transmitted on his authority as well as their ḥadīth or aḥādīth. Theoretically, the intention of quoting the ḥadīth, which connected with the name of a particular transmitter, was “to have every personality’s position (in scholarship and the degree of his reliability) made known.”

In the course of time, Rosenthal observes that the following fourth/tenth century saw a widening of the notable groups that qualified for inclusion in this genre. The result was a relaxation of the condition that each biography was to contain at least one ḥadīth, which its subject has transmitted. This resulted in the addition of a greater amount of biographical materials. However, this method was unpopular in certain places and in the generation after Bahshal, Muḥammad b. Saʿīd al-Qushayrī (d. 334/945), still followed the old custom in his *Tārīkh al-Raqqa*. Concurrently, the alphabetical arrangement of the biographies made its appearance. As described by Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhawī (d. 831/1428), Ibn Yāsīn’s (d. 334/945) *Tārīkh Hira* is arranged alphabetically. Nevertheless, it may have

188 Ibid.
190 Ibid.
192 Ibid, 145 and 393.
been a much earlier practice, for example in local historiography. At about the same time, al-Bukhārī used the alphabetical arrangement for his Tārīkh, and local historians might have had the same idea to arrange the biographies alphabetically at that early date.195 Among biographical dictionaries of local towns we may include what al-Sakhāwī mentions in al-I’lān bi al-Tawbīkh.196

1.3.2 Biographical Dictionaries on Companions of the Prophet

From the numbers of that appear later, it is evident important this topic for early ḥadīθ scholars. “One who is intimately associated (with another)” is the primary meaning of the word ṣaḥīb, according to Ibn Manẓūr. Ṣaḥībahu is explained “he associated, kept company, or consortcd with him; … (he accompanied him) he was, or became, his companion, associate, comrade, fellow, friend…”197 In the Qurʾān, the trilateral root ṣ ḥ b occurs 97 times in six derived forms: once as the form verb yuṣḥabū (to protect), twice as the form

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verb *tuṣāhib* (to keep company), 78 times as the noun *aṣḥāb*, 10 times as the noun *ṣāḥib*, four times as the noun *ṣāḥibat*, and twice as the noun *ṣāḥib*.198

In most cases, *ṣaḥāba* (sing. *ṣaḥābī*, other plural forms are *aṣḥāb*, *ṣaḥb*, *ṣuḥbān*) is a synonym for Companion of the Prophet. The Prophet used to say: “Do not insult my Companions, for if one of you spent [by way of charity] what is equal to [mount] Uḥud in gold, he would not equal their measure or [even] half of it”.199 Al-Bukhārī in the opening of The Merits of the Prophet’s Companion chapter states “and who so of the Muslims kept company with the Prophet or saw him, is of the Companions.”200 Muḥammad Asad in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*’s translation raises a topic as to who is considered a Companion. He asserts the Companions themselves; they were undoubtedly of the opinion that not every Muslim who merely saw the Prophet was a Companion. Then he quotes Ibn Ṣalāḥ in his *Mugaddima*:

Somenone asked Anas b. Ṣāliḥ, “Is any of the Companions the Apostle of God still alive beside thee?” Anas answered, “Some Bedouins who saw him are still alive; but of his Companions – none.”

Siddiqi also recognizes that the exact qualifications necessary for being a Companion is not uniform according to Islamic scholars.201 He states

Some have held that every Muslim who saw the Prophet was a Companion. Others have thought that only through long association with him could one join this category. The majority of writers, however, have held that the term may be applied to every adult Muslim who associated with the Prophet for any length of time. His near relations, his close friends, his attendants, as well as ordinary Muslims who saw him even once, are generally included within the definition.202

In spite of all of this, Muslim scholars in third/ninth century like Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ and Bahshal conclude that the Companions are one *ṭabaqa*.203 However, the classification in more than a dozen classes is based on their seniority and closeness to the Prophet, their precedence in embracing Islam, time of migration to Madinah, participation in the various battles and many others.204 Ibn Ṣalāḥ in the chapter of the acquaintance of Companions

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198 corpus.quran.com
202 Ibid.
204 Mohammad Hashim Kamali, *A Textbook of Ḥadīth Studies*, 47.
(ma’rifa al-Ṣaḥāba), lists the leading Companions in terms of transmitting ḥadīth, legal response, total numbers of Companions, ṭabaqa (ranks) among Companions, the first to convert to Islam, and the last of the Companions to die in regard to specific regions.205 Prior to discussing the collective probity of Companions venerated from Qur’ānic passages and Prophetic ḥadīth, Ibn Ṣalāh establishes a way to characterize a Companion

In some cases, an individual is known to be a Companion by means of universal acknowledgement (bi-l-tawātūr); in some cases, by numerous testimonies (bi-l-istifāda) falling short of universal acknowledgement; in some cases, by a few of the Companions relating that he is a Companion; and in some cases by his own statement or report – after his integrity is established – that he is a Companion. God knows best.206

In the opinion of Juynboll, Abū Ḥātim and his son were among the early ḥadīth scholars that never put the trustworthiness of the Companions to the test.207 He added this was important as Sunnis needed to rehabilitate the Companions who participated in conflicts after the Prophet’s death. In the introduction to his edition of Muslim’s Kitāb al-Tamyīz, A’zami affirms that there can be no doubt that the doctrine of the collective probity of the Companions were held by the majority of Muslim scholars.208 Based upon this, Lucas explains how the scholars in third/ninth century address the problem of “warring Ṣaḥāba” which was addressed by later ḥadīth critics.209 He suggests a role played by scholars like Ibn Sa’d, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, Ibn Abī Shayba, his two student’s al-Bukhārī and Muslim in the adoption of the belief in the collective probity of the Companions. Later he points out al-Wāqidī’s definition of the Companion preserved in Ibn Sa’d’s al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr precedes Abū Ḥātim’s opinon.210 Meanwhile, Amr Osman examines of relevant works and prefers the view that the collective probity crystalized in the fifth/eleventh century.211 He has observed, “the doctrine has become an article of the Sunni faith simply because it was indispensable.”212

206 Ibid, 294.
208 Among them are the four madhhabs imams, Yahyā b. Maʿīn, ʿAlī b. al-Madhnī, al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Zurʿa, Abū Dāwūd, and Abū Ḥātim. See Muslim, Kitāb al-Tamyīz, ed. M. Muṣṭaṣfā al-Aʿzami, (Riyadh: Wizarā al-Maʿārif al-Suʿūdiyya, 1982), 41.
209 Scott Lucas, Constructive Critics, Ḥadīth Literature, and The Articulation of Sunni Islam, 282-285
210 “Al-Wāqidī states: Whoever saw the Messenger of God and saw his forbearance and submitted and understood the religion and its goodness is a companion of the Prophet, in our opinion, even if it was for just an hour of the day.” See Scott Lucas, Constructive Critics, Ḥadīth Literature, and The Articulation of Sunni Islam, 267.
212 Ibid, 302.
Muḥammad b. al-Jaʿrī al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) in his famous work *Ṭārīkh al-Ṭabarī* dedicates a section to illustrate the biographies of the Prophet’s Companions.\(^{213}\) A quick glance at al-Ṭabarī’s work, in the case of the Companions, he mentions their Islamic record or services to the cause of Islam, as well as any detail or anecdote connecting them with the Prophet. The biographies contain physical descriptions, personal traits, and historical events in which the subjects were involved. Occasionally, al-Ṭabarī followed the method of *ṭabaqāt* which arranged in categories of time and place, or tribes regularly. However, al-Sakhāwī who looks from the ḥadīth scholar’s perspective touched upon the reliability of sources in *Ṭārīkh al-Ṭabarī*. Describing al-Ṭabarī’s work, al-Sakhāwī says the following:

The great history includes both reports on the history of the world and the sources from which they derive, but it is limited by the author’s purpose, namely, to supply information about history, wars and conquests. Only rarely does [al-Ṭabarī] deal with the question of the reliability of transmitters (*al-Jaʿrī wa al-Taḍīr*), because his biographical work suffices in this respect (*iktīfāʿan bi-tārīkhihi fī al-rijāl*). Thus, the information he gives (in the history of Prophets and Kings) about the great religious teachers (*al-Aʿīma*) is not exhaustive, for his interest lay in conveying clear detailed accounts of wars and conquests, stories of ancient prophets and kings, past nations and bygone generations. He adduced [all this information] together with its sources and many chain of transmission; he was erudite in all these and other matters.\(^{214}\)

Before al-Sakhāwī, Ibn Ṣalāḥ gave a similar review of biographical dictionaries of the Companions genre when he says

This is a vast science on which people have written many books. If it had not been for Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr’s inclusion of a large amount of material concerning the disputes that flared up between the Companions and his relations from the historians, rather than the transmitters of ḥadīth, his *Kitāb al-Istīʿāb [fī maʿrifat al-Aṣḥāb]* (Comprehensive Book [of the Acquaintance of Companions]) would have been one of the most pleasant and useful works on the subject. Prolixity and confusion prevail in what the historians relate.\(^{215}\)

Perhaps this could be a distinction, if not a real fissure that points to the differences of writing style among scholars at that time. In the beginning, for ḥadīth scholars around the early second/eighth or the end of seventh century, excellence of qualities and virtues (*faḍāʿ il wa manāqib*) of the Companion were a favourite theme in their narrative arts.\(^{216}\) The works on ḥadīth compilation in their turn devote a special chapter to a theme, such as *faḍāʿ il Aṣḥāb*

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\(^{214}\) Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Iʿlān bi al-Tawbīkh liman Dhamm Ahl al-Tārīkh*, 286; Rosenthal, *History*, 488; Ella-Landau-Tasseron has translated this text.


al-Nabī and manāqib al-anṣār.\textsuperscript{217} As suggested by Asma Afsaruddin, a survey of this kind literature shows that the terms manāqib and faḍā il could be used fairly interchangeably.\textsuperscript{218}

Subsequently, the virtue of notable persons like Caliph Rashidun and other companions constitute a sub-section of most ḥadīth collections. For example, al-Bukhārī lists Abū Bakr’s virtues as him being “chose to be dearest friend of the Prophet if allowed for the Prophet,” “the only Companion to accompany the Prophet in hijra.”\textsuperscript{219} The occurrence of Abū Bakr’s relationship with the Prophet therefore displays his preferred status. Similar to those works the status of Companions further establishes in larger context when the composition of biographical dictionaries on Companions or Kutub al-Ṣaḥāba materialized. As mentioned earlier, ḥadīth scholars gathered the information regarding Companions along with the reliability of the transmitters of their selection. However, most of the works do not exist in manuscript form, as it only attributed later by scholars who engaged in the science of ḥadīth transmission. There are at least 21 known biographical dictionaries of Companions, according to al-ʿUmarī, al-Zahrānī and Ḥafṣī’s lists.\textsuperscript{220}


\textsuperscript{219} Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, (Riyadh: Dâr al-Salām, 1999), 613-618.

1.3.3 Biographical Dictionaries on al-Jarḥ wa al-Taʾdīl (Impugning and Approving)

This branch of ḥadīth biographical dictionaries is concerned mainly in the degree of accuracy of a particular transmitter. According to Ibn Abī Ḥātim, the word naqḍ\(^{221}\) is used for criticism by some early ḥadīth scholars in the second/eight century.\(^{222}\) While in third/ninth century, Muslim uses the word yamīz for the purpose of ḥadīth criticism.\(^{223}\) His book al-Tamyīz designed for a more general audience and along with Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim introduction, present distinctive data about his criticism methodology.\(^{224}\)

However, this kind of criticism is widely known as al-Jarḥ wa al-Taʾdīl and Ibn Abī Ḥātim could be the first to give a book title using this term. The noun is spelt al-Jarḥ as well as al-jarḥ. For this reason, the plural of this word comes in the development of al-Jarḥ wa al-Taʾdīl from

Taking up Ibn ʿAdī (d. 365/975)'s introduction in al-Kāmil fi ḏuʿaṭa al-Rijāl, Tāhir al-Jazāʾirī presents a general compendium of the development of al-Jarḥ wa al-Taʾdīl from

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\(^{221}\) Among the meaning as Ibn Manẓūr said al-naqd or al-tanqad is the differentiation of dirhams (silver coins) and to extract the counterfeit coins from them. See Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān al-ʿArab, 3/425.


\(^{223}\) Sometimes they would say, tamyīz al-rawa (distinction of the transmitters).

\(^{224}\) Jonathan A. C. Brown, The Canonisation of al-Bukhari and Muslim, 82.

\(^{224}\) Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān al-ʿArab, 2/422-423.
its beginning down to the mid-fourth century of hijra. Ibn ʿAdī states it began with Companions like Ibn ʿAbbās, Ubāda b. Ṣāmit, and Anas who criticised and assessed the transmitter. Successors such as al-Shaʿbī, Ibn Sīrīn and Saʿīd b. al-Mūsāyyab continued the tradition. After describing his seventy-three-man list of ḥadīth critics, he concluded

I have mentioned the names of those scholars among the Companions, Successors, and the following men, generation by generation to our day, who, in their own right, are allowed to give opinions concerning [ḥadīth] transmitters or who assert themselves to be qualified to do this and who memorize the [name of the] reliable and unreliable transmitters.

In the opinion of Aʿzami, the investigation of transmitters began to involve basic principles during the lifetime of the Prophet. For example, Ḍimām b. Thaʿlabah came to the Prophet and said, “Muḥammad, your messenger came to us and told us your assertion that verily Allāh had sent you [as a prophet]. The Prophet remarked: He told the truth.” Abū Bakr the first caliph is considered as the pioneer of this field. "Umar, 'Alī ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās, Abū Bakr b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (d. 94/712), ʿUbayd Allāh b. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUtbah (d. 98/716), Khārijah b. Zayd b. Thābit (d. 100/718), 'Urwah b. al-Zubayr (d. d. 94/712), Abū Bakr b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān (d. 94/712), and Sulaymān b. Yasār (d. 104/722) continued to contribute to the development of al-Jarḥ wa al-Taʿdīl. However, the investigation of transmitters only become common during the next generation since the transmitter of doubtful veracity grew in number, and so the evaluation of transmitters grew in importance. Most scholars agree that an enormous amount of forgeries was included in the ḥadīth literature and according to Ahmad b. Ḥanbal, ḥadīth and

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228 This text has been translated by Scott C. Lucas. See also Ibn ʿAdī, al-Kāmil fi Ḍuʿ afāʾ al-Rijāl, (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1985), 1/47.
229 M. Muṣṭafā al-Aʿzami, Studies in Ḥadīth Methodology and Literature, 65.
230 Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, trans. Abdul Hamid Siddiqi, (Lahore, Sh. Muḥammad Ashraf Publishers, 1993), 1/7. Aʿzami suggests to read with ḥadīth no. 63 in Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, trans. Muḥammad Muḥsin Khan, (Lahore: Kazi Publications, 1979), 1/55. After the conversation, Ẓimām declared, “I have believed in all that with you have been sent, and I have been sent by my people as a messenger, and I am Ẓimām b. Thaʿlabah from the brothers of Banī ʿAbbās.”
231 M. Muṣṭafā al-Aʿzami, Studies in Ḥadīth Methodology and Literature, 66.
tafsîr were more affected by forgery than any other branch of literature.233 The Glaswegian William Muir thought that forgery in ḥadīth began during the caliphate of ʿUthmân.234 However, Siddiqi argues it was more likely to have occurred during the lifetime of the Prophet himself.235 Hashim Kamali in *Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence* discusses briefly the historical origins of forgery in ḥadīth.236

Hence, in the course of the second/eight century realizing that there were many forged aḥādīth, the interest in the transmitters developed for evaluating their qualities.237 The science of ḥadīth transmission evolved in parallel with the development of strategies for collecting and classifying ḥadīth. The focus of ḥadīth criticism was the isnād and the individuals named in it. Biographical notices were compiled from ḥadīth collections, and they were presented as such, with full chains of transmitters or isnād.238 With the passage of time, biographers came to rely more on written evidence, but this was still be combined with information obtained orally.239

By the turn of the second to third century of hijra ḥadīth scholars who collected aḥādīth were concerned not only with the soundness of the chain of the transmission, but also with the reputations of the individual’s transmitters. Aʿzami added that before scholars found out the degree of accuracy of a particular transmitter, they practised a method of comparison, including

1. Comparison between the aḥādīth of the different students of a particular scholar.

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234 He quoted ʿUthman commanding, “It is not permitted to anyone to relate a tradition as from the Prophet, which he hath not already heard in the time of Abu Bekr or Omar. And verily nothing hinders me from repeating traditions of the Prophet’s sayings (although I be one of those endowed with the most retentive memory amongst all his Companions) but that I have heard him say, *whoever shall repeat of me that which I have not said, his resting-place shall be in Hell*. See Sir William Muir, *The Life of Mahomet*, (London: Smith, Elder & Co, 1894), xxxii.

235 Ibn Ḥazm in *al-Iḥkām fi Uṣūl al-Āḥkām* wrote, “After the hijra, he tells us, a man went to an outlying district of Medina and told a tribe living there that the Prophet had given him authority over them. He resorted to this device because he was of a mind to marry a girl who was a member of that tribe, to whom he had proposed marriage before the hijra, but who had not consented. The tribe sent a messenger to the Prophet to make enquiries concerning the ‘authority’ thus asserted in his name. The Prophet told them that the man was a pretender, and had received no warrant for what he did. See Muḥammad Zubayr Siddiqi, *Ḥadīth Literature Its Origin, Development & Special Features*, 32.


239 Ibid.
2. Comparison between the statements of a particular scholar at different times.

3. Comparison between oral recitation and written documents.

4. Comparison between the ḥadīth and the related text of the Qur’an.\textsuperscript{240}

He gives further examples to illustrate the methods.\textsuperscript{241} Agreeing with the legal theorist viewpoint, Daniel Brown states that the rules for evaluating the trustworthiness of a transmitter were borrowed the procedures and technical vocabulary used to test witnesses in legal cases.\textsuperscript{242}

Meanwhile Eerik Dickinson in the \textit{The Development of Early Sunnite Ḥadīth Criticism} focuses on Ibn Abī Ḥātim’s \textit{Taqdima} that was meant to serve as an introduction to \textit{Kitāb al-Jarh wa al-Ta’dīl}, one of the Ibn Abī Ḥātim’s biographical dictionaries. Ibn Abī Ḥātim justifies the employment of ḥadīth criticism which began early and was used continuously up to his own day.\textsuperscript{243} He applies the \textit{ṭabaqāt} presentations to determine the case that these early scholars were critics of ḥadīth. In \textit{Taqdima}, the critics were categorized into four \textit{ṭabaqāt}.\textsuperscript{244} In conjunction with Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Dickinson also highlights the

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{240} M. Muṣṭafā al-Aʿzāmī, \textit{Studies in Hadith Methodology and Literature}, 70.
  \item \textsuperscript{241} Ibid, 70-77.
  \item \textsuperscript{242} Daniel Brown, \textit{Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought}, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 82.
  \item \textsuperscript{243} Eerik Dickinson, \textit{The Development of Early Sunnite Ḥadīth Criticism: The Taqdima of Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī} (240/854-327/938), (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 41.
  \item \textsuperscript{244} The First \textit{Ṭabaqa}:
    - Madinah - Mālik b. Anas (d.179/795)
    - Makkah - Sufyān b. ʿUyayna (d. 196/811)
    - Kufr - Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161/778)
    - Basra - Shuʿba b. al-Ḥajjāj (d.160/776)
    - - Hammād b. Zayd (d. 179/795)
    - Damascus - al-Awzāʾī (d. 157/774)
  \item The Second \textit{Ṭabaqa}:
    - Kufr - Wākī b. al-Jarrāḥ (d. 197/812)
    - Basra - Yahyā b. Saʿīd al-Qattān (d. 198/812)
    - - ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Mahdī (d. 198/813)
    - Marv - ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Mubārak (d. 181/797)
    - Damascus - Abī Ishāq al-Fazārī (d. 188/804)
    - - Abī Mushīr (d. 218/833)
  \item The Third \textit{Ṭabaqa}:
    - Baghdād - ʿAbd Allāh b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855)
    - - Yahyā b. Maʿīn (d. 233/847)
    - Basra - ʿAlī b. al-Madhīnī (d. 234/849)
    - Kufa - Ibn Numayr (d. 234/848)
  \item The Fourth \textit{Ṭabaqa}:
\end{itemize}
general principles and methods of the ḥadīth critics of Ibn Abī Ḥātim’s era. Nevertheless, he called into question Mālik b. Anas and Sufyān al-Thawrī generation of the second/eight century as ‘not ḥadīth critics’. In his conclusion, he says:

Consultation of later biographies shows that figures like Mālik and Sufyān al-Thawrī bore easily the mantle of the critic. Both the critics and their rivals agreed on this point, but for entirely different reasons.

He summarises by stating that “nowhere does Ibn Abī Ḥātim explicitly delineate the criteria he employed in selecting the scholars for the Taqdima.” Lucas, meanwhile, deliberately responds to Dickinson’s opinion. He argues, “Ibn Abī Ḥātim cast the first generation of scholars as ḥadīth critics in order to give the discipline of ḥadīth criticism a greater veneer of authenticity and historical depth.” In his monograph, Lucas selects 120/738 as a cut-off death date and classifies second/eight century as the first phase of ḥadīth critics of the nascent Sunni tradition. The second phase extends from 200/815 to 300/912 and the final phase from 300/912 to 400/1009. Apart from al-Dhahabī’s Tadhkira al-Huffāẓ, Lucas scrutinizes an additional nine sources to yield a group of ḥadīth critics who lived in three century-long periods. The sources include seven lists and three ṭabaqāt presentations. Ninety-two names generated by these sources are arranged into three phases as mentioned above and a tripartite hierarchy namely primary, secondary and ‘other’.

In general, most third/ninth and fourth/tenth century biographical dictionaries on ḥadīth transmitter criticism commence with introductions discussing both technical and polemical aspects. Within the introduction one finds the reason for the compilation, conditions for listing as approval or impugning transmitter, the scope biography itself, and justifications of ḥadīth criticism aimed at the attacks of the ahl al-ra’y and ahl al-kalām. Although most of the judgement of early critics is scattered, it is argued that substantial fragments are preserved in the form of quotations with isnād in later works. As stated by Mehmet Akif, it is quite usual to look the evaluation of al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta’dīl reports in

Ray - Abū Zur‘a (d. 264/878)  
- Abū Ḥātim (d. 277/890).

245 Eerik Dickinson, Taqdima Abī Ḥātim, 127-128.
246 Ibid.
247 Ibid, 49.
249 Ibid, 121.
251 Ṭabaqāt presentations by Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn Ḥibbān, and Ibn Ḥadhīf.
252 Daniel Brown, Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought, 14.
general, because it is subjective in nature, and hence they do not yield any consensus that can be measured in statistical terms. In addition, Tarif Khalidi asserts the personal inclinations of the ḥadīth critics was a very important factor in determining their critical method, and thus there is a glaring lack of uniformity in viewpoints in this regard. When books on the science of ḥadīth transmission were written, in fourth/tenth century onwards, the broad designation includes all of the various disciplines of the study of ḥadīth. Ibn Ḥajar (d. 852/1449) presents a brief history of this sub-genre in the introduction of Nuzha al-Naẓar, his commentary on his own Nukhba al-Fikar. Consequently, al-Jarḥ wa Taʿdīl formed a recognized branch of the subject. In this discipline, a list of rules and criteria was drawn up. It suffices for our purpose here to summarize Ibn Ḥajar’s classification of transmitters into twelve grades which has been widely accepted by the later ḥadīth scholars:

1. The Companions, [who are accepted as transmitters on the authority of the Qur’an’s praising their qualities as believers].

2. The transmitters who have been consistently described as awthaq al-nās (the most reliable of people) or thiqa thiqa (reliable reliable) or with terms meaning thiqa ḥāfīz (reliable expert).

3. The transmitters who have been described at least once with words of high praise like thiqa or mutqin (accurate) or thabt (firm) or ‘adl (just).

4. The transmitters whose quality is marginally less than no. 3, described as ṣadūq (very truthful) or la ba’sa bihi (no harm in [taking from] him).

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253 Mehmet Akif, “Isnāds and Rijāl Expertise in the Exegesis of Ibn Abī Ḥātim (327/939),” in Der Islam Bd. 82. (Walter de Gruyter, 2005), 156.
256 Akram Diyā al-Umarī, Buhūth fī Tārīkh al-Sunna, 96. See also James Robson, “(Al-)Djarh wa’l Ta’dīl”, Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2/462.
5. The transmitters whose quality is marginally less than no. 4, described as ṣadūq sayyiʿ al-ḥifż (very truthful with sound memory), ṣadūq yahim (very truthful but committing mistake sometimes) and etc.

6. The transmitters who transmit few aḥādīth, and no reason is known for turning away from those aḥādīth, and are described as maqḥūl (accepted).

7. The transmitters from whom more than one person has transmitted, but whose reliability is not explicitly confirmed, described as mastūr (hidden), or majhūl al-ḥāl (whose condition is unknown).

8. The transmitters whose reliability is not affirmed by one whose affirmation matters, and who have pointed to as daʿīf (weak).

9. The transmitters from whom only one person has transmitted, and whose reliability has not been affirmed at all; described as majhūl (unknown).

10. The transmitters whose reliability is not affirmed at all, and about whom something negative is known; described as matrūk (left) or sāqiṭ (fallen) or wāhy al-ḥadīth (weak in ḥadīth).

11. Transmitters who have been accused of lying.

12. Transmitters about whom lying or fabricating is established, [either by their confession or otherwise].

These classifications were mostly adopted by later scholars and for every rank there are many terms that have been used by different scholars. However, there are a few discrepancies of meaning in the terms applied by some of the early scholars. In Ibn Abī Ḥātim’s al-Jarḥ wa Taʿdīl, Ibn Ḥibbān’s al-Ḍuʿafāʾ wa al-Matrūkīn, Ibn Ḥadīth fi Ḥadīth, and others, they discuss the various classes of transmitters with their own terms, and their classification served as a standard for the next generation of authors; e.g., al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī in his al-Kifāya, Ibn Ṣalāḥ, and until nowadays.

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258 Ibn Ḥajar, Taqrib al-Tahdhīb, 80.
259 M. Muṣṭafā al-Aʿzami, Studies in Hadith Methodology and Literature, 81.
Concerning the principles of selection on which the biographical dictionaries on approving and impugning transmitters are compiled, three groups may be distinguished. There are many works that laid the foundations of a methodology of evaluation combining approved and impugned transmitters. Meanwhile, gargantuan biographical dictionaries were dedicated to listing and discussing only impugned transmitters. Finally, dictionaries were dedicated to listing and discussing only impugned transmitters.

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260 Meanwhile, gargantuan biographical dictionaries were dedicated to listing and discussing only impugned transmitters. 261 Finally,

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CHAPTER TWO

IBN ḤIBBĀN: HIS LIFE AND CAREER

This second chapter introduces Ibn Ḥibbān from his early life when he began a journey to seek knowledge, building a scholarly career until the end of his life. Very brief reference to Ibn Ḥibbān appears in many histories, chronological, and biographical dictionaries; however, his biography is treated in a general form and not much is known about his early life. The works such as al-Ansāb by al-Samʿānī (d. 562/1166), Tārīkh Dimashq by Ibn ʿAsākir (d. 571/1175), Muʿjam al-Buldān by Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (d. 626/1228), al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh by Ibn al-Athīr (d. 630/1233), Wafayāt al-Aʿyān by Ibn Khallikān (d. 681/1282), Tadhkirā al-Ḥuffāẓ and Siyar Aʿlām al-Nubalāʾ by al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348), Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān bi Tartīb Ibn Balabān by Ibn Balabān (d. 1083/1672), reported Ibn Ḥibbān’s biography repetitiously.

Ibn Ḥibbān also appears in Brockelmann’s list of Arabic literary works, Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur, which was published in 1898 (vol. 1). In the GAL, Ibn Ḥibbān is introduced as a ḥadīth scholar and as a judge in Samarkand after extensive travels.266 Then Brockelmann quoted from Goldziherr’s Maʿānī al-Nafs the criticism towards Ibn Ḥibbān on the issue of prophethood as we will see in this chapter. Meanwhile, Sezgin under the chapter of Ḥadīth in Geschichte der Arabischen Schrifftums described him as one of the important ḥadīth scholars in his time. From the entry of Ibn Ḥibbān, we can see Sezgin list ten works of Ibn Ḥibbān’s manuscripts.267

2.1 Early Life


266 Carl Brockelmann, Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur, 1/273
267 Fuat Sezgin, Geschichte der Arabischen Schrifftums, 1/189.
268 Al-Ansāb, 2/208; Muʿjam al-Buldān, 1/415; Al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh, 7/291; Tadhkirā al-Ḥuffāẓ 3/920; Siyar Aʿlām al- Nubalāʾ 16/92; Al-Ishāra ilā Wafayāt al-Aʿyān, 176.

According to Yāqūt, this genealogy clearly shows that Ibn Ḥibbān comes from a famous Arab tribe called al-Tamīmī, which originally inhabited the Arab Peninsula in Pre-Islamic times. Tamīm who is the eponymous ancestor of this tribe is a direct descendant of ‘Adnān. This tribe of al-Tamīmī was subdivided by the three sons of Tamīm, namely Zayd Manā, ‘Amr and Hārith. The leading group of the subdivision of Mālik b. Zayd Manā was the Ḥanḍala b. Mālik, among whom the Dārim b. Mālik, or rather the ‘Abd Allāh b. Dārim was the dominant group of the whole tribe of Tamīm. ²⁷¹

Ibn Ḥibbān’s ancestor could have occupied close to the region of Bahrain as mentioned by Yāqūt. ²⁷² His tribe, the tribe of ‘Abd Allāh b. Dārim has been known to reside in the town of Kufa and its district, possibly close to the Euphrates. ²⁷³ It is unclear exactly when Ibn Ḥibbān’s ancestor moved to Bust ²⁷⁴ (Pliny the Elder called it Parabestan, ²⁷⁵ Bust or Bust in Isidore of Charax), ²⁷⁶ an ancient town ²⁷⁷ in the region of al-Rukhkhāj, and a main station on the trade route between Baghdad and India. It is possible, though, that Ibn

²⁶⁹ Al-Ansāb, 2/208; Mu’jam al-Buldān, 1/415; Al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh, 7/291; Tadhkirā al-Ḥuffāz 3/920; Siyar Aḥlām al- Nubalā’ 16/92; Al-Iṣḥāra ilā Wafayāt al-A’yān, 176.


²⁷² On Banu Dārim under the region of Bayda, see Mu’jam al-Buldān, 1/532; Nihāyat al-ʿArab, 249.


²⁷⁴ Bust, or Bost, the ‘settlement of twenty forts’, situated to the east of Sistān and close to the site of present-day Lashkar Gah, Afghanistan. In classical times this whole region had formed the province of Arachosia, the Avestan Harakhvaiti, whose name survived into Islamic times for the district of Rukhud or Rukhudh/Rukhwadh. Arabic historians like al-Balādhuri, al-Ṭabarī and al-Mas’ūdī called it al-Rukkhhāj. Bust was the main town of these eastern dominions of the early Saffarids. Some authorities like the early fourth/tenth century geographer Abū Zayd al-Balkhī considered Bust was the centre of one of the administrative and fiscal districts of early Islamic Sistān and its dependencies. Whilst others considered as a separate kurah (province) or administrative and fiscal unit. See Clifford Edmund Bosworth, The History of the Saffarids of Sistān and the Malikīs of Nimruz, (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda Publishers in association with Bibliotheca Persia, 1994,) 57-58.


²⁷⁷ Yāqūt used here of the simple term madīnah (the proper town) when he describes Bust. A town located between Sijistān, Ghaznī and Herat. See Mu’jam al-Buldān, 3/190.
Ḥībbān’s ancestor moved to Bust after the decline of the Sassanian Empire. Beyond this not much we had known about his parents’ lineage. Accordingly, all sources agree he was born in Bust and grew up there. However, the report on Ibn Ḥībbān date of birth is uncertain and al-Dhahabī guessed it was around 270/883.

Apart from his famous nisba (toponymic surname) al-Bustī, derived from his birthplace, Ibn Ḥībbān is commonly known by the nisba al-Tamīmī and al-Sijistānī. Al-Sijistānī called by the Arabs refers to Sijistān or Sistān, is ancient Sakastane, named for Indo-Iranian Sakas, who migrated there in second century B.C. from the area of Bactria and the Upper Oxus. Sistān was also called Nimirūz in Persian, a region of the Afghan-Iran borderland. This region came under the rule of Islam during the reign of Caliph Umar al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 23/644). Speaking specifically about this land, Yāqūt said that Bust, “a fertile, commercially prosperous as well as enjoyed a vigorous intellectual life and scholarship.” And so Ibn Ḥībbān began to collect hadith from a judge of his hometown, Ibrāhim b. Ismāʿīl al-Qāḍī al-Bustī. Ibn Ḥībbān narrated 69 hadith from Ibrāhim b. Ismāʿīl in his Šaḥīḥ, who

278 Al-Qabābī al-ʿArabīyyah fī al-Shaq, 187.
279 Al-Ansāb, 2/208; Muʿjam al-Buldān, 1/415; Al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh; Tadhkirā al-Huffāz 3/920; Siyār Aʿlām al-Dschīdān, 3/190; Siyār Aʿlām al-Nubalāʾ, 16/92; Al-Iṣḥāra fī al-Wafayat al-Aʾyan 176; Al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh 7/291; Taḥaqāt al-Šāfīyya, 3/133.
280 Siyār Aʿlām al-Nubalāʾ, 16/92.
281 “Sistān”, Middle Persian Sakastan “land of the Sakas”, the Arabs wrote Sijistān or Sistān, a more recent name in history than Drangiana, the term which subsequently appears in the Greek text. On the province of Sistān (Sijistān), see Muʿjam al-Buldān, 3/190; C. E. Bosworth, The History of the Saffarids of Sistān and the Maliks of Nimruz, 30; Joel K. Kraemer, Philosophy in The Renaissance of Islam: Abū Sulaymān al-Sijistānī and His Circle, (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 3.
282 According to the anonymous Tārīkh-e Sistān (History of Sistān), al-Ḥasan al-ʿAshrī (d. 110/728), one of the most important figures in early Islam played a large role in laying down the foundations of Islam in the region of Sistān. Al-Ḥasan al-ʿAshrī was born in 21/642 in Madīnah. He joined military expeditions to the east which led to the conquest of Eastern Iran. He was the teacher, architect of the mihrab and pulpit of the Friday mosque in Zarang/Zaranj, a city in south west Afghanistan, near border with Iran nowadays. This mosque was built by ’Abd al-Rahmān b. Samurah, the governor of Sistān between 41/661 and 46/666. See Suleiman Ali Mourad, Early Islam between Myth and History, al-Ḥasan al-ʿAshrī (d. 110/728 CE) and the Formation of His Legacy in Classical Islamic Scholarship, (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 19-33; Guy Le Strange, The Land of the Eastern Caliphate, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1905), 335.
283 When the Persian defeat at Qādisīyya in 14/636, the conquest of Sistān continued by Rabīʿ b. Ziyād in 30/650. After several furious battles, with heavy casualties on both sides, the Sistānīs were forced to retreat into the city. The Sistānīs sent an envoy to tell Rabīʿ that their books had predicted the coming of the Arabs and Islam and that ‘that dawlah would long endure’, Rabīʿ responded that he preferred peace to war. Elsewhere in Sistān, Rabīʿ met with resistance, many Sistānīs were killed; others were taken prisoner and sent to the caliphal court, where ‘they become important men’, and ‘through the blessings of Islam and of learning became princes, found freedom after slavery, and themselves gained many slaves’. But the Sistānīs did not remain docile, and in 33/654-5 ’Abd al-Rahmān b. Samurah, accompanied by al-Ḥasan al-ʿAshrī and a number of important jurisprudence scholars, was sent to subdue the region. See Julie Scott Meisami, Persian Historiography to the End of the Twelfth Century, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 111 and Hamid Naseem Rafiabadi, World Religions and Islam: A Critical Study, (New Delhi: Sarup & Sons, 2003), 1/137.
284 Muʿjam al-Buldān, 1/415.
lived till the end of the third century of Hijrah. In his hometown he also learned from Abū al-Ḥasan, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Junayd (d. 347/958). And from the source of al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, we consider his father among the scholars. Apart from this, not much is known of his early career and life during almost of a quarter century in Bust.

2.2 Travels and Teachers

In his Encyclopaedia of Islam article on Ibn Ḥibbān, J. W. Fuck calls him “the traditionist” as Ibn Ḥibbān was particularly an expert in the ḥadīth scholarship. Basically the tradition of Muslim scholars in Ibn Ḥibbān’s generation began their education by memorizing the Qurʾān from childhood and learnt from their local scholars. Some scholars forbade their children to attend ḥadīth’s “majlis” before they completed the study of the Qurʾān. A cursory look at the major biographical entries on Ibn Ḥibbān reveals a basic, but far from comprehensive list of his teachers. Yāqūt devotes an inordinately large part of his section on the town of Bust in his geographical dictionary to report about Ibn Ḥibbān’s teachers and travels. Ibn Ḥibbān himself declared that he wrote from 2000 teachers. ‘Adab able to name list about 429 teachers met by Ibn Ḥibbān. Subsequently Shu‘ayb listed about 21 teachers from whom Ibn Ḥibbān narrated more than sixty ḥadīth in his Ṣaḥīḥ. All of these 21 teachers are in the level of masters in the field of ḥadīth. Four-fifths (6287 out of 7491) of the ḥadīth narrations in Ibn Ḥibbān’s Ṣaḥīḥ emanate from them. Hence, the list of teachers from whom Ibn Ḥibbān heard the ḥadīth is the principal evidence for his travels.

As has been mentioned above, Ibn Ḥibbān’s education was similar for ḥadīth scholars of his time in many respects. They would study with local scholars in their hometown and

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285 For reference on al-Qāḍī al-Bustī, see Siyar Aʿlām al-Nubalāʾ, 14/140; Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān, 1/16.
286 Muʿjam al-Buldān 3/121.
289 The term majlis gives philosophical evidence to this effect. It was used in the first century of Hijra to designate a hall in which the teaching of ḥadīth took place: kharaṣa... ilā majlisī al-lā ḥadīth kāna yumî fiḥi al-ḥadīth (he left for his hall in which he dictated ḥadīth). It was also used to designate the lesson or lecture itself: lam yuḥaddith ilā majlisīn aw majlisayn (he delivered only one or two lessons of ḥadīth). For the teaching of ḥadīth, at least four methods were generally employed: Oral recitation, reading from books by the teacher, question and answer, and dictation. See Mustafa A’zami, Studies in Early Ḥadīth Literature, 188; George Makdisi, The Rise of College: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981.), 10.
290 Mustafa A’zami, Studies in Early Ḥadīth Literature, 184; Eerik Dickinson, Taqdimah Ibn Abī Hātim, 16.
291 “Walu allānā qad katabnā ‘an akhār min alafay shaykh min Isbījāb ilā al-Iṣkandariyyah”. See Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān, 1/152.
293 Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān, 1/12-17.
when they grew up they travelled to intellectual centres across the Islamic world to collect ḥadīth or the quest for knowledge. According to Al-Dhahabī, Ibn Ḥibbān left home to pursue his studies around the year 300/912. 40 years later he returned to his hometown after visiting more than forty cities from Tashkent to Alexandria. Those 40 years filled with learning and steady growth in prestige. We have useful important biographical data attributed to the cities visited by Ibn Ḥibbān. Ibn Balabān, the editor of his Ṣaḥīḥ quotes al-Hakim saying (presumably quoting Tārīkh Naysabūr), “Ibn Ḥibbān came to Nishapur and learnt with ‘Abd Allāh b. Shīrūyah (d. 305/918). Then he entered Iraq and stayed for a period with Abī Khalīfa al-Qāḍī (d. 305/918) and his peers simultaneously.”

It is most likely that before Ramaḍān 301/914, during which his earliest teacher died, Ibn Ḥibbān visited Baghdad to study ḥadīth with Ibn Nājiya, ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad (d. 301/914). At this time, although Baghdad had weakened as the centre of Abbasid power, it was considered the intellectual capital of the Islamic world. This city was significant for the students of ḥadīth as it had been the home of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855) and Yahyā b. Ma‘īn (d. 233/847), scholars whom Ibn Ḥibbān acknowledged as experts in ḥadīth criticism. Many of their students still taught there and these were the individuals whom Ibn Ḥibbān sought out. Among them are Ḥāmid b. Muḥammad al-Balkhī (d. 309/921), al-Haytham b. Khalaf al-Dūrī (d. 307/919), Aḥmad b. Al-Ḥasan b. ‘Abd al-Jabbār al-Sufī (d. 306/918), ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Baghwārī (d. 317/929).

Ibn Ḥibbān later studied with Aḥmad b. Shu‘ayb (d. 303/916), known as al-Nasā’ī, one of the compilers of canonical Six Ḥadīth Books/Kutub al-Sitta. This trip took him to Egypt ahead of Dhū al-Qāʿidah in 302/915 since al-Nasā’ī only left Egypt after that particular date. Al-Dhahabī reported two versions of al-Nasā’ī end of life, and he gave preference to the story that al-Nasā’ī died in Palestine, Safar 303/914 after he left Egypt. Alexandria in Egypt is the farthest city in the west that Ibn Ḥibbān has reached as he
mentioned in *al-Taqāsim wa al-Anwā‘*, “min Isbijāb ila al-Iskandariyya”.

In 303/915, it is reported that Ibn Ḥībbān was in the east, a village called al-Waz which was located three farsakh from the city of Nisā‘/Nasā‘. He came there and attended one of his teacher’s funerals, Abū al-ʿAbbās, al-Ḥasan b. Sufyān al-Shaybānī al-Nasawī (d. 303/915). Shu’ayb calculated that Ibn Ḥībbān narrated about 815 ḥadīth from al-Shaybānī, this make the second-highest total of ḥadīth sources compared with others.

Between the first/seventh to fourth/tenth centuries, the studies of ḥadīth were largely unstructured. Students casually choose to study with whomever they preferred. The main focus was the great scholars of the age who were recognized as watersheds in the flow of ḥadīth from one generation to the next. Hence, Ibn Ḥībbān availed himself of the opportunity to collect ḥadīth in the city of Mosul with Abī Yaʿlā, Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Mawsūfī (d. 307/919). Abū Yaʿlā, whose well-known title ‘ḥadīth master of Mosul’, is the highest sources for ḥadīths in *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥībbān*.

His major work included *al-Musnad* and during his stay in Mosul until he died at 97 years of age, all students haunted his circle to acquire ḥadīth with *sanad āli*/elevated chain of transmission. The rank of Abū Yaʿlā was stated by Ibn Ḥībbān: “between Abū Yaʿlā and Prophet Muḥammad only three people.”

It was in Nishapur in the region of Khurasan that Ibn Ḥībbān met Ibn Khuzayma, Muḥammad b. Ishāq (d. 311/923), and he stayed longer with him then with Abī Yaʿlā. Through the guidance of Ibn Khuzayma, Ibn Ḥībbān was firmly established in the Shāfiʿī madhhab, or school of law which enabled him to ascertain the true meaning of a ḥadīth and to deduce from it all its legal implication. However, Melchert claims that Ibn Khuzayma’s comment illuminates his Shafiʿīsm, evidently a matter of theology more than jurisprudence. Ibn Khuzayma stated that the first person to bring ‘ilm of al-Shāfiʿī to Khurasan was Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Ḥafṣ al-Naysabūrī (d. 263/877) and he also travelled

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300 *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥībbān*, 1/152.
301 1 farsakh = 3 miles. The *farsakh* comes from an ancient Persian unit, the *parasang*, in principle the distance a horse would walk in an hour.
302 Nisā‘ was an ancient city to southwest of Ashbagat, Turkmenistan. *Siyar Aʾlām al-Nubalā‘*, 14/159.
303 For reference on al-Shaybānī, see *Siyar Aʾlām al-Nubalā‘*, 14/159.
304 *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥībbān*, 1/12-13.
306 Mosul is a city in northern Iraq nowadays.
308 For reference on Abī Yaʿlā, see *Siyar Aʾlām al-Nubalā‘*, 14/179.
309 For references on Ibn Khuzayma, see *Siyar Aʾlām al-Nubalā‘*, 14/365.
to Egypt to hear the books of al-Muzanī, the most important Shāfīʿī’s student. What he may have learnt from al-Muzanī, or was reinforced by him, was above all to renounce taqlīd: “I have not resorted to anyone’s [authority concerning a legal problem].” A flip through the list, the vast majority of Ibn Ḥibbān’s teachers, ḥadīth scholars included, would be similarly trained in the Shāfīʿī madhhab, indicating the loose boundaries of a scholarly network.

Probably before 308/920 Ibn Ḥibbān performed the pilgrimage in Makka. Ibn Ḥibbān’s teacher in Makka, al-Mufaḍḍal b. Muḥammad al-Janaḍī (d. 308/920) had a class in the al-Ḥarām Mosque where he gave lessons on qirāʿa and ḥadīth. Another highly esteemed scholar with whom Ibn Ḥibbān studied in Makka was Ibn al-Mundhir, Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Naysābūrī (d. 318/930), the student of al-Shaykhayn Bukhārī and Muslim. Ibn al-Mundhir travelled from Nishapur and settled in Makka where importance came from his role as the chief scholar in al-Ḥarām Mosque of Makka. Al-Shirāzī and al-Subkī considered Ibn al-Mundhir as a scholar of the Shāfīʿī school.

For the purpose of collecting ḥadīth and his writings in general, we can conclude that Ibn Ḥibbān passed through and made several detours studying in Turkey, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Palestine, Arabian Peninsula, Iraq, Iran, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Afghanistan. Because his āḥādīth supplied with isnād, the authors of the biographical dictionaries are able list his teachers regarding where and when he received his āḥādīth. The following anecdote quoted from Yāqūt on his entry of Bust listed the place and teachers of Ibn Ḥibbān:

Bust from Abā Aḥmad Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Qāḍī and Abā al-Ḥasan Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Junayd al-Bustī,

Herat from Abā Bakr Muḥammad b. ʿUthmān b. Saʿd al-Dārimī


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311 “Ma qalladtu ahadan”. See Christopher Melchert, the Formation of the Sunni Schools of Law: 9th – 10th Centuries C.E., 98.


313 For reference on Ibn al-Mundhir, see Siyar Aʿlām al-Nubalāʾ, 14/491.


315 Marw is a city in the east of Turkmenistan.

In Saghd,\textsuperscript{317} after the river from Abā Hafṣ ʿUmar b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-Hamadānī


Arghiyan\textsuperscript{320} from Abā ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Al-Musayyib b. Ishāq al-Arghiyanī


Ray\textsuperscript{322} from Abā al-Qāṣim al-ʿAbbās b. Al-Faḍl b. ʿAdhān al-Muqrīʿ, ʿAlī b. al-Ḥasan b. Muṣṭafī al-Rāzī,

Al-Karakh\textsuperscript{323} from Abā Umārah Alḥmad b. ʿUmarah b. al-Hajjāj and al-Husayn b. Ishāq al-Aḥbahānī.

ʿAskar Mukram\textsuperscript{324} from Abā Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh b. Alḥmad b. Mūsā al-Jawāliqī al-Ahwadhī, well-known as ʿAbdān al-Ahwadhī

Shushtar\textsuperscript{325} from Abā Jaʿfar Alḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. Zuhayr al-Tustaṭarī

Al-Ahwadh\textsuperscript{326} from Abā al-ʿAbbās Muḥammad Yaʾqūb al-Khaṭīb

Al-Ubullā\textsuperscript{327} from Abā Yaʿla Muḥammad b. Zuhayr al-Ubullī, al-Husayn b. Muḥammad b. Biṣṭām al-Ubullī

\textsuperscript{316} Sanj is one of the villages in the region of Mary, Turkmenistan.
\textsuperscript{317} Saghd is a place in Samarkand.
\textsuperscript{318} Nisa or Nasa was an ancient city to southwest of Ashgabat, Turkmenistan (Western Khurasa, north of Tus, west of Marw).
\textsuperscript{319} Nishapur is a city in north east of Iran, near border Turkmenistan.
\textsuperscript{320} Arghiyan is a village in Nishapur.
\textsuperscript{321} Jurjan or Gorgan is the capital of Golestan Province, Iran.
\textsuperscript{322} Ray or Reya is the capital of Ray County, Tehran Province, Iran.
\textsuperscript{323} Karkh or al-Karkh is historically the name of the western half of Baghdad, Iraq.
\textsuperscript{324} ʿAskar Mukram is a state in Khuzestan Province.
\textsuperscript{325} Shushtar is a city in the east of Iran.
\textsuperscript{326} Al-Ahwadh is a city in Khuzestan Province.
\textsuperscript{327} Al-Ubullā is a town of medieval Iraq situated in the Euphrates-Tigris delta at the head of the Persian Gulf.


Kufah from Abā Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh b. Zaydān al-Bajālī.


Samirrā from ʿAlī b. Saʿīd ʿAskarī, ʿAskar Samirrā.


A state of Sinjar from ʿAlī b. Ibrāhim b. al-Haytham al-Mawsūlī.


Kafartūtha from house of Rabīʾāḥ, Muḥammad b. al-Husayn b. Abī Maʿshar al-Sulamī.


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328 Wāsiṭ nowadays located in Wasit Governate, south east of Kut in eastern Iraq.
329 Qumm al-Ṣīlī is a large river near Wasit, Iraq.
330 Nahr Sabis is a place near to Wasit.
331 Samirrā was built by al-Muṭasim between Baghdad and Tikrit.
332 Also known as Shingal, is a town in Sinjar District, Nineveh province, Iraq.
333 Nusaybin is a city in Mardin Province, southern Turkey.
334 Kafartūtha is a village in Palestine.
335 Al-Rāfiqa is a city in Syria located on the north bank of the Euphrates.
Al-Raqqā\textsuperscript{336} from al-Ḥusayn b. 'Abd Allāh b. Yazīd al-Qaṭṭān

Manbij\textsuperscript{337} from 'Umar b. Sa`id b. Sinān al-Ḥāfīz and Ṣāliḥ b. al-Asbagh b. 'Āmir al-Tanūkhī.

Aleppo from 'Alī b. Aḥmad b. Ḥmrān al-Jurjānī

Musaysah from Abā Ṭalīb Aḥmad b. Dāwūd b. Muḥsin b. Hilāl al-Musaysī

Antakya\textsuperscript{338} from Abā 'Alī Waṣīf b. 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥāfīz

Tarsus\textsuperscript{339} from Muḥammad b. Yazīd al-Darqī and Ḥbrāhīm b. Abī Umayyah al-Tarsūsī

Adana\textsuperscript{340} from Muḥammad b. 'Allān al-Adhanī

Sidon\textsuperscript{341} from Muḥammad b. Abī al-Ma`āfī b. Sulaymān al-Ṣaydawī.

Beirut from Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abd al-Salām al-Birūtī, well-known as al-Makhul

Homs\textsuperscript{342} from Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh b. al-Faḍl al-Kulāī al-Rahīb


Bayt al-Maqdis from 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Muslim al-Maqdisī al-Khāṭīb

Ramla\textsuperscript{343} from Abā Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. Qutayba al-`Asqalānī

Egypt from Abā 'Abd al-Raḥmān Aḥmad b. Shu`ayb b. 'Alī al-Nasā`ī, Sa`īd b. Dāwūd b. Wirdān al-Miṣrī, 'Alī b. al-Husayn b. Sulaymān b. al-Mu`addāl and many of them from this generation but we have mentioned.

\textsuperscript{336} Also called Rakka. Raqqā is a city in Syria located on the north bank of the Euphrates River, about 160 kilometres east of Aleppo.

\textsuperscript{337} Manbij was an ancient state located between Euphrates and Aleppo.

\textsuperscript{338} Antakya is a seat of the Hatay Province in Southern Turkey.

\textsuperscript{339} Tarsus was a historic city in south-central Turkey, 20km from the Mediterranean.

\textsuperscript{340} Adana is a large city in southern Turkey.

\textsuperscript{341} Sidon is the third-largest city in Lebanon. It is located in the south governorate of Lebanon, on the Mediterranean coast.

\textsuperscript{342} Homs is a city in western Syria and the capital of the Homs Governorate.

\textsuperscript{343} Ramla is a city in central Palestine.
We also found additional information which is not mentioned by Yāqūt or al-Dhahabī in relating to Ibn Ḥibbān’s travels and his meeting with some teachers. In some places Ibn Ḥibbān stated that “I heard this ḥadīth from a (Name of person) in (Name of place)” but almost entirely he omitted the name of places in the transmitter chains. Among the places are Jundaysabūr, Harran, Tyre, Ashkelon and Fusṭāṭ.

2.3 The Trial of Ibn Ḥibbān

Ibn Ḥibbān’s scholarly career was not parted from tribulations, as an explanation of the social scenery will show. Al-Ḥākim said people envy his advantage and achievement. In light of Ibn Ḥibbān’s strong affiliation with the prophet tradition, it seems difficult to believe that some of his contemporary banished him for his words on the prophethood. The issue of prophethood had begun when Ibn Ḥibbān said: “Prophethood is knowledge and action.” Because of this apparently problematic saying some people judged him to be a ḥindīq. According to Ibn Khallikān and al-Dhahabī, the tremendous tension of this issue led the Caliph to declare that Ibn Ḥibbān should be killed. Al-Dhahabī would understandably have viewed it as a philosophical statement, hence these words hard to be interpreted in a good sense according to him. However, he wrote to secure and incisively identified the polemical circus around Ibn Ḥibbān declaration:

They objected to Ibn Ḥibbān because he said, “Prophethood is knowledge and action.” They judged him to be a ḥindīq and the Caliph was informed of that and he wrote that he should be killed, until one of the ḥadīth said, “that is a philosophical self.”

Ibn Ḥibbān did not mean that prophethood is an acquisition that can be acquired by exercise in knowledge and action, as is the position of the philosophers. He meant that prophethood demands additional knowledge and action, and then that is given to the one whom Allāh chooses. His words are indicated by the words of the Almighty, Allāh knows best where to place his message.

As for the belief that the prophets are not above people in knowledge and action and that they choose appointment, that has no basis in the Sharīʿah at all. Or he might

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345 Jundaysabur is a city in Khuzestan Province.
346 Harran was a major ancient city in Upper Mesopotamia whose site is near the village of Altinbasak, Turkey.
347 Tyre is a city in the south governorate of Lebanon.
348 Ashkelon or ‘Asqalan is a coastal city near to Gaza, Palestine.
349 Fustat is the first capital of Egypt under Muslim rule. The remains of the city were eventually absorbed by nearby Cairo.
350 Tārīkh Dimashq, 52/253.
351 Tārīkh Dimashq, 52/253; Siyar Aʿlām al-Nubalāʾ, 14/96.
352 The Qurʾān 6:124.
have meant that the prophets possess greater knowledge and more actions after they become prophets. Because of that Allāh has protected them from all wrong actions and errors. This is a meaning which is agreed upon by all the people of Islam.

This is also an excellent possibility as he did not mean to contain the beginning in the report. It is like that statement, ‘Hajj is ‘Arafa’. It is known that a person does not perform ḥajj by merely standing at 'Arafa. He is mentioning the ḥajj along with it.\(^\text{353}\)

Another criticism concerns the issue of ḥadd (definition) for Allāh. In the introduction of al-Thiqāt he said: “Alhamdulillāh alladhi laysa lahu ḥadd mahdūd (Praise belongs to Allāh who has no limited extent).”\(^\text{354}\) Abū Ismā‘īl al-Anṣārī (d.481/1089) asked Yahyā b. 'Ammār about Ibn Ḥibbān, and Yahyā replied: “I met him and we expelled him from Sijistān although he has vast knowledge but no religious obedience. He came to us and negates ḥadd for Allāh and we expelled him.”\(^\text{355}\) Ibn Ḥajar tried to protect him by saying: “The truth is with Ibn Ḥibbān.”\(^\text{356}\) Al-Subkī also tried: “Look at how ignorant the critic, would that you know, who should been criticized, to determine ḥadd for Allāh or to negate?” 357 Al-Dhahabī later discussed about the issue of ḥadd in Ibn Ḥibbān’s entry with saying:

To negate or determine ḥadd for Allāh both are exaggerations in words, to be silent from both is better if there is no evidence to negate or determine it.... Whoever consigns to Allāh and silent is safe and has followed the predecessor... The negation by all of you is also going astray, because to debate on what Allāh has not permitted and any evidence for determining or negating it. Verily, from perfection of Islam that a person abandons what does not concern himself. Glorify to Allāh from any limitation or attributes except by what He described Himself, or with purpose he taught His messengers that no equal and no conformity of Him. ((There is nothing like Him, and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer))\(^\text{358 359}\).

During the lifetime of Ibn Ḥibbān and in the decades after his death, the question of ḥadd in particular remain controversy among theologians.\(^\text{360}\) Even as late a scholar as al-Dhahabī’s teacher, Ibn Taymiyya wrote a book *Bayān Talbīs al-Jahmiyya* and discussed the

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\(^{355}\) *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, 14/96.

\(^{356}\) *Lisan al-Mizan*, 7/46.

\(^{357}\) Ibid.

\(^{358}\) The Qur’ān 42:11.

\(^{359}\) *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, 14/98.

topic of ḥadd for Allāh. Ibn Taymiyya quoted Qāḍī Abū Ya’lā (d. 458/1065)’s attempt to reconcile that Allāh has a ḥadd that only He knows and Allāh does not have a ḥadd.

That is Abū Ya’lā said: The place in which (Aḥmad) said that He is on the throne with a ḥadd, its meaning is of His essence that is in line with the throne, so it (the throne) is His ḥadd and His direction. And the place which he said He is over throne without ḥadd, its meaning is what is besides the direction in line with the throne – that is above, behind, front, right and left.

The difference between the downwards direction parallel to the throne and other than it which we mentioned [i.e the other five directions] is that the downward direction is in line with the throne as established from evidence, and the throne is limited (maḥdūd). Hence it is possible to describe of the essence that is in line with it and that it is a limit and direction. That is not so in other than it, because it is not in line that which is limited, but it is traversing through the right and the left, up, front and behind, without a limit. This is why none of these [five directions] are described with ḥadd or direction; whereas the direction of throne is parallel to what opposes it from the direction of [His] self, but it is not in line with the whole [of His] self because it has no limit.

However, Ibn Taymiyya does not agree with Abū Ya’lā. According to Ibn Taymiyya, the difference between downward direction and the other directions is not that the first is limited and the others unlimited, but that the limit in the first is known while the limits in the other five directions are unknown. This is how Ibn Taymiyya reconciles between the Allāh has ḥadd that only He knows and Allāh does not have a ḥadd.

We also have report about the criticism of Ibn Ḥibbān by his own student, Aḥmad b. ʿAlī b. ‘Amr al-Sulaymānī al-Bikandī (d. 404/1014), from a village Bikand, near Bukhārā. Al-Sulaymānī classified Ibn Ḥibbān in his book under the “Chapter of the Liars” and quoted what was said by his teacher Sahl b. Al-Surī: “Don’t write from him, he is a liar.” When al-Sulaymānī was asked by al-Ḥākim about Ibn Ḥibbān, he said in the end: “Then I looked at his face, the face of liar, and his words, the words of liar.” Al-Dhahabī in his Siyar A’lām al-Nubala’ began the entry for al-Sulaymānī’s biography with appreciation of his

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361 Al-Dhahabī introduced him as a Master in Ḥanbalite. He has lots of works in theological issues such as al-Radd ‘alā al-Karāmiyya, al-Radd ‘alā al-Salīmiyya wa al-Majassima, al-Radd ‘alā al-Jahmiyya, al-Kālām fi al-Isiwiyā and so on. See Siyar A’lām al-Nubala’ 18/89.
362 On biography of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855), see Siyar A’lām al-Nubala’, 11/177.
365 Muṣṭafā al-Baldān, 1/419.
366 Ibid.
367 Ibid.
status of Imām, a ḥadīth scholar ‘mā warā` al-nahr’. Although al-Dhahābī appraised al-Sulaymānī, he took a cautious step after giving a detail for al-Sulaymānī’s biography and suggested: “I saw al-Sulaymānī has a book denouncing great scholars, don’t listen to him what is irregular.”

2.4 The Career of Ibn Ḥibbān

Ibn Ḥibbān is considered as a ḥadīth master of his time and Lucas has called him as ‘renaissance muḥaddith’. It is difficult to ascertain exactly when Ibn Ḥibbān commenced his career as an author. Although it might have begun earlier, available sources such al-Ḥākim point out to Herat, Marw and Bukhara as its starting point. According to Ibn ʿAsākir, Ibn Ḥibbān wrote in various fields of knowledge. He wrote his Ṣaḥīḥ, Tārīkh, and al-Ḍuʿāfā’ and many others, while he was teaching in Samarqand. Near 320/932, Ibn Ḥibbān settled in Samarqand for a long period of time and was he appointed qāḍi there, but we found no evidence concerning his judgship from those places. Ibn ʿAsākir added that during Ibn Ḥibbān’s residence in Samarqand, the Samanid emir, al-Muẓaffar b. Aḥmad b. Naṣr b. Aḥmad b. Saman built a ṣuffa/pavilion for scholars, especially scholars of ḥadīth to give lectures. J. W. Fuck insists in this position Ibn Ḥibbān had many enemies. As mentioned by al-Sulaymānī, Ibn Ḥibbān owed his appointment to Abū al-Ṭāyib al-Muṣʿabī, for whom he had written a book on the Qarāmiṭa, and that the people of Samarqand drove him out.

In the latter half of the third/ninth century, Samarqand served as the capital of the Samanid Empire before it was shifted to Bukhara in 279/892. Accordingly, the Samanid

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368 Mā warā` al-nahr, known Transoxiana means what (is) beyond the (Oxus) river. This is an ancient which located in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, southern Kyrgyzstan and southwest Kazakhstan nowadays. See Siyar Aʿlām al-Nubalā’, 17/200.
369 Ibid.
371 Tārīkh Dimashq 52/251.
372 Ibid.
373 The Samanids traced their descent to Samankhuda of Balkh, a scion the aristocratic dihghan class that had governed Persia before Islamic conquest, who was said to have converted to Islam by an Umayyad governor of Khurasan. Gardizi’s account that it was the Caliph al-Ma’mun who converted Samankhuda and promoted his son Asad and the latter’s four sons, while clearly apocryphal, reflects al-Ma’mun’s importance as a legitimating figure with respect to the rule of Khurasan. See Julie Scott Meisami, Persian Historiography to the End of the Twelfth Century, 15.
374 Tārīkh Dimashq 52/251.
375 J. W. Fuck, Encyclopaedia of Islam, 3/798.
376 Ibid.
Empire is independent and governs the province of Sughd, the ancient Sogdiana, after it had received recognition in the year 261/875 when the Caliph al-Mu’tamid sends the investiture for all of Sughd to Naṣr b. Aḥmad (d. 279/892). However, the emergence of the Samanids as a powerful force only began after Naṣr’s brother, Ismā’īl b. Aḥmad (d. 295/907) took full control. During his brother Naṣr’s reign, Ismā’īl was sent to take control of Bukhara in 260/874 which was in a chaotic state in the vacuum left by the fall of the Tahirids. Ismā’īl therefore continued to rule the Samanids Empire from Bukhara after Naṣr died and made it the new centre of the Samanids state. Fyre asserts that Ismā’īl shaped Bukhara into both capital and the centre of a cultural and literary due to his ability to attract scholars into the region.

Meisami and Treadwell make further observations that the reign of Ismā’īl’s grandson Naṣr (II) b. Aḥmad (d. 331/933), who came to the throne at the age of eight witnessed a transformation of the cultural and religious orientation of the state aristocracy. This was through the medium of the executive class who advised the young ruler possessed of authority which their predecessor had lacked. Meisami quotes from Zayn al-Akhhār by Gardizi, that Naṣr’s first Prime Minister, Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Jayhanī (d. 313/925) was a capable administrator as well as a famous geographer and intellectual person. Thus Bukhara achieved an intellectual and cultural refinement in this period as a result of an intense cultivation of Sunni theology with some admixture of the sciences such as astronomy, astrology, mathematics and medical art. Naṣr did much as well to foster Persian literature and what has been called the ‘Persian literary renaissance’ which came under the patrons of the Samanids. Suffice it to say that during Naṣr’s rule both Arabic and Persian books were

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378 The province of Sughd, the ancient Sogdiana, may be taken as including the fertile lands, lying between the Oxus and Jaxartes, which were watered by two river systems, namely the Zarafshan, or Sughd river, on which Samarqand and Bukhara stood, and the river which flowed by the cities of Kish and Nasaf. More properly, however, Sughd is the name of the district surrounding Samarkand; for Bukhara, Kish, and Nasaf were each counted separate districts. See Guy Le Strange, The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate, 460.


380 Naṣr b. Aḥmad found himself the virtually independent ruler of Transoxiana with his capital in Samarqand. He consolidated his power by sending his brother to Bukhara which was in chaotic state. See R. N. Fyre, The Cambridge History of Iran vol. 4, 137.


382 Julie Scott Meisami, Persian Historiography to the End of the Twelfth Century, 16.


384 Julie Scott Meisami, Persian Historiography to the End of the Twelfth Century, 15.
produced in the state which saw the assembly of a library. Later in the Samanid era, this library earned the high tribute of scholars including Ibn Sīnā (d. 427/1037).385

Presumably, Ibn Ḥībbān came to Bukhara in the year 329/940 or 330/941 after his long residence in Samarqand according to Yāqūt’s from al-Sulaymānī’s source. Later al-Sulaymānī conveys the impression that he gained the enmity of the people of Bukhara which had him expelled from the city. It is most likely after his expulsion from Bukhara, which al-Ḥākim reported in Tārīkh Naysabūr, Ibn Ḥībbān migrated to Nishapur in the year 334/945. Al-Ḥākim who was 13 years old boy at that moment said, “He returned to Nishapur in the year 334/945, hence we came to him on Friday after prayer and we also asked him about ḥadīth. He looked towards the people and I was the youngest among them, he said: Please write. I replied: Yes. Then I wrote about him.” As Bulliet has pointed out, a lot of people visited Nishapur during the period under consideration; their biographies are often preserved in the city’s biographical dictionaries. Only the most important of visitors, however, had classes convened for them, no matter how short their stay, as a mark of honour.386 In assessing Ibn Ḥībbān’s achievements and influence upon his stay in this region, al-Dhahabī adorns him with the honorific ‘Shaykh/Master of Khurasan’.387 Certainly his appointment as a qāḍī briefly in Nasa, had been occasioned before his return for the last time to Nishapur in the 337/948.

As stated by al-Ḥākim, in the year 337/948 Ibn Ḥībbān built a khānqāḥ388 in Nishapur in which he read all of his books to the students.389 It is reported also that he provided the students of his khānqāḥ with an allowance. However, he is not known to have exercised any profession aside from teaching in Nishapur. Al-Ḥākim himself was the headmaster of Dār al-Sunna or Madrasa al-Sibghī which was founded by and named for al-Ḥākim’s teacher, Abū Bakr Aḥmad al-Sibghī (d. 342/953).390 As such Nishapur achieved a worldwide level of prominence for ḥadīth scholarship during this century and was the only serious rival to

385 R. N. Fyre, *The Cambridge History of Iran* vol. 4, 143.
387 Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥībbān, 1/26.
388 The term khānqāḥ is made up of two Persian words khana-gah and means ‘a place of residence’ for the Sufis, a ‘place at the table’ or a ‘place of recitation’. This word is used in Persian regions and also in Arab regions such as Syria, Iraq and Egypt. A typical khānqāḥ was a self-reliant hostel, a meeting and socialisation place, a madrasa or school and, to some extent, a mosque, with all of the necessary annexes, services, amenities and facilities. See Omer Sphahic, *From Mosque to Khanqa: The Origins and Rise of Sufi Institutions*, (Kemanusiaan The Asian Journal of Humanities, Universits Sains Malaysia Press, vol. 21, no. 1, 2014), 13; John Renard, *Seven Doors to Islam: Spirituality and the Religious Life of Muslims*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 171.
389 Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥībbān, 1/26.
390 Richard W. Bulliet, *The Patricians of Nishapur*, 249
Baghdad. The educational system of Nishapur, then, was a system of teachers. These were the men who either founded their own madrasas or for whom they were endowed. Madrasa or mosque, the quality of the education depended upon the teacher, not the place. In other words, they maintained, and to a great extent controlled, the educational system. Madrasa Miyân Dahiya is the earliest evidence of a madrasa in Nishapur conforming to al-Ḥākim’s notice on the life of Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhim b. Maḥmud b. Hamza known as al-Qaṭṭān contained in the section of his work covering who died between roughly 270/883 and 314/926.

After staying in Samarqand, Bukhara, Nasa, and Nishapur, Ibn Ḥibbān returned to his native Sijistān in 340/951. Perhaps this homecoming was the final migration after a very long expedition. Nevertheless, this very long expedition was a particularly interesting case, as he is one of the few ḥadīth scholars to have achieved proficiency in non-religious sciences. Almost each informant and bibliographer records information about his expertise in philology, medicine and astronomy. When Ibn Ḥibbān arrived in 340/951, Sijistan was still under the power of Ṣaffārids, Abū Jaʿfar Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Khalaf b. al-Layth (d. 352/963), alias Ibn Bānū who enjoyed a long and successful rule. The affiliation with al-Layth, was through his mother, Sayyida Bānū, whence his name Ibn Bānū or Ibn Bānūya (Bānawayh) bt. Muḥammad b. ‘Amr b. al-Layth.

The meeting between Ibn Ḥibbān and Ibn Bānū is obscure, at least according to the way the reports present it. Relevant to Ibn Bānū, Ibn al-Dawādāīrī suggests he was an Ismāʿīlī preacher named as ‘Ibn Bābūya sahib Sijistan’, which one might read as ‘Ibn Bānūya, ruler of Sistan’. It is however more likely that it should be read as ‘Ibn Bandana, missionary of Sistan’ i.e. Abū Yaʿqub al-Sijistani. Ibn Bānū and his son Khalaf were famed as patrons of philosophy, and it was perhaps their interest in philosophy which generated rumours of Ismāʿīlism at the Sistani court. From the story of al-Sulaymānī, Ibn Ḥibbān is said to have

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392 Ibid, 249.
393 Tārīkh Dimashq, 52/251.
395 R. N. Fyre, The Cambridge History of Iran vol. 4, 131.
396 Sistan achieved varying degrees of independence under the Ṣaffārid dynasty, which ruled from 253/867 in uninterrupted succession, despite invasion and occupation by the Samanids, Ghaznavids, and Mongols, until the end of the fifteenth century. The founders, Yaʿqub was a copper-smith (ṣaffār) in Zaranj and his brother ‘Amr a simple muleteer or stone mason. See R. N. Fyre, The Cambridge History of Iran vol. 4, 109.
399 Ibid.
a written book in Samarqand about the Qarāmiṭa (Carmathians) for al-Muṣʿābī whilst he was qāḍī there. Later, he presented the book again to secure government appointments from ‘Ibn Bānū’ (text, Ibn BĪbū) in Sistān. A few reports were circulated to show that Ibn Ḥībbān was in the circle or majālis (gatherings) held under the ruler’s auspices (presumably in Zaranj), at which he presided over discussions on philosophical and ethical problems.

Ibn Bānū handled many of his court sessions with the intellectual by presenting questions, simultaneously the lines of questiones naturals. He commented upon sayings of the ancient as well as Arab proverbs and it went beyond wisdom literature. Abū Sulaymān al-Sijistānī, Ṭalḥa b. Muḥammad al-Nasafi, Abū Tammām Yusuf b. Muḥammad al-Naysābūrī and Abū Hāmid ʿAḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Isfirāzī are among the leading figures in Ibn Bānū’s circle. Nevertheless, it would be an exaggeration to say that Ibn Bānū had inspired the cultivation of science and philosophy from the remarks of Abū Sulaymān al-Sijistānī (d. 391/1000). According to Abū Sulaymān al-Sijistānī, Ibn Bānū encouraged the pursuit of philosophy; he had surrounded himself with its disciples and materially supported their enterprise. In one majlis as Abū Sulaymān recorded in Śiwaṅ al-Ḥikma, Ibn Bānū gave them a lesson on the pitfalls of self-love and the dangers of flattery. Among the texts on Ibn Bānū the Śiwaṅ al-Ḥikma states:

Abū Sulaymān said: One night, King Abū Ja’far (Ibn Bānū) questioned a group that was with him, including al-Isfirāzī (Abū Hāmid ʿAḥmad b. Muḥammad), Ibn Ḥībbān, Ṭalḥa (b. Muḥammad al-Nasafi), Abū Tammām (Yūsuf b. Muḥammad al-Naysābūrī), and others: “Why is it said concerning the circulation of a report, ‘The truest report is accompanied by sneezing?’”

They were silent. They then replied: “We have nothing to say about it; [sneezing] is an effect of nature, depending upon the excess or deficiency of the humours, and this kind of thing hardly has a proper final cause.”

He said: “All this is evading the issue. Nature gives warning in such matters by virtue of soul, which informs it, dictating to it. This [effect of soul] traverse nature, which responds to it with excitement. And this [excitement] attests to something that is resolved and accepted. If this were not so then the imagination of everyone who hears a sneeze in the course of conversation would not be reassured only in this way. It is as though the soul signals in this manner. The truth of this is in moderation; its falsehood, in excess and deficiency, strength and weakness.”

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400 Mu’jam al-Buldān. 1/415.
401 Joel L. Kraemer, Philosophy in the Renaissance of Islam, 16.
402 We follow the translation of Kraemer. See Philosophy in the Renaissance of Islam: Abū Sulaymān al-Sijistānī and His Circle, 21.
Since Ibn Ḥibbān appears to live in Sistan in the time of Ibn Bānū’s rule, the assumption of a common source the Šiwān al-Ḥikma might be justified. However, it is still unclear whether this was the exact Ibn Ḥibbān. The question of Ibn Ḥibbān’s identity must remain open, although on the basis of contemporary sources it can be deduced that there was a possibility of a meeting between them. Kraemer is tempted to identify Ibn Ḥibbān in the above source but is unsure whether Ibn Ḥibbān was a philosopher or not. And al-Shahrastani omits him from the list of philosophers in al-Milal wa-l-Nihal, as he is not mentioned again in the Šiwān al-Ḥikma.

After extensive travels where he served the Samanids and Ṣaffārids, Ibn Ḥibbān spent the last years of his life back in Bust. In his hometown, he built up his madrasa  or collections and writings. He endowed all of his collections to the students as well as awarding them an allowance. Al-Arnaʿūṭ added these collections cannot be borrowed and taken outside Ibn Ḥibbān’s library. And the copying process of these collections was to be carried out inside the library. Almost one hundred years later, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādi quoted from Masʿūd al-Sijzī that the destruction of Ibn Ḥibbān’s library resulted from weak ruler, internal revolt and the conquerors who destroyed the collections.

2.5 Ibn Ḥibbān’s Works

Ibn Ḥibbān was an extremely prolific author whom Yāqūt once said “produced works in the science of ḥadīth transmission that no one else could have written.” From what we encounter, Ibn Ḥibbān showed a passion to write of each he considered as a knowledge and information. One story reported by Abī Hāmid Ahmad b. Muḥammad al-Naysabūrī illustrates this, “We were some way in Nishapur with Ibn Khuzayma, and Ibn Ḥibbān was also with us and he asked Ibn Khuzayma again and again until Ibn Khuzayma said: Oh tranquillity steps aside from me, don’t harm me, or a word similar to that. Then Ibn Ḥibbān

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403 Joel L. Kraemer, Philosophy in the Renaissance of Islam, 22.
404 Ibid, 90.
405 ‘Khizāna’ could refer to collections of various sizes ranging from a fully-fledged library with several thousand volumes to a mere book chest or several shelves for storing manuscripts. While ‘Library’ refers in the following to manuscript holdings that were, at least theoretically, accessible to a wider audience of users in contrast to ‘private collections’ where the owner controlled access. See Konrad Hirschler, The Written Word in the Medieval Arabic Lands, (Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2012), 125.
408 Mu’jam al-Buldān 1/419.
wrote down what had been said. He has been asked: Did you write that? He answered: Yes I write everything from him.  

It is clear that Ibn Ḥibbān’s primary interest was in reports transmitted from the earlier generations of Muslims, in particular from the Prophet Muḥammad and perhaps as a means for constructing his method on ḥadīth studies. His most famous, of course, was his Ṣaḥīḥ, originally titled al-Taqāṣīm wa al-Anwā’. Although most of the works do not exist, as many as eighty-one works are identified; only about ten survive until the present day. And a closer look at these titles indicates that he had ventured into almost every aspect of Islamic studies including theology, tafsīr, ḥadīth, fiqh, Arabic literature and so on. It is a fortunate that al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādi was inspired to name these books as he recorded from the words of Masʿūd al-Sijzī. The earliest record of his literary output is the one provided by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādi in his al-Jāmiʿ.  

Apart from al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādi’s allusions, Ibn Ḥibbān literary production can also be determined on the basis of extant works. There are many citations in other scholars’ writings which enable us to identify works attributed to Ibn Ḥibbān. Titles of works attributed to Ibn Ḥibbān are furnished mostly in the science of ḥadīth transmission books and he himself mentioned them. In modern scholarship, Brockelmann and Sezgin listed ten titles of all the survived works of Ibn Ḥibbān. These topics can be divided into theology, tafsīr, ḥadīth and bio-biography.  

1. *Al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ ḍala al-Taqāṣīm wa al-Anwā’.* Not like previous ḥadīth books which arrange the aḥādīth in chapters or by the isnāds, Ibn Ḥibbān arranged them in innovative new arrangements. He first mentioned the divisions and then mentioned their categories. This book unfortunately is not traceable in any form. It was rearranged later by Ibn Balaban (d. 739/1338) in systematically chapters and he called it al-Iḥsān fī Tartīb Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān. This published critical edition by Muassasa al-Risāla, Beirut, 1994 was edited by Shuʿayb al-Arnaʿūṭ in eighteen volumes.  

2. *Kitāb al-Thiqāt.* This book was published by al-Kutub al-Thaqafiya, Hyderabad, 1983. The main topic is a description of approved transmitters from the first/seven

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409 Muʿjam al-Buldān 1/419.  
410 Al-Jāmiʿ li Akhlāq al-Rāwī wa Ādāb al-Ṣāmiʿ, 2/447.  
to the third/ninth century. Ibn Ḥibbān made an assessment of twenty levels of good transmitters.

3. *Maʿrifāt al-Majrūḥīn wa al-Dhuʿafāʿ min al-Muḥaddithīn*. This book was published in India and Egypt with notes by al-Daraqūṭnī (d. 385/995). It was later reproduced in Halab, Syria with notes by Maḥmūd Ibrāhīm al-Zāyid in three volumes. Ibn Ḥibbān says that he would describe those weak transmitters in this book who have been considered weak by previous critics and opted for moderation instead of going into finer considerations. He also declared that he summarized it from his *Tārīkh al-Kabīr*.

4. *Mashāhīr ʿUlamāʾ al-Amṣār*. The work titled *Mashāhīr ʿUlamāʾ al-Amṣār* was edited by Manfred Fleischhammer which recorded life-sketches of 1602 persons of varying lengths. It has been included in one of The Bibliotheca Islamica series books, a joint project of the Orient-Institut Beirut and German Oriental Society for the critical edition of Arabic texts. This book was meant to provide an abridgement of famous and reliable ḥadīth transmitters from six regions (Hijaz, Iraq, Sham, Egypt, Yemen and Khorasan) between the second/seventh and fourth/ninth century.

5. *Rawḍa al-ʿUqalāʿ wa Nuzha al-Fuḍalāʿ*. The research on the work titled *Rawḍa al-ʿUqalāʿ wa Nuzha al-Fuḍalāʿ* has been conducted by Muḥammad Muhay al-Dīn, Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Razzāq and Muḥammad Hamīd Faqīh. Shawkat Toorawa classifies it as adāb anthology literature. It is a training manual with lectures, guidance and ritual thematically arranged of bits of prose and poetry in forty-seven chapters. The prose is laced with Quranic verses, ḥadīth and couplets reflects familiarity with philosophical gnomologies.

6. *Asmāʾ al-Ṣahāba*.413

7. *Kitāb al-ʿAzama*.413

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412 Encyclopaedia of Arabic Literature, 1/334.


10. *Ḥadīth al-Aqrān.*

### 2.6 The Students of Ibn Ḥibbān

Another leading theme of Ibn Ḥibbān’s life has been transmission of his knowledge to students. Most notably, Ibn Ḥibbān had many students who later became prominent figures in ḥadīth scholarship. Overall, Yāqūt, Ibn ʿAsākir, al-Dhahabī and al-Arnaʾūṭ named sixteen who studied under Ibn Ḥibbān. The *nisba* (toponymic surname) of Ibn Ḥibbān’s student in the list indicates the geographical distribution of those who studied under him.

Abū ʿUmar Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Sulaymān al-Nūqāṭī (d. 382/992), a prolific writer in the field of Arabic philology. He wrote a lot when he was at Herat, Marw, Balkh and Transoxiana.

Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. ʿUmar b. Aḥmad b. Mahdi al-Dāraquṭnī (d. 385/995), he was known as *amīr al-muʿminīn fī al-ḥadīth* (commander of the faithful in ḥadīth) and his critique of Bukhārī and Muslim (the ʾṢaḥīḥayn) was popular.

Abū Sulaymān Ḥamd b. Muḥammad al-Khaṭṭābī (d. 388/998), the first scholar to produce a commentary on ʾṢaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī. He spent most of his time in Bust.

Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. Manda al-Aṣbahānī (d. 396/1005), like his teacher, he has travelled a lot as a student of ḥadīth and al-Dhahabī

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414 Sezgin says that perhaps this is a collection of definition in *usūl al-dīn.* See *Geschichte der Arabischen Schriftum,* 1/189; Ph. S. Van Ronkel lists *Mukhtasar fī al-Ḥudūd* among the available manuscript in Museum Pusat Batavia (Jakarta). See Philippus Samuel van Ronkel, *Supplement to the Catalogue of the Arabic Manuscripts Preserved in the Museum of the Batavia Society of Arts and Sciences,* (Jakarta: Albrecht, 1913), 170.

415 Ādab doubts the attribution of this *Tafsīr* to Ibn Ḥibbān in regards to unnamed of manuscripts and several other factors. See Ādab Hamsb, *Al-Imām Ibn Ḥibbān wa Manhajuhu,* 1/324.

416 *Geschichte der Arabischen Literatur,* 1/273; *Geschichte der Arabischen Schriftum,* 1/189. *Al-Imām Ibn Ḥibbān wa Manhajuhu,* 1/381.


418 *Siyar Aʿlām al- Nubalāʾ,* 16/450.

419 Ibid, 17/23.
called him ‘al-Imām al-Ḥāfīz al-Jawwāl’ (An Imam, scholar of ḥadīth who travel a lot).420

Abū al-Fāṭḥ ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Bustī (d. 400/1009), secretary to Baytuz, the Turkish ghulam commander in Bust, but later entered Sebuktigin’s service after the latter took over Bust. He is famous for his poetry and his dazzling epistolary style, so that his extensive use of paronomasia earned him the title of ṣāḥib al-tajnīs.421


Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad Al-Ḥākim al-Naysabūrī (d. 403/1012), and also known as Ibn al-Baiyi. He wrote upon Ibn Ḥibbān when he was 13, and gained substantial reputation for writing al-Mustadrak `ala al-Ṣaḥḥayn.423

Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad ‘Ghunjar’ al-Bukhari (d. 412/1021). 424 He also known as historian and wrote Tārīkh al-Bukhārī (now lost) which was one of the earliest sources on scholars in Bukhara.425


Al-Ḥasan b. Mansūr al-Asfijābī (n.d).430

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421 C. E. Bosworth, The History of the Saffarids of Sistān and the Maliks of Nimruz, 332.
423 Ibid, 17/163.
424 Ibid, 17/304.
426 Ibid 1/417.
428 Tārīkh Dimashq, 52/250.
429 Mujam al-Buldān, 1/416.
430 Ibid.


As mentioned earlier, Ibn Ἤbbebān spent the final years of his life in Bust where he remained a great attraction to enthusiastic scholars in their quest for mastery of the Prophetic tradition. He died on Friday night, the 22nd of Shawwal 354/965 at the age of eighty at the madrasa he built. ⁴³³ Yāqūt said his grave in Bust is well-known and still visited until nowadays. ⁴³⁴
CHAPTER THREE

THE ṢĀḤĪḤ OF IBN ḤIJBĀN

Chapter three mainly examines the introduction of the Ṣāḥīḥ of Ibn Ḥijbān and provides a summarised translation of the introduction. In order to situate the Ṣāḥīḥ and its author within the history of Islam and its magnificent tradition of hadīth scholarship, this chapter begins by comparing Ibn Ḥijbān with several of his students, teachers, and early participants of the Ṣāḥīḥ network. Subsequently, this chapter will discuss the historical development of the Ṣāḥīḥ hadīth collections in general, Ibn Ḥijbān’s conditions and technical vocabularies of authentic hadīth, and the overall contents of his Ṣāḥīḥ.

3.1 The Originality and Role of Ṣāḥīḥ Collections

Before the recognised books were accumulated, the body of hadīth had grown remarkably, and serious students of hadīth recognised that much of it was fabricated.435 Siddiqi lists four categories of people which are generally attributed with forged hadīth; (1) the heretics (zanādiqa), who made chaos by wilfully forging thousands of hadīths and propagating them among the Muslim community. (2) The various sectarian preaches at both the Shi‘ī and Khārijī ends of the political spectrum. (3) The storytellers (quṣṣās) were men who invented

435 The question authenticity of the hadīth material is of course debated in the Muslim and Western world. Each of these scholars has a different approach and studies different materials, as was discussed generally in the first chapter. In addition, many studies have been conducted determining the nature of the debates about the sources and their reliability. And as Herbert Berg concludes: “Once one accepts the testimony of isnāds, there are a plethora of hadīths indicating that the transmitters, exegetes, jurists, and historians employed both oral and written means to assure fairly accurate transmission and that this activity was so geographically and temporally widespread as to preclude collusion. Consequently, hadīths are largely authentic and their isnāds can be trusted. On the other hand, if the evidence claiming to come from the first century and a half of Islam is irrelevant. Virtually everything we know of that period, whether historical, legal, exegetical, and so forth, comes to us in the form of hadīths or texts with isnāds. The only avenue through which this material can be examined is literary analysis. It is only the mains and texts themselves that can yield reliable information of their chronology and provenance. But to what can the mains and texts be compared to give us this information? In other words, what are our external reference points that allow us to judge chronology and provenance? The answer is to these questions is the theory or assumptions one has adopted.” See Herbert Berg, “Competing Paradigms in the Study of Islamic Origin: Qur’ān 15:89-91 and the value of isnāds” in Method and Theory in the Study of Islamic Origins, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2003), pp. 259-290; See also Gautier Juynboll, “(Re)appraisal of Some Technical Terms in Ḥadīth Science,” Islamic Law and Society (2001:8.3), pp. 303-349; Herbert Berg. The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam: The Authenticity of Muslim Literature from the Formative Period (London: Curzon Press, 1999); Harald Motzki, “The Question of the Authenticity of Muslim Traditions Reconsidered: A Review Article” in Herbert Berg, Method and Theory, pp. 211-57; and Herbert Berg (ed.), Method and Theory in the Study of Islamic Origins; Robert Hoyland, “History, Fiction, and Authorship in the First Centuries of Islam,” in Julia Bray (ed.). Writing and Representation in Medieval Islam: Muslim Horizons (London and NewYork; Routledge, 2006), pp. 16-46; John Burton “Qur’an and Sunnah, a Case of Cultural Disjunction,” in Herbert Berg (ed.), Method and Theory, pp. 137-157; N. J. Coulson “European Criticism of Hadith Literature;” in Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period, pp. 317-321.
the most extraordinary ḥadīth to which they attached seemingly impeccable isnāds, their purpose being to astonish the common people and receive payment for their stories. (4) The students of ḥadīth themselves and they were perhaps the most dangerous category of ḥadīth forgers, as asserted by Siddiqi. The fact that different types of people invented ḥadīths shows how important ḥadīth had become. Siddiqi adds, “thanks to the precision and rigour of the elite of ḥadīth scholars, then, the vital core of the ḥadīth literature was preserved intact.” And as Abbott concludes:

Deliberate tampering with either the content or the isnāds of the Prophet’s Tradition, as distinct from the sayings and deeds of the Companions and Successors, may have passed undetected by ordinary transmitters, but not by the aggregate of the ever-watchful, basically honest, and aggressively outspoken master traditionists and ḥadīth critics.439

As mentioned in the first chapter, by the end of the third/beginning tenth century a large amount of ḥadīth collections had been produced, six of which have since then been regarded as being especially authoritative and are known as Kutub al-Sitta. The most authoritative were considered to be the Ṣaḥīḥs of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, followed in importance by the Sunan works of Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, al-Nasāʾī and Ibn Mājah. Studies by Siddiqi and Brown have tended to answer the question about dating the canonization of the Ṣaḥīḥayn since Goldziher raised the issue

We cannot establish with chronological accuracy the date which brought the consensus publicus for the two Ṣaḥīḥs to maturity or the date when favour of the ijmāʿ was extended to the ‘six books’.441

According to Siddiqi and Brown, this recognition started in the middle of the fourth/tenth century, when Saʿīd b. al-Sakan (d. 353/964) and Ibn Manda (d. 395/1004-5) declared the Ṣaḥīḥayn, and the two Sunans of Abū Dāwūd and al-Nasāʾī were the foundations of Islam. However, some scholars did not agree about the equal recognition of this book and had varying opinions on which books constituted the canon. Ibn al-Ṣalah speaks of five basic works, excluding Ibn Mājah. Later, al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277) who edited the work of Ibn al-Ṣalah, also recognizes ‘five books’ (al-kutub al-khamsa) and deliberately

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436 Muḥammad Zubayr Siddiqi, Ḥadīth Literature Its Origin, Development & Special Features, 33-35.
438 Muḥammad Zubayr Siddiqi, Ḥadīth Literature Its Origin, Development & Special Features, 38.
442 Muḥammad Zubayr Siddiqi, Ḥadīth Literature Its Origin, Development & Special Features, 73.
places Ibn Mājah’s *Sunan* on the same plane as the *Musnad* of Ibn Ḥanbal. We also come across with the recognition such as ‘the relied-upon books’, ‘the Four Books’, ‘the Ten Books’, ‘the Authentic Collections’ and several others. Yet among these books the position of al-Bukhārī and Muslim was always incomparable.

In general, the *Ṣaḥīḥs* contain biographical material and Quran commentary in addition to details of religious observance, law, commerce, and aspect of public and private behaviour which are the main interest of the *Sunan* works. The corpus of ḥadīth provides details to regulate all aspects of life in this world and to prepare people for the next. Al-Bukhārī is famously acknowledged as the founder of “*Ṣaḥīḥ* movement” and its first author. It took him sixteen years of ḥadīth criticism to produce his famous collection to which he contributed significantly, and thus was able to extract from his material 6000 authentic ḥadīth. His student, Muslim, collates 12000 ḥadīth in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* including 4000 repetitions, and is dedicated to ḥadīth alone, unburdened with legal notes, and divided into 54 chapters with titles such as faith, purity, and prayer. Muslim revealed serious consideration over would-be ḥadīth scholars who transmitted material of dubious nature to the exclusion of the well-known and well-authenticated ḥadīths. They yield this type of material to the common people when in fact it is the ḥadīth scholars’ duty to leave the common people with trustworthy ḥadīth only. Muslim wrote his *Ṣaḥīḥ* in response to what he felt was the laxity and misplaced priorities of ḥadīth scholars and transmitters as he states:

> If the matter is such as we have described it, then it is more appropriate for them (sc. the common people) to approach of the ḥadīth material the small quantity that is authentic than to compile the weak. Only for those experts who are blessed with a certain alertness and knowledge of factors that modify the state of a ḥadīth it is hoped that extensive dealing with this material and [even] the compilation of reiterations will prove to be beneficial.

With the *Ṣaḥīḥ/Sunan* movement, the ḥadīth tradition had reached a new landmark. Their works looked both to reject many aspects of the culture of ḥadīth transmission and to offer their works as the preeminent ḥadīth references for legal scholars. On that account, al-Bukhārī’s and Muslim’s *Ṣaḥīḥ* met with repudiation among important elements of the ḥadīth

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448 G. H. A. Juynboll, “Muslim’s introduction to his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, translated and annotated with an excursus on the chronology of *fitna* and *bid’ā*” in *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 5, (Jerusalem, 1984), 266.
scholar community.  

For instance, Abū Zurʿa al-Rāzī and his colleagues in Rayy argue a collection limited to purely authentic ḥadīths unnecessarily delimited the potential application of the Prophet’s sunna in Muslim life and debate. Ibn Abī Ḥātim identifies the pinnacle of the ḥadīth tradition with the greatest generation of Ibn Ḥanbal and ignores the existence of the Ṣaḥīḥ movement. In Kitab al-Tatabbu’, al-Dāraquṭnī scrutinizes the Ṣaḥīḥayn and reveals weakness in 78 ḥadīths in al-Bukhārī, 100 in Muslim and 32 listed in both, on account of adverse points in the matn or isnād. Short while ago, some scholars such as Ibn ‘Uthaymīn, Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī and others undertake to question some of the collections’ contents.

Notwithstanding, according to Brown, at least three early cities namely Baghdad, Jurjan and Nishapur where the ‘Ṣaḥīḥayn Network’ circulated in the fourth/tenth century. Baghdad inherited the study of al-Bukhārī’s and Muslim’s collections from both Jurjan and Nishapur. For Jurjan, it constituted an important centre of ḥadīth study in its own right during the mid-fourth/tenth century. More particularly, it was home to three friends who developed a stronghold of academic interest in al-Bukhārī’ Ṣaḥīḥ. We have already mentioned, ’Abd Allāh Abū Ahmad Ibn ‘Adī (d. 365/975-76) who gained renown for his voluminous biographical dictionaries on ḥadīth transmitters’ criticism, al-Kāmil fi Ḍuʿafāʾ al-Rījāl. He


They raise three objections to Muslim’s Ṣaḥīḥ. First, they decry it as impertinent glory-seeking. Second, they disagree with Muslim’s judgement concerning the reliability of some transmitters, arguing that his criteria are flawed and subjective. Finally, they worry that producing a Ṣaḥīḥ compilation could hinder the use of other ḥadīths that would be considered lacklustre in comparison. See Jonathan Brown, *The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim*, 93

Ibid, 147.

Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Raūf, “Ḥadīth Literature,” 285; However, according to Jonathan Brown, al-Dāraquṭnī criticism never intended to alter the theological, ritual, or legal material of the Ṣaḥīḥayn rather he clearly deemed them seminal embodiments of the Prophet’s Sunna. His objections to certain aspects of al-Bukhārī’s and Muslim’s compilations through specific methodological developments within Ḥadīth Sciences between third/ninth and ninth/fifteenth centuries. See Jonathan Brown, “Criticism of the Proto-Ḥadīth Canon, al-Dāraquṭnī’s adjustemnts of the Ṣaḥīḥayn”, in *Journal of Islamic Studies* 15:1 (2004), 1-37.


For example, the ḥadīth “Sacrifice only a mature cow, unless it is difficult for you, in which case sacrifice a ram.” Al-Albānī’s method of determining the authenticity or lack thereof of a particular ḥadīth is based largely upon the analysis of the isnād, using information found in the biographical dictionaries. Al-Albānī argues that this ḥadīth is weak by virtue of the fact that one of its transmitters is Abū al-Zubayr. Al-Albānī argues that Abū al-Zubayr’s transmission from Jabir is interrupted (ghayr mutaṣāfī) on the grounds that (1) ḥadīth critics label Abū Zubayr as a muddālīs, i.e., person who suppressed faults in isnād; (2) and he did not explicitly declare whether or not he heard the ḥadīth directly from Jabir, but rather used the term “‘an” (on the authority of). Hence, in the case of Abū al-Zubayr, al-Albānī’s method leads to the result that we must question the historicity of at least 125 of his ḥadīths in Muslim’s Ṣaḥīḥ as Kamrūddin Amin argued. See Kamrūddin Amin, “Nāṣiruddīn al-Albānī on Muslim’s Ṣaḥīḥ: A Critical Study of His Method”, *Islamic Law and Society*, vol. 11 no. 2 (2004), 149/176.

also served as a significant source on al-Bukhārī’s life and as an important transmitter of al-Bukhārī’s Ṣaḥīḥ from al-Firabrī (d. 320/932) in Jurjan. His colleague Abū Bakr al-Isma‘īlī (d. 371/981-2) composed *mustakhraj* which remained an indispensable reference for students and scholars of the Ṣaḥīḥ, even late ones such as Ibn Ḥajar. Another, the last scholar, Abū Ahmad Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Ghiṭrifī (d. 377/987-8) also composed a *mustakhraj* of al-Bukhārī’s Ṣaḥīḥ.457

As can be seen in this era, ḥadīth scholars began acknowledging at the Ṣaḥīḥayn not as an intimidation of the living transmission of the Prophet’s sunna but rather as ways and means to express their personal association to his authority and interpreting his instilling knowledge according to their own method. Ḥadīth scholars began using the Ṣaḥīḥayn and the methods of their authors as templates for their own ḥadīth collections. For these *mustakhraj* books, each of the ḥadīths in the template book the author would use his own narration of the ḥadīth for, with the isnād extending from him back to the Prophet. Isnāds in these *mustkharaj* would customarily side with the isnāds of the template collection at the teacher of the original collector, following the same isnād from that point to the Prophet.458

Preceding Baghdad and Jurjan, Nishapur was the native soil of the *mustakhraj* genre and it was in this municipality that the genre blossomed.459 Nishapur scholars crafted *mustakhrajs* of Abū Dāwūd’s Sunan, al-Tirmidhī’s Jāmi‘ and Ibn Khuzayma’s Ṣaḥīḥ.460 Nishapur, along with Merv, Herat and Balkh was one of great cities of Greater Khurasan and one of the greatest cities in the middle ages. Richard Bulliet scrutinizes the history of Nishapur in fourth/tenth century and concludes that the city’s intellectual landscape was sharply divided between the Ḥanafī school, with its strong ties to Mu’tazilite doctrine, and the ḥadīth scholars, who generally identified with the teachings of al-Shāfī‘ī.461 Other school had small numbers of adherents in the city, notably the Malikīs, Zahirīs, and Ḥanbalīs, but they played no known part in the Ḥanafī-Shāfī‘ī struggle.462

The emergence of Shāfī‘ī’s school in the fourth/tenth century manifested itself most apparently through the teachings of specific individuals with strong attachments to the legacy of the founder.463 At the beginning, the learning of Shāfī‘ī jurisprudence was

460 Ibid.
462 Ibid, 30.
organized as a regular course of study under one teacher, then like the gathering of ḥadīth reports from number of teachers, the more the better. Later a course of study led to the production of a taʿlīqa (notebook), describing the juridical opinion chosen by the Shāfiʿī school. The nascent school extended out from these individuals, whom Melchert refers to as “local chiefs”, through teacher/student relationship and through the study of formative texts.

Al-Subkī has entries for some fifty Khurasānī Shāfiʿī jurisprudence. Almost all the names derived from al-Hakim al-Naysabūrī’s Tārīkh, and evidently represents Shāfiʿīyya of the old school; that is, men who represented themselves as ahl al-ḥadīth and collected their jurisprudence in the old style, much as students of ḥadīth collected ḥadīth. Ibn al-Ṣalah repeatedly reminds us that “of ahl al-ḥadīth” in Khurasan, means “Shāfiʿī”. At the heart of the Shāfiʿī pedagogical and textual tradition were his prominent students, al-Rabiʿ and al-Muzanī. Their student Muḥammad b. Isḥāq Ibn Khuzayma (d. 311/923) became a stronghold of the Shāfiʿī tradition in his native Nishapur.

However, according to Melchert, Ibn Khuzaymah’s comment illuminates his Shāfiʿīsm, evidently a matter of theology more than jurisprudence. Abū Saʿīd al-Samʿānī

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464 Christopher Melchert, The Formation of the Sunnī Schools of Law, 9th-10th Centuries C.E., 87.
465 Ibid.
467 Christopher Melchert, The Formation of the Sunnī Schools of Law, 98.
468 Ibid, 99.
470 Jonathan Brown, The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, 125.
471 Christopher Melchert also suggests ḥadīth scholars of Khurasan needs much further study and he ventures to propose of two reasons why it must have faltered. On the theological plane, it must have suffered repeated embarrassments before attacks from the Ḥanafī Muʾtazilah. On the juridical plane, it must have been increasingly difficult to occlude all forms of taqlīd, and also to maintain the superiority of picking up one’s Shāfiʿīsm piecemeal from shaykhs in Mecca and Egypt over learning it from one authoritative teacher at home. See Christopher Melchert, The Formation of the Sunnī Schools of Law, 9th-10th Centuries C.E., 98.
tells us that Ibn Ḥibbān learnt and established jurisprudence from Ibn Khuzayma. Ibn Ḥibbān also was included in the fifty Khurasānī Shāfīʿī Jurisprudence and praises his teacher:

He [Ibn Khuzayma] – May Allāh bestow His mercy upon him – was one of the pinnacles of this life in various fields of knowledge, jurisprudence, memorization, compiling and concluding rulings from the texts. He excelled to the level that he was able to narrate sunan ḥadīth with chains that none of the expert leaders knew before him, while also being perfect in his knowledge and exceedingly righteous until the day he passed away, may Allāh bestow His mercy upon him.

Ibn Ḥibbān also said: I saw no one on the surface of the earth who produced the sunan, the authentic wording of these narrations, and the additions of such narrations; it was as if (all) the sunan ḥadīth were present before his eyes except for Muḥammad b. Ḥāq Ibn Khuzayma.

Ibn Khuzayma who both studied with and transmitted ḥadīths to al-Bukhārī and Muslim compiled a Ṣaḥīḥ work entitled Muḥtaṣar al-Mukhataṣar min al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ ‘an al-Nabī (The Abridged Abridgement of the Ṣaḥīḥ Musnad from the Prophet). And this work later become known as Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Khuzayma. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī is among the scholars who argues that Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Khuzayma deserves mention alongside the Ṣaḥīḥayn as he sets up a clear requirement for authenticity on the first page of his work. Ibn Khuzayma says that this book contains material

That an upright (ʿadl) transmitter narrates from another upstanding transmitter continuously to [the Prophet] peace be upon him without any break in the isnād nor any impugning (jarḥ) of the reports’ transmitters. Nevertheless, Brown asserts Ibn Khuzayma’s Ṣaḥīḥ never attracted the scholarly interest heaped on the Ṣaḥīḥayn, and its exclusion from the Six Canonical Books seems to be the result of his failure to inspire the same confidence in the community that canonized al-Bukhārī and Muslim. The reason why the Ṣaḥīḥayn, not other canonical ḥadīth books, played such a salient role in ritual and narrative grew out of the unique status they had achieved by the beginning of fourth/tenth century. The Ṣaḥīḥayn would serve as the authoritative reference for “non-specialist” after an increasing separation between jurists and

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474 Kitāb al-Thiqāt, 9/156.
475 Ibn Ḥibbān, Maʿrifāt al-Majrūḥūn wa al-Dhuʿafāʾ min al-Muḥaddithūn, ed.ʿAzīz Baygh Nawshabandī al-Qadirī, (Hyderabad, 1970), 1/93. See also Al-Dhahabī, Siyar Aʿlām al-Nubalāʾ, 14/372.
478 Ibn Khuzayma, Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Khuzayma, 45.
hadīth scholars.\textsuperscript{479} For example, Abū Ḥishāq Ibrāhīm b. ‘Alī al-Shirāzī (d. 476/1083) suggests a muftī should rely on “the imāms of the asḥāb al-ḥadīth” and should be exempted from mastering the ḥadīth criticism.\textsuperscript{480} A former Ḥanafī, Abū Muzaffar al-Sam‘ānī (d. 489/1095-6) list “the relied-upon books” for such purposes as the Ṣāhiḥ of al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī al-Nasā’ī, the Mustakahraj of Abū ‘Awāna and finally the Ṣāhiḥs of Abū ‘Abbās al-Daghūlī and Ibn Ḥibbān.\textsuperscript{481}

And al-Bukhārī and Muslim were not just used to prove the authenticity of hadīth, but also to authoritatively shape the study of hadīth. Thus the Ṣāhiḥayn are canonical in that they are standards that can be employed to set the rules of genre. Abū Bakr al-Ḥāzimī (d. 584/1188-9) characterizes Bukhārī as the best of his era in ḥadīth collection and criticism.\textsuperscript{482} Considerably Ibn al-Ṣalah describes books of Bukhārī and Muslim are the soundest books after the august book of God [that is, the Quran].\textsuperscript{483} Ibn Taymiyya states that not even Ibn Khuzayma or Ibn Ḥibbān come nearer al-Bukhārī’s level of proficiency.\textsuperscript{484}

Presumably for these reasons, Ibn Ḥibbān’s Ṣāhiḥ conveys the impression more to have been the ‘victim’ of the accident of history than a requirement of theory. In principal there can be any number of hadīth collections at any given time. And in the first four centuries of the hijra, there was, according to standard view, a plethora of ḥadīth collections. Muḥammad al-Qī‘ī states that Ibn Ḥibbān narrated from unknown transmitters (majāhīl).\textsuperscript{485} This assessment of Ibn Ḥibbān’s Ṣāhiḥ commenced as early as the work of his own student, al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī. Yet as Brown’s review of transmitter studies has shown, the earliest work on al-Bukhārī’s teachers freely admits that at least one of his sources in the Ṣāhiḥ was also unknown. It was only after another two generations of study that Abu Nasr Ahmad al-Kalābādī (d. 398/1008) discovered the identity of this transmitter and produced the most comprehensive listing of all al-Bukhārī’s transmitters.\textsuperscript{486} He further argues

Had his [Ibn Ḥibbān] Ṣāhiḥ received the generations of scholarly attention devoted to the Ṣāhiḥayn during the long fourth century, it too might have been purged of


\textsuperscript{486} Jonathan Brown, \textit{The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim}, 122.
unknown transmitters, in which case al-Ḥākim would have read it with glowing approval. Indeed, later scholars such as Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328), Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373) and Zayn al-Dīn al-ʿIrāqī (d. 806/1404) did champion Ibn Ḥībbān’s work as an exceptional source for authentic ḥadīth.\footnote{Ibid, 152.}

3.2 The Transmission of Ibn Ḥībbān’s Ṣaḥīḥ\footnote{It should be noted that Ibn Ḥībbān’s Ṣaḥīḥ has not survived in its original form and its present arrangement by legal topic is the work of a later hand. The principal contemporary studies (to my knowledge) are al-Ḥusān bi Tarīṯ Ibn Balabān, ed. Shuʿayb al-ʿArnaʿūṭ, Al-Ḥisān fi Taqrib Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥībbān, ed. Markūz al-Buhūṭī wa Taqniyat al-Maʿlūmat, Mawārid al-Zamān, ed. Husayn Sālim Asad al-Dārānī, Taʿlīqāt al-Ḥisān al-ʿalā Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥībbān, al-Albānī. On the other hand, their introductions are substantially comprising mostly about Ibn Ḥībbān in general. The authenticity of hadīth in Ibn Ḥībbān’s Ṣaḥīḥ is also scrutinized by three of them.}

Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar al-Kattānī (d. 1345/1927) account of Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥībbān remains in its entirety five volumes as of the late nineteenth/early twentieth century.\footnote{Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar al-Kattānī, al-Risāla al-Mustaṣṭira li-bayān Mashhār Kutub al-Sunna al-Mushriqa, ed. Muḥammad al-Muntaṣır, (Beirut: Dār al-Bashār al-Islāmiyya, 1993), 20.} This great Moroccan ḥadīth scholar asserts “it has been said that Ibn Ḥībbān, after Ibn Khuzayma, authored the most authentic ḥadīth collection, after Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim.”\footnote{Ibid, 20-21.} And perhaps Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥībbān become the fourth most authentic ḥadīth collection in al-Kattānī’s views. Earlier before al-Kattānī, al-Suyūṭī indicates that Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Khuzayma was the most authentic collection after Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, followed by Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥībbān which, in turn, was more greater than al-Mustadrak ‘alā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn by al-Ḥākim al-Naysabūrī.\footnote{Al-Suyūṭī, Tadrīb al-Rāwī fi Sharḥ Taqrib al-Nawawī, (Riyadh: Dār Ibn al-Jawzī, 1431H), 1/183-184.}

According to Ibn ʿAsākir, Ibn Ḥībbān wrote his Ṣaḥīḥ, Tārīkh, and al-Duʿāʾ ‘āfā’ and many others, while he was teaching in Samarqand.\footnote{Ibid.} The actual name of his Ṣaḥīḥ collection is al-Taqāṣim wa al-Anwāʾ, and is largely cited by al-Dhahabi, al-Haythamī, al-ʿIrāqī, Ibn Balabān, Ibn ʿAsākir, al-Suyūṭī, and many others.\footnote{Al-Dhahabi, Tadhkirāt al-Ḥuffāẓ, 3/921 and Siyār ʿAlī al-Nubalāʾ, 16/94. Muṣaddima Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, 11.} However, it is often abbreviated to Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥībbān. Ibn Balabān (d. 739/1338)\footnote{Al-ʿIrāqī, Abu al-Dhahab, 184.} in his derivative work of Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥībbān regularly cites it as al-Taqāṣim wa al-Anwāʾ. Ibn Balabān suggests, similar to Ibn Khuzayma steps, he names after his book “al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ ‘alā al-Taqāṣim wa al-Anwāʾ min ghayr
wujūd qaʿṭ fī sanadīḥā wa lā thuḥūt jarḥ fī nāqīlīḥā.” Aḥmad Shākir indicates that this is the title written in the manuscript of Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya.495

Brockelmann and Sezgin list the available manuscripts of the al-Taqāsim wa al-Anwāʾ and it is scattered in various places, including Istanbul, Cairo, Berlin, as well as Madīnah.496 Neither GAL nor GAS mention whether these manuscripts are complete or not. Later, both add several more manuscripts that of derivative works from Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān. Sezgin also mentions the first standard edition of Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān was first printed in one volume, in Egypt in 1952.497 This was Aḥmad Shākir’s edition, completing the first volume before his death. In his introduction, Shākir discusses in length the available manuscripts including the name, date of composition, scribes or copyists, and the transmission of the book.498 Discussing one of the manuscripts, he indicates that under the book title the transmission was written as

From the composition of Shaykh al-Islām Master and Custodian of Critics Abī Hātim Muḥammad b. Ḥibbān b. Aḥmad b. Ḥibbān al-Tamīmī (d. 533/1138). Shākir asserts obviously the scribe was one of Ibn Ḥibbān, (d. 571/1175) students. He adds, this “book’s sanad” belongs to Ibn Ḥibbān, acknowledging that he read (Ibn Ḥibbān’s) note:1 using qaraʾ tuḥāʾ alāʾ the material in 5 volumes over to his teacher, Abū al-Qāsim al-Shaḥḥāmī (d. 533/1138).500 This Azharī scholar, who died in 1377/1958, completed the first volume of Ibn Balabān’s derivative work of Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān by comparing four

496 GAL, 1/273. GAS, 1/191.
497 GAS, 1/191.
499 Al-Dhahabī mentions Abū al-Ḥasan al-Zūzānī among the transmitters of Ibn Ḥibbān. And he died in 369/979. See Al-Dhahabī, Tārīkh al-Islām, 26/112; Zūzānī is a big town between Herat and Nishapur. And some people called it ‘small Basra’. See al-Samʿānī, al-Ansāb, 3/175.
manuscripts.\textsuperscript{504} Since then several other workings of the \textit{Ṣahīh} have appeared. 'Abd al-Raḥmān Muḥammad ’Uthmān edited another two volumes of the \textit{Ṣahīh} which were published by al-Maktaba al-Salafiyya of Madīnah in 1970. However this edition did not include anecdotes or ḥadīth status.\textsuperscript{505}

What deserves to be standard editions are those of Kamāl al-Ḥūt in 10 volumes,\textsuperscript{506} Shuʿayb al-Arnaʿūt in 18 volumes (including two volumes of index), al-Albānī in 12 volumes, and Markāz al-Buḥūth wa Taqniyāt al-Maʿlūmāt in 8 volumes. They have been indispensable to this study. In addition, their introductions are substantial, comprising mostly about Ibn Ḥibbān in ḥadīth scholarship. The authenticity of ḥadīth in Ibn Ḥibbān’s \textit{Ṣahīh} is also scrutinized by all of them. In this case, all of them possessed the derivative manuscript famously known as \textit{al-Iḥsān fī Taqrīb Ṣahīh Ibn Ḥibbān (bi-Tartīb Ibn Balabān)}. Sezgin indicates this complete manuscript is available in 9 volumes in Cairo.\textsuperscript{507}

The \textit{Ṣahīh}, edited by Shuʿayb and assistants published in 1988 used two main manuscripts which were contained in 9 volumes for the reconstruction of the work as a whole. The first manuscript provides the largest part of the text, volume 1-6, 8, and 9. The second was for the remaining volume 7. Shuʿayb in his introduction, like a number of others, assumes that political quarrels and religious disputes within the nascent Islamic community brought about the destruction of Ibn Ḥibbān’s works.\textsuperscript{508} Meanwhile al-Albānī and assistants give a title \textit{al-Taʿliqāt al-Hisān ʿalā Ṣahīh Ibn Ḥibbān: wa Tamyīz Saqīmihi min Ṣahīhihi wa Shādhdhihi min Malḥuṣihi} for the edition and published in 2003.\textsuperscript{509} Moreover, the latest edition of \textit{Ṣahīh Ibn Ḥibbān} edited by Markāz al-Buḥūth wa Taqniyāt al-Maʿlūmāt\textsuperscript{510} discusses in detail the features of the manuscript. To a certain degree, the Markāz compares three earlier printed versions (Kamāl al-Ḥūt, Shuʿayb, and al-Albānī) and points out the slight difference in the text and numbering between them. According to the Markāz, however no dissimilarity of \textit{matn} occurred between Shuʿayb and al-Albānī.

\textsuperscript{505} \textit{Ṣahīh Ibn Ḥibbān bi-Tartīb Ibn Balabān}, ed. Shuʿayb al-Arnaʿūt, 1/63.
\textsuperscript{507} GAS, 1/190.
As mentioned earlier, all these editions certainly do not reproduce the original Ṣahīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān. Ibn Balabān, the great scholar and editor of his time, rearranges the Ṣahīḥ which he described easy for students to comprehend. Ibn Balabān presents at the end of each of the ḥadīth an index of the original location in the Ṣahīḥ. Obviously Ibn Balabān was not alone in adopting this feature, another sort of re-arrangement belong to ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Abd Allāh b. Qalīj al-Mughūltay (d. 762/1361), Ibn Zurayq, Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Muḥammad (d. 803/1400), and Ibn Mulaqqin, ‘Umar b. ‘Alī b. Aḥmad al-Andalūsī (d. 804/1401). In like manner they rearranged the Ṣahīḥ according to the topics of jurisprudence leaving out any commentaries or anecdote by them. Perhaps this was because Ibn Ḥibbān’s arrangement is difficult to understand, as professed by al-Suyūṭī. At this point, al-Suyūṭī adds the reason is that Ibn Ḥibbān is an expert on kalām, astronomy and philosophy.

There are sources from which we can gain more insight in to the history of the Ṣahīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān; such as the books of atrāf. Atrāf is a genre of ḥadīth literature similar to the mustakhraj. It is an index of ḥadīth which is organised primarily according to the Companion who narrated the text, but which also focuses on the key components of the text rather than the whole matn. Al-Kattānī lists among early scholars to produce an atrāf of the Ṣahīhayn, Khalaf b. Muḥammad al-Wāsiṭī (d. 400/1010) and Abū Masʿūd ʿIbrāhim al-Dimashqī (d. 401/1010-11). Khalaf produces three – or four – volume atrāf (one volume, seven juz’s, of which has survived in manuscript form), while Abū Masʿūd’s work exists today in only partial and unpublished form.

Unlike mustakhraj, which are organized along the chapter structure of the template book, atrāf books usually present the ḥadīth according to the Companion at the beginning of the isnād. As stated in Lahz al-Alhāz, Zayn al-Dīn al-ʿIrāqī (d. 806/1404) composed Atrāf Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān up until sixty category of the third division of the Ṣahīḥ. He also uses Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān as one of the sources when analysing the ḥadīth that al-Ghazālī had

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513 Al-Suyūṭī, Tadhrib al-Rāwī, 1/684.
514 Ibid.
517 GAS, 1/220.
519 Ibid, 105.
520 Ibn Fahd, Lahz al-Alhāz, (Damascus: al-Qudsī, n.d.), 232. See also his works in GAL, 69/70.


Although ten years younger than Zayn al-Dīn al-’Irāqī, he became a committed disciple for he traveled together with Zayn al-Dīn al-’Irāqī to many cities in Egypt, and also to Makkah to perform pilgrimage, Madīna, Jerusalem, Damascus, Aleppo and other places. His *Mawārid* represented those ḥadīth included in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* that do not appear in the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*. In other words, this work listed ḥadīth that Nūr al-Dīn al-Haythamī believed al-Bukhārī and Muslim should have included in their collections.

In the same way of ḥadīth scholars, Nūr al-Dīn al-Haythamī presents his detailed records of transmission of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* in the introduction. According to the information, he possessed two transmissions which went back to:


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The former, Nūr al-Dīn al-Haythamī said that he read back the Ṣahīḥ to ʿAbd Allāh al-Makki who settled in Cairo, using bi-qirāʾ atī ʿalāyhi.524 And the latter transmission through Ibn Jamāʿah covers a long period with few links, a type considered more valuable.525 Al-Haythamī got it when he was listening to a reading by Zayn al-Dīn al-ʿIrāqī to Ibn Jamāʿah. As for another contemporary study of this version, al-Abbānī published Ṣahīḥ and Daʿīf Mawārid al-Ẓamʿān, the principal aim of which was to distinguish what he deemed weak ḥadīths from the Mawārid.

And another atrāf for the Ṣahīḥ is that of “the ten books” by Nūr al-Dīn’s al-Haythamī student which contains an extremely long index of transmitters. Ibn Ḥajar names these ten volumes Ithāf al-Mahara bi- ʿl-Fawāʾid al-Mubtakira min Atrāf al-ʿAshara.526 He adopts Ṣahīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān as an exercise in tracing ḥadīth through the usual channels back to the oldest collections. The title refers to ten books, but Ibn Ḥajar used the Sunan of al-Dāraquṭnī as an eleventh volume to supply missing parts of Ibn Khuzayma’s Ṣahīḥ. Ibn Ḥajar composed an Ithāf al-Mahara that included the individual texts of the Ṣahīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān, along with ḥadīth from Sunan of al-Dārimī, Ṣahīḥ of Ibn Khuzayma, al-Muntaqa of Ibn al-Jārud, Mustakhraj of Abī ʿAwānā, Mustadrak of al-Ḥākim, Muwaṭṭa of Mālik, Musnad of al-Shāfiʿī, Musnad of Aḥmad and Sharḥ Maʾāniʿ al-Āthār of al-Ṭahāwī.

Just as al-Mizzī (d. 742/1341)527 had done a century earlier for ḥadīth in the Six Books with Tuhfat al-Ashrāf,528 Ibn Ḥajar isolates ḥadīth in the Ṣahīḥ by Companion and Successor. This arrangement makes it easier to compare different transmissions of effectively the same ḥadīth report.529 The individual musnads comprise complete isnāds but do not contain the complete matns supported by these isnāds. Only the taraf (plural atrāf), a technical term which indicates the “gist” or an epitomising phrase of each matn, precedes the sometime substantial list of names from the isnād as it occurs in the various collections.

525 See footnote no. 306 on isnād ʿāli.
528 Tuhfat al-Ashrāf bi- Maʾ rifat al-Atrāf is available in the complete edition of ʿAbd al-Ṣamad Sharaf al-Dīn. This work contains the musnads of all those first generation transmitters, the Companions of the Prophet, arranged in alphabetical order, who, after the Prophet, had the isnāds of the “Six Canonical Books” and a few other minor collections. See Juynboll, EI2, 7/213.
Within each Companion’s *musnad* the material is presented in the alphabetical order of the third and sometimes fourth links in the *isnāds*. For the record, the abbreviation used in *Itḥāf al-Mahara* for the *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān* is ḥb.

This Egyptian scholar, who died in 852/1449, possessed the *Ṣaḥīḥ* in two transmissions. Ibn Ḥajar got the first three volumes from Ibrāhim b. Aḥmad al-Tanūkhī by reading it over to him, using *qaraʾ tu*. And the last two volumes were received by Ibn Ḥajar from Khaḍīja bt. Ibrāhim using *samī tu*. Both Ibrāhim and Khaḍīja got it from Abī ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Zarrād, using *ʿan*. Abī ʿAbd Allāḥ got it from al-Hāfīz Abū Ḥāfīfa al-Bakrī from Abū Rūḥ Ḥabīb b. Muḥammad al-Harawī (d. 618/1221) from Tamīm b. Abī al-Ḥasan Muḥammad al-Baḥḥāʾī al-Zūzanī from Abū al-Ḥasan Muḥammad b. Ḥāfīza Ḥabīb b. Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb b. Ḥabīb b. al-Bustī, *akhbaranā* being used at each of these stages.

Most importantly the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, like the many existing ḥadīth compilations, was handed down to succeeding generations by chains of authority. In dealing with the transmission, we have been mainly dependent on details given by Ibn Ḥajar, Abū Bakr al-Haythamī, and Ibn ʿAsākir. The similarity between the transmissions allows us to conclude that then was a single transmitter of the first and second generation after Ibn Ḥabība that goes back to Abū al-Ḥasan Muḥammad al-Zūzanī and Abū al-Ḥasan Ḥabīb b. Ḥabīb b. Ḥabīb b. al-Bustī, based on the information also we can assume that the *Ṣaḥīḥ* was originally contained in 5 volumes.

And the number of ḥadīth reports in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* (bi-Tartīb Ibn Balabān) varies less widely in the printed editions. By counting ḥadīth reports differently, particularly where variant *asānīd* are presented one after another, different editions come up with slightly different numbers: Shuʿayb’s edition counts 7491, Al-Albānī’s edition counts 7448, while the recent edition of Markāz al-Buḥūth wa Taqniyāt al-Maʿlūmah counts 7535. Ḥusayn Sālim (editor of Nūr al-Dīn al-Haythamī’s *al-Mawārid*) has similar estimation with al-Albānī that of 7448. It suggests that Ibn Ḥabībān shared with al-Bukhārī and Muslim or one of them at 4801. And this leaves the number of zawāʾid (additional ḥadīth reports) for Ibn Ḥabībān alone at 2647.

### 3.3 The Corpora in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* and their Common Features

531 *Mawārid al-Ẓamʿīn*, 74.
Before analysing the Ṣaḥīḥ’s contents, it is more useful to understand what parts and how Ibn Balabān reorganized the Ṣaḥīḥ. In the introduction of the Ṣaḥīḥ, Ibn Balabān justifies the rearrangement of the Ṣaḥīḥ of Ibn Ḥibbān in his time on the basis of the needs of students. The advantage of arrangement by topic that it makes much easier to look up a given ḥadīth report. Practically, most rearrangement works on ḥadīth collections are prefaced by an introduction which typically has technical aspects. The technical matters usually involve the explanation of procedures, those things which the reader should care to know about. Hence Ibn Balabān’s introduction to the Ṣaḥīḥ of Ibn Ḥibbān can be divided into three main parts. The first part contains a description of Ibn Ḥibbān’s biography that includes genealogy, journeys, teachers, students and death.

And to make the case that Ibn Ḥibbān very own introduction is maintained, Ibn Balabān cites and places it in the second part. This part is generally comprised of a list of Ibn Ḥibbān’s explanation of purpose, technical terms in ḥadīth science, authentic ḥadīth criterion, polemical issues, the concept of khabar, and some aspects of the reliable transmitter. However, much of this part is covered with a section of the legal methodology of Ibn Ḥibbān which runs to forty-four pages in the printed text, as it touches upon principles derived from the ḥadīth. This will be discussed in a subsequent section along with other issues and concepts of Ibn Ḥibbān’s introduction.

The third and last part of Ibn Balabān’s introduction consists of his new table of contents according to topics within jurisprudence. Prior to establishing the first kitāb (book), Ibn Balabān places two chapters within his introduction supported by thirty-two aḥādīth. Both chapters have titles: Bāb mā jā’a fi-l-ibtidā’ bi-ḥamd Allāh Ta’ālā (Chapter Concerning Praise to Allāh in the Beginning) and Bāb al-I’tisām bi-l-Sunna wa mā yata’allaq bihā naqlan wa amran wa zajaran (Chapter on the devotion to the Sunna and what relates to it [concerning] its transmission, order, and rejection). Looking at the contents and chapter placement, it shows that there is not much difference between Ibn Balabān era with that of Ibn Ḥibbān’s generation. Kitāb Bad’ al-Wahy (The Book of the Beginning of the Revelation) is the very first book encountered when the Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī is opened. Al-

532 Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān, 1/95.
534 Eerik Dickinson, The Development of Early Ḥadīth Criticism, 41.
535 Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān, 1/96.
536 Ibid, 1/100.
537 Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān, 1/166.
Bukhārī introduces his chapter with a quotation from the Quran (4: 163).538 and locates the ḥadīth of intention, as the first ḥadīth.539 Focusing on this theme invites reflection upon Ibn Balabān’s placement of two chapters in his introduction.

Coming immediately after the introduction, Ibn Balabān posits the ḥadīth about the arrival of Angel Gabriel in the cave of Hira’ together in the first chapter and Book of Revelation. The book has the short title: Kitāb al-Wahy (The Book of the Revelation), and includes ten chapters supported by twelve ḥadīths. Next, he arranges the total of the chapters in sixty kitābs (books).540 In the context of the chapter framework, the word dhikr (report) is often used as a heading or title. The title of the chapters is meant to indicate the subject-matter and teaching of the ḥadīth they contain. Certain ḥadīth contain material on more than one subject and it is not surprising that they should appear in more than one chapter. Ibn Balabān presents at the end of each of the ḥadīth an index of the original location in the Ṣaḥīḥ.

Analysed for style and vocabulary, the contents of the Ṣaḥīḥ of Ibn Ḥibbān unmistakably divides into three idiosyncratic corpora. Before discussing what makes the corpora different, it is necessary to examine their common features, which characterize the book as a whole. The Ṣaḥīḥ is built around a core of: (1) chapter titles, (2) ḥadīths, and (3) commentaries. All these corpora are included in a specific framework, in which the ḥadīth are arranged according to their subject-matter. This framework is mainly made up of practical, usually protracted, tarājim (chapter titles), containing an abundance of material. Certainly, Ibn Ḥibbān aims to engrave the opinions of his readers towards his views on the

538 We have revealed to thee as We revealed to Noah, and the Prophets after him. The Qur’ān 4:163.
540 The kitāb is followed by books of the Night Journey (al-İsrā’), Knowledge (al-İlm), Faith (al-İmān), Philanthropy and Excellence (al-Birr wa al-İhsān), Piety (al-Raqā’i), Purity (al-Tahāra), Prayer (Ṣalāh), Funerals (al-Janā’i), Obligatory Charity Tax (Zakāt), Fasting (Saʿm), 13. Pilgrimage (Hajj), Marriage and Its Ethic (al-Nikāh wa Adabuh), Nursing (al-Radā‘), Divorce (al-Talāq), Emancipation (al-Iq), Oaths (al-Aymān), Vows (al-Nudhār), 20. Criminal Law (al-Ḥudād), 48 Expeditions (al-Siyar), Lost Things (al-Luqata), Endowment (al-Waqf), Sales (al-Buyū‘), Transgression (al-Ḥajr), Transference (al-Ḥiwa’la), Collateral (al-Kifāla), Judiciary (al-Qaḍā‘), Witnesses (al-Shahadāt), Prosecution (al-Da‘wā), Peace-making (al-Ṣalāh), Loan (al-Ariyā), Gift (al-İbā‘a), Successor and Life Grant (al-Ruqā‘ wa al-Umrā), Lease (al-I‘ara), Abduction (al-Ghaṣb), Pre-emption (al-Shu‘fa‘a), Agriculture (al-İmu‘ara), Revival of Death (Ibyā‘ al-Mawā‘), 40. Meals (al-İsha‘a), Drinks (al-Asbiba), Dress and Its Ethic (al-Libā‘ wa Adabuh), Adornment and Balminess (al-İzna wa al-Tatāwwub), Prohibition and Permission (al-İ‘zir wa al-İbabā), Hunting (al-İyā‘), Slaughters (al-Dhabā‘i), Sacrifice (al-Adhiyya), Mortgage (al-Ra‘ā‘), Criminals (al-Janā‘i), Compensation (al-Di‘ā‘), Will (al-İbā‘) Inheritance (al-Farā‘ iyi), Dream (Rū‘a), Medicine (al-İbb), Incantation and Amulet (al-Ruqā‘ wa al-Tamā‘ i‘m), Contagion, Omen, and Optimist (al-İdā‘ wa al-İtyarā wa al-Fa‘i), Rain and Asterism (al-Anawā‘ wa al-Najā‘), Fortune-tellers and Black Magic (al-Kihāna wa al-İbhr), History (al-İbhr).
practical applications of the ḥadīth which he cites. He accomplishes it by his wise legal principles, the divisions, the categories and the tarājim, which may be regarded as among the most important characteristic of the Ṣahīḥ.\footnote{According to one theory, al-Bukhārī first prepared the entire framework of his treatise and only then filled it out with relevant hadīth data. See Vardit Tokatly, “The Aʿlām al-Ḥadīth of al-Khaṭṭābī: a commentary on al-Bukhārī’s Ṣahīḥ or a polemical treatise?” Studia Islamica 92 (2001), 53-91.}

The notion of narrative frame in medieval Arabic literature is very familiar, but here the tarājim seeks to place the ḥadīth in a specific milieu. This causes the reader to interpret the ḥadīth included in the kitāb in a particular way.\footnote{For a basic idea of frames and semetemic, see Umberto Eco, The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 24-25.} Ibn Ḥibbān’s tarājim can be profitably compared with that of al-Bukhārī, as famously known “Knowledge of al-Bukhārī in his chapter titles.”\footnote{“Fiqh al-Bukhārī ār tarājimīhi.” See Taqy al-Dīn al-Nadwī al-Muẓāhirī, al-Imām al-Bukhārī: Imām al-Huffāz wa al-Muḥaddithīn, (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 1994), 130.} Tarājim has been the topic of study for a number of scholars since they show both interest in the jurisprudence and the legal principles of al-Bukhārī. Taqy al-Dīn al-Nadwī lists nine works solely of tarājim, not to mention the discussion of the tarājim in commentaries on the Ṣahīḥ of al-Bukhārī.\footnote{Taqy al-Dīn al-Nadwī al-Muẓāhirī, al-Imām al-Bukhārī: Imām al-Huffāz wa al-Muḥaddithīn, 131.} Hence describing al-Bukhārī’s tarājim, Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Rauf says the following:

Readers of Ṣahīḥ with a deep insight will realize that the author had two objectives of writing his book – not one. On the one hand, being himself a great scholar and a leading jurist in his own right, al-Bukhārī sought to make his work a rich fountain of knowledge in all areas of the Islamic religion. Apparently he used the tarājim as a convenient and relevant place for expounding his own views or the opinions of others that he supported and wanted to advocate.\footnote{Muḥammad Abdal Rauf, Imām al-Bukhārī and al-Ṣahīḥ, (Washington D.C.: The Islamic Centre, n.d.), 16.} Just as ṭafsīr is an attempt to understand the Qurʾān, tarājim is Ibn Ḥibbān’s attempt to understand the meaning of the ḥadīth. Undoubtedly, the tarājim is borne out of the interaction between Ibn Ḥibbān and the ḥadīth, and this is a deeply personal action; it is a reflection of the self that incorporates a number of different elements: what Ibn Ḥibbān has read, his methodology, ideological leanings, aspiration in writing the Ṣahīḥ, and so on. In the manner that Bernard Weiss once put it, it is not possible for Ibn Ḥibbān to derive knowledge from ḥadīth without the prior knowledge that he takes to ḥadīth, “and this prior knowledge must necessarily have an extrarevelational basis.” Ibn Ḥibbān wishes to convey to his readers theological, juridical, or philosophical ideas that must necessarily be
linked to the body of the ḥadīth. As an illustration, Ibn Ḥibbān offers the following *tarjama* about the well-known ḥadīth concerning the five pillars of Islam547

*Dhikr al-bayān bi-Anna al-Imān wa al-Islām ismān li-ma’nā wāhid* (An account of explanation that *al-Imān* and *al-Islām* are two names for one meaning).548

Next, the largest part of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* is the ḥadīth corpus and its typical feature is to supply *isnād* for a *matn*. There are many terms employed by Ibn Ḥibbān, his teachers and other transmitters to describe the transmission of ḥadīth. For Ibn Ḥibbān, a ḥadīth that is quoted with an *isnād* is introduced by the formula *akhbaranā*.549 This phrase is distinctive for its inversion of the verb and the subject, as is the consistent use of the verb *akhbara* (among other verbs that could have been used, such as *akhbaranī*, *anba’ānā*,550 *haddathanā*, *annahu samī’a*, ‘*an*, etc.) This introductory formula must always precede an *isnād*, which in turn is followed by the *matn* of the ḥadīth.551

The practise of specifying the *isnād* was continued by Ibn Ḥibbān and is very important, it only because he compiled his works approximately eighty or ninety years after al-Bukhārī and Muslim and thus he was instrumental in preserving the integrity of the *Ṣaḥīḥ*. Concurrently, comparison of *isnād* was the essential method of third/ninth to fourth/tenth-century ḥadīth criticism. Recording the name of transmitter or his teacher, Ibn Ḥibbān was concerned with their full names, nicknames, paidonymics, and patronymics. However, at times, there are numerous *isnād* when Ibn Ḥibbān represents a transmitter as transmitted amongst members of one family, with or without names. For instance, from father to son, from grandfather to grandson, from uncle to niece, and that were announced on this basis

From Suhayl b. Abī Ṣāliḥ from his father552

From Hishām b. ‘Urwa from his father553

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547 “Islam has been built on five [pillars]: testifying that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allāh, establishing the prayer, paying the obligatory charity, fasting in Ramadan, making the pilgrimage to the House”. *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 1/374.

548 Ibid, 1/374.

549 According to A’zami, *akhbaranā* is used to denote learning through a reading by the students to the teacher or by certain man called *qāri*, and other students compared the hadith with their books or only listened attentively. This method was called ‘*ard.* See Studies in Ḥadīth Methodology and Literature, 28.

550 *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 1/280


From Muʿtamir b. Sulaymān from his father554

From al-ʿAlāʾ b. ʿAbb al-Rahmān from his father555

From Zayd b. Sallam from his grandfather556

From his uncle Wāsiʿ b. Ḥibbān557

Connected with the name, there are some occasions when Ibn Ḥibbān mentions the place where he could have received the ḥadīth. For example

Ishāq b. Ibrāhim b. Ismāʿīl informed me in Bust558

Muḥammad b. ʿUmar b. Yūsuf informed me in Nasā559

Aḥmad b. ʿAmr al-Muʿaddal informed me in Wāṣī560

Furthermore, here are a few examples to show how Ibn Ḥibbān preserves the isnād in the Ṣaḥīḥ; (1) Widely known although the isnād is the same, the details or matn are different,561 (2) he includes the profession of the transmitter,562 (3) he combines the teacher’s name with qualities are known as al-hāfiz (the guardian) or al-faqīḥ (the legal professor) according to the degree of perfection they have obtained,563 (4) he usually gives an account of specific places of the teacher, but sometimes these are very wide geographically,564 (5) he describes the state how the teacher has narrated,565 (6) he evaluates explicitly the ḥadīth

558 Akhbaranā Ishāq b. Ibrāhim b. Ismāʿīl il bi-Bust. Ibid, 1/196.
556 Ibid, 1/399 and 1/477.
564 Akhbaranā Ismāʿīl il b. Dāwūd b. Wardān bi-I-Fustāf, Ibid, 1/431
Akhbaranā Ismāʿīl il b. Dāwūd b. Wardān bi-Mīṣr, Ibid, 1/406
immediately after his teacher’s name, and he does occasionally combine two or several of his teachers if the transmitters of his teachers are similar, right back to the Prophet.

In a concise manner, the present study has considered the authority of some 21 teachers of 215 from whom Ibn Ḥibbān transmits. These 21 teachers narrated 6284 ḥadīth out of a total of 7491 ḥadīth which makes up 84 per cent. The most significant of those 6284 is Abū Yaʿlā in Mosul who narrates 1174, 18.6 per cent. Thus, the most typical introductory formula is; akhbaranā Abū Yaʿlā or akhbaranā Aḥmad b. ʿAlī b. al-Muthannā. And for a total of 3 Jazirah (Mosul, Harran, and Raqqa) teachers Ibn Ḥibbān narrated 1431 ḥadīth, 22.7 per cent of the total. Those 7 connected to Khorasan (Nasā, Nishapur, and Herat) he narrated 2099 ḥadīth, 33.4 per cent, respectively. From 3 Syrian teachers (Ashkelon, Manbij, and Bayt al-Maqdis) he narrated 1055 ḥadīth, 16.7 per cent. The total of 802 ḥadīth narrated by 2 Iraqi teachers (Baghdad and Basra) represents 12.7 per cent of the total. From 2 Khuzestan teachers (ʿAskar Mukram, Shushtar) he narrated 148 ḥadīth, somewhat around 2.3 per cent. From every one of Sughd (Samarkand) and Jurjān he narrated 589 ḥadīth, 9.3 per cent. However, from 2 teachers of his hometown Sijistan (Bust), he only narrated 160 ḥadīth, 2.5 per cent.

Table 3: Ibn Ḥibbān’s Most Frequently Cited Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Death Date</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Total Reports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  Abū Yaʿlā</td>
<td>307/919</td>
<td>Mosul</td>
<td>1174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  Abū al-ʿAbbās al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī</td>
<td>303/915</td>
<td>Nasā</td>
<td>815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  Abū Khalīfa al-Faḍl al-Jumāḥī</td>
<td>305/917</td>
<td>Basra</td>
<td>732</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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568 This border region is based on G. Le Strange’s the Land of Eastern Caliphate map.
569 This information is based on al-Arna’ut’s introduction. See Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān, 1/12.
570 For biographies of al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī, see Siyar Aʿlām al-Nubalā’, 14/157.
571 Akhbaranā Abī Yaʿlā bi-Mawṣūl. Ibid, 4/421.
572 For biographies of al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī, see Siyar Aʿlām al-Nubalā’, 14/157.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Abū `Abbās Muḥammad al-Lakhmī ⁵⁷⁴</td>
<td>310/922</td>
<td>Ashkelon</td>
<td>464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Abū Muḥammad al-Azdī/Ibn Shīrūya ⁵⁷⁵</td>
<td>305/917</td>
<td>Nishapur</td>
<td>463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ibn Bujayr al-Hamdānī ⁵⁷⁶</td>
<td>311/923</td>
<td>Samarkand</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh al-Maqdis ⁵⁷⁷</td>
<td>313/925</td>
<td>Bayt al-Maqdis</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Ibn Khuzayma</td>
<td>311/923</td>
<td>Nishapur</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Abū Ishāq ʿImrān b. Mūsā al-Jurjānī ⁵⁷⁹</td>
<td>305/917</td>
<td>Jurjan</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Abū al-Abbās Muḥammad al-Thaqāfī ⁵⁸⁰</td>
<td>313/925</td>
<td>Nishapur</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Al-Husayn b. Muḥammad/Abū ʿArūba ⁵⁸¹</td>
<td>318/930</td>
<td>Harran</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn al-Anṣārī ⁵⁸²</td>
<td>301/913</td>
<td>Herat</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad al-Sāmī ⁵⁸³</td>
<td>302/914</td>
<td>Herat</td>
<td>112</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad al-Nasawi ⁵⁸⁴</td>
<td>313/925</td>
<td>Nasā</td>
<td>99</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Abū al-Ḥusayn Muḥammad al-Junayd ⁵⁸⁵</td>
<td>347/958</td>
<td>Bust</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn al-Qaṭṭān ⁵⁸⁶</td>
<td>310/922</td>
<td>Raqqā</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁵⁷⁵ For biographies of Ibn Shīrūya, see Siyar Aʿlām al-Nubalāʾ, 14/66.
⁵⁷⁶ For biographies of Ibn Bujayr al-Hamdānī, see Siyar Aʿlām al-Nubalāʾ, 14/402.
⁵⁷⁹ For biographies of Abū Ishāq ʿImrān b. Mūsā, see Siyar Aʿlām al-Nubalāʾ, 14/136.
⁵⁸⁰ Wa Muḥammad b. Ishāq b. Ibrāhim, mawlā thaqīf, bi-ṣ-Nayṣabūrī. For biographies of Muḥammad b. Ishāq, see Siyar Aʿlām al-Nubalāʾ, 14/388.
⁵⁸¹ Akhbaranā Abū ʿArūba bi-Harrān, Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān, 4/149. For biographies of Abū ʿArūba, see Siyar Aʿlām al-Nubalāʾ, 14/510.
⁵⁸² For biographies of Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn al-Anṣārī, see Siyar Aʿlām al-Nubalāʾ, 14/113.
⁵⁸³ For biographies of Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad al-Sāmī, see Siyar Aʿlām al-Nubalāʾ, 14/114.
⁵⁸⁴ For biographies of Abū Jaʿfar Muhammad al-Nasawi al-Rayyānī, see Siyar Aʿlām al-Nubalāʾ, 14/433.
The principal evidence is how his teachers are identified in the Ṣaḥīḥ’s isnād and biographical dictionaries. Identifications most often take the form akhbaranā Muḥammad b. ʿUmar b. Yūsuf (Muḥammad b. ʿUmar b. Yūsuf informed me in Nasā), wa qad haddatha bi-miṣr (he may have narrated in Egypt), aḥad kubarāʾ Naysabūr (one of Nishapur’s Greats) muḥaddith ma warāʾ al-nahr (Transoxiana Ḥadīth Scholar), fulān al-Kūfī (he the Kufan), and so forth. And when someone is described as Medinese for example, it will usually indicate where he dictated ḥadīth in old age. A glance at the above data is sufficient to show that in the time of Ibn Ḥibbān, the centre of ḥadīth studies flourished in Iraq and Khorasan or in the Abbasid eastern land.

The fundamental corpus to this book may lie in the sayings, acts, and endorsement of the Prophet. In a sense, all ḥadīth in the Ṣaḥīḥ are narratives, since they convey reports of events involving the Prophet and Companions. Most of the matn, however, contain simple, single acts of the Prophet, verbal speech of commands or prohibitions, voluntary declarations, all with or without circumstantial setting. These structures stand in miscellaneous quality, contingent upon the type of oratory occupied, and conclude the passage which can be quite extended. Simultaneously they are different in structure from those matn that engage conversational exchanges and/or dramatic actions in the process of communicating whatever ḥadīth of deeds, word, or endorsement is the subject of any given report.

589 Akhbaranā Ahmad b. al-Ḥasan b. Abd al-Jabbār al-Ṣūfī bi-Baghdad. See Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān, 4/274. For biographies of al-Ḥasan al-Sufi, see Siyār Aʿlām al-Nubalāʾ, 14/152
In general terms, the *matn* of ḥadīth in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* may be treated as a compressed but authoritative collection of legally-oriented ḥadīth as it contains a very large number of *ahādīth al-aḥkām* (legal ḥadīths). By our count, Ibn Ḥibbān assembles 4997 ḥadīth from *Kitāb al-Ṭahāra* (Book of the Purity)⁵⁹² to *Kitāb al-Farāīḍ* (Book of the Inheritance),⁵⁹³ which makes up to 80 per cent. A loose analysis of the content of the legal ḥadīth in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* reveals the similarity to *Kutub al-Sitta* and seems to indicate a common source. By examining the *tarājim*, we can identify that Ibn Ḥibbān first seeks the solution of legal problems in the specific terms of the ḥadīth, applying thereto the accepted rules. This explains Ibn Ḥibbān’s account of the spectrum of opinions concerning the legal issues exclusively within the domain that he had sifted authentic ḥadīth from weak.

Since the very earliest time, scholars have made a distinction between theological ḥadīth, legal ḥadīth, ethico-moral ḥadīth, and the purely historical material (*sīra wa maghāzī*).⁵⁹⁴ According to Muḥammad Zubayr Siddiqi, some scholars were concerned with the greater importance of legal and doctrinal ḥadīths than historical dating, arguing the precise date of Prophet’s battles, for instance has no practical utility for a Muslim.⁵⁹⁵ Ibn Ḥibbān’s explicit dedication of historical material is found in the final book of the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, viz. *Kitāb al-Tārīkh*.⁵⁹⁶ The *matn* that relates to the *sīra* and *maghāzī* account constitutes a self-contained narrative unit which characterizes an occurrence and in most cases it does not make any reference to the historical situation, nor does it hint at the context in which it arose. Identical with other ḥadīth collections, it is these which preserve for us the most extensive random sample of earlier historical writing and which therefore thoroughly contribute the indigenous historical culture. In principle, Ibn Ḥibbān aimed to bring together all the reliable and well-attested accounts pertaining to each event. His *isnād* or other ḥadīth collections’s *isnād* can be easily compared with that of the *sīra* or *maghāzī* literatures. Under the circumstances, the *Ṣaḥīḥ* contradict to the *sīra* or *maghāzī* literatures that have no intention

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⁵⁹² The first ḥadīth of *al-Tahāra* is no. 1037, *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, 3/311.
⁵⁹³ The last ḥadīth of *al-Farāīḍ* is no. 6034, *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān* 13/396.
⁵⁹⁴ Franz Rosenthal has highlighted that “historical material occupied the more modest position as a means of preserving and reflecting the achievements of the Prophet. Second only to the legal, historical material was instrumental in firmly planting into the hearts of a large Muslims the ideals and aspirations of Islam. At the same time, historical material also served to keep alive the memory of significance of their distinctive national heritage for the various nations of Islam. Furthermore, it always maintained a position in which it was able to stimulate a certain interest in valuable aspects of cultural activity which were in danger to be entirely eliminated from Muslim life.” See, Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, 172.
⁵⁹⁶ For a discussion of how hadith scholars analysed reports about the military campaigns of Prophet and the early Muslim community, see Muhammad Qasim Zaman, “Maghāzi and the Muḥaddithūn: Reconsidering the Treatment of “Historical” Materials in Early Collections of Hadith”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* vol. 28, no. 1 (Feb., 1996), 1-18.
to construct a connected narrative of events; rather it consists of a series of discrete anecdotes and reports, which vary in length from one line to several pages.\textsuperscript{597}

The last distinctive character of the \textit{Ṣahīḥ} is indeed striking in light of the commentary on ḥadīth by Ibn Ḥibbān. His commentary on the ḥadīth served several functions and was able to take advantage of the scholarship of previous centuries. As Ibn Balabān has standardized, a commentary that appeared after the matn is typically introduced by the formula \textit{qāla Abū Ḥatim} (Abū Ḥātim [Ibn Ḥibbān] said). Essentially, the commentary is to assist the reader in the basic task of understanding the difficult and uncommon word embedded in the matn. Once in a while, Ibn Ḥibbān elaborates on the transmitter in detail from the isnād of a ḥadīth.

According to Jonathan Brown, Ibn Ḥibbān and other ḥadīth critics from the third/ninth century and fourth/tenth century did engage in matn criticism or content criticism but “consciously manufactured the image of exclusive focus on the isnād in an effort to ward off attacks by rationalist opponents.”\textsuperscript{598} We shall illustrate Ibn Ḥibbān’s attitude to the matn criticism in the commentary which shall indicate his sensitivity to logical impossibility and a rejection of material that contradicts what he knew to be historically, dogmatically and legally true.\textsuperscript{599} For example, Ibn Ḥibbān exactly rejects all the ḥadīth that characterize how the Prophet would fasten a rock against his stomach with a cloth to stave off hunger while fasting. He claims that any report about the Prophet is starving would result in God letting His prophet go hungry; a notion that contradicts the ḥadīth “Indeed I am not like any of you; I am fed and given drink [by God].”\textsuperscript{600} Ibn Ḥibbān makes further comment that the precise wording of the rock-tying reports is not ‘ḥajar (rock),’ but rather ‘ḥajaz,’ or the end of the loincloth (izār). He concludes his argument and says, “And a rock does not stave off hunger.”\textsuperscript{601}

Overall this shows the advancement of ḥadīth writing continued alongside that of exegesis, theology, legal principles and other literatures. By the late age of the compilation of the \textit{Ṣahīḥ}, the considerable position accustomed to the study of the matn resulted in a proliferation of commentaries which gave extensive exploration, including matn criticism,

\textsuperscript{598} Jonathan A.C. Brown, “How We Know Early Ḥadīths Critics Did Matn Criticism and Why It’s So Hard to Find”, in \textit{Islamic Law and Society} 15 (2008), 143-184.
\textsuperscript{599} Jonathan Brown, “How We Know Early Ḥadīths Critics Did Matn Criticism,” 161-162
\textsuperscript{600} \textit{Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān}, 14/325
\textsuperscript{601} Ibid, 8/345
the historical connections and references of the text,\textsuperscript{602} theological,\textsuperscript{603} juridical,\textsuperscript{604} language matters,\textsuperscript{605} and the rest. However, Ibn Ḥībbān does not comment on all the ḥadīth, but only on some ambiguous ones that he picks out.

3.4 Ibn Ḥībbān’s Introduction to His Ṣaḥīḥ\textsuperscript{606}

In the introduction, Ibn Ḥībbān includes an explanation of the purpose, technical terms in the science of ḥadīth transmission, authentic ḥadīth criterion, the concept of khabar, and some aspects of the reliable transmitter. However, much of this part notably includes a section of the legal theory of Ibn Ḥībbān. He prefaced it with a substantial glorification of God, some of which shows his expertise in Arabic

Praise be to Allāh Who deserves praise for His blessings, the sole One in His might and greatness, Who is close to His creation in the highest of His height and far from them in the closest of His closeness, the Knower of hidden matters concealed in intimate conversation, Who is aware of the thoughts of the inner conscience and what is yet more hidden, and aware of what is concealed under the elements of the earth and of the thoughts of people which flit through their minds, Who originated things by His power and scattered people by His will without any prior source from which He imitated it nor any laid out order which He followed. Then He made the intellects as a way for those who possess knowledge and as refuge on the ways of those possessing understanding, and He made what He had created for them of hearing and sight cause of reaching the howness of the intellects, and the taking on the responsibility for research and consideration. So He perfected the fineness of what He managed and was exact in all that He decreed. Then He distinguished the people of discrimination and intelligence with varied types of address, and chooses a group of them to be His elite and guided them to cling to obeying Him by following the path of the people of taqwā in holding fast to the Sunnahs and traditions. He adorned their hearts with faith and made their tongues speak with eloquence in disclosing the signs of His dīn and following the Sunnahs of His Prophet by undertaking travel and journeys, leaving behind home and family to collect Sunnahs, refute sects and obtain understanding about them by abandoning personal opinions.\textsuperscript{607}

The annotated passages are selected in order to expound Ibn Ḥībbān’s core idea and a careful reading of Ibn Ḥībbān’s introduction helps one to understand the distinctive

\textsuperscript{602} Ibid, 15/323
\textsuperscript{603} Ibid, 14/10
\textsuperscript{604} Ibid, 6/6
\textsuperscript{605} Ibid, 1/332
\textsuperscript{606} In order to make the translation read more fluently, we have, on frequent occasion, added one or more words in square brackets [ ]. These words cannot be traced to Ibn Ḥībbān’s original but are only added for the English reader’s sake. What is added in round brackets ( ) constitutes brief explanations in English of Arabic words, mostly technical terms, or vice versa.

\textsuperscript{607} Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥībbān, 1/100-101. This passage is also translated in ‘Abd al-ʿAzīz al-Dihlawī, The Garden of the ḥadīth Scholars, 102-103.
character of the Ṣahīḥ. Carrying as an expression, the title al-Taqāsim wa al-Anwā’ (the divisions and the categories) inevitably manifests his master plan. As mentioned earlier, to make the case that Ibn Ḥibbān very own introduction is maintained, Ibn Balabān cites and places it in the second part of the reorganization. The following concise treatise on various abstract issues concerning the science of ḥadīth transmission combined with the legal methodology may be considered as perhaps among the earliest books of its genre. Among Kutub al-Sitta, only Muslim provides his book with an introduction. Juynboll translates Muslim’s introduction to his Ṣahīḥ and asserts

We do not find in source such as – among others – Ibn Ḥajar’s Tahdīh al-Tahdīh and Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzi’s Taqdīm al-Ma’rifāt li-Kitāb al-Jarh wa al-Ta’dīl a great many fragments ascribed to authorities earlier than Muslim – who died in 261/875 – containing statements concerning the theory and practice of the science of tradition but, to my knowledge, no integral part text comparable with and earlier than Muslim’s has ever come to light.

In general, Ibn Ḥibbān and other ḥadīth scholars of the third/ninth and fourth/tenth century were well aware that many spurious ḥadīth had become current, and therefore efforts were made to guard against them. The special emphasis given to the ḥadīth of the Prophet is best understood as a product of the impulse towards uniform authority. The Prophet represented the one figure whose authority all Muslims respected. Echoing a verse of the Qur’ān (4:59), Ibn Ḥibbān says of him, “In the case of a disagreement, it is necessary to refer to his Sunna, since he is the undisputed resort of all.”

There is more than one way of establishing the thesis that the polemical goal of the Ṣahīḥ and other ḥadīth collections had a decisive influence on their contents as well as on their character. However, the assumption is best supported by the striking similarity

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613 Ibn Ḥibbān on one occasion had to defend the story how Moses gouged out an eye of the Angel of Death against attacks launched by the ahl al-ra’y wa al-qi’yās. The attackers had called the ḥadīth scholars “…firewood collectors and ‘night shepherds’, who ventured opinions which Islam invalidates.” “But the people who say this”, exclaimed Ibn Ibn Ḥibbān, “do not grasp the inner meaning of traditions; they do not realize that the Angel of Death was sent to Moses as a visitation, just as Abraham’s being ordered to sacrifice his son had been a visitation. Moses, not realizing that this visitor was an angel, defended himself as any honourable man, who objected to intruders, who have defended himself.” Juynboll, “Ahmad Muhammad Shakir [1892-1958] and his edition Ibn Ḥanbal’s Musnad,” 236.
between them in the third/ninth and fourth/tenth century. Ibn Ḥibbān’s students, al-Ḥākim and al-Khattābī (d. 388/998) who wrote the first commentary of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī both describe their current state of affairs; the disappearance of knowledge and the appearance of ignorance, the predominance of the ahl al-bida’ (people of innovation), the turning of many people towards their doctrines and away from the Qur’ān and the Sunna.614 Similarly Ibn Ḥibbān complains that his surroundings were flooded with ever-multiplying attributions to the Prophet and dilettantes who could not tell authentic ḥadīths from forged ones. Indeed, when I saw narrations (khabar) flooding with ever-multiplying [attributions to the Prophet], and the people’s knowledge of its authenticity decreasing, considering their engagement with fabricated books, and memorizing the false and contradiction, so much so the authentic khabar were being abandoned not transcribed.615

An analysis of Muslim’s Ṣaḥīḥ, Abu Dāwud’s Sunan, Ibn Qutayba’s (d. 276/889) Ta’wīl Mukhtalāf al-ḥadīth, Ibn Abī Ḥātim’s (d. 327/938) Taqdimā, Ibn Furak’s (d. 406/1015) Mushkil al-ḥadīth wa-bayānīhi, and Khattābī’s (d. 388/998) A’lām al-ḥadīth, may be concluded as collection that reflect similar polemical purposes.616 According to Vardit Tokatly, most of these literatures share two important features: Firstly, the works were written with a declared polemical goal to defend the ḥadīth as well as the people who call themselves ahl / aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth against their opponents. Secondly, all the authors attempt to achieve that purpose by the same means namely, ḥadīth commentary.617 As an illustration, it is widely known that Ibn Abī Ḥātim classifies the Muslim intellectual world into two camps that of “al-ḥadīth”, the scholars like him and “ahl al-ra’y” or the “ahl al-kalām” that use intellect in the formulation of an opinion in the field of law and theology.618 Similarly, Ibn Ḥibbān demonstrates the following tarjama about the ahl al-kalām

Dhikr al-zajr ’an mujālasāt ahl al-kalām wa al-qadr wa musātaḥatihim bi-l-nazar wa-l-jidāl (An account of the restraining from being associated with ahl al-kalām and al-qadr and approaching them with contemplation and dialectic)619

As it has been seen above, there is straightforward textual evidence that Ibn Ḥibbān promoted scholarly Prophetic studies and that he attacked those who ignored or used ḥadīth

614 Al-Ḥākim, Ma’rifat ilm al-Ḥadīth, (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm, 2003), 106; Al-Khattābī, A’lām al-Ḥadīth fi Sharīḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, (Makkah: Umm al-Qura University, 1988), 1/102.
615 Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān, 1/102.
616 Vardit Tokatly, “The A’lām al-Ḥadīth of al-Khaṭṭābī: A Commentary on al-Bukhārī’s Ṣaḥīḥ or a Polemical Treatise?”, 64
617 Ibid, 65
618 Eerik Dickinson, The Development of Early Sunnite ḥadīth Criticism, 2-3.
619 Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān, 1/280
without having had any proper training in the field. It was, first and foremost, when Ibn Ḥibbān considers what compilation he should draw up, that he discovered how great the number of ḥadīth was that he had to sift because of its being weak or fabricated. Indeed, Ibn Ḥibbān chooses several shaykhāt who occupy the madār (pivot) in his time, through which ḥadīth were transmitted and were highly articulated, “Perhaps we wrote about more than two thousand shaykhāt from Isbijāb (Sayram) to Alexandria, but we do not narrate except more or less than one hundred and fifty shaykh in our book.”

In the wide illustrated image that Ibn Ḥibbān offered there are two degrees of people at the same time; apart from promoting authentic ḥadīth to the wider Muslim public, he demonstrates more academic and epistemological issues, preserving them for the future generations of scholars and students. It is perhaps for this reason that the epistemological arguments are kept within the confines of the introduction of the Ṣaḥīḥ; those who did not understand science of the ḥadīth, legal theory and so on, or were not interested in it, could simply ignore it. To a considerable degree, many of the earlier ḥadīth scholars do not theorize nor approach the ḥadīth and its transmission of their collections in quite as sophisticated a manner as Ibn Ḥibbān. Thus it is easy to ascertain Ibn Ḥibbān’s Ṣaḥīḥ and his audience. Ibn Ḥibbān adopts certain technical terms in legal theory to create some sort of systemization in his appraisal of ḥadīths.

Furthermore, among the subjects highlighted in the introduction we find studying, teaching, and travelling in quest of truth. For Ibn Ḥibbān, in association with the great ambition of practise and knowledge of ḥadīth is the preservation of knowledge: this means authentic ḥadīth and its transmission. Knowledge of the truth of ḥadīth stacks up with knowledge of its authentic report. A brief look at the Chapter on the devotion to the Sunna and the Kitāb al-ʿIlm (Book of the Knowledge), Ibn Ḥibbān praises ḥadīth scholars exceptionally and magnifies the religious benefit of knowledge and study. Supported by the ḥadīth, he shows the real religious meaning of “knowledge” that of the necessity of instruction, the process of instruction, the role of memorization in opposition to written

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620 According to Halit Ozkan, the word madār may refer to a transmitter in an isnād (its most frequent meaning), to the isnād itself, to the text of a ḥadīth, or to an early authority. See Halit Ozkan, “The Common Link and Its Relation to the Madār,” Islamic Law and Society, vol. 11, no. 1 (2004), 51.

621 The City of Pai-shui (also Isbijāb, literally “White River”) was located northeast of Tashkent and five miles east of modern Chimkent, Uzbekistan. It is now known as Sayram, Kazakhstan.

622 Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān, 1/152.


624 Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān, 1/176-215 and 1/261-335.
transmission, the appropriate behaviour that preserves the dignity of knowledge, the interpretation and study of knowledge, the relationship of knowledge and action— all these matters, and many others, are dealt specifically in the *tarājim* of mentioned book.\footnote{Franz Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant: The Concept of Knowledge in medieval Islam*, (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 74.}

Synchronically, it is meant to show the superiority of “knowledge”, that is, of traditional information, over independent opinion (as in the introduction, Ibn Ḥibbān used the term “*qiyyās*” and “*ra’y*” instead of *ijtihād* or *kalām*) and to set forth the epistemological, educational, and methodological problems involved in the transmission of “knowledge”. Ibn Ḥibbān states

> So people devoted themselves to ḥadīth, sought it, travelled in order to obtain it, wrote it down, asked about it, mastered it, discussed it and spread it. They understood it, gave its roots and branches and disseminated it… so that by them Allāh preserved the *din* for the Muslims and guarded it from the calumny of the detractors and in cases of dispute, He made them imams of guidance and lamps of darkness in disasters. They are heirs of the Prophet, the intimate companions of the pure, the fulcrum of the *awliyāʾ*, and the refuge of the god-fearing. He is due praise for His power and His decree, His generosity with His gift and blessing and His bestowing His blessings.\footnote{Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān, 1/101.}

> Without doubt, this knowledge follows certain theories in the science of ḥadīth transmission along with the legal theories. Asma Hilali who was concerned with the notion of truth in the science of ḥadīth transmission has highlighted the phenomenon of *taghyīr* (alteration) as paramount to its history. She adds that any theories that emerged are a direct consequence of the phenomenon of alteration.\footnote{Asma Hilali, “The Notion of Truth in Ḥadīth Sciences”, 34.}

> In the opinion of Melchert, Ibn Ḥibbān is the first author to define his system of criterion that might be called a theory of authenticity.\footnote{Christopher Melchert, “Bukhārī and Early Ḥadīth Criticism”, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 121, no. 1 (Jan. – Mar., 2001), 10.}

> This theory of authenticity is established upon a set of formulas pertaining to the transmission and its knowledge. According to Ibn al-Qaysarānī, “It has not been transmitted of any of them (the Six) that he said, ‘I have made a condition of putting (a ḥadīth report) in my book that it meet such and such criterion’, so expressly.\footnote{Ibn al-Qaysarānī, *Shurūṭ al-Aʾīma al-Sitta in Thalāṭah Rasāʾil fī ʿIlm al-Ḥadīth*, ed. ‘ Abd al-Fattāḥ Abū Ghuddah (Aleppo: Maktab al-Matbu’at al-Islamiya, 1997), 85.} Al-Ḥākim was the head of the line to scrutinize Bukhārī’s authentication, proclaiming that a ḥadīth report met Bukhārī’s authentication if it had at least *'adlayn* (two reliable transmitters) at every
Meanwhile Ibn Ḥibbān presents the theory of authenticity in the following ways

As for our conditions regarding the transmitters of the ḥadīth placed in our book, indeed, we have not placed in this book other than transmissions in which every transmitter has met five requirements; (1) al-ʿAdāla (righteous conduct) and magnificently concealed [from misdeed] in the religion. (2) al-Ṣīdaq (trustworthy) and familiar [student] in the ḥadīth. (3) al-ʿAql (rational) when he transmits the ḥadīth. (4) al-ʿIlm (Knowledge) about the meaning of what he is transmitting. (5) al-Mutaʿarrī (does not contain) with the tadlīs (concealed omissions in the isnād).

It has been correctly posited that early ḥadīth theory of authenticity revolved almost entirely around the examination of isnāds. And Ibn Ḥibbān exactly demonstrates no exception to this account, for the scope of his formulas applied a great stress on criticism of the chain of transmission, which meant criticism of the various transmitters through whom the report had been transmitted. He bases his analysis of ḥadīth on the comparison of different narrations from which he selects the most solid and reliable versions. As a centre of science of the ḥadīth, the theory of authenticity is not a simple memory exercise but rather a quest for truth. Correspondingly, the notion of truth is synonymous with authentic ḥadīth which refers to a historical period i.e. the prophetic era.

From the theory of authenticity, Ibn Ḥibbān advances to construct a structure that he termed “al-Taqāsim wa al-Anwāʿ” (the divisions and the categories) and it is also the title of his book. This title presents a very clear conception of the degree to which his work is a collection dealing with the body of ḥadīth by the divisions and the categories which are interpreted with legal theories. Its higher objective is first to study the ḥadīth, especially on the basis of the texts, supply a set of principles and support for the solutions. He criticizes those who were discovering for the upside down or the inductive approach using the term al-qiyās al-mankūs (the inverted analogy). Although he does not present a single name of an individual or group throughout epistemological arguments, he is inverting Ḥanafite’s logic. Certainly he argues that the Prophet’s word or action was itself ḍalīl (authoritative source), not istidlāl (interpretive reasoning). In that respect, the Prophet’s position is unique and cannot be occupied by others. For all these, Ibn Ḥibbān credits al-Shāfiʿī’s opinions and

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630 Christopher Melchert, “Bukhārī and Early Ḥadīth Criticism”, 10-11.
631 Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān, 1/151.
632 Jonathan Brown, “Criticism of the Proto-ḥadīth Canon, al-Dāraquṭnī’s Adjustments of the Ṣaḥīḥayn”, 12
633 Christopher Melchert, “Bukhārī and Early Ḥadīth Criticism”, 8; Eerik Dickinson, The Development of Early Sunnite Ḥadīth Criticism, 105.
634 In the opinion of Asma Hilali, when a ḥadīth scholar uses the usually equivocal concept of truth in their rigorous scientific demonstrations, he is addressing not the technical knowledge of a ḥadīth expert but rather his belief. See Asma Hilali, “The Notion of Truth in Ḥadīth Sciences”, 37.
works from which he borrowed every ḥasad (revealed case) and every ṣarf (assimilated case). It will emerge that, in many instances, Ibn Ḥibbān follows al-Shāfiʿī’s terminology of hermeneutic techniques.

In the introduction, Ibn Ḥibbān elaborates the Sunnah structure as it contains 400 categories under 5 divisions; the division on commands has 110 categories, the division on prohibitions has 110 categories, the division of formatives has 80 categories, the division of permissible has 50 categories, and the division of prophetic actions specific to him contains 50 categories. If this is so, it may be said that each original volume is parallel with five divisions made by Ibn Ḥibbān for his Ṣaḥīḥ. He sets forth the divisions as follows

Thus I saw it [the authentic hadīth] divides into five equals and concurrent divisions without inconsistency:
The first one: The obligation that Allāh commands for His slaves for it And secondly: The forbidden that Allāh prohibits His slaves from it And thirdly: His statement that which required for knowing it And fourthly: The permissions that permitted committing it And fifthly: Prophet’s actions that he alone acts upon it.

Additionally, in relation with the ḥadīth rearrangement, Ibn Balabān reveals it as follows

For example, if the ḥadīth is from the eleventh categories, it facing like (11). Then if it was from the first division, the number uncovered from any signs as you have already seen. And if it was from the second division, it be like a linewidth under the number (11). And if it was from the third division, it be like an upper line (11). And if it was from the fourth division, it be like the number between two lines (11). And if it was from the fifth division, it be like the two upper lines (11).

In his article, Scott Lucas rightly says “there exists a second Sunnī tradition of legal theory, virtually unstudied, that runs parallel to the mainstream one.” That means that the

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635 Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān, 5/497.
636 Ibid, 1/105-149.
637 Faawwaluhā: al-Awāmir allatī amara Allāh ʿibādahu bihā
Wa-l-thānī: al-Nawāhī allatī nahā Allāh ʿibadahu bihā
Wa-l-thālith: Ikhbāruhu ʿanmā ihtīja ilā ma ʿrifatihā
Wa-l-rābiʿ: al-Ibāhāt allatī ubīha irtikabuhā
earliest surviving articulation of legal theory in al-Bukhārī, Ibn Ḥibbān, Ibn Ḥibbān, Ibn Ḥibbān, Ibn Ḥibbān, Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī and many others works of ḥadīth scholars has been overshadowed by the dominant tradition of usūl al-fiqh. The legal theory sketched out by Ibn Ḥibbān in his introduction has eluded the attention of contemporary scholarship easily because his opinions and legal theories seem to be absent from the Islamic legal tradition itself.

Undoubtedly Ibn Ḥibbān offers his own conception of the Sunnah, a more systematic methodology of interpretation of the ḥadīth. One of basic tasks of Ibn Ḥibbān is to anchor the legal principle in the Prophet’s life. He asserts that the purposes of the divisions are that they; firstly, enlighten a disputed report among the scholars and its figurative meaning (taʿwīl). Secondly, these divisions will assist most of the people in the basic task of understanding the meanings and yield a purposeful interpretation.640 The point to be noted is that he differentiates the Sunnah that would carry no special authority for other Muslims with the Sunnah that has a different implication in the law. It is proposed that the scope of the Sunnah comprises of its obligatory, forbidden, formative, permitted, and exclusive. Significantly, later jurists debated whether it is possible for the Prophet to engage in ijtihād (independent judgement), an activity which would rise to mere fallible opinion, not to Sunna.641 For Jasser Auda writes, “it could be actions exclusive to him out of prophethood considerations or actions that he did out of custom (ʿāda) of a ‘man living in seventh century’s Arabia’.”642 The Sunna implies a ruling and all schools of law accept it as legislation on condition that it does not fall under actions that are specific to the Prophet.

Moreover, when a ḥadīth had been evaluated led back explicitly to the Prophet, and had been classified the relevance and degree of applicability of any given rule or precedent according to the divisions and categories, Ibn Ḥibbān made it available in organized book chapters. It should be remembered that many of the chapters of ḥadīth books, at least from the time of al-Muwaṭṭāʾ of Mālik, are organized around legal topics. These tarjama (headings or titles) are taken over directly by the early law books and show that ḥadīth collections are proto-lawbooks as it was al-Shāfiʿī’s works in the case of Ibn Ḥibbān. It is, therefore, no surprise that the development of legal studies and the madrasa oriented to a specific jurist or law school should immediately follow the flowering of ḥadīth studies in

640Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān, 1/149.
this eastern Islamic era. Ḥadīth reports of aḥkām (assessment) are characteristically those that indicate in which category a given act belongs. Ibn Ḥibbān also simply announces his juridical positions in the tarjama, then related the ḥadīth that support them. Ḥadīth reports are not just authorities corroborating his assessments, but they practically are the judgement. It is with this sense he cites al-Shāfi‘ī’s famous quotation “if the ḥadīth is authentic, that is my madhhab (school).”

Ibn Ḥibbān not only evaluates and insures its authenticity as much as possible, but also smooths out its numerous apparent contradictions. Most cases of ḥadīth contradiction are because of apparently missing context. For example, Ibn Ḥibbān represents the method of jamʿ (conciliation) for harmonizing in the case of two ḥadīth that discusses whether the Prophet was following Abu Bakr in the prayer or not. In any event, the method of al-naskh (abrogation) and the method of al-tarjīḥ (elimination) in the Ṣaḥīḥ treat a ḥadīth no differently, apart from the discussion of what statement repeals which, there is a clear reference to the importance of the chronological order taken into account. The following description of Ibn Ḥibbān’s appraisal narration is typical of the method of naskh: “The ḥadīth of Ṭalq b. ʿAlī is the abrogated report because his coming to the Prophet was in the first year of hijra when people built the Prophet’s mosque... And Abu Hurayra becomes Muslim in the seventh year of hijra, indicating that Abu Hurayra’s report occurred seven years after Ṭalq b. ʿAlī report.” As the above example shows, narrations were associated with specific transmitters, whose version of that Prophetic tradition could then be contrasted with other transmitter’s narrations.

Towards the end of the introduction, Ibn Ḥibbān presented the most fundamental question to be asked here; what is the source he selected for these five divisions as being of salient importance to the Sunnah? In the legal theory books, apart from each word of the Qurʾān, the Sunnah is generally accepted under the heading of revelation. Therefore the

644 Christopher Melchert, “Traditionist-Jurisprudents and the Framing of Islamic Law,” 388.
645 Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān, 5/497.
647 Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān, 4/219.
650 Jonathan Brown, “Criticism of the Proto-ḥadīth Canon, al-Dāraquṭnī’s Adjustments of the Ṣaḥīhayn”, 12
651 See Bernard Weiss, The Search for God’s Law, 161; Tariq Ramadan, Radical Reform: Islamic Ethics and Liberation, (USA: Oxford University Press, 2008), 129.
status of *khabar* (report) or ḥadīth that constitute the Sunnah has continued to command intense attention among scholars. The statement delivered by Ibn Ḥibbān is undoubtedly one of the most under discussed in the field of classical and contemporary ḥadīth when he reveals:

> The entireties of reports [of the Prophet] are *aḥad* reports, because there exists no report from the Prophet narrated by two upstanding transmitters, each one of them from two upstanding transmitters until it ends at the Prophet. When it be impossible that is invalid. It has been proven that all the reports are *aḥad* reports. And those who uphold on acceptance of *aḥad* reports have intended to abandon all of the Sunnah. Since no Sunnah has been transmitted except the *aḥad*, whoever rejects the *aḥad* ḥadīth has denied the entire Sunnah. 

The basic meaning of *khabar* denotes “a piece of information” or it constitutes a self-contained narrative unit which depicts an incident. Ibn Ḥibbān uses the term *khabar* and ḥadīth as synonyms. In recent works in ḥadīth scholarship, the term *khabar al-aḥad* has been applied to a report going back to one single authority in the *isnād*. However, in *uṣūl al-fiqh* the *khabar* is treated from a number of perspectives, but what concerns us here is the perspective of the number of transmissions. Throughout the history, the term *khabar al-wāḥid, khabar al-infirād, and khabar al-khassa* are used to refer to *khabar aḥad* as well. According to al-Nawawi, the first scholar who writes about the *khabar al-wāḥid* is al-Shāfiʿī. Al-Shāfiʿī dedicates two chapters in his *al-Risāla* and argues that *khabar al-wāḥid* constitutes a *hujja* (argument) if it meets certain conditions.

In the counterpart, *mutawātir* is used to refer a report “transmitted frequently” in every generation. The classification of a report to *aḥad* (single) and *mutawātir* (by a number of people in each generation) is propounded primarily in the books of legal theory or theology (*kalām*). Yet the discussion on *aḥad* and *mutawātir* are not only kept within the confines of the number of transmitters; those in which *tawātur lafẓī* (the verbatim *mutawātir* transmission of a text), became distinguished from *tawātur maʿnawī* (transmission according only to the meaning), *mutawātir* provides necessary knowledge while *aḥad* provides conjectural knowledge and the rest have been thoroughly explained in the books of legal

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652 Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān, 1/156.
654 *EI2*, 4/896.
656 Al-Nawawi, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-Sharḥ al-Nawawī, (Cairo: Al-Azhar, 1929), 1/131
657 *EI2*, 4/896.
theory or theology. For then Huseyin Hansu relates this distinction of *aḥad* and *mutawātir* is alleged referring back to Wāṣil b. ‘Atā’ (d. 131/748), the ostensible founder of Mu’ tazīlī theology.\(^{658}\) However al-Shāfīʿī rejects this dichotomy as he argues in the chapter of *al-Risāla*.\(^{659}\)

In general, the *mutawātir* reports have been explained in chapters or sections that are frequently excessive in length by the legal theorist because it’s important discussion of epistemological certainty. For instance, al-Ghazālī’s *al-Mustasaḵfā* treats *mutawātir* in both a topic from jurisprudence and a topic from theology (as in the theory of knowledge) and Bernard Weiss has analysed its conditions. Al-Ghazālī plainly indicates that the conditions are: (1) the statement about the past event must be based on certainty and empirical observation; that is to say, it must be true in the sense of being empirically based; and (2) the number of persons making the statement (or number of occurrences of the statement) must be adequate.\(^{660}\) However, there is no consensus concerning the requisite number of transmitters in the *mutawātir*. Al-Ghazali rejects the attempt by others to set any number and holds that this number is known only to God. Bernard Weiss adds that “One does not argue one’s way from adequacy of number to the truth of the statement. The reverse, in fact, is the case.”\(^{661}\)

Moreover, the classification of ḥadīth to *aḥad* and *mutawātir* did not exist in the discourse of ḥadīth scholars until the fifth/eleventh century. It also has been discussed in detail by Ḥātim al-ʿAwnī who has articulated the origin of the classification in the field of the science of ḥadīth transmission.\(^{662}\) He suggests al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī who was the first ḥadīth scholar to use this classification influenced by legal theorist understanding. Huseyin asserts the dichotomy of *aḥad* and *mutawātir* began as an epistemological exercise in the fields of legal theory and theology and was later applied to the ḥadīth sciences.\(^{663}\) From the time of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī onwards, a remarkable amount books sciences of the ḥadīth transmission apply this classification which led to some ambiguities. For example, Ibn Ḥajar has provided a definition of *mutawātir*: “a transmission by a group of transmitters on the

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663 Huseyin Hansu, “Notes on the Term Mutawātir and Its Reception in Ḥadīth Criticism”, 406.
authority of another group of transmitters from the beginning of the transmission until its end and this in every generation.”

Nevertheless, to this point, analyses by Nūr al-Dīn ‘Itr, Ḥātim al-ʿAwnī, Juynboll, Huseyin Hansu and many others have shown that there is no ḥadīth that has been transmitted through two transmitters on each level of the isnād. Ibn al-Salah similarly did not include the mutawātir concept in his comprehensive work and states there are no mutawātir in the ḥadīth literatures. Ṣubhī al-Ṣāliḥ says further that only the Qurʾān has been transmitted through multiple chains of transmitters. Earlier before Ibn Ḥibbān concluded that the Sunnah is entirely originated from the khabar al-ḥadīd. Following this, Al-Hazimi emphasizes that Ibn Ḥibbān’s conclusion seems to be the finest argument against later Muʿtazilites. Therefore Ibn Ḥibbān asserts that whoever rejects the single authority has denied the body of the Sunnah.

**Conclusion**

Ibn Ḥibbān chooses to conclude the issue of khabar al-ḥadīd through the theories of definition and syllogistics. In this theory, it was emphasized that the Sunnah must be seen as proceeding from khabar al-ḥadīd or pre-existent axiomatic knowledge to new concepts by means of definitions. If we know, for instance, what ‘khabar’ and ‘ḥadīd’ are, we can form

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667 Juynboll, “(Re)Appraisal of Some Technical Terms in Ḥadīth Science”, *Islamic Law and Society,* vol. 8, no. 3, Ḥadīth and Fiqh (2001), 342
668 Huseyin Hansu, “Notes on the Term Mutawātir and Its Reception in Ḥadīth Criticism”, 394.
a concept of ‘Sunnah’, which Ibn Ḥibbān defined as “kullu khabar al-aḥad (the entirety of reports are aḥad).” It is through definitions, then, that the concept of Sunnah is formed by Ibn Ḥibbān.672

From another perspective, we might say that Ibn Ḥibbān’s intention is to compose a legal theory book supported with a ḥadīth. Al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ ‘alā al-Taqāsim wa al-Anwā’ means “An Authentic Transmission for the Divisions and the Categories.” Throughout the introduction and contents of the Ṣaḥīḥ, it shows that Ibn Ḥibbān is unique among fourth/tenth century ḥadīth compilers for both his high standards of ḥadīth-transmitter criticism and his articulation of an unstudied set of divisions and categories that approach the topics in the classical legal theory tradition.673 This gigantic Ṣaḥīḥ could only advantageously be determined and its transmitters be appropriately evaluated with the holistic study of a number of technical terms in the science of ḥadīth transmission and the legal theory. Thus we conclude using his combined terminologies in both fields

They [ḥadīth scholars] clarified the mursal from the connected, the mawqūf from the munfaṣil, the abrogating from the abrogated, the decisive from the annulled, those explained from those undefined, the used from the neglected, the concise from the exhaustive, the binding from those which are set aside, the general from the particular, the proof from the text, the permissible from the forbidden, the unusual from the well-known, the obligatory from the guiding, the define from the promise, those with integrity from those that are impaired, the weak from those that are abandoned, the manner of what is acted upon, disclosing the unknown, what is altered of what is cut off, or reserved of what is falsely attributed, the signs of tadlīs (concealed omissions in the isnād) and what it contains of deceit.674

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672 In this theory, it was emphasized that, to avoid infinite regress, the mind must be seen as proceeding from some a priori or pre-existent axiomatic knowledge to new concepts (taṣawwurāt) by means of definitions. See Wael Hallaq, Ibn Taymiya Against Logicians, (Oxford University Press, 1993), xv.


674 Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān, 1/101.
CHAPTER FOUR

IBN ḤĪBBĀN AS A ḤADĪTH CRITIC

The aim of this chapter is to identify Ibn Ḥībbān as one of the most significant master ḥadīth critics in the Sunni tradition. It begins by carrying out the history of ḥadīth criticism until the time of Ibn Ḥībbān and the techniques that the early critics employed to determine a transmitter. Although a comprehensive analysis of whole of Ibn Ḥībbān’s biographical dictionary of impugned transmitters namely Ma‘rifāt al-Majrūḥīn wa al-Dhu ‘afā’ min al-Muḥaddithīn would be very beneficial, this chapter only concentrates on the introduction of the book. This task involves analysing Ibn Ḥībbān’s justification for the employment of ḥadīth criticism in his own day, early authorities to his contemporaries, and some of the reports which may be described as impugning of a transmitter.

4.1 Ḥadīth Criticism in the Biographical Dictionaries

Ḥadīth criticism flourished in the Islamic world since the first century of hijrah, and remains a compelling characteristic of Muslim cultural life today. It was not only those who were formally ḥadīth scholars who discussed ḥadīth criticism, but interpreters of the Quran, jurists, theologians, historians and others all made important contributions to the topic. When trying to determine the origin of ḥadīth criticism, the first question usually asked here is what date represents the beginning of ḥadīth criticism in Muslim scholarship? It is impossible to answer this question, since theoretical questions were brought up during Prophet’s lifetime.675

In Muslim’s Kitāb al-Tamyīz editorial introduction, A’zami depicts the historical process of ḥadīth criticism by carving three eras across a vast geographical area.676 He selects the era of the Companions and classifies it as the first phase of ḥadīth criticism of the nascent Sunni tradition (Ibn Ḥībbān states that the last Companion who died in Makkah was Abū al-Ṭufayl Ṭāmir b. Wathila in 107/725).677 The second phase extends from the Successors’ era until the mid to fourth/tenth century in which ḥadīth scholarship was not only established but proliferated. And from the mid of fourth/tenth century onwards is the final phase of

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Nabia Abbott, Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri II: Quranic Commentary and Tradition, 73.
676 See the introduction by A’zami in Muslim, Kitāb al-Tamyīz, ed. M. Mustafā A’zami, (Riyadh: Sharika al-Ṭibā’a al-ʿArabiyya al-Suʿūdīyya al-Maḥdīdā, 1982).
677 Ibn Ḥībbān, Kitāb Mashāhīr ʿUlamāʾ al-ʿArab, 36.
ḥadīth criticism. One point related to understanding the process of ḥadīth criticism, which is particularly relevant to contemporary readers, has been highlighted by Tarif Khalidi:

In general, ḥadīth scholars of the first hundred and fifty years did not believe that they were creating a new science but simply preserving for the community a record, normative, didactic, or homiletic, of Muḥammad and the drama of the early years of the community’s history. They were animated by an essentially conservative spirit which tended to view the past as a process of steady decline and their own days as inferior in morality and knowledge to the days of Muḥammad and of his four ‘rightly guided’ successors … In passing on the wisdom of ancestors these scholars believed that they were transmitters rather than creator. But the process of transmission became, as so often in the history of cultures, creation through transmission.678

According to Shibli Numani (d. 1916), matn criticism occurred as early as the time of the Companions.679 A’zami brings under one heading ‘comparison’ as the method of early ḥadīth criticism in the era of the Companions. For example, Abū Bakr compared Mughīrah’s statement with that of Muḥammad b. Maslamah al-Anṣārī’s affirmation upon the issue of the inheritance of a grandmother.680 Abū Bakr also preferred to remain silent rather than relate on the authority of the Prophet a ḥadīth about which he had the slightest doubt. ‘Umar was strict not only with his own ḥadīth but also with that of others. ‘Uthmān was reported saying that it was not permissible for anyone to relate ḥadīth that he had not already heard in the time of Abū Bakr and ‘Umar.681

It is obviously ḥadīth criticism not commenced with isnād criticism since ḥadīth may have had its origins in a time when the body of the isnād had not yet come into existence.682 Nabia Abbott points out a tradition traced to ‘Alī in which the role of the matn is placed ahead of that of the isnād. It was matn alone that circulated among the Companions, who frequently compared and pooled their ḥadīths in the mosque session of ‘Ubāda b. al-Sāmit al-Anṣārī (d. 34/654).683 And she also considers it was not until after the fitna (First Civil War)684 that the Companions began to be questioned as to corroborative sources and the accuracy of their traditions. Ḥadīth criticism is classified approaches; (1) matn i.e. the content of the ḥadīth, (2) isnād or the chain of transmission, i.e. furnished biographical

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678 Tarif Khalidi, Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period, 25.
680 M. Mustafa A’zami, Studies in Ḥadīth Methodology and Literature, 69.
682 G. H. A. Juynboll, Muslim Tradition, 161.
683 Nabia Abbott, Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri II: Quranic Commentary and Tradition, 75.
information on the ḥadīth transmitters as a basis for evaluation of their reliability. Also, the investigation certain pairs of transmitters as to establish the continuity of their basic link.685

The notion of matn or content criticism was often used as part of a ḥadīth criticism connoting the rejection of certain ḥadīths without acceptable meaning. This approach has been discussed roughly in the previous chapter and sometimes allegedly claimed that ḥadīth scholars did not focus their attention on developing a rule by which the matn could be analysed.686 For instance, Khaled Abou el-Fadl quotes Ibn Khalḍūn criticizing the inclination of some scholars to overlook the historical context in the process of identifying the authorial statement of the Prophet.687

Nevertheless, Brown holds the opposing view that ḥadīth scholars looked only at the isnād and not the matn to discern the authenticity of ḥadīth. He identifies at least fifteen examples of al-Bukhārī, Muslim, al-Fasāwī, al-Juzājānī, Ibn Khuzayma and Ibn Ḥiibbān sensitivities to anachronism and logical inconsistency applied in the matn of ḥadīth.688 Earlier before those scholars, al-Shāfiʿī in his Ikhtilāf al-Ḥadīth suggested that it is possible to reconcile two reliable ḥadīths whose meanings seem incompatible. However, when the content of a ḥadīth proved contradictory with what al-Shāfiʿī regarded as the establish truth, he resorted to criticize its isnād. In the same way to ḥadīth scholars, they blame a problem in the isnād.689 And it is a normal practise when there were two contradictory ḥadīth on the

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687 Ibn Khalḍūn describes in his famous al-Muqaddimah: “The (writing of history) requires numerous sources and greatly varied knowledge. It also requires a good speculative mind and thoroughness. (Possession of these two qualities) leads the historian to the truth and keeps him from slips and errors. If he trusts historical information in its plain transmitted form and has no clear knowledge of the principles resulting from custom, the fundamental facts of politics, the nature of civilization, or the conditions governing human social organization, and if, furthermore, he does not evaluate remote or ancient material through comparison with near or contemporary material, he often cannot avoid stumbling and slipping and deviating from highroad of truth. Historians, Qur’an commentators and leading transmitter form, without regard for its value. They did not check them with the principles underlying such historical situations, nor did they compare them with similar material. Also, they did not probe (more deeply) with the yarstick of philosophy, with the help of knowledge of the nature of things, or with the help of speculation and historical insight. Therefore, they strayed from the truth and found themselves lost in the desert of baseless assumptions and errors.” Ibn Khalḍūn, The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History, trans. Franz Rosenthal, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958), 1/15-16. See also Khaled Abou El Fadl, Speaking in God’s Name: Islamic Law, Authority and Women, (Oxford: One World, 2005), 109.
689 Ibid, 184.
same legal question, the one presented with the most lines of transmission would be accepted as evidence to regulate the law.690

The subject of conflict within the matn and attempted reconciliation between them were further discussed by ḥadīth scholars after al-Shāfiʿī. These include works such as Ibn Qutayba’s (d. 271/884) Taʾwil Mukhtalāf al-Ḥadīth, Abū Jaʿfar Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ṭahāwī’s (d. 321/933) Mushkil al-Āthār, Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Hasan al-Isfahānī’s (d. 406/1015) Mushkil al-Ḥadīth wa Bayānuh and etc.691 Yet in the fifth/eleventh century, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī explained that there exists an entire category of ḥadīths that are immediately clear as forgeries on the basis of their contents alone.692 Brown claims that the list of content criteria originated from al-Khaṭīb influenced almost every significant ḥadīth scholars who wrote on ḥadīth criticism after him. For the record, the first systematic discussion and application of content criticism among ḥadīth scholars did not appear until Ibn al-Qayyim’s (d. 751/1350) al-Manār al-Munīf fī al-Ṣahīh wa l-ḍaʿīf.693

It is undeniable that the methodological vision of the early ḥadīth scholars to a great extent revolved around the examination of isnād. The dependence of ḥadīth on the isnād was one of the basic assumptions of the classical understanding of ḥadīth and consequently an elaborate system was developed to evaluate the authenticity of the isnād. When the isnād reaches back to the Prophet, there is clearly an implicit claim for authenticity, the individual links or ascriptions simply authorize the accuracy of the matn. Ḥadīth scholars set their efforts to scrutinize the series of names linking their time with that of the first and oldest authority, i.e. mostly the Prophet and to focus as well on transmitters influence over an evaluation of the whole report.694

690 In a wide lens, scholars would also reject one source of knowledge and the other is given priority. For further discussion in the case of revelation and reason that contradict each other see Frank Griffel, “Al-Ghazālī at His Most Rationalist: The Universal Rule for Allegorically Interpreting Revelation (al-Qānūn al-Kullī fī t-Tawīl)” in Islam and Rationality: The Impact of al-Ghazālī, vol. 1 ed. Georges Tamer, (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2015), 89.


692 These consist of reports that either; (1) al-ʿuqūl (reason) rejects as impossible, such as the notion that there is no Creator, (2) contradict the Qurʾān, the massively transmitted Sunna of the Prophet (al-Sunna al-Mutawāṭira) or the consensus of the Muslim community, (3) are transmitted by limited narrations but address a topic so important for Muslim that, if the ḥadīth were truly the Prophet’s words, it would have been much more widely transmitted, (4) or recount events so momentous that if the report were true it would have been more widely transmitted. Jonathan Brown, “The Rules of Matn Criticism, there are No Rules,” 362.

693 Jonathan Brown, “How We Know Early Ḥadīth Critics Did Matn Criticism?” 145.

694 The study of the transmitter has been defined by B. Scarcia Amoretti, “… [It is] the science devoted to the study of the persons figuring in isnāds, with the purpose of establishing their moral qualities (and thus
In general we find the critical output of ḥadīth scholars was confined to the extensive magnum opus they devoted to identifying and evaluating riǰāl (transmitter) or examining various narrations of ḥadīths for īlal (technical flaws) not associated with their meanings.695 Both terms riǰāl and isnād used interchangeably with the term isnād criticism and riǰāl criticism contain of necessity numerous references to īlal, while īlal studies are in fact riǰāl works analysing (the absence of) certain links among them.696 Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal’s biographical dictionary that is Kitāb al- īlal wa Maʾrīfat al-Riǰāl reflects both approaches in its title, however, there is not yet discernible an alphabetical arrangement of the riǰāl treated.

According to Tarif Khalidi, the isnād criticism was particularly suited to controversy because it forced evaluation of what constitutes a man’s reputation e.g. trustworthy or untrustworthy.697 For Aʿzami notes, “One finds that a father graded down his own son, a son criticized his father, a brother criticized his own kin and friends criticized their dear ones without any fear or favour except the fear of Allah”.698 And ḥadīth scholars were responsive of the fact that evaluating a man’s reputation is a very controversial issue. In the manner that al-Nawawī says the jarḥ and the taʿdīl are made lawful for the protection of the religion.699 Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī also has discussed the controversy at some length.700

Ibn Ḥajāj quotes from Ibn Ḥibbān’s al-Thiqāt who suggested that Shuʿba b. al-Ḥajjāj (d. 160/776) was the first to scrutinize ḥadīth transmitters in Iraq or rather as it turned out in the entire Muslim world.701 Shuʿba was followed in this technique by Yaḥyā b. Saʿīd al-

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695 Ibid.
697 Tarif Khalidi, Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period, 25.
698 Mustafa Aʿzami, Studies in Hadīth Methodology and Literature, 63
699 al-Nawawī, al-Taqrīb (with commentary al-Taḍrib), 2/298.
700 Al-Khaṭīb says: “Some people […] have criticized the commenting by the experts among our imams and the people of knowledge from our ancestors that so-and-so transmitter is weak, and that so-and-so is not reliable, and whatever is similar to that, and they consider that as backbiting those about whom these comments are made if that fault [really] is found in them, and as slander if that fault is not found in them. Their ḥadīth [that they base this opinion on] is the ḥadīth of Abū Hurayra that the Messenger of God (may the peace and blessings of God be upon him) was asked: What is backbiting? He said: To mention about your brother what he dislikes. The person asked: What if what I say [really] in my brother? The Prophet (may the peace and blessings of God be upon him) said: If what you say is in your brother, then you have backbitten him, and if it is not in him, then you have slandered him. What they say is not valid: for the people of knowledge are unanimous that a report should not be accepted except from an intelligent, truthful person who can be trusted in what he says. In that there is evidence of permissibility of jarḥ of the one who is not truthful in his narration. Also the Sunnah of the Prophet (may the peace and blessings of God be upon him) has come clearly attesting to what we have stated, and opposing the opinion of those who differ from us”. See Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, al-Kifāya fī Ilm al-Riḍāya, (Hyderabad: Dāʿira al-Maʿārif al-Uthmaniyya, 1357), 37-38.
701 Ibn Ḥajār adds that Shuʿba b. al-Ḥajjāj was the first to scrutinize ḥadīth transmitters in Iraq. See Ibn Ḥajār, Tahdīb al-Tahdhib, (Hyderabad: Dāira al-Maʿārif al-Niʿāmiyya, 1325H), 4/345.
Qaṭṭān (d. 198/813), Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and many others. The task evaluating transmitters is more complex as the number of intermediaries expanded in the second/eight century.

Yet critics of this era were dealing primarily with people they knew directly or with people whom their teachers knew. The volume of the testimonials by them increased with the passage of time and mainly orally-transmitting until the writing of criticism works began late in the second/eight century, and grew in scope in the third/ninth century. Their activities were eventually put down in writing, thus giving rise to a new genre of literature that of the biographical dictionaries of transmitters’ criticism works.

For an entry of transmitter, in the first place, critics determine exactly the transmitter’s full name and place of origin or the place his ḥadīth circulated. The structure continues with a list of men the transmitter transmitted from and another of those who transmitted from him follows. In critics’ selection of material, one or more of transmitter’s ḥadīth noted; then an incident or testimonial is quoted which reflected moral qualities and doctrinal leanings. Sometimes critics conclude the entry with his date and place of death. Primarily, the documentary and testimonial evidence on the men are results achieved by a critic.

Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ advises the students of ḥadīth mastering the two major works in this genre that are al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr of Bukhārī and the Kitāb al-Jarḥ wa al-Taʿdīl of Ibn Abī Hātim. According to Juynboll, these two works were followed by a number of others which as far as possible encompassed the information contained in already existing ones.

703 Ghassan Abdul Jabbar, Makers of Islamic Civilization: Bukhārī, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007), 93-94.
705 The biographical materials are drawn from a number of genres and include varied items since literary traditions were exceptionally rich in this particular subject. The Books of names, paidonymics, nicknames, history of cities and many others which supplied critics with evidence on each transmitter or helped him to identify each transmitter.
706 Kāna bi-Baghdād (he was in Baghdad); Hadīthuhu fi al-Shāmiyyīn (His ḥadīth [circulated] among the people of Sham); ka ānahu sakana Makka (He seems to have lived in Makkah). See Tārīkh al-Kabīr 1/281, 286.
709 G. H. A. Juynboll, Muslim Tradition, 134.
Al-Bukhārī and Ibn Abī Ḥātim were able to build upon the work of the preceding generation of master critics, some of whom were their direct teachers or father.\textsuperscript{710} Hence it is not a coincidence that both books of transmitters’ criticism have obtained the high-ranking as the most authoritative books in this genre.

It seems reasonable to identify an evolution in isnād, Ḱil, or rijāl criticism in parallel with the development of strategies for collecting and classifying ḥadīth. Indeed some hadīth scholars like Muslim, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn Ḥibbān, and Ibn ‘Adī give a general survey of the development of isnād criticism from its beginning down to their own era.\textsuperscript{711} Apart from theoretical and polemical issues, the inclusion of authoritative critics-list is among the important themes in the introduction of their hadīth collections or biographical dictionaries. On that account, Ḥātim al-‘Aw纳税 suggests to the contemporary reader three following books as the sources of the list of the critics whose opinions are accepted in rijāl criticism; Dhikr man yu’tamad qawluh fi l-jarḥ wa l-ta’dīl of al-Dhahabī, al-Mutakallimūn fi al-Rijāl of al-Sakhāwī, and al-Muzakkān li-ruwat al-Akhbār ‘inda Ibn Abī Ḥātim of Hīshām b. ‘Abd al-‘Aziz al-Hallāf.\textsuperscript{712}

A quick glance in al-Dhahabī’s work shows that he divides them into three classes of critics – severe (muta’annit), fair (mu’tadil), and lenient (mutasahul) – and names a select few critics to each of them.\textsuperscript{713} After mentioning the classification of severe, al-Dhahabī elaborates further, “if [severe] to approve someone, thus you have to bite on to his word with your back molar teeth …”\textsuperscript{714} Synonymously Juynboll used the classification throughout the stage of describing a transmitter as he states, “The lenient Ibn Ḥibbān called him [Shihāb b. Khirash] da ‘if’. “\textsuperscript{715} Just earlier before Juynboll offers a list of forty-seven rijāl critics and

\textsuperscript{710} Kitāb al-Jarḥ wa‘l-Ta’dīl is an advantageous early point of supply for a comparative analysis of Ibn Ma’in and Ibn Ḥanbal’s critical opinions. Just as Ibn Abī Ḥātim has brought together a lot of their opinions from a mixture sources. Scott Lucas, Constructive Critics, Ḥadīth Literature, and the Articulation of Sunni Islam, 287.

\textsuperscript{711} Zubayr Siddiqi, Ḥadīth Literature Its Origin, Development & Special Features, 93.

\textsuperscript{712} Ḥātim al-‘Aw纳税, al-Ta’sil li’-Ibn al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta’dīl, (Makkah: Dar ‘Alīm al-Fawā’id, 1421 AH), 23.


\textsuperscript{714} Al-Dhahabī, Dhikr man yu’tamad qawluh fi l-jarḥ wa l-ta’dīl, in Arba’ Rasa’il il fi ‘Ulam al-Ḥadīth, 171.

\textsuperscript{715} Juynboll, “Muslim’s Introduction to his Sāḥibī,” 278.
their books that are arranged in chronological order. He assumes that their books or treatises may have been at Ibn Ḥajar’s disposal during the composition of *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*. And his analysis shows that many critics were active in more than one region, the Iraqis seem to outnumber the Northeasterners by two to one.

Lucas has scrutinized seven lists and three *Ṭabaqāt* presentations consisting of the names of a set of critics. These ten sources generate ninety-two names and has been arranged into three chronological periods; the first periods extends from 100-200 AH (718-815), the second one from 200-300 (815-912), and the final one from 300-400 (912-1009). Within these three periods, Lucas later divided into tripartite hierarchy or qualitative grades of critics namely primary, secondary, and ‘other’, on the basis of the frequency by which each individual scholar is mentioned in the ten sources.

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717 Christopher Melchert, *Bukhārī and Early Ḥadīth Criticism*, footnote no. 62.
719 It consists of three eras of scholars each of which is divided further into chronological *ṭabaqa*, and has been presented by Lucas in the following way;

### Period 1 (100-200 AH)

**Ṭabaqa 1**
Primary Critics: Ibn Maʿīn, ʿAlī b. al-Madīnī, Ibn Ḥanbal

**Ṭabaqa 2**

### Period 2 (200-300 AH)

**Ṭabaqa 3**
Primary Critics: Ibn al-Mubārak, Wākī, Yahyā b. Saʿīd al-Qaṭṭān, Ibn Mahdī
Secondary Critics: al-Shāfiʿī, Abū Mushīr ʿAbd al-ʿAla b. Mushīr

**Ṭabaqa 4**
Primary Critics: al-Zuhrī, al-Aʿmash

**Ṭabaqa 5**
Primary Critics: al-Bukhārī, Abū Zurʿa al-Rāzī, Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī
Secondary Critics: Ibrāhīm al-Jūzajānī, Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj, al-Nāṣīʿī

### Period 3 (300-400 AH)

**Ṭabaqa 6**
Primary Critics: Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn ʿAdī
Secondary Critics: al-ʿUqaylī, Ibn Ḥibbān

**Ṭabaqa 7**
In essence, the purpose of these critics is to establish characteristically a transmitter in the *isnād*. One of the second century critics, Ibn al-Mubarak (d. 181/797) has put into effect a criteria of transmitter, “the transmitter must be a person who prays in congregation, does not drink *nabīd*,” does not tell lies and does not suffer from any mental disqualification.” Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, al-Nawawī, Ibn Ḥajar, al-Suyūṭī and others had agreed almost unanimously that when a critic evaluates transmitters, he was concerned with two primary keys that are ‘*adāla* (integrity) and *dabṭ* (accuracy). With regards to the possessing ‘*adāla*, it denotes a transmitter’s awareness of his/her moral responsibility, free from guilt for major sins, and not prone to minor sins. On the other hand, *dabṭ* refers to the mental capacity of transmitters, linguistic ability and the accuracy of their transmissions.

One can assume the style for evaluating transmitters remained general and unstructured in the second century. Hereinafter the third century critics advanced for the two focuses of *rijāl* criticism that were the comparison testimonials which they inherited from earlier times and a series of technical terms or grades. By adopting comparison, a critic abridged an abundance of materials and through his selection and arrangement, he provided a context of his own designation. Mehmet Akif insists that it is quite usual to view the grades in general as it is subjective in nature and does not yield any consensus that can be measured in statistical terms. Nonetheless, grades were the most popular technique from the third century onwards and consisted of several dozen terms and expressions by different critics. A system of grading was worked out to place the binary of accepted and rejected comments of early critics. The most typically prominent of which were *thiqa* and *ḍaʿīf*. Despite the fact of poor preservation, Lucas pointed out that the emergence of these two terms connected

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720 Which could cause intoxication if kept for a long period of time.

721 Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, al-Kīfāya fī ‘*Ilm al-Riwa‘āya, 79.*


723 There is disagreement on the number of people required to attest to the integrity of a transmitter. Some scholars required the testimony of at least two critics, similar to the requirement of two testimonies in some legal cases. Others were satisfied with one person, drawing analogy with the acceptance of *ḥadīth aḥad*. See Amr Osman, “Adalat al-Ṣaḥāba: The Construction of a Religious Doctrine”; See also Daniel Brown, *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought*, (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 82.

724 The accuracy of transmitter comes to be recognized by the comparison of his transmission with others. See Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, *Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*, 106.

725 Mehmet Akif, “*Isnāds* and *Rijāl* Expertise in the Exegesis of Ibn Abī Ḥātim (327/939),” 156.
strongly with Shuʿba, Mālik and Ibn Ṭuyayna and in turn their students appear to have adopted them.\textsuperscript{726}

In the twenty-third chapter namely “The characteristic of those whose transmission is accepted and those transmission is rejected, and the allied subjects of impugning and discrediting, and certifying and accrediting,” Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ includes a discussion of the grades that was based on Ibn Abi Ḥātim’s four categories of accreditation and four categories of disapproval.\textsuperscript{727} Perhaps the most comprehensive analysis of the grades has been discussed by al-Suyūṭī in his commentary on al-Nawawī’s abridgement of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ’s \textit{Muqaddima} entitled \textit{Tadrīb al-Rāwī fī Sharḥ Taqrīb al-Nawawī}. Besides early critics’ grades, he includes the opinions of al-Dhahabī, al-ʿIraqi, and Ibn Ḥajar regarding of the grades not mentioned by al-Nawawī in his abridgement.\textsuperscript{728}

4.2 \textit{Maʿrifāt al-Majrūḥīn min al-Muḥaddithīn} of Ibn Ḥibbān

Although the most complete work of Ibn Ḥibbān’s grades for appraisal and critique namely \textit{al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr} is nowhere to be found nowadays, his contribution in this particular discipline still can be established from two other biographical dictionaries \textit{al-Thiqāt} and \textit{al-Majrūḥīn}. Ibn Ḥibbān says in his introduction to \textit{al-Majrūḥīn} that he will give a shortened version of \textit{Tārīkh} material that does not include the transmissions, narrations, and stories. Precisely he indicates that, “These two books \textit{al-Majrūḥīn} and \textit{al-Thiqāt} fulfil a need of abridgement from \textit{al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr}.”\textsuperscript{729} From the two titles one can understand that Ibn Ḥibbān separated two parties’ transmitters of accepted and rejected.

The process by which evaluating transmitters became customary practise culminates with an authentic ḥadīth critic like Ibn Ḥibbān who was devoted to biographical materials that not only are famously but controversially rejected. As the title \textit{al-Majrūḥīn min al-Muḥaddithīn} indicates, this work was intended to examine a group of ḥadīth transmitters who are commonly known by their impugning and weakness. The actual name of this biographical dictionary is “\textit{Maʿrifāt al-Majrūḥīn min al-Muḥaddithīn wa al-Ḍuʿafāʾ wa al-Matrūkīn},” as noticeably cited by the scribe in the conclusion of the book.\textsuperscript{730} However, it is

\textsuperscript{726} Scott Lucas, \textit{Constructive Critics, Ḥadīth Literature, and the Articulation of Sunni Islam}, 287.
\textsuperscript{727} Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, ‘Ulūm al-Ḥadīth, 122.
\textsuperscript{728} Al-Suyūṭī, \textit{Tadrīb al-Rāwī}, 890.
\textsuperscript{730} In the last page of the \textit{Majrūḥīn}, the scribe stated, “Complete book of \textit{Maʿrifāt al-Majrūḥīn wa al-Ḍuʿafāʾ wa al-Matrūkīn},” and finished its writing in month of Shaʿbān year 324. We heard it from Abī
often abbreviated to al-Majrūḥín or al-Ḍuʾafāʾ. Ibn Ḥibbān in his Ṣaḥīḥ collection regularly quotes al-Majrūḥín. The phrase “Maʿrifah” translates as gnosis, with the literal meaning “knowing.” The term “al-Majrūḥín,” “al-Ḍuʾafāʾ,” and “al-Matrūkīn” have come to be customarily applied to the “impugned,” “weak,” and “rejected” transmitters.

This book was a scholarly exercise undertaken by Ibn Ḥibbān to cull the reports by earlier critics who could be subordinated under the impugning of a transmitter. He places them together and so the Majrūḥin approximately contains about 1282 entries. The entries are brief as a rule, recording the subject’s teachers, his students and assessments of his merits as a transmitter from Yahyā b. Maʿīn, al-Bukhārī, Abū Zurʿa and other prominent critics. Apart from the data which are also found in its predecessors in this genre, the book constitutes a major enlargement in that it contains numerous examples of ḥadīth which the weak and rejected transmitters narrate that are supposed to have brought into circulation.

It is understandable that authorship of much early Islamic literature is ambiguous. The uncertainty of authorship continues so long as questions about authorship are not answered in detail in each peculiar case. In what follows, the attribution of al-Majrūḥin to Ibn Ḥibbān is made mainly in biographical dictionaries of ḥadīth criticism. But it is also found in works of history, ḥadīth collections, and in the indices of books. Ibn Ḥibbān’s work is credited by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, al-Dhahabī, Ibn Ḥajar, and al-Suyūṭī as the author of al-Majrūḥin in many biographical notices of transmitters on whose authority Ibn Ḥibbān transmitted accounts of ḥadīth. Moreover, Ibn Ḥibbān is credited by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, al-Dhahabī, Ibn Ḥajar, and al-Suyūṭī as the author of al-Majrūḥin in many biographical notices of transmitters on whose authority Ibn Ḥibbān transmitted accounts of the testimonials. During the time listing the biographical dictionaries of impugned transmitters in Mīzān al-Iʿtidāl, al-Dhahabī mentioned that Ibn Ḥibbān’s work was at his disposal.

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Eerik Dickinson. The Development of Early Sunnite Ḥadīth Criticism, 33.

Juynболліның EL2, “Ridjūl,” 8/516.


Ibn Ḥasāʾik, Tārīkh Dimashq 52/251.

The sources that explicitly attribute this work to him are: Taʿlīqāt of al-Dāraqūṭnī, al-ʿĀdāb of al-Khaṭīb, Mīzān al-Iʿtidāl of al-Dhahabī, al-Iʿlān of al-Sakhawī, Taʿdrīb of al-Suyūṭī, Tadhīb of Ibn Ḥajar.

Al-Dhahabī, Mīzān al-Iʿtidāl, 1/2.
More than that, Brockelmann and Sezgin list the available manuscripts of the *Maʾrifāt al-Majrūḥīn wa al-Ḍuʿajāʾ min al-Muḥaddithīn* and it is preserved either completely or in abbreviated versions across various places, including Istanbul, Cairo, as well as Madinah. Saad Eldin adds Hyderabad, Makkah and Rabat where manuscripts are also kept. And the first standard edition of *al-Majrūḥīn* was first printed in one volume, in Hyderabad with commentaries by al-Dāraquṭnī (d. 385/995). This was 'Azīz al-Qādirī’s edition which only reaches the transmitter “al-Ṣabāḥ b. Muḥammad.”

The surviving manuscripts of Ibn Ḥibbān’s *al-Majrūḥīn* in Cairo are available in a complete printed edition by Dār al-Wa’y, Aleppo in three volumes. The editor, Maḥmūd Ibrāhīm al-Zāyid used two main manuscripts for the reconstruction of the work as a whole which comprised 188 folios in the first edition and in the second, 1315 pages. He infers that Ibn Ḥibbān summarized the *Majrūḥīn* from al-Bukhārī’s *Tārīkh al-Kabīr*. Meanwhile the latest edition of *al-Majrūḥīn* edited by Ḥamdī ’Abd al-Majīd attempts to improve the previous editions. Using the manuscript from Hagia Sophia Library, Ḥamdī furnished it with footnotes and assigns numbering schemes.

Additionally, there are sources from which we can gain more insight into the history of the *Majrūḥīn*. The *Majrūḥīn*, like other books, was handed down to succeeding generations by chains of authority. It is related to al-Dāraquṭnī who provides valuable information concerning the transmission of the *Majrūḥīn* from Ibn Ḥibbān to him. Earliest in order, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī possessed the *Majrūḥīn* in a transmission which goes back to Ibn Ḥibbān via al-Dāraquṭnī. Based on al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī’s gigantic *Tārīkh Baghdad*, the transmission reads: “I recited to al-Azhari,” from Abī al-Ḥasan al-Dāraquṭnī, he said: Abū Ḥātim Ibn Ḥibbān al-Bustī informed us by *ijāza* (licensing). Secondly, the

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737 The abbreviation is by al-Dhahabī. See GAL, 1/273. GAS, 1/191.
740 Apart from the first printed edition, Maḥmūd states that he also compares the transmitters using other sources of biographical dictionaries such as Yaʿqūb’s *Muʿjam al-Buldān*, al-Dhahabī’s *Tadhkira al-Huffaz* and *Muṣān al-I ṭidāl*, al-Suyūṭī’s *Tābaqāt al-Ḥuffaz*, al-Subkī’s *Tābaqāt al-Shaʿfiʾiyya* and etc. See the editorial introduction of Ibn Ḥibbān, *Kitāb al-Majrūḥīn min al-Muḥaddithīn wa al-Ḍuʿajāʾ al-Matrūkh* by Maḥmūd Ibrāhīm Zāyid.
741 Ibid. 1/15.
information of the book’s transmission was given in the first page of the manuscript that is preserved in Hagia Sophia Library, dated 776 A.H. (1374-75). The following transmission is to be found on the first page of the manuscript:


The term ijāza has been applied to the transmission where students are granted permission to transmit the Majrūḥīn. Although differences of opinion exist, there appears to be some agreement that ijāza refers to licensing or granting permission. Nevertheless, al-Dāraquṭnī reorganized the material received from Ibn Ḥibbān together with materials that he received from other teachers. The origin of the material put together in such a new compilation was, as a rule, marked by the name of Abū ʿĪlām (Ibn Ḥibbān) from whom it originated. Just as he did to Ṣāḥiḥayn, al-Dāraquṭnī noticed the mistakes in the Majrūḥūn and furnished it with another complete explanation. Consequently, he created a new synthesis, a new work, of which he himself became the author. The book was later known


747 Al-Jawharī was the teacher of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādi and Ibn Mākūlā who died in 7 Dhu al-Qāʾida, 454. See Al-Dhahabi, Sīyar Aʿlām al-Nabūlā, 18/68-70. See al-Samʿāni, al-Anṣāb, 2/125-126.

748 Abū Manṣūr receives most of the Tārīkh Baghdad from al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādi himself. And he died 539/Baghdad. See, al-Dhahabi, Sīyar, 20/94.


751 Ibn Ḥibbān, al-Majrūḥūn, the introduction page. See also the copy of manuscript.


754 For a discussion about early Islamic transmission of knowledge, see Harald Motzki, “The Author and His Work in the Islamic Literature of the First Centuries”, Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam 28 (2003), 1-31.
as “Ta’liqāt al-Dāraquṭnī ʿalā al-Majrūḥīn li-Ibn Ḥibbān (al-Dāraquṭnī’s Appending of Ibn Ḥibbān’s al-Majrūḥīn).”755 This shows that al-Dāraquṭnī took a profound interest in the Majrūḥīn and desired to fix any deficiency he found in it.

For all that, the Majrūḥīn is highly regarded and is considered one of the most important works of early rijāl criticism. Ibn Ḥibbān’s students together with later generations heavily rely upon the material in the Majrūḥīn. Assuredly, the completion of the Majrūḥīn was preceded by the Ṣaḥīḥ as he clearly explained, “Whosoever we assume is not [completely] just in respect of the way that we have described him as not [worthy of being used for] proof, we put him in book of al-Majrūḥīn of the transmitters.”756 Like his other compositions, Ibn Ḥibbān prefaced the Majrūḥīn with an introduction, which typically has technical aspects. The technical matters in the Majrūḥīn involve the explanation of rijāl criticism procedures, those things which the reader should care to know about. On glancing over the introduction in the Majrūḥīn, we see right away that this introduction is separated into three matters of contention. Ibn Ḥibbān structured the introduction of Majrūḥīn in accordance with his concept of the epistemological arguments, his synopsis of the history of hadīth criticism, and the classification of transmitters.

4.3 Ibn Ḥibbān’s Introduction to the Majrūḥīn

Ibn Ḥibbān commences with opening remarks which are almost identical to those in the Ṣaḥīḥ. The emphasis on the chosen group of people appears in the opening sentences. As usual, he stresses the importance of knowing authentic hadīth from the weak by determining the transmitters.757 He also adds that the group of accepted and reliable transmitters has been mentioned in the previous book (that is the Thiqāt), and the Majrūḥīn is specific for impugned transmitters.758 There are at least twelve tarājim formulated by Ibn Ḥibbān that are primarily concerned with the encouragement to preserve the Sunnah, retribution for

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755 Ta’liqāt (sing. Ta’liq) refers to the “appending upon” (ʿala) a text or the “deriving from” (ʿan) an author and then to the resulting notes, comments, excerpts etc. See F. Rosenthal, “Ta’lik”, EI2, 5/165.

756 Wa man ṣaḥḥaʿ indanā annahu ghayr ŏd, bi-l- tibār alladhī wasaftāhū, lam nahtajj bihi, wa adkhalnāhu fi kitāb al-majrūḥīn min al-muḥaddithīn. Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān, 1/155. Also he mentions, “we have mention the reason Ismail left in book of the Majrūḥīn”. Ṣaḥīḥ, 12/211.

757 At this point, he employed word tamyiẓ for the separation between authentic and weak hadīth. Occasionally, we found this word used for the separation between reliable and impugned transmitters. See Ibn Ḥibbān, al-Majrūḥīn, 1/13. In addition, in the Qurʾān, the term yamīz appears in subjunctive mood, “yamīza al-khabīth min al-ṭayyib”, means “He separates the evil from the good”. See, the Qurʾān, 3:119 and 8:37.

758 Ibn Ḥibbān, al-Majrūḥīn, 1/14.
lying, and justification of the *jarḥ*. Ibn Ḥibbān’s *tarājim* neatly permits us to trace his judgement through his classificatory schemes.

In the same way, Ibn Ḥibbān’s *tarājim* along with the proof for argumentations in the introduction of the *Majrūḥīn* can be profitably compared with the *tarājim* in the introduction to the *Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim*. Muslim’s introduction has been translated by Juynboll referring to al-Nawawī’s commentary.⁷⁵⁹ However, according to Stephen Burge, Muslim did not write down the *tarājim* as they were added by a later author.⁷⁶⁰ Nevertheless, we can find some identical *tarjama* in both books. For instance, in the *Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim* there is the, “Chapter on the Coarseness of the Falsehood upon the Messenger of Allāh,”⁷⁶¹ while in the *Majrūḥīn* it reads, “Report on the Coarseness of the Falsehood upon the Messenger of Allāh.”⁷⁶² At the basis of the evidence, both books use similar ḥadīth to uphold their epistemological arguments. They relate the *tarjama* with the ḥadīth that later were considered as *mutawātir*, “Convey from me even a sign, also narrate from children of Isrāʾīl and there is no harām. He who tells lies about me on purpose will have to occupy a seat in Hell.”⁷⁶³

Thus in a similar fashion to his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, the *tarājim* are Ibn Ḥibbān’s attempt to convey to his readers juridical or philosophical ideas that must necessarily be linked to the body of the ḥadīth. All these *tarājim* are included in a specific framework, in which the ḥadīth are used to countenance his argumentations. On the other hand, *tarjama* apprises the reader for Ibn Ḥibbān’s notion when he encounters a ḥadīth or other reports. In the wide illustrated image, each *tarjama* is followed by ḥadīth which are almost entirely composed of the citation of transmitted reports offered with *isnads*. The commentaries that appear after the ḥadīth are typically introduced by the formula qāla Abū Ḥātim (Abū Ḥātim [Ibn Ḥibbān] said). At the beginning of the *Majrūḥīn*, the first *tarjama*, ḥadīth and commentaries are as follows

Report on the Encouragement to Preserve the Sunnah and Dissemination⁷⁶⁴

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⁷⁵⁹ The introduction of *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* has been translated by Juynboll benefiting from the commentary by al-Nawawī. See, G. H. A. Juynboll, “Muslim’s Introduction to His *Ṣaḥīḥ*: Translated and annotated with an excursus on the chronology of *fītnā* and *bidʿa*”, *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 5, Jerusalem, 1984, 263-311.


⁷⁶³ G. H. A. Juynboll, “Muslim’s Introduction to His *Ṣaḥīḥ*”, 273.

Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd b. ʿAḍī al-Nasāʾī narrated for us, he said: Ḥumayd b. Zanjūyah narrated for us, he said: Yaʾla b. ʿUbayd narrated for us, he said: Muḥammad b. Ishāq narrated for us, from al-Zuhrī, from Muḥammad b. Jubayr b. Muṭʿim, from his father, he said: The Messenger of Allāh – ʿṣallā Allāh ʿalayh wa sallam – stood up at Khayf in Mina and said; “May Allāh brighten a man who hears my speech and he understands it, simultaneously he delivers it to those who could not hear it. Perhaps he who [thinks that he] understands does not really understand. And perhaps he who [thinks that he] understands conveys to one who understands more than him. Hatred does not enter the heart of the Muslim [because] of three things; sincerity of the deed, counsel to Muslim rulers, and adherence to the community. So indeed their invocation is to be answered.”

Abū Ḥātim said;

The obligation of he who carries along the tools of knowledge is to honour the times for the Sunnah preservation, hoping to be with whoever the Prophet prayed. Then Allāh [The Owner] of Greatness and Reverence commands His slaves to follow His [Prophet’s] Sunnah, and the return to his path whenever there is disagreement, where He says: “And if you differ among yourselves concerning any matter, refer it to God and the Messenger.” Then He has denied the faith of those who do not rule it (Sunnah) in disputation between them as He says; “But no, by thy Lord, they will not believe until they have made thee the judge between them in their disputes, and find no resistance in their souls to what thou hast decreed, and surrender with full submission”. He neither says until they have made so-and-so judge (yuhakkimu) between them in their disputes, nor He says so-and-so decides (qaḍā) what is to be decreed, but the order between Allāh and his creatures is merely the Messenger of Allāh – ʿṣallā Allāh ʿalayh wa sallam –. Hence, do not nullify the heart that is admonished by the faith that he does not neglect the preservation of the Sunnah, as much as he can. He even returns [to the Sunna] during disputation about the word [of God], [the Prophet] “nor does he speak out of caprice. It is not but a revelation revealed.” May Allāh made us among them through His gift.

The next part shows Ibn Ḥibbān’s aim to support his argument on the authentication of ḥadīth in such a way that is scrutinized the transmitters. He uses the ḥadīth like, “he who transmits from me a ḥadīth which is considered to be a lie, he is one of the liars,” and, “when a man transmits everything he has heard, that suffices to [be accused of] falsehood.” Ibn Ḥibbān asserts that these aḥādīth demonstrate the emphasis of individual certainty in the authenticity of a ḥadīth. And this only can be known by scrutinizing the history and names of the reliable or impugned for the transmission of the prophet’s ḥadīth.

Subsequently, he set the minimum requirement for a ḥadīth to be constituted as a proof; (1)
The solitary report of a [transmitter] reliable in his religion, (2) the [transmitter] renowned with honesty in his ḥadīth, (3) the [transmitter] sagacious by what he says, (4) the [transmitter] learned by which he discovers the meaning of the ḥadīth from the hidden expression.\textsuperscript{773}

A lengthy discussion on the justification of the transmitters’ evaluation shows how polemical the issue was in Ibn Ḥibbān’s era. Undoubtedly, the dilemma over evaluating persona is not a point of agreement and is not germane among Muslim scholars. Ibn Ḥibbān deals with the justification of the obligation to evaluate transmitters and runs to eighteen pages in the printed text.\textsuperscript{774} Consistently, he supplies proofs inducing from the Qurʾān or ḥadīth and also presents his predecessors’ notions for the desirability of knowing the impugned transmitters. He offers a tarjama, “An account of information seeming to command the impugning of the weak.”\textsuperscript{775} The fact that Ibn Ḥibbān subsumes the impugned of transmitters under the imperative verb al-ʾamr (the commanding) is to demonstrate the responsibility of implementing this matter. He adds that that there are innumerable evidences and examples in the Qurʾān or ḥadīth and all these are clearly represented as a command. For instance, Ibn Ḥibbān places the ḥadīth, “The prophet says: Oh Hassān,\textsuperscript{776} reply for me. O Lord! Help him with Rūḥ al-Quds (the holy spirit),” and construes it as follows

In the report is seems to be proof for a command to impugn the weak because the Prophet says to Hassān: “Reply for me.” Indeed, his command is to remove the polytheists’ fabrication from him. So if because of the polytheists’ fabrication the Messenger of Allāh commands that it be removed even though their lying does not harm the Muslims. They do not permit what is forbidden, and do not forbid what is permissible. If someone among the Muslims lies about the Messenger of Allāh in transmission to permit the forbidden and forbid the permissible, it is more appropriate to command the removal of the lie from him – ṣallā Allāh ʿalayh wa sallam –.\textsuperscript{777}

Furthermore, Ibn Ḥibbān delineates explicitly the objection along with the proof by his opposition in discussing the issue of transmitters’ evaluation that could be equated as backbiting or slander.\textsuperscript{778} He gives the following report from Abī Hurayra as an example for the forbiddance of backbiting


\textsuperscript{774} Ibid. 1/18-36.

\textsuperscript{775} Dhikr khabar fīhi kal-ʾamr bi-l-jaḥr li-l-ḍuʿ afā`. See Ibn Ḥibbān, al-Majrūḥin, 1/19.

\textsuperscript{776} Hassān b. Thābit. A discussion on him will follow in chapter five.

\textsuperscript{777} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{778} In the course of the justification of impugning the transmitters, it is common to see contemporary ḥadīth scholars proving with The Qurʾān, 49:6. “O you who believe! If an iniquitous person comes to you
What is backbiting? He [the prophet] said: Your talking about your brother in a manner which he does not like. [It was] said [to him]: What is your view about this if that I actually find it in my brother what I mention? He said: If it be in him, you already slander him, and if not in him, you accuse him [falsely].

Not surprisingly, Ibn Ḥibbān attempts to counter the argument of the slander’s controversy by advocating with another ḥadīth from ‘Ā’isha

A man was approaching, and when the Prophet saw him, he said: “He is a bad member of the tribe – or - son of the tribe”. Then when he came to the Prophet, he [the Prophet] gladly spoke to him, and when he passed ‘Ā’isha said: “Oh Messenger of Allāh when you saw him you have said what you have said, but when he came [why did] you gladly speak to him?” [The Prophet] said: “Oh ‘Ā’isha, indeed the worse of my umma in Allāh’s estimation on the resurrection day is the person that people abandon, fearing his indecency.”

Abū Ḥātim said;

In the report there is a proof about a report of a man and what kind of religiosity [he has] it is not a slander, as the Prophet said: He is a bad member of the tribe or a son of the tribe.” If this is a slander (ghība) the Messenger of Allāh did not issue it. But indeed he intends with his statement to prepare the leaving of the indecency because he intends for his defamation (thalb). Indeed, the speaker intends with the slander to make an insult in his statement.

Our Imāms - may the mercy of God be on them -, indeed, they explain these matters and issue an impugned [criticism] upon non-reliable [transmitters] so that one does not prove [something] through their reports. They do not intend to criticise them and tell-tales on them. Reporting a matter is not a slander if the speaker intends other than defamation.

‘Umar b. Muhammad b. Bujayr b. Rāshid narrated for us, he said: ‘Amr b. Alī narrated for us, he said: ‘Affān narrated for us, he said: I was [in] the presence of Ismā‘īl b. ‘Ulayya, a transmitter related a man’s ḥadīth. I said: “Do not transmit this. This [man’s reliability] has not [yet] been established.” Then [the transmitter] said: “You have slandered him!” Whereupon Ismā‘īl b. ‘Ulayya said: “Not slandered him but I have pronounced the judgement that this [man’s reliability] has not [yet] been established.

However, in all of the arguments where Ibn Ḥibbān presents objections against those who reject the impugning of transmitters, he does not offer a single name of an individual or group. In justifying the issue of backbiting, Ibn Ḥibbān deals with various terms like ghība, thalb, qadh, jarḥ, and waqṭa. It is unmistakably the question that Ibn Ḥibbān was concerned

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779 Ibn Ḥibbān, al-Majrūḥin, 1/23; See also Šahīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān, 13/72.
780 Ibn Ḥibbān, al-Majrūḥin, 1/24
with, then, is: How can a report by a person be true if someone cannot be evaluated? The only way of knowing that these aḥādīth are authentic is through continuous transmission through reliable transmitters. Ibn Ḥibbān’s analogy, we have noted, maintains that if a judge needs to call a character witness (muʿaddil) to testify for the probity of the two witnesses in court, it is more deserving to evaluate a transmitter who relates a ḥadīth. Hence the fundamental principle of explicitly declaring the defamatory condition of someone’s personality is in fact employed by Ibn Ḥibbān as an obligation and is not to be considered as reprehensible slander.

Moreover, behind all the justifications of the transmitters’ evaluation found in the Majrūḥīn and other works of ḥadīth scholars there exist similar issues pertaining to the status of the Companions. On this point, analyses by Lucas, Juynboll, Brown, Dickinson, Osman, and many others have shown that there is a very lengthy debate among early Muslim scholars about the question of the collective probity of the Companions. As Osman has pointed out, Ibn Ḥibbān and his contemporaries of the fourth/tenth century are those who contribute to develop epistemological basis for the doctrine. They treat it as an articulation of faith but not crystallized yet in their time. And towards the end of this epistemological discussion in the Majrūḥīn, Ibn Ḥibbān discouraged the questioning of collective probity by his opponents. The question put by Ibn Ḥibbān epitomizes what lies behind the collective probity of the Companions

If someone says, “How could you impugn those who came after the Companions and yet you refuse [to impugn] the Companions, even though negligence and the error were found among the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh just as was found among the transmitters who came after them?” He is answered, “God declared the Companions of Messenger of Allāh to be above the defamation of any slander. He protected them from the disparagement of any detractor and made them like guiding stars.”

Ibn Ḥibbān believes that the Qurʾān and ḥadīth have emphasized the Companions merits and their religious superiority. He insists that the Companions cannot be liable to

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781 Ibn Ḥibbān, al-Majrūḥīn, 1/25.
783 Scott Lucas, Constructive Critic, Ḥadīth Literature, and the Articulation of Sunni Islam, 221-285.
784 G. H. A. Juynboll, Muslim Tradition, 192-201.
785 Daniel Brown, Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought, 85.
786 Eerik Dickinson, The Development of Early Sunnite Ḥadīth Criticism: The Taqdima of Ibn Abi Ḥātim al-Rāzī (240/854-327/938), 120-123.
788 Ibid, 284.
789 Ibn Ḥibbān, al-Majrūḥīn, 1/35-36.
disparagement, thus they are dissimilar from other generations of transmitters. The Prophet himself gives an assurance of their integrity and God declared that on the Day of Judgement He would not disgrace the Prophet and those who believed with him. Ibn Ḥibbān continues that the Companions take over the duty from the Prophet and God commissions them with His exposition to mankind. Hence, disparaging them is at variance with faith, for the Prophet would not have trusted them with revelation if he thought that they were not sincere and trustworthy witnesses. However, in the Ṣaḥīḥ, Ibn Ḥibbān unequivocally acknowledges that the Companions intermittently do not mention the names of their intermediaries, and made mistakes in transmission. But he declares that there was no harm in accepting ḥadīth from the Companions even when they did not state their direct audition from the Prophet. Ibn Ḥibbān also states that the Companions, like other transmitters, lam yakānū bimā ʿśūmīn (“were not infallible.”) He writes,

We accepted the reports of the Companions from the Prophet so long as they related them from the Prophet, even if they did not show audition in all of what they related – and we know for certain that one of them sometimes heard a report from another Companion and related it from the Prophet without mentioning the person from whom he heard it – because they are all reliable, leading, and sovereign authorities. God declared the likes of the Companions to be above weakness being attached to them.

The next part of the introduction is a synopsis of the history of ḥadīth criticism. The practises of stating the tarjama was continued by Ibn Ḥibbān for establishing his notion. He builds up a network which connects ḥadīth criticism to prominent scholars or critics from preceding generations, that is to say ʿtabaqāt. As Lucas indicated, “Ibn Ḥibbān’s ʿtabaqāt presentation in Kitāb al-Majrūḥīn is the most useful ʿtabaqāt presentation for this project because it includes a description of the activities of the seven generations of scholars.”

The critics included in the Majrūḥīn cover a period of about two centuries and a half, the

790 “The Day when God will not disgrace the Prophet and those who believe with him”. The Qurʾān, 66:8. Ibn Ḥibbān also supports with another aya from The Qurʾān, 3:68. “Truly the people worthiest of Abraham are those who followed him, and this prophet and those who believe. And God is the Protector of the Believers”. Ibn Ḥibbān, al-Majrūḥīn, 1/36.

791 Osman also points this argument, “as for those who witnessed the Revelation and accompanied the Messenger, disparaging them is not lawful, abusing them contradicts faith, and abasing any of them is hypocrisy, for they are the best generation of all people after the Messenger of God.” See Amr Osman, “ʿAdilat al-Ṣaḥāba: The Construction of a Religious Doctrine”, 283.

792 Ibn Ḥibbān, Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān, 1/161. This point is also analysed in Dickinson, The Development of Early Sunnite Hadith Criticism, 120-123.

793 Ibn Ḥibbān, Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān, 1/153.

794 Ibid.

795 Ibid, 1/161-162.

796 Lucas also gives a different interpretation of these passages, see Scott Lucas, Constructive Critics, Ḥadīth Literature, and the Articulation of Sunni Islam, 119.
earliest being the second caliph ‘Umar and the latest Abū Zur‘a al-Rāzī (d. 264/878). Ibn Ḥibbān yields about forty-three names of critics and indicates some of the geographical areas of their activities, but does not give either birthdates or death dates.

For each of the seven ṭabaqāt, Ibn Ḥibbān lays out a general characterization and proper method of the critics. The selection of critics reflects his notion that ḥadīth criticism started as early as the era of Companions and their practise had been imitated by the following generations. Firstly, under the tarjama “(An account on who is the first to protect the Messenger from fabrications),” Ibn Ḥibbān declares that ‘Umar was the pioneer in this practise. ‘Umar instructed his fellow Companions to refrain from ḥadīth transmission in the interest of studying the Qur‘ān. Asserting a report that ‘Umar used to compare statements by the Companions, Ibn Ḥibbān suggests that ‘Umar did not suspect the Companions but simply desired to set a model of scrutinizing the identity of ḥadīth transmitters. Besides ‘Umar, Ibn Ḥibbān states that ‘Alī was among the earliest who merely scrutinized the transmitters in the transmission and searched about the transference of the report. Ibn Ḥibbān terms the next generation of critics as jamā‘a min ahl madīna min sādat al-tabi‘īn (a group of leading Successors among people of the Madinah) whom followed in the footsteps of the Companions in preserving, travelling, scrutinizing, understanding and disseminating the Sunna. In a reasonable manner Ibn Ḥibbān maintains that the model of the disposition of the Prophet’s knowledge remained in Madinah during the first century of the hijra. This also was the model adopted by Ibn Abī Ḥātim for his ṭabaqāt. It is well known in the first/seventh century that Madinah retained its centrality as its preceding scholars had a greater knowledge and brought in intellectual currents from the rest of the

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797 This also could be interpreted that Ibn Ḥibbān’s view of the practise of identifying transmitter began earlier before the fītnā.
798 Dhikr awwal man waqqā al-kadib ‘alā Rasūl.
799 Fa‘-amada ‘Umar iît al-Thiqāt al-mutqīnîn alladhihā shahidu al-waky wa-l-tanzīl (Umar resorts to the excellent reliable whom witness the Revelation and the Qur‘ān). See Ibn Ḥibbān, al-Majrūhīn, 1/38; A’zami moves a bit earlier in the case of the pioneer in ḥadīth criticism. He considers the first Caliph Abū Bakr was the pioneer in this fīeld. See M. M. A’zami, Studies in Ḥadīth Methodology and Literature, 66.
Muslim world. And among the critics of this generation that Ibn Ḥibbān included was ʿUrwa b. al-Zubayr, the patron of “Madinan School of History” i.e. the maghāzi school of Madinah.

The lineage continues with the inclusion of ʿUrwa’s student, al-Zuhrī whom Ibn Ḥibbān explicitly declared the greatest scholar of his generation. The amount of space devoted to al-Zuhrī’s testimonial evidences speaks for itself. Ibn Ḥibbān adds that al-Zuhrī’s virtues are discussed at more length in his Kitāb al-ʿIlāl. Most unfortunately, the book has not come down to us. Ibn Ḥibbān says that al-Zuhrī and his contemporaries are a generation which tracked the ways, selected the men, and travelled for gathering the Sunnah. Comparatively, this third generation includes four additional Madinian scholars.

To the greatest extent, the fourth generation of critics is the most celebrated in Ibn Ḥibbān’s genealogy of ḥadīth criticism. Ibn Ḥibbān asserts that this generation not only preserved the material and techniques of their teachers, but invented the practices of transmitter criticism and declaring weak transmitters to be unreliable. The eight men (Sufyān al-Thawrī, Mālik, Shu‘ba, al-Awzāʿī, Ḥammād b. Salama, al-Layth, Ḥammād b. Zayd, and Sufyān b. ʿUyayna) are described as being a “group of Imams of the Muslim and jurists of religion”. Ibn Ḥibbān explicitly credits Mālik, Shu‘ba, and Sufyān al-Thawrī with the transformation of general ḥadīth criticism into a craft. He also supplies the report of certain scholars’ geographical areas that cements particular places as a ḥadīth centre in the second/eighth century. This generation famously inspired the creation of the madhhab in Islamic law and Mālik’s al-Muwaffaq continues to be venerated by Sunni scholars of all schools of law to this day. Four salient features characterize the fifth generation; the design in the ḥadīth, the investigation of the transmitters, the identification of the weak, and the scrutinizing of the transmission reasons. Ibn Ḥibbān explains,

Except for Yaḥyā b. Saʿīd al-Qaṭṭān and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī (who with the duty of religion, extreme devotion, and comprehension the Sunnah) who investigate the most about the transmitters’ state, and who are the most [willing] to leave the

803 Yasin Dutton, The Origins of Islamic Law, 15.
804 See ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Dūrī, The Rise of Historical Writing Among the Arabs, 76.
806 Inīqād al-rijāl, wa l-qaḏīf fī al-duʾāʾ. Ibid, 1/41.
807 ʿAllāḥa jā al-dhikira sināʿat l-hum. Ibid, 1/41.
weak and the rejected [transmitters] to the point that they made this practise into a craft.  

Ibn Ḥibbān moves to the sixth generation and makes room for seven “Imams” who fortify this craft and reached an even higher level of scrutiny and clarification. In this particular part, Ibn Ḥibbān quotes ʿAlī b. al-Madīnī’s list which consists of the most important list of early ḥadīth scholars who can be considered as indispensable figures in conjunction with their distinctive ḥadīth centres. According to Juynboll, this list gives a perfect overall view of the earliest development of ḥadīth. As asserted by Lucas, “ʿAlī b. al-Madīnī’s list enjoys the distinction of being both the earliest and most widely cited list in both Muslim and non-Muslim works”. The pinnacle of Ibn Ḥibbān’s ṭabaqāt conclusion was the seventh generation who perpetuated the report criticism and the transmitter selection. The characterization of this generation is that they not only scrutinized the transmitters but practised *matn* criticism. Below is a table of forty-three critics who have been mentioned by Ibn Ḥibbān:

Table 4: Ibn Ḥibbān’s List of Critics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>List of Critics</th>
<th>Death Dates</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Companions</td>
<td>1. ʿUmar,</td>
<td>23/644</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. ʿAlī,</td>
<td>40/661</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Ibn ʿAbbās.</td>
<td>67/687</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Madinian Followers</td>
<td>1. Saʿīd b. al-Musayyib,</td>
<td>93/711</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad b. Abū Bakr,</td>
<td>106/724</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Sālim b. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar</td>
<td>106/724</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī,</td>
<td>93/711</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5. Abū Salama b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAwf,</td>
<td>94/712</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6. ʿUbayd Allāh b. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUtba,</td>
<td>98/717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. ʿUrwa b. al-Zubayr al-ʿAwwām,</td>
<td>94/712</td>
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810 Ibid, 1/52-53.  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Person 1</th>
<th>Person 2</th>
<th>Person 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Third</td>
<td>Al-Zuhri</td>
<td>Yahya b. Sa`id al-Ansari</td>
<td>Hisham b. `Urwa</td>
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<td>Sa`d b. Ibrahiim</td>
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<td>The Fourth</td>
<td>Sufyan b. Sa`id al-Thawri</td>
<td>Malik b. Anas</td>
<td>Shu`ba b. al-Hajjaj</td>
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<td><code>Abd al-Rahman b. </code>Amr al-Awza`i</td>
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<td>Hammad b. Salama</td>
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<td>al-Layth b. Sa`d</td>
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<td>Hammad b. Zayd</td>
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<td>Sufyan b. `Uyayna</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Fifth</td>
<td>`Abd Allah b. al-Mubarak</td>
<td>Yahya b. Sa`id al-Qattan</td>
<td>Waki b. al-Jarrah</td>
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<td>`Abd al-Rahman b. al-Mahdi</td>
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<td>Muhammad b. Idris al-Matlabi al-Shafi`i</td>
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<td>The Sixth</td>
<td>Ahmad b. Hanbal</td>
<td>Yahya b. Ma`in</td>
<td>Alfi b. al-Madinii</td>
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<td>Abu Bakr b. Abi Shayba</td>
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<td>Ishaq b. Ibrahiim al-Hanafal (Ibn Rawayh)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ubayd Allah b. `Umar al-Qawariri</td>
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<td>Zuhayr b. Harb, Abu Khaythama</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Seventh</td>
<td>Muhammad b. Yahya al-Dhuhli al-Naysaburi</td>
<td><code>Abd Allah b. </code>Abd al-Rahman al-Darimi,</td>
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<td>Abi Zur'a Ubayd Allah b. `Abd al-Karim b. Yazid al-Razi,</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Muhammad b. Isma<code>il al-Ju</code>fi al-Bukhari,</td>
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In general, the significance of Ibn Ḥibbān’s seven-ṭabaqāt presentation is understandable from the author’s insightful descriptions of the members of each generation as well as the identification and biographical information of the forty-three men. Additionally, the inclusion of the Companions’ generation in the list of critics offers an interpretation that the number of critics is not limited. Ibn Ḥibbān usually used the word minhum (that could be translated as ‘among them’) before specifying the name of critics in each generation.⁸¹⁴ And it is also noteworthy that Ibn Ḥibbān included the Companions in the history of ḥadīth criticism. For this inclusion, it was emphasized that the Companions practised the scrutiny of whoever related a ḥadīth. Consequently, the result was that slander of a person has no place since the earliest stage of Islam.

And throughout the epistemological arguments, it is clear that Ibn Ḥibbān did not intend to do more than stress the role of transmitters’ evaluation in the proper interpretation to be accorded to the ḥadīth. Presumably, all the ḥadīth in his arguments are available in his Ṣaḥīḥ and as in this case, he included materials that had satisfied his requirement for inclusion.⁸¹⁵ But this inclusion was the basis of criticism by al-Dāraquṭnī, as Ibn Ḥibbān’s ḥadīth was scrutinized for containing problematic isnad. Although differences of opinion still exist, a ḥadīth quoted involved a process of authentication stage before its content was confirmed or not as a proof. This issue, it should be noted, was raised only with regard to ḥadīth, the authenticity of which was upon. Understanding the sphere and ramifications of al-Dāraquṭnī’s critique of the ḥadīth in the Majrūḥīn’s introduction requires a conceptual review of the manner in which Ibn Ḥibbān recorded and demonstrated the ḥadīth.⁸¹⁶

### 4.4 Ibn Ḥibbān on Ṛijāl Criticism

To make the case that Ṛijāl criticism in the structured display, Ibn Ḥibbān abbreviates a wide variety of transmitted material in a framework determined by his conception of transmitters’ evaluation. While the epistemological discussions and ṭabaqāt presentation that we

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⁸¹⁴ As scrutinized by Lucas, about ninety-two names are mentioned between from the first/seventh to the fourth/tenth century. See Scott Lucas, Constructive Critics, Ḥadīth Literature, and the Articulation of Sunni Islam, 114.

⁸¹⁵ This is based on footnote supplied by Hamdī through Ibn Ḥibbān’s al-Majrūḥīn.

articulated in the previous section relied exclusively upon the introduction of the Majrūḥīn, this topic of Ibn Ḥibbān’s rījāl criticism also involves studying his comments in the introduction to the Sahīh. The present section emphasizes those aspects of rījāl criticism which link it most closely to the context in which it was written and Ibn Ḥibbān’s general principles. For Ibn Ḥibbān, the study of rījāl should also flourish, especially since the master craft of rījāl criticism can attain control as well as consummate his knowledge of Islam. When one is able to authenticate a ḥadīth with knowledge of rījāl he or she avoids misleading interpretations. Hence the growing interest in the actual critical appraisal of transmitters is that this imposing body of material was perceived to be capable of authenticating ḥadīth on the basis of criteria drawn from the domain of rījāl criticism.817

Ibn Ḥibbān quotes extensively from the early biographical dictionaries, which deal with all the impugned transmitters in ḥadīth transmission and provide evaluative judgements as to their relative worth, often comparing one against the other. ‘Adab’s study attempts to compare Ibn Ḥibbān’s evaluation with the works of others and his generation of critics like Ibn Abī Ḥātim, al-Dāraquṭnī and others. However, he states the difficulties in tracing the origin of Ibn Ḥibbān’s quotations about early critics regarding the absence of isnād in their statements.818 From the previous section we understand that the second/eight and third/ninth century generations have produced a plethora of works in rījāl criticism and their testimonials or statements about transmitters scattered in ḥadīth collections, tārīkh, ‘ilal, and other biographical dictionaries. Assigning back their statements to the source certainly requires a large of comparative study.

In the introduction of the Majrūḥīn and the Sahīh, Ibn Ḥibbān justifies the employment of rījāl criticism in his own day on basis of the precedent set by prestigious scholars of earlier generations. These works were a technical criticism in which Ibn Ḥibbān contributed his own methodology of transmitters’ evaluation based on those of the early critics whom he studied.819 One can speak in an ordinary historical sense about the origins and sources of the works of any critic because critics receive information directly and were influenced by their teachers. In the case of Ibn Ḥibbān, also, his primary source is his ḥadīth teachers received either by reading or listening. Generally, Ibn Ḥibbān tends to be more forthright in his assessment of characters, preferring to quote his predecessors’ evaluation in

this regard and then making comments. This is probably due either to religious conscience or not directly facing the transmitter or both.\textsuperscript{820}

In the wake of the above argumentation, what emerged from Ibn Ḥibbān’s materials, methods and conclusions for establishing a transmitter reproduced on a large scale is a combination of his own evaluation with that of his sources. His writings become an important posture of the science of ḥadīth transmission where his evaluations and examples are repeatedly quoted by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, Ibn al-Jawzī, Ibn Ḥajar and others that belong to the later developments of rījāl criticism.\textsuperscript{821} However, it is quite characteristic to find later critics speaking in high praise of Ibn Ḥibbān’s evaluation and at the same time to find others who value it less highly. In rījāl criticism it is common to find some evaluations of rījāl who are considered “authorities” by some, and “worthless,” or at least ambiguous, by others. Nevertheless, taken together Ibn Ḥibbān’s introductions and his successors quotations’, indicate general influence of Ibn Ḥibbān’s notions on the transmitter’s virtues. And as it might be seen in the Ṣaḥīḥ, Ibn Ḥibbān pays particular attention to the conception of the transmitter’s virtues, not only because of the complexity of the subject, but also because he sought to differ from some of his predecessors views as well as to establish his own idea.\textsuperscript{822} Ibn Ḥibbān dedicates a certain amount of treatment to what may be termed “minimum requirement of a transmitter”.

Apart from transmitters’ classifications, there are systematic descriptions with clearly discernible requirements. Those general terms that relate to virtues of transmitters which need elucidation are; 1) al-‘adl (probity), 2) al-ṣidq (trustworthiness), 3) al-‘aql (intelligence), 4) al-‘ilm (knowledgeable), 5) al-mutaʿarrī (does not contain) al-tadlīs (concealed omissions in the isnād).\textsuperscript{823} So one can see clearly the virtues most admired by Ibn Ḥibbān. The term ‘adl is used either in the general sense of probity, which implies conformity with the law, or as a necessary qualification for being a witness. It also signifies

\textsuperscript{820} Tarīf Khalidi, “Islamic Biographical Dictionaries: A Preliminary Assessment”, 64.


\textsuperscript{822} Majid Khadduri, Shafi’ī’s Risāla, 24.

\textsuperscript{823} Ibn Ḥibbān says: “As for our conditions regarding the transmitters of the ḥadīth placed in our book, indeed, we have not placed in this book other than transmissions in which every transmitter has met five requirements; (1) al-‘adlā (righteous conduct) and magnificently concealed [from misdeed] in the religion. (2) al-ṣidqā (trustworthy) and familiar [student] in the ḥadīth. (3) al-‘aqlā (rational) when he transmits the ḥadīth. (4) al-‘ilmā (Knowledge) about the meaning of what he is transmitting. (5) al-mutaʿarrī (Uninhabited) with the taddīs (concealed omissions in the isnād)”. See Şahîh Ibn Ḥibbān, 1/151.
probity or uprightness of character; the minimum requirement of this is that he must be reliable regarding his religion. Ibn Ḥibbān asserts that when someone is well known for his dignity and there is no criticism of impugning on him, then he is considered a reliable transmitter. It is necessary, Ibn Ḥibbān argues that a person should be considered ʿādil when he is righteous and this outweighs his misbehaviour, for sinless persons do not exist. Ibn Ḥibbān elaborates precisely the concept of ʿadāla

Most of his circumstances are obeying Allāh. So that is when we can establish an upright [transmitter] who is free from error in any circumstance. If we have accomplished that, hence no-one upright in this world. It is because people are not free from disturbances of the devil in their circumstances. Yet the upstanding [transmitter] is the person whose apparent circumstances are obeying Allāh, and he who contravenes the upstanding is the person whose circumstances are disobeying Allāh.

Most importantly, Ibn Ḥibbān says that the trustworthiness (al-ṣidq) of a transmitter can only be established by those who are versed in the art of ḥadīth. Even the views of a scholar’s neighbours and fellow townsmen are immaterial in determining his trustworthiness as a transmitter. Next the description of al-ʿaql connotes a transmitter who acquires an intelligence in language and then transmits ḥadīth in accord with his language considering the text has preserved the meanings of the Sunnah. The intellect of Ibn Ḥibbān’s transmitter is would be more closely approximate the practical intellect not the philosopher’s reason or the theoretical intellect. There are clearly mental and moral overtones to this intellect as he insists that a transmitter must also fathom the art of ḥadīth, in other words he does not support the halted ḥadīth (yusnidu mawqūfan), or raise the loose ḥadīth (yarfaʿu mursalan), or falsify the name (yusaḥḥifu ʿsman).

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824 Majid Khadduri, Shāfiʿi’s Risāla, 29.
825 Ibn Ḥibbān, al-Thiqāt, 1/13.
826 However, Ibn Ḥajar criticized Ibn Ḥibbān in regards to his conception of dignity. See Ibn Ḥajar, Lisān al-Mīzan, 1/14-15.
827 Ṣāḥib Ibn Ḥibbān, 1/152
828 al-ṣidq fi-l-ḥadīth bi-l-shuhrā fihi. Ibid.
829 Ibid; See also Dickinson, The Development of Hadith Criticism, 90.
830 This statement shows that Ibn Ḥibbān agrees with the sort of transmission at best approximates the meaning of the original of ḥadīth. In other term it is called riwāya bi-l-muʿnā but was controversial whether it be considered as a reliable means of preserving the Sunna. See Gregor Schoeler, “Writing and Publishing on the Use and Function of Writing in the First Centuries of Islam”, Arabica T. 44, Fasc. 3, Jul. 1997, 423-435.
832 Literally, it means ‘raised up’. The halted ḥadīth is the one which is transmitted from the Companions. Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, al-Muṣaddima, 33.
833 The loose ḥadīth is the one which is transmitted from an early Follower. Ibid, 39.
Al-ʿaqīl and al-ʿilm are very much alike discussed in this context. The knowledgeable transmitter understands fiqh in order to transmit and to shorten ḥadīth in a well-informed manner. This signifies that, after the transmitter has received ḥadīth for himself, he acquires an understanding of it and then transmits in accord with his language and knowledge. Certainly Ibn Ḥibbān's notion of intellectual transmitter clearly represents his agreement with the concept of riwāya bi-l-maʿnā (transmission according to meaning). It is a basic decision of a transmitter whether he confines himself to transmitting matn literally or whether he analyse it in his own language. Thus, debates between ḥadīth scholars about the correct recitation of the text of ḥadīth were raised as to whether the reproduction of a narration’s meaning was sufficient or whether it had to be riwāya bi-l-lafẓ (verbatim transmission). 834 However, according to Nūr al-Dīn, the majority of Muslim scholars including the four madhhabān agreed with the reproduction of a narration’s meaning so long as its transmitter is well-known in the ḥadīth scholarship. 835

Another major criterion is that a transmitter’s report does not contain al-tadlīs (concealed omissions in the isnād). Dallasa means “to conceal a fault in an article of merchandise,” hence it was used for transmitters concealing deficiencies in isnāds. 836 Principally, al-tadlīs consisted of misleading others about the immediate source of one’s ḥadīth. 837 The responsibility of the transmitter is to mention his/her immediate source and face-to-face transmission, which defines a central expression of the transmitter’s personal source. By means of this the transmitter is known as having heard ḥadīth directly and personally. Ibn Ḥibbān summarized his ideas; “since he (a transmitter) was known to have resorted to tadlīs, his ḥadīth only deserve to be taken into consideration when he explicitly says that he has heard them in person.” 838 Altogether this shows that a man accused of tadlīs could be considered reliable when in a certain isnād he appeared to have been mentioned clearly as having “heard” the ḥadīth in person, for which the technical term samāʾ was coined.

835 Nūr al-Dīn ʾItr, Manḥaj al-naqd fī ʿulām al-ḥadīth, 227. Mahmoud Ayoub says that “modern scholars who argue for approximate meaning rather than precise transmission do so on the basis of the fact that early grammarians did not cite prophetic ḥadīth as proof texts in their studies of the Arabic language”. See, Mahmoud Ayoub, “Muhammad the Prophet” in Dictionary of Literary Biography (Arabic Literary Culture 500/925), ed. Cooperson, Toorawa, (US: Thomson Gale, 2005), 311/278.
836 Juynboll, Muslim Tradition, 179.
837 A discourse of tadlīs can be discerned in two contexts; Tadlīs al-isnād entails a student transmitting something from a teacher with whom he had studied but from whom he had not actually heard that particular report. Secondly, tadlīs al-shaykh could involve a student obfuscating the identity of his source. See Ibn Ḥajar, Taḥqīq al-Mudallisin, (Cairo: al-Maṭbāʿa al-Husaynīyya, 1322), 3. See also Jonathan Brown, Canonization of Bukhari and Muslim, 283.
838 Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān, 1/161. See also Juynboll, Muslim Tradition, 181-182.
According to Ibn Ḥibbān, a transmitter should have “heard” (samā’) the ḥadīth from the intermediaries who must also fulfill all the previous requirements. He asserts that if someone known to commit tadlīs (called a mudallis) does not say: “samī’tu (I heard)” or “ḥaddathānī (he narrated for me),” his transmission is to be regarded as problematic. This is due to a possibility of the mudallis transmitting from a weak person whose inclusion made the authority of the report void (if the identity of weak person was known and the report ascribed to him). Hence Ibn Ḥibbān’s resolution was based on an overall investigation of the technical terms known to denote face-to-face transmission or the formula (samī’tu or haddathanā or akhbaranā etc.) portraying the transmission between the two transmitters in all of the isnād.

Ibn Ḥibbān also provides some list of transmitters who committed tadlīs like Abū al-Khaṭṭāb Qatāda b. Di‘āma (d. 117/735), Abū Ishāq ʿAmr b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Sabīʿī (d. 127/745), ʿAbd al-Malik b. ʿUmayr, ʿAbd al-Malik b. ʿAbd al-Azīz b. Jurayj (d. 150/767), Sulaymān b. Mihrān al-Aʾmask (d. 148/765), Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161/778). From this list we find that the term tadlīs was already applied to successors or first/seventh century transmitters. Yet in one of the Majrūḥin’s entries there is material that demonstrates viewpoints, methods, and analysis for mudallis. Ibn Ḥibbān’s interest in the alleged mudallis transmitter Baqīyya b. al-Walīd al-Ḥimṣī (d. 197/812) was stimulated after he found Ahmad b. Ḥanbal’s admission that he had misjudged in evaluation that Baqīyya related forged ḥadīth only from unknown transmitters. But later Ibn Ḥibbān considered that Baqīyya also transmitted forged hadīth from reliable transmitters. To analyse the accusation of Baqīyya’s tadlīs, Ibn Ḥibbān collected all the transmissions of his students and scrutinized them. This to the largest extant was determined by the convergence of the lines of transmission. His

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839 See also Dickinson, The Development of Hadith Criticism, 107.
840 Ibn Ḥajar discusses five levels of mudallis:
1. Those who are known to do it occasionally, such as ʿUrwa b. al-Zubayr and Muslim, the Ṣaḥīḥ collector. He includes 33 persons in this category.
2. Those who are accepted by critics either because of their good reputation and relatively few cases of tadlīs, such as the famous al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Sufyān al-Thawrī, or because they reported from authentic authorities only, like Sufyān b. ʿUayna. He includes 33 persons also in this category.
3. Those who practised tadlīs in a great deal. Critics have accepted only such aḥādhīth from them which were reported with a clear mention of hearing directly. Among them are Abū Zubayr al-Makki and al-Ḥasan b. Dhakwān. However, still opinions differ regarding whether their ḥadīth are acceptable or not. Ibn Ḥajar includes 50 persons in this category.
4. Perhaps it is similar to the previous level, but critics agree that their hadīth are to be rejected unless they clearly admit of their face-to-face transmission, such as Baqīyya b. al-Walīd and Ḥājjīj b. Arťah. He includes 12 persons in this category.
5. Those who are disparaged due to another reason apart from tadlīs; their aḥādhīth are rejected, even though they admit of hearing them directly. In total, Ibn Ḥajar supplies about 152 names for all categories. See Ibn Ḥajar, Ṭabaqāt al-Mudallisīn, 4-22.
841 Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān, 1/154.
arguments are set forth in a systematic manner and carried to their plausible conclusions as he says

Abū ʿAbd Allāh [Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal] did not [carefully] examine him, but he only looked at some forged ḥadīth related from him from reliable folk and rejected them. According to my findings, he is hasty in rejection! For something even worse than this there is no reason to impugn the reliability of a person in ḥadīth. I entered Homs and my greatest concern was Baqiyya’s case. I tracked down his ḥadīth and I copied the notes [of his students] in their entirety. I tracked the transmission of [his] early [students] which I did not find [at first] with short isnāds. Hence I saw that he was reliable, but he was mudallis (someone who altered isnāds). He heard some ḥadīth in a correct manner from ʿUbayd Allāh b. ʿUmar, Shuʿba and Mālik. Then he heard [some ḥadīth] ascribed to ʿUbayd Allāh b. ʿUmar, Shuʿba and Mālik from rejected and weak liars, like al-Mujāshi’ b. Amr, al-Sārī b. Abd al-Hamīd, ʿUmar b. Musā al-Mithāmī, others of their ilk and some people known only by their kunyas. [He] related [the ḥadīth] that he heard from these weak transmitters as coming directly from those reliable scholars he had seen. He used to say, “ʿUbayd Allāh b. ʿUmar from Nāfiʾ” and “Mālik from Nāfiʾ,” etc. [His students] transmitted [the material] from Baqiyya [directly] from Malik and the feeble transmitter was omitted from between [Baqiyya and Mālik]. As a consequence, the forged ḥadīth were attributed to Baqiyya and the [real] forger was omitted from in between. In reality, Baqiyya was taxed with some students who used to omit [the names of] the weak transmitters from [the isnāds of] his ḥadīth and transmitted them without the weak transmitters. So all of that [forging] was attributed to him.

As mentioned earlier, it is established in the science of ḥadīth transmission that a ḥadīth by mudallis may not be relied upon if the mudallis does not state clearly the manner in which he received it, as is true of Baqiyya b. al-Walī. In this case, Ibn Ḥibbān produces three steps in a methodology for evaluating ḥadīth. The first is Ibn Ḥibbān’s attempt to collect all the transmissions of what came to be known as Baqiyya’s ḥadīth. The second is his recognition that Baqiyya’s intermediaries led to the source of forgery. Finally, Ibn Ḥibbān concluded that Baqiyya only passed on the forgeries of his intermediaries and did not forge the ḥadīth himself. However, because he and his students often omitted (tadlīs) the names of the weak transmitters from their isnāds, it appeared at first glance that he was personally responsible for the forging.

Another issue discussed by Ibn Ḥibbān that relates to the transmitter’s reliability in transmitting ḥadīth was the person who embraced what ḥadīth critics considered the rejected

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842 This; i.e. Ibn Ḥanbal’s rejection of Baqiyya
843 Al-Majrūḥīn, 1/229. This passage is also translated in Dickinson, The Development of Ḥadīth Criticism, 87.
845 Dickinson, The Development of Ḥadīth Criticism, 87.
doctrinal sects, such as Shiite, Mu'tazilite, Kharijite, Qadarite, Murjiites, and others. Ibn Ḥibbān says, “according to our authorities, it is absolutely forbidden to cite the ḥadīth of a daʿīya (proselytizer) for sectarian doctrines. I do not know of any disagreement among them on this point.”846 Then Ibn Ḥibbān declared that one could accept aḥādīth from any “heretical” transmitter provided he was not an extremist and did not actively try to convert others to his beliefs. The main idea underlying this dictum is that it appears Ibn Ḥibbān was willing to consider for someone known for his tenderness in promoting a certain sectarian. In a few words if a transmitter transmits ḥadīth from his teacher, critics like Ibn Ḥibbān had little interest in his beliefs or practises. Drawing on Ibn Ḥibbān’s conclusion, Brown states

In theory, this meant that one could accept ḥadīths from Shiite transmitters as long as they did not engage in virulently anti-Sunni practise such as cursing Abu Bakr or Umar or transmit ḥadīths that seemed to preach the Shiite message.847

Furthermore, as we shall see, establishing the transmitter’s reliability was not accomplished due to his personal belief or character but it was based almost entirely on his materials. Although the pinnacle period of riḍāl criticism is relatively a century before Ibn Ḥibbān’s era, Ibn Ḥibbān continued to re-examine or reconcile existing opinions on earlier transmitters based upon their aḥādīth. The analysis of the body of transmitter’s transmissions for corroboration that determined his dabh (accuracy) and thus his grade. These are matters which Ibn Ḥibbān took up in his analysis; was its transmitter alone in transmitting it or not? Is it well known or not? In his terminology, the term “al-iʿṭibār” (consideration) is used in the process of searching for different isnād of a ḥadīth.848 In the introduction to his Ṣaḥīḥ, Ibn Ḥibbān demonstrates the process

Ḥammād b. Salama relates an unparalleled ḥadīth from Ayyūb from Ibn Sīrīn from Abī Hurayra from the Prophet (peace be upon him). It is examined: did a reliable transmitter other than Ayyūb relate it from Ibn Sīrīn? If that is found, it is known that the report has an original version to which it goes back. If that is not found, then does a reliable transmitter other than Ibn Sīrīn relate it from Abī Hurayra? If not, does a Companion other than Abū Hurayra relate it from the Prophet (peace be upon him)? If any of that is found, it is thereby known that the ḥadīth has an original version to which it goes back. If it is not found, the ḥadīth does not have one.

If we go to Ḥammād b. Salama, we notice that he transmitted a report from Ayyūb from [Muḥammad] b. Sīrīn from Abī Hurayra from the Prophet. We do not discover that report with any other student of Ayyūb. Hence we are compelled to halt from impugning him [Ḥammād] and compare [it] with what his contemporaries

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848 Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān, 1/155. See also Halit Ozkan, “The Common Link and Its Relation to the Madar”, *Islamic Law and Society*, vol. 11, no. 2 (2004), 65.
transmitted. It is essential that we first cogitate on this report: Did several of Ḥammād’s students transmit it from him or only one, all by himself? It is found that several of his students transmitted it [from him], then it is known that Ḥammād indeed transmitted it. [But,] if it is found to be the transmission of a single weak [transmitter] from Ḥammād, then it is ascribed to that transmitter and not to him.

When it is established that Ḥammād did transmit from Ayyūb something which no one else did, then it is necessary to pause and weakness should not be ascribed to him [yet]. Rather, it should be ascertained: Has any reliable transmitter other than Ayyūb transmitted this report from Ibn Sīrīn? If that is found, then it is known that the report has a source from which it derives.

If what we described is not found, it is then ascertained: Did any reliable transmitter other than Ibn Sīrīn transmit this report from Abī Hurayra? If that is found, then it is known that the report has a source.

If what we said is not found, then it is ascertained: Does anyone relate this report from the Prophet other than Abū Hurayra? If that is found, it is established that the report has a source. When that is absent and the report itself at variance with the three sources [i.e. Ibn Sīrīn, Abū Hurayra, and the Prophet], then it is known that the report is undoubtedly a forgery and that the transmitter who was alone in transmitting it [at some point in the isnād] is the one who forged it.849

This is how Ibn Ḥibbān developed his methodology. His method starts in a conventional position and it is clear to see its structure and systematic manner. This example is also quoted by Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ in his methodological writing.850 The objective of Ibn Ḥibbān analysis is aimed at solving the problem of forgery by examining the transmissions of Ḥammād.851 He looked for indications in the isnād that could show whether the ḥadīth given by Ḥammād’s students were single in transmission or not. If only one of his students transmitted the ḥadīth from him, Ibn Ḥibbān was satisfied to leave behind the ḥadīth and considered that student as a forger. But if not, Ibn Ḥibbān then turned to the distribution of ḥadīth among the names given by Ḥammād as his informants (who were Ayyūb, Ibn Sīrīn, and Abū Hurayra). This either would result in Ḥammād being exclusive in transmitting the ḥadīth that available to him or that he really received it along with others. Ultimately, Ibn Ḥibbān compared the transmission of Ḥammād with those of others, and he was able to see

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849 Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān, 1/155. This passage is also translated in Dickinson, The Development of Ḥadīth Criticism, 89.
that they matched closely. Then on this basis, he drew the conclusion that Ḥammād was a reliable transmitter.

In the opinion of ʿAbd al-Rahmān al-Ḥālifī, it appears that Ibn Ḥibbān’s assessment of Ḥammād was the product of his appraisal and it is certainly distinct with al-Bukhārī’s evaluation. He adds that al-Bukhārī never included Ḥammād except in one mutābaʿa (auxiliary) narration. Auxiliary narrations served to bolster the authenticity of the Prophetic tradition, but al-Bukhārī did not meet his usual tough criteria for authenticity when dealing with them. Thus we found that Ḥammād is highly regarded by Ibn Ḥibbān where the Sahīḥ contains about 287 ḥadīth through him. Basically, as demonstrated by A’zami, Ibn Ḥibbān’s method of evaluating the accuracy of a transmitter is parallel to other critics’ style. They compare the aḥādīth of different students of a transmitter, or the statements of a transmitter at different times, or oral recitation and written documents and many others. A century before, as recorded in the Majrūhīn, Yahyā b. Maʿīn had applied the same method

Yahyā went to ʿAffān to read the books of Ḥammād to him. [ʿAffān] said to him, “Have you not heard from anyone else?” [Yahyā] said, “Yes, seventeen people have transmitted to me from Ḥammād b. Salama.” [ʿAffān] said, “By God, I will not transmit to you.” [Yahyā] said, “This is a mistake. I will go to al-Basra and hear [them] from Tabūḏahākī.” [ʿAffān] said, “[That is] your business.” [Yahyā] went to al-Basra and reached Mūsā b. Ismaʿil (Tabūḏahākī). Mūsā said to him, “Have you not heard these books from anyone?” [Yahyā] said, “I heard them in their entirety from seventeen people and you are the eighteenth.” [Mūsā] said, “Why do you do this?” [Yahyā] replied, “Ḥammād b. Salama used to make mistakes and I want to distinguish the errors he made from those which others made. If I see that his students unanimously transmit something [from him], I know that the error originates from Ḥammād himself. If they unanimously transmit something from him and one of them says [something] in disagreement with them, I know that the error originates from [that student] and not from Ḥammād. Thus, I distinguish between his own errors and the errors attributed to him [by his students].”

Neither, it should be said, is Ibn Ḥibbān trying to directly replicate what the earliest critics did. On rijāl criticism he has cultivated an approach that was his own. He was influenced by his predecessors, of course but firmly with the demands of rijāl criticism of his era. Nevertheless, the terminologies chosen by Ibn Ḥibbān followed the early usage in the biographical dictionaries. His terminology was already well-known and resemble the

854 M. M. A’zami, Methodology and Literature, 70-71.
855 Al-Majrūhīn, 1/34. This passage is also translated in M. M. A’zami, Methodology and Literature, 70-71 and Dickinson, The Development of Ḥadīth Criticism, 88.
formulations of Ibn Abī Ḥātim, al-Bukhārī, Ibn Maʿīn and others represented little disputed usage. Ibn Ḥibbān, like other critics, envisages the process of transmission so that ḥadīth play a fundamental role in every aspect of his world view, rooted in the terminology of the Quran. *Thiqā* (trustworthy) and *ḍaʿīf* (weak) denoted both successful and bad in a cosmic resulting of circumstance. Ibn Ḥibbān does choose *ḍaʿīf* to be the general term for all the impugned transmitters included, as he mentions the twenty categories of them. With these Ibn Ḥibbān included anyone who conformed to his judgement of the weak and of the forged, that is to say, proven to be weak or unreliable, proven not to be *ʿadl*, and thus not to satisfy the requirements demanded of transmitters of ḥadīth in the science of ḥadīth transmission.

Ibn Ḥibbān treats in some detail twenty categories of impugned transmitters and spends twenty-five pages discussing essential definitions, examples, demonstrations and related topics. He asserts that these categories are appropriate for transmitters, explaining that these categories are necessary for all critical evaluation. The discussion of transmitters’ categories in the *Majrūḥīn* is probably one of the earliest comprehensive analysis that provides some insight into ḥadīth transmitters whose individual backgrounds are problematic. In the second and third century of Hijra, an enormous amount of transmitter evaluation was devoted to questions regarding the names, dating, provenances, and sources of various ḥadīth transmissions. All of this formed different evaluation of even a transmitter and consequently the status of ḥadīth. An advantage of continuous *rijāl* criticism was that it enabled critics like Ibn Ḥibbān to learn much about the background and impact of certain ḥadīth without having to make a definitive decision about these persistent and perhaps unsolvable discussions. Additionally, it also provides for checks and balances on previous critics’ evaluation.

Hence Ibn Ḥibbān reached a synthesis of the dissimilar evaluation when he established to consolidate the earlier terminologies employed in considering transmitters.

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858 Jonathan Brown, “Did the Prophet Say It or Not? The Literal, Historical, and Effective Truth of Ḥadīths in Early Sunnism”, 265.


860 Librande, “Ḥadīth Scholars and Retentive Memory”, 44.

weakness into his twenty categories of impugned transmitters. This way each particular
category will affect the accuracy of transmitters on a rigorously hierarchical basis and thus
eventually a weak transmitter appears.\textsuperscript{862} Perhaps like walking on eggshells, he repeatedly
advised scholars to not exaggerate in impugning anyone.\textsuperscript{863} He formulated his own
descriptive which employed different terms for twenty categories of impugned transmitters:

1. They are the zanādiqa (heretics) who believe in infidelity and disbelief and do not
   believe in God and the Hereafter. They enter the cities and act like scholars but they
   forge the ḥadīth.

2. Among them are those who are aroused by the devil and attribute ḥadīth to
   trustworthy masters for the sake of motivating people to do good deeds.

3. Among them are those who deliberately forge ḥadīth and attribute them to
   trustworthy transmitters, thereby rendering the Prophet guilty of forgery.

4. Among them are those who from time to time forge ḥadīth to support the rulers or
   others but do not make a profession of it.

5. Among them are those who had previously written the ḥadīth but are overwhelmed
   with other duties and worshipping, hence they do not memorize or sift them. So that
   when they transmit ḥadīth, the mursal is elevated, the mawquf is supported (with
   isnād), and the isnād is altered.

6. Among them are those trustworthy transmitters who confused their ḥadīth at the end
   of their life as far as they do not think while transmitting and answer the question
   and transmit according to their will. Hence their authentic ḥadīth are mixed with their
   weak ḥadīth. All these are deserved to be leftover.

7. Among them are those who answer everything that has been asked, whether it is from
   his own report or others, and he does not bother to understand what is to be dictated.

\textsuperscript{862} Dickinson, \textit{The Development of Hadith Criticism}, 95.
\textsuperscript{863} \textit{Wā lā yaqūl `alayh fāwq mā yu lam min. Al-Majrūhīn}, 1/58.
8. Among them are those who lies and he is even unaware that he is lying because the knowledge does not belong to his art.

9. Among them are those who transmit from teachers with authentic books that they have never met. The books are authentic but they had neither heard nor seen the teachers.

10. Among them are those who invert the reports and adjust the *isnād*.

11. Among them are those who met and heard from certain teachers, but after the teachers died, they memorize and dictate the ḥadīth that they had not heard from them.

12. Among them are those who travel and write down what they have obtained but lose their book. After enquiry, they transmit from others’ books without memorizing or hearing it.

13. Among them are those who make many mistakes or make enormous errors to the point that they are not correct. Hence this deserves to be put aside although he is truthful and his transmission is good.

14. Among them are those who have been audited by a bad son or transcriber who forged his report.

15. Among them are those who is not aware that something has been inserted into ḥadīth.

16. Among them are those who have a quick tongue as far as they say something wrong in transmitting without being aware of their mistake.

17. Among them are those who are publicly regarded as stupid and sinful, even if they are in fact truthful.

18. Among them are those who are *mudallis*, obfuscating a person he has never met.

19. Among them are those who are *mubtadi ‘* (sectarian) as well as proselytizers for the sake of the adherents of their sectarian belief.
20. Among them are story-tellers and asks those who forge ḥadīth for the sake of interesting their audience.864

Conclusion

An abundance of such literatures has been written on this subject which has formed the basis of the science of ḥadīth transmission. As with all biographical dictionaries or ḥadīth collections in the early three centuries of hijra, its purpose is to enable one to figure out the work and character of great scholars and determine their value as critics. By examining Ibn Ḥibbān’s al-Majrūḥīn and Ṣaḥīḥ one gains an understanding into the different opinions relating to even a single transmitter among the various critics, and Ibn Ḥibbān himself writes from a committed standpoint. But one can also detect in this discussion changes in the conception which relate directly to the question of the status and style of critical evaluation.865 The personal capabilities of Ibn Ḥibbān were a very important factor determining his critical method and surely they influenced his results, and one thus encounters an obvious lack of similarity in his viewpoints in comparison to other critics. Nonetheless, Ibn Ḥibbān took advantage of the fact that he lived in the late age of the Ṣaḥīḥ movement. The mean that Ibn Ḥibbān had at his disposal comparable versions of the ḥadīth along with earlier critics’ evaluations of transmitters. Undoubtedly these works gave him a panoramic view of the timeline of the transmissions and enabled him to discover the transition of the ḥadīth through time, from one generation to the next.866 Although Ibn Ḥibbān persisted approachable to pursues to submit higher strictness in the criticism process, he argued that if the trustworthy category was made too strict, few transmitters could be established. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in Ibn Ḥibbān’s discussions of Ḥammād b. Salama and Baqiyya b. al-Walid. He argues that if one were to reject the transmission of all those who made mistakes or altered isnāds, there would be no ḥadīth left. Practically, this shows that Ibn Ḥibbān was actually very flexible with determining the status of a transmitter.

864 Al-Majrūḥīn, 58-83.
865 Tarif Khalidi, Arabic Historical Thought, 39.
866 Dickinson, The Development of Ḥadīth Criticism, 82.
CHAPTER FIVE

IBN ḤIBBĀN’S BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARIES ON RELIABLE TRANSMITTERS

The chapter is concerned with some of the ways in which Ibn Ḥibbān has presented the biography of the Prophet and the early scholars in the Islamic tradition. The task involves analysing both theoretical and practical aspects of Ibn Ḥibbān’s method for evaluating. Apart from biographical material of reliable transmitters in the Ṣaḥīḥ, it manifests clearly that Ibn Ḥibbān’s approval of a transmitter is due to the inclusion both in Kitāb al-Thiqāt and Mashāḥīr al-ʿUlamāʾ al-Amṣār. Both sources yield information of reliable transmitters who lived during a period of 300 years using terminology that reflects his opinion on the reliability of the transmitter. They certainly give us an opportunity to investigate and compare his approach.

5.1 The Thiqāt of Ibn Ḥibbān

In a recent volume of the Encyclopaedia of Arabic Literature, Ibn Ḥibbān is credited with Kitāb al-Thiqāt, where he was described as “a widely travelled traditionist and prolific writer.” Meanwhile, Brockelmann and Sezgin list the available manuscripts of the Thiqāt and show it is scattered across various places, including Istanbul, Madinah, Damascus, Aligarh and Lucknow. The available manuscripts of al-Thiqāt also mentioned by Maʿhad al-Turāth al-ʿIlmī al-ʿArabī. The first printed edition of the Thiqāt was edited by Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Muṣn Khan and assistants in 9 volumes and published by Dāʿira al-Maʿārif al-ʿIlmīyya of Hyderabad, India in 1973. In comparison, this study has used and cited the following edition: Kitāb al-Thiqāt published by Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya of Beirut which is furnished with numbering schemes. Yet both editions keep its original structure and organization. Later, a group of Indian scholars give a title of Itmām al-Inʿām bi-Tartīb mā Warada fī Kitāb al-Thiqāt li-Ibn Ḥibbān min al-Asmāʾ wa al-Aʾlām for the new alphabetical indexes of the names and the paidonymics of the Thiqāt transmitters.

867 Encyclopaedia of Arabic Literature, 1/334.
868 GAL, 1/273; GAS, 1/191.
work also was edited in a strictly alphabetical arrangement ignoring the original structure of its 16008 entries by Khalīl Maʾmūn Shīḥā in 2007.\(^{872}\)

Throughout the history of biographical dictionaries of ḥadīth transmitters, there is a great difference in scope, plan, and detailed contents, according to the main theme of the compilers. In the introduction of the Thiqāt, Ibn Ḥibbān writes that his work is an index of all the ḥadīth transmitters accompanied by biographical information about them. Concern for the authenticity of the biography and ḥadīth of the Prophet led to Ibn Ḥibbān sifting all available sources about and generations of transmitters which resulted in the collection of biographical material about transmitters which was used to assess their scholarship. In general, the Thiqāt is a biographical dictionary of ḥadīth transmitters that are grouped into four consecutively numbered generations i.e. ṭabaqāt, framed by an introduction at the beginning of the work and a postscript at the end. However, the transmitters are arranged in a loose alphabetical order.

Just like all the critics, Ibn Ḥibbān contented himself with gathering the evidence, and classifying it accordingly. There already existed many testimonies of ḥadīth transmitters biographies during Ibn Ḥibbān’s time, which for some reason or other, he did not incorporate into his work. Occasionally, he points out that certain testimonies or materials had been mentioned and discussed in more detail in his other works.\(^{873}\) Nevertheless, in respect of the sources of this ample biographical material, it is understandable that in the earlier stages Ibn Ḥibbān’s Thiqāt was derived from preceding biographical dictionaries like Ibn Saʿd’s (d. 223/837) Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā, Khalīfa b. Khayyāt’s (d. 240/854) Tārīkh, Ḥammad b. Ṣufyān al-Fasawī’s (d. 277/890) al-Maʿrifa al-Tārīkh, Abū al-ʿArab al-Tamimī’s (d. 333/944) work, and the Thiqāt of Ibn Ḥibbān is reproduced as such, being unsupported with chains of transmission.\(^{874}\)


\(^{874}\) Saʿd el-Dīn, Ibn Ḥibbān wa Qīmat Kitābayh al-Thiqāt wa al-Majrūḥīn, 178. See also Amīn b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Shaqāwī, Taʿāruḍ Abkūm al-Imām Muḥammad Ibn Ḥibbān al-Busīr al-Baḍal al-Ruwāt fī Kitāb al-Thiqāt wa al-Majrūḥīn, (M.A. Diss., King Saud University, 1419H).
He adds that Ibn Ḥibbān seems to have copied certain biographies from Ibn Abī Ḥātim’s *Jarḥ*. For example, in the *Thiqāt*

'Abd al-Mālik b. Abī Bakr b. 'Abd al-Azīz transmits from Abī Hurayra and Sa‘īd b. Abī Ayyūb transmits from 'Abd Allāh b. al-Walīd from him.<ref name="876"/>

In the *Jarḥ*, Ibn Abī Ḥātim heard from his father

'Abd al-Mālik b. Abī Bakr b. 'Abd al-Azīz transmits from Abī Hurayra and Sa‘īd b. Abī Ayyūb transmits from 'Abd Allāh b. al-Walīd from him.<ref name="877"/>

In fact, as mentioned by al- Kháṭīb al-Baghdādī, the composition of *Jarḥ* was based on Bukhārī’s *Tārīkh*.<ref name="878"/> It is undeniable that there is a marked similarity between them. However, entries in *Jarḥ* commonly name more transmitters and offer fuller versions of a transmitter’s name, and the entries also include evaluations of the transmitter’s personal reliability. Dickinson states the allegation that the scholars of al-Rayy i.e. Abu Zurʿa, Ibn Abī Ḥātim and his father plagiarized Bukhārī’s *Tārīkh* is puzzling.<ref name="879"/> Taking up ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Yahyā al-Mu’allimī’s opinion, Dickinson makes the important observation that

While Bukhārī supplies dates for many transmitters, often he neglects to provide any evaluation of their reliability. On the other hand, *Jarḥ* contains few dates, but assesses the reliability of almost every transmitter. Ibn Abī Ḥātim does appear to have taken (without acknowledgement) a number of the shortest entries directly from Bukhārī’s book. The transmitters treated in these would appear to be those whom Ibn Abī Ḥātim – as he describes in his introduction – included for the sake of completeness, although he had not yet come across any critical judgement on them.<ref name="880"/>

Nevertheless, Ibn Ḥibbān clearly adheres to the material and organisation of the *Tārīkh* and *Jarḥ*. The principles undergirding the *Thiqāt*’s organization include person, topic, sīra, history, ṭabaqāt, and chronology. It should be noted that abridgement is Ibn Ḥibbān’s prime technique for composing the *Thiqāt*. The ḥadīth transmitters whose biographies are contained in the *Thiqāt* are thus presented as the successors of the Prophet, who are said to have been the subject of an earlier work by Ibn Ḥibbān, entitled *Kitāb al-Tārīkh*.<ref name="881"/>
length of entries varies widely. Some are very brief. Longer entries sometimes give some brief appreciation of the transmitter’s subject. At the very outset, Ibn Ḥibbān determines exactly the transmitter’s full name and place of origin or the place his ḥadīth circulated. Once in a while, he gives the reason why the transmitter is included in that particular ṭabaqāt.

The structure continues with the respective list as those from whom a transmitter related ḥadīth (rawāʿ an) and who related ḥadīth from him (rawāʿ anḥ). This is important for ḥadīth scholars in determining the possible connection with alleged teachers and students. The entry on each subsequent figure lists his teachers and students and thus establishes his place in a lineage whose authority derives ultimately from that of the founder. For the same purpose, Ibn Ḥibbān provides information about the transmitters in cities that he travelled to and the masters whom he met. According to Mashhoor, in the Thiqāt, Ibn Ḥibbān “lumped together reliable transmitters which unconcern with different levels of reliability, making them all equal with regard to trustworthiness.” In this case, it seems more reasonable to relate Ibn Ḥibbān’s methodology with the Tārīkh of Bukhārī. Unlike in the Majrūḥīn, Ibn Ḥibbān offers few evaluations of personal reliability. Hence we can say that the defining feature of the Thiqāt is that it is concerned with the names of men and the links in which they figure, not with evaluations of their personal reliability.

Comparing the entries in the Thiqāt with his Majrūḥīn, it is particularly interesting to discover that on several occasions Ibn Ḥibbān mentions the same transmitter in both books. On one of the occasions, Ibn Ḥibbān states that his intention was to include the transmitter among the weak, like in the case of Muṣʿab b. Thābit (d. 157/773). Or his name should be removed from among the weak, like Sufyān b. Husayn b. Ḥasan. Saʿd el-Din lists about 90 identical transmitters in the Thiqāt and Majrūḥīn. Among those transmitters are ‘Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā (d. 203/818) who was the famous descendant of the Prophet. Ibn Ḥibbān writes in ‘Alī al-Riḍā’s entry: “His grave in Sanabad, out of al-Nawqan was famously visited beside the grave of al-Rashid. I have visited it many times. When I faced a problem during

884 For a more detailed discussion of Bukhārī’s Tārīkh, see Christopher Melchert, “Bukhārī and Early Ḥadīth Criticism”, 7-19.
885 Al-Thiqāt, 7/478.
886 Ibid, 6/404.
887 What was once the village of Sanabad became the city of Mashhad, which was built around the mausoleum of ‘Alī al-Riḍā. See Josef W. Meri, Medieval Islamic Civilization: An Encyclopaedia, 438.
my stay in Tus, I have visited ʿAlī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā’s grave, blessings of Allāh be upon his forefather and him, and asked Allāh for [the problem] to be solved, and my supplication has been answered and my problem has been solved. I have experienced this many times and I have found it likewise.” Overall, by our count, about 9 transmitters of those 90 were used in his Ṣaḥīḥ which makes up 13 ḥadīth.

We should also mention that Ibn Ḥibbān’s apparent attitude in evaluating reliable transmitters also drew the attention of later scholars. For instance, Ibn Ḥibbān includes Yūsuf b. Maymūn al-Qurashī in the Thiqāt, whereas, Ibn Ḥajar and al-Dhahabī consider him weak. Al-Dhahabi adds that “no lesson [can be learnt] by Ibn Ḥibbān mention of him (Yūsuf b. Maymūn) in the Thiqāt.”888 According to al-Nawawī, Ibn Ḥibbān’s leniency in expressing probity regarding certain transmitters indicates that he is almost similar to al-Ḥākim.889 A ḥadīth whose transmitter has a reputation for truthfulness and trustworthiness, but not quite so accurate will degrade it from ṣaḥīḥ (authentic) to ḥasan (good).890 Al-Ḥāzimī tried to justify Ibn Ḥibbān’s leniency by saying: “what is said about Ibn Ḥibbān’s leniency is not true because his aim is to consider ḥasan as ṣaḥīḥ.” Later ḥadīth scholars hold that Ibn Ḥibbān did not really distinguish between ṣaḥīḥ and ḥasan ḥadīth.891

Above all, apart from the biography lists of ḥadīth transmitters which dominate the work, entries of non-transmitters are to be found. That is to say, the essential building blocks of the Thiqāt’s biography lists are also constructed with the lists of Islamic world rulers. For example, under the chapter on Caliphs and Kings (he considers that the first four are the only caliph),892 Ibn Ḥibbān gives a list of rulers until his era, their full name, and important occasions occurred during their reign, and so on. As such, the Thiqāt has been one of the most valuable sources for the study of the first three centuries of ḥadīth transmitter biography and a record of medieval Islamicate history, and even of non-ḥadīth transmission. Perhaps we can say that the subjects of the Thiqāt are the Prophet’s sīra, the history of caliphs and kings, biographies of Companions, ḥadīth transmitters, legal theorists, jurists, judges, theologians, and many others. However, the main theme is devoted to religious scholars, primarily ḥadīth transmitters who also acquired an understanding in fiqh, as asserted by Ibn

888 Taqrīb al-Thiqāt, 91.
889 Al-Ṣuyūṭī, Tadrīb al-Rāwī, 1/108
890 Ibn al-Salāḥ gives Khaṭṭābī’s definition of ḥasan thus: “the ḥasan is that whose origin is known and whose men are well-known. It is the pivot of most ḥadīth, is accepted by most of learned, and used by all the faqīhūn”. For a closer analysis of ḥasan ḥadīth, see James Robson, “Varieties of the Hasan Tradition” in Journal of Semitic Studies 6 (1961), 47-61.
891 Tadrīb al-Rāwī, 1/108.
892 Al-Thiqāt, 2/304.
Ḥibbān. As it has been seen before, there is textual evidence that Ibn Ḥibbān’s “minimum requirement of a transmitter” is that he is someone who not only memorizes and transmits ḥadīth but understands the meanings of the Sunnah i.e. fiqh of the ḥadīth. His contemporary, al-Rāmahurmuzī (d. 360/971) also discusses al-Shāfiʿī’s opinion and others regarding to the competence of transmission by one who had legal understanding.\(^{893}\)

In scholarly writing to date, only limited attention has been paid to the structure of the Thiqāt and the historical and ideological information that the structure conveys.\(^{894}\) It is perhaps best to return to the substantial arrangement of the composition itself, in order to acquire an understanding into the technique that has been exercised. Throughout the Thiqāt, Ibn Ḥibbān makes a number of revealing statements about his principles for the organization, classification and sequencing of the work. The below introduction is typical of this work, in that he offers a biographical summary in the form of a list of statements which encompass a limited range of information. And to make the case that his ṭabaqāt is understandable, Ibn Ḥibbān explains that

In this book, first we begin with the report of al-Muṣṭafā (the chosen one), his birth, [the beginning of] his prophethood, his migration, until he was taken by Allāh to His heaven.

Then, we mention the Prophet’s Companions one by one in alphabetical order because they are the best generation after the Prophet.

After them, we mentioned the Successors who speak to the Prophet’s companions from all regions in alphabetical order because they are the best people after the Companions.

Then we mentioned the third generation who met the Successors, as we mention them [the third generation] in the same style as the first two generations.

Then we mentioned the fourth generation who meet the Successors of Successors in the same fashion of their predecessor. This generation ends until our time.\(^{895}\)

As this example from introduction of the Thiqāt shows ordinarily Ibn Ḥibbān prefers to cluster people from the same time period, to mention material thematically, and to sequence people and titles chronologically. Ibn Ḥibbān’s remark about the principles of classification in the Thiqāt have not gone unnoticed, but neither have they attracted a great deal of scholarly attention, certainly not as much as the contents of the work have. Juynboll’s analysis of the number of ṭabaqāt in the Thiqāt misses the fourth generation. He states that the Thiqāt commences with extensive biography of the Prophet and “it is further organised on the basis of three ṭabaqāt: that of the Successors and those of the following two


\(^{894}\) EI2, 8/516.

\(^{895}\) Al-Thiqāt, 1/10-11.
generations.” The principle applied to the classification of biographies into the four ṭabaqāt is exceptionally helpful.

Like Bukhārī’s Tārīkh, many of the biographies in the Thiqāt supply the year of death. One would anticipate this from what is known of other biographical dictionaries of ḥadīth transmitters, which share important characteristics with the Thiqāt and regularly include death dates in transmitter entries, usually without giving any other significant year with regard to the subject of the biographical information. A quick glance at these dates demonstrates that Ibn Ḥibbān’s four ṭabaqāt deal with a period ranging back from the early fourth/tenth century to the first/seventh century. This is determined by the inclusion of his famous teacher Abū Ya’lā Ahmad b. ‘Alī b. al-Muthannā (d. 307/919) in the final ṭabaqāt.

There can be no doubt that Ibn Ḥibbān adopted the ṭabaqāt system for a specific purpose. His motivation was to identify the scholars who had legitimate authority to determine religious doctrine and method. As observed by Claude Gilliot, “in the book classes (or “generations”) the interest in genealogy developed so as to establish a hierarchy of merits, also becoming concerned with the “authentic” transmission of the Islamic sciences, like the traditions of the Prophet (ḥadīth)”.

In each ṭabaqāt, Ibn Ḥibbān arranges the names in alphabetical order then follows with a section on paidonymics as an integral part at the end. He also first mentions males and then the females. The first of Ibn Ḥibbān’s ṭabaqāt (Companions) is made up of 1595 biographies (1484 names, 111 paidonymics); the second ṭabaqāt (Successors) consists of 4867 biographies (4640 names, 227 paidonymics); the third ṭabaqāt (Successors of Successors) consists of 5552 biographies (5456 names, 96 paidonymics); and the final ṭabaqāt consists of 4488 biographies (4486 names, 2 paidonymics). Roughly, 68 percent of all women included in these four ṭabaqāt are ṣaḥābiyyāt (female Companions). Ibn Ḥibbān cites 222 women among the prominent transmitters of the first generation which is about 16.5 percent among the whole Companions. As we shall see, the three following

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896 EI2, 8/516.
897 See also Devin Stewart, “The Structure of the Fihrist: Ibn al-Nadim as Historian of Islamic Legal and Theological School”, International Journal of Middle East, vol. 39, no. 3 (Aug., 2007), 370, for an observation about the arrangement of Ibn al-Nadim’s Fihrist in chronological order as he apparently thinks first and foremost in terms of death dates.
898 Al-Thiqāt, 8/55.
900 Ruth Roded, Women in Biographical Collections: From Ibn Sa’d to Who’s Who, 63.
generations were included in the *Thiqāt*, but the *ṣaḥābiyyāt* undoubtedly represent a large contingent of all women whose biographies were recorded.\(^{901}\)

In the *Thiqāt* as a whole, chronology is a structural organizing foundation, functioning at four recognizable degrees: the internal order of *sīra*; the internal order of the Chapter on Caliphs and Kings; the internal order of lists of *ṭabaqāt*; and the order of the book as a whole. Obviously an insight of these four chronological foundations helps readers to understand the *Thiqāt* and the ideas behind it. By classifying them like this one may collect necessary data from the *Thiqāt* and also gain insight into Ibn Ḥibbān’s method of arrangement, beliefs, and historical analyses.\(^{902}\) Ibn Ḥibbān does not, however, adhere to chronology at all times. In most cases when he breaks chronological arrangement, though, he does so for a discernible reason. Although the *ṭabaqāt* of the *Thiqāt* are presented in a chronological sequence, the individual biographies within them are plainly not. In general, Ibn Ḥibbān divides the *Thiqāt* into eight principal parts, which he designates *Kitāb* (book), each of which is then subdivided into *bāb* (chapter). Below is the list of eight *Kitāb* according to the pagination in the Dār al-Kutub edition

Table 3: Content of the *Thiqāt*’s Eight *Kitāb*

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<th>List of Book</th>
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<td>2.</td>
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<td>History of Caliphs</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>Conclusion.</td>
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\(^{902}\) Devin Stewart, “The Structure of the Fihrist,” 370.
5.2 The Sīra Corpora in the Thiqāt

A number of recent studies have been interested in comparing the historiography of the sīra and maghāzī literatures between Ibn Isḥāq’s Sīra,⁹⁰³ al-Wāqidi’s Maghāzī and Ṭabarī’s Tārīkh with ḥadīth collections like Bukhārī’s Ṣaḥīḥ and others.⁹⁰⁴ According to John Wansbrough, it has been recognized that data constituting them are generally identical.⁹⁰⁵ However, what differentiates these materials from each other are approximately their narrative and chronological structures and the motives and methods governing these structures.⁹⁰⁶ Basically, the sīra about the Prophet was constructed to furnish Muslims not only with the legal foundation for their way of life, but also with the actual importance of a unified Islamic model. Examining Ibn Isḥāq’s method, Muḥammad Ḥamidullāh claims that Ibn Isḥāq took a world-wide and universal view of history, where all human beings are interdependent and the emergence of the Prophet as the last of all prophets marked the goal towards which the world’s sacred history was moving.⁹⁰⁷ Hence, in the light of this understanding, Ibn Ḥibbān and many others record the sīra under the section devoted to world history.⁹⁰⁸ For instance, in the Ṣaḥīḥ of Ibn Ḥibbān, the section named Tārīkh begins with the creation of the world, the stories of earlier prophets, and then proceeds to ḥadīth in which the central events in the Prophet Muḥammad’s life are dealt with.⁹⁰⁹

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⁹⁰³ Patricia Crone compares between our two best-known sources for the life of the Prophet, Ibn Isḥāq and al-Wāqidi. She also ascribes “the steady growth of information” to them, says: “It is obvious that if one storyteller would know the date of this raid, while the third would know everything that an audience might wish to hear about it. This process graphically illustrated in the sheer contrast of size between works of Ibn Isḥāq (d. 767) and Wāqidī (d. 823), that of Wāqidī being much larger for all that it covers only Muḥammad’s period in Medina.” See Patricia Crone, Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987), 223. However, Michael Lecker refutes the claim that any of this additional material is spurious. In his study of the death of Prophet’s father, he concludes that everything stated by al-Wāqidi regarding the death was cited from some earlier source. See Michael Lecker, “The Death of the Prophet Muḥammad’s father: did Wāqidī invent some of the evidence?”, Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft 145 (1995): 9-27.


⁹⁰⁸ See Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān, 14/5-602, 5-268.

⁹⁰⁹ Rosenthal also observes that “the Prophet is placed in a historical context. His history starts long before him with the beginning of the world. It leads through a series of great moments of spiritual promise, or
In writing the section on *Tārīkh*, it is clear that Ibn Ḥibbān followed the method of selecting his historical information after he had subjected his sources to ḥadīth criticism. One will notice that those of his sources whom he mentions by name were scholars of lofty reputation in their fields of study. However, his historical information is only limited to Muslim written sources, unlike Ibn Qutayba (d. 282/891). According to ʿAbd al-Azīz Duri, Ibn Qutayba was the first to take account of the Old Testament consulting information without prevarication from it about the beginning of Creation and the history of the prophets. He adds that Ibn Qutayba’s historical materials were esteemed for their neutrality and importance on matters of historical fact. Occasionally Ibn Qutayba offers the predominant view of events, but at others he gives his own original assessment.\(^{910}\)

Earlier before, we also found that Ibn Ḥisāq utilized the knowledge of the Jews and Christians who had information about Muslim history, and thus he collected data from both parties. He cited them by naming this or that Jew or Christian, or as “some scriptuary” (*ahl al-Kitāb*). The most widely discussed criticism of Ibn Ḥisāq’s work was that of his contemporary Mālik b. Anās.\(^{911}\) Mālik saying that he cited even the Jews as his authorities.\(^{912}\) Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal also recorded a long narration of a Christian in Muʿāwiya’s era related to a Muslim who had met him in a convent, how Heraclius had sent him to see the Prophet and how he met him during the expedition of Tabuk.\(^{913}\) Seemingly the effort of collecting from various sources is beneficial, as Muḥammad Ḥamidullāh once observed

To collect material from such varied and multifarious sources was not possible for a single generation, much less for a single person. Some information, even when recorded, could remain for generations confined to a certain locality and would not become available to the general student. The material was not merely religious or political, but also social, economic, and cultural; in fact, it related to all walks of life. Happily the early Muslim historians were not content with the information pertaining to the person of the Prophet only, but also gathered the material about his time and his contemporary society.\(^{914}\)

Nevertheless, in this part our information of Ibn Ḥibbān’s thought about the *sīra* of the Prophet is derived from exegetical and juridical ḥadīth as well as his commentaries

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\(^{910}\) A. A. Duri, *The Rise of Historical Writing Among the Arabs*, 68.

\(^{911}\) *EI2*, 3/810.

\(^{912}\) Muḥammad Ḥamidullāh, “Muḥammad Ibn Ḥisāq (*The Biographer of the Holy Prophet*)”, 82.

\(^{913}\) Ibid, 85.

\(^{914}\) Ibid.
recorded in the Thiqāt.\footnote{Ibn Ḥibbān’s writing on sīra also has been separately printed from the Thiqāt. See Ibn Ḥibbān, al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya, ed. Al-Sayyid ‘Azīz Bak, (Beirut: al-Kutub al-Thaqafiyya, 1417H).} The sīra is followed by chapter about the caliphs.\footnote{Andreas Gorke presents two different opinions of the relationship between the fields of maghāzī or sīra and ḥadīth. First, “maghāzī material is derived from exegetical and juridical ḥadīth… According to the other view, the development was the other way around”. See Andreas Gorke, “The relationship between maghāzī and ḥadīth in early Islamic scholarship”, Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, 74 (2011), 171-185.} These all are focused on the Prophet and contain stories about his sayings and acts or his Companions’ stories about him. Certainly to present a history of the life of the prophet poses problems for Ibn Ḥibbān just as compilation of authentic ḥadīth does for him. It is not easy to remain faithful both to objective history and the demands of authentic sources.\footnote{Review Author: Robert B. Campbell S.J. Journal of the American Oriental Society, Vol. 95, No. 2. (Apr. - Jun., 1975), pp. 303-305.} As Robin L. Fox stated, “if we read biblical narrative (or in this case the sīra) as a story, we abandon its historical truth. If we read it as literature, we will often find literary art in it, but this art takes further from truth.” Ibn Ḥibbān was clear about the fact that the sīra constituted no closed system of regulations and doctrinal positions, but that the ideal or norm had to be painstakingly extrapolated from often incomplete and contradictory sources.\footnote{Robin Lane Fox, The Unauthorized Version: Truth and Fiction in the Bible, (Middlesex: Viking, 1991), 399.}

Ibn Ḥibbān stated that he was composing an authentic biography of Prophet by sifting the materials which had been mixed. Ibn Ḥibbān’s sīra is an extra work since his work in the science of ḥadīth transmission is accompanied by an abundance of forged materials, and there is a greater effort to identify the reliability of the even more ḥadīth closely. For Ibn Ḥibbān, that effort seems to have met with considerable success, if judged by the popularity of his works.\footnote{K. Abu Deeb, “Literary Criticism” in Abbasid Belles Letters ed. Julia Ashtiany, T. M. Johnstone, J. D. Latham, R. B. Sergejeant (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 339.} In a few words, his writing of the sīra attempts to carry the method of the ḥadīth scholars. Due to this, he was really accomplished in organizing four available sources for revealing the historical Prophet; the Quran, the ḥadīth, the sīra, and the poet. In the way that the first and the last such source feature less prominently, if not altogether infrequently, in his writing.\footnote{Review Author: Robert B. Campbell S.J. Journal of the American Oriental Society, Vol. 95, No. 2. (Apr. - Jun., 1975), pp. 303-305.} A further characteristic of the sīra in the Thiqāt is presentation within a chronological framework.\footnote{A similar methodology has been effectively adapted by Ibn Kathīr in his Sīra. See the review by Ahmad Fareed in Ibn Kathīr, The Life of the Prophet Muhammad (al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya), 4. Vol., trans. Trevor Le Gassick, (Reading: Garnet Publishing Limited, 2006), xvi.} Like al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Ḥibbān applies the annalistic form to the

\footnote{J. M. B. Jones, “The Maghāzī Literature,” in Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period, 350.}
Sīra.923 Under a heading such as: “In the year n”, or “Then, there came the year n”, the various events of that particular year are enumerated.

Likewise, the practise of specifying the isnād was continued by Ibn Ḥibbān. However, in the conventional ḥadīth sense, Ibn Ḥibbān’s use of the isnād is irregular. It is a few times complete, but frequently omitted altogether; very often it does not go beyond his immediate source like typical sīra literatures. Among the most consistent names in the isnād is Ibn Ishāq and his probable influence on Ibn Ḥibbān is also clear to see. It appears that Ibn Ḥibbān took material from his predecessors and modified it for his own purpose.924 The contents of the sīra in the Thiqāt are the same as in his Ṣaḥīḥ. The individual episodes seem, however, to flow much more smoothly into each other than in the Ṣaḥīḥ; in fact, as in any effective “thriller”, there never seems to be a pause or stop, and the end seems never to be in sight. The texts are longer and much more frequent.

As mentioned above, one of the important ingredient of Ibn Ḥibbān’s sīra is poetry.925 In the opinion of Rosenthal, “the frequency of poetical insertions often marks as fiction. The verses which occur in the sīra are characterized by a simple language which, in contrast to Arabic poetry in general, needs no philological training and acumen for its understanding.”926 In the Thiqāt, the poems deal with a variety of themes and styles: there is, for instance, the story when the Prophet stayed at the tent of Umm Maʿbad during the migration to Madinah.927 This poem is followed by Ḥassān b. Thābit’s poem which has been

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923 According to Rosenthal, the first Muslim author of annals whose work is preserved was the great Ṭabarî. Al-Ṭabarî’s History was first published in the first decade of the tenth century, and it was continued to the year 302/914-5. However, Rosenthal adds that it is unlikely that al-Ṭabarî might have been the first to apply the annalistic form to historical writing. See Rosenthal, A History of Muslim Historiography, 64.


927 Al-Thiqāt, 1/127. Ibn Ḥibbān provides the poem as follows:

Allāh, Lord of all men, awarded His very best reward to Two Companions who stayed at the tents of Umm Ma’bad They stayed there in good will, and then left; and Lucky is he who becomes the Companion of Muhammad O Quṣayy, Allāh did not withhold from your actions that Will not be rewarded, nor leadership? Ask your sister about her goat and bowl; if you were To ask the goat, she would testify. He asked her for a goat without young, and it gave milk For him in plenty, its teat giving foam
posited in similar fashion to the writing of Ibn Sa’d’s Ṭabaqāt.\textsuperscript{928} Ḥassān b. Thābit (d. 54/673) is well known for his evocative panegyrics in defence of Islam, its Prophet, and his Companions.\textsuperscript{929} Ibn Ḥibbān records one of Ḥassān’s poem

“A people disappointed, having lost their prophet, while those to whom he hurried were pleased,
He left a people and their spirits left them, and he took up residence with a people with a light renewed.
Are those who mislead people out of blind stupidity equal to those rightly guided by a guide?
A prophet, seeing about him what other do not see, Reciting the Book of Allāh at every scene.
If one day he should speak the words of the unseen, it is corroborated the same day or, at most, the morning of the next.
Abu Bakr must be pleased by the pleasure his grandfather enjoys at his accompanying him; whoever pleases Allāh will be happy
Let the place of their woman please the Banū Ka‘b, and her sitting watching for the Muslims.”\textsuperscript{930}

This poem is recorded under the chapter of hijra which draw the line between two eras of Makkah and Madinah. Just the same, Ibn Ḥibbān’s general narrative framework is identical with others; the story of the prophet is split into those two important stages. The Makkkan period stretches from the Prophet’s birth to his migration to Madinah. This phase represents the pre-Islamic era, the Prophet early years in Makkah, his first revelation, the beginning of his public preaching, the migration of his Companions to Abyssinia, the meeting at al-‘Aqaba, and his migration to Madinah. From this point, as can be seen in the Thiqāt, Ibn Ḥibbān imposes annalistic or a chronological timeline according to the year of hijra until the year of forty hijra. The Madinan era is made up of events describing his arrival there, the building of first mosque, the establishment of brotherhood between the Muhājirūn (emigrants) and the Anṣār (helpers), and primarily his maghāzī (military expeditions) against

\textsuperscript{929} Walid ‘Arafat has called him the “poet laureate” of the prophet. He adds that Ḥassān is more correctly the most prominent of several poets who were associated with the rise of Islam and one who already had established reputation in the Jahiliyya. See \textit{EI2}, 3/271; He also publishes several articles on Ḥassān b. Thābit. “Ḥassān b. Thābit, Diwān, no. 1: The Historical Background to a Composite Poem”, \textit{Journal of Semitic Studies}, v. 15 no. 1 (1970), 88-97; “A Controversial Incident and the Related Poem in the Life of Ḥassān b. Thābit”, \textit{Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies}, vol. 17, 12 (1955), 197-205.
\textsuperscript{930} Al-Thiqāt, 1/127-128.
others and the unbelievers of Makkah, which culminated in the fall of that city, and in the eventual spread of Islam throughout Arabia.  

At the beginning of each chapter or annalistic heading, Ibn Ḥibbān introduces a ḥadīth that is complete with an isnād. As an illustration, coming immediately after the introduction of the Thiqāt, Ibn Ḥibbān posits the ḥadīth about the year of the Prophet’s birth. A commentary that appears after the ḥadīth or narrative is typically introduced by the formula qāla Abū Ḥatim (Abū Ḥātim [Ibn Ḥibbān] said). The first ḥadīth is preceded by short tarjama: dhikr mawlid Rasūl Allāh ṣallā Allāh ‘alayh wa sallam (an account of the birth of the Apostle of Allāh, may peace be upon him). The sole interest of the ḥadīth seems to be to ascertain the exact date and to determine the years either side of it. Then Ibn Ḥibbān proceeded to present stories having something to do with “the affair of the elephant”, which marked the year in which Abraha’s troops and elephants have been defeated at the outskirts of Makkah. Stories detailing occasions of the event are arrayed in sequence, and the chapter ends with Abraha’s death and the succession of his son Yaksum. 

The early part also comprises ḥadīth about some of the genealogy of the Prophet and plotted out the significant ancestors of the Prophet’s patrilineal lineage. The subject of the Prophet’s genealogy received much attention from Ibn Ḥibbān because of the contentious issues involved. Perhaps through comparative textual analysis, Ibn Ḥibbān presented the differences between several sources. It is worth mentioning that in the context of his methodology uncertain reports have been used in the narration of the Prophet’s genealogy and he presents them as “the available sources” which include all the stories he received. In this case, as asserted by Daniel Martin Varisco, “genealogy should be approached as a mode of discourse and at some point it must be read as more than a genealogy; historiography must be give way to hermeneutic.”

932 Al-Thiqāt, 1/14.
933 Michael Cook has analysed the divergent reports on ʿAbdullāh’s death and compared al-Wāqidī to his predecessors. It has been a well-known fact that Prophet’s father died before his birth. See Michael Cook, Muhammad, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 65. While Michael Lecker scrutinizes al-Wāqidī and others have to say about the death of the Prophet’s father “in order to arrive at some general observations on the emergence of Islamic historiography”. See Michael Lecker, “The Death of the Prophet Muhammad’s father: did Wāqidī invent some of the evidence?”, Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft 145 (1995): 9-27.
934 Muḥammad Qasim Zaman, “Maghāzī and the Muḥaddithīn”, 3.
Ibn Ḥibbān demonstrates the genealogy that traces the Prophet’s lineage through the ancient prophets all the way back to Ādam. He emphasises that the certainty of the Prophet’s genealogy is traced only until 'Adnān. From 'Adnān to Ādam he indicates otherwise. Taking into consideration these conflicts, Ibn Ḥibbān brings five discrepancies in the Prophet’s patrilineal lineage from 'Adnān to Ibrāhīm, three discrepancies from Ibrāhīm to Nūh, and three discrepancies from Nūh to Ādam. In Ibn Ḥibbān’s selection of ḥadīth, when the Prophet presented his lineage, he gave the significant ancestors i.e. Ismāʿīl, Kināna, Quraysh, and Hāshim. The Prophet says, “Verily Allāh has chosen Kināna amongst the descendants of Ismāʿīl, and He has chosen Quraysh amongst Kināna, and He has chosen Banī Hāshim amongst Kināna, and He has chosen me amongst the Banī Hāshim. And I am the master of the children of Ādam on the Day of Judgement, and it is no boast.”

Arab society in which the Prophet lived along with Greek, Roman, Jewish groups, Byzantines and Sassanians is generally described as male-dominated marriage and patrilineal kinship with some traces of an earlier matriarchy. William Robertson Smith in his *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, first published in 1885, attempts to establish “the theory of the primitive matriarchy in the Arabian context.” Smith concluded that the patriarchal family grew out slowly out of a system commonly called the *matriarchate*, in which women were the acknowledged permanent element in the household. At the time of the Prophet, matrilineal kinship was gradually replaced by patrilineal kinship. Analysing materials from the biographical dictionaries of ḥadīth transmitters like the *Thiqāt* or other literatures also shows that male kinship was of dominant importance, but female kinship was not neglected. The first component of description in the Prophet’s biography is patrilineal descent, and as the above-mentioned goes far back to Ādam. Ibn Ḥibbān also reports the Prophet’s mother’s genealogy with her both patrilineal and matrilineal lineages.

Furthermore, Ibn Ḥibbān posits biographies of the family of the Prophet in a separate section at the end of the *sīra*. Apart from Prophet’s uncles and aunts, his section on the

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937 *Al-Thiqāt*, 1/21.
941 *Al-Thiqāt*, 1/47.
Prophet’s family is devoted to the Prophet’s wives where the biographies deal with the name, tribe, their earlier marriage, death, and they are organized according to year of marriage. In the text relating to the Prophet and Khadija’s marriage, Ibn Hibban cites the story that the Prophet went off with his uncle Hamza to visit Khuwaylid b. Asad and Khadija was given away by her father. The story that Khadija consulted Waraqa appeared after the marriage to prepare a base for the first revelation or the beginning of the prophethood episode. Waraqa says to Khadija: “If this is true Khadija, then Muhammed is the Prophet of our people. Long have I known that a prophet is to be expected, and his time hath now come.”

The process of elaborating upon the story of the prophethood widened the scope of Ibn Hibban’s conception of revelation. According to the ḥadīth supplied the genesis of Muhammed’s prophecy was decreed by Allāh between the creation of Adam and the spirit breathed into him. Ibn Hibban presents the story of the first revelation under the heading of “The Beginning of Revelation.” He states that the story itself in two versions of ḥadīth. First, ‘Ā’isha’s ḥadīth which contains early ideas about revelation, such as “a true dream in sleep,” address of the angel, the inexperienced prophet’s fear, etc. Secondly, Jābir’s ḥadīth

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943 Al-Thiqāt, 1/47.

944 Ibid.

945 Ibn Hibban cites ‘Ā’isha’s report: “The first prophetic experience of the messenger of God was “a true dream in sleep” (al-ruʿa al-sādiqa [var. al-ṣāliḥa] fi al-nawm) cf. Quran 37:105, 4827). Each time the dreamt, it would seem to him like the “light of dawn” (falaq al-subh; cf. Quran 6:96). Then he began to find pleasure in solitude. He used to retire to a cave in the mountain Ḥirā’, where he practised tabannuth (see M. J. Kister, “Al-Taḥannuth: An Inquiry into the Meaning of term”) … when he was thus engaged in the cave of Ḥirā’, the angel came to him, saying: Recite. The Prophet said: “I am not a reciter”. The [Prophet] said: “The angel seized me and gripped my body till I could bear it no longer. Then he released me and said: Recite!” I said: I am not reciting. The angel seized me again and gripped my body till I could bear it no longer. Then he released me and said: “Recite!” I said: “I am not reciting”. The angel seized me for the third time and gripped my body till I could bear it no longer. Then he released me and said: “Recite in the name of your Lord who created …” the Prophet repeated it, his heart palpitating with terror. Then he returned home to Khadija, saying: “Cover me [with cloths]”, so they covered him till he overcame his anxiety. He told Khadija what had taken place, and said: “I fear for myself,” Khadija said: “God will never disgrace thee …” then Khadija took him to her cousin Wāraqa, who had become a Christian in the jihiliyya, wrote Hebrew, and used to copy passages from the Gospels (Injil) in Hebrew … the prophet told him about the things he had seen, and Wāraqa said to him: “This is the nāmās which God sent down unto Moses. The Messenger of Allāh asked: Will they drive me out? Wāraqa replied in the affirmative and said: Anyone who came with something similar to what you have been brought was treated with hostility; and if I am still alive when you are sent as a prophet, I shall support you and help you. But after a few days Wāraqa died. The revelation is stopped coming to the Messenger of Allāh for a while, till he became distressed and grieved…” See Al-Thiqāt, 1/48-51.
(the Muddaththir passage) is a chronological continuation of the cave of Ḥīrā’ ḥadīth. Ibn Ḥibbān comments with a number of phrases linking the occurrence of the second revelation directly to the first: “It was Gabriel that had appeared to him in Ḥīrā’ with “Recite in the Name of thy Lord Who created.” When he (the Prophet) returned to Khadija’s house and was wrapped up, Allāh revealed in Khadija’s house “O thou who art covered, arise and warn! Thy Lord magnify.” Altogether, this constitutes a sense of unity between the two ḥadīth. Next, Ibn Ḥibbān continued to describe the early people’s acceptance of Islam like Khadija, ‘Alī, Abū Bakr and others.

Across-the-board, the episode about the Prophet’s revelation seems to have a deep meaning other than simply recounting the account which the three aḥadīth have the appearance to be acting as one unit. The chapter does more than simply provide a chronological timeline of the first revelation, Ibn Ḥibbān describes the origin of prophethood, the first revelation, the experience of revelation, and the lapse of revelation. He also does not easily introduce ḥadīth to declare his belief, but also uses a number of other tools (i.e. title chapter, commentaries) to help one understand his idea on the discussion of revelation. For example, the use of the ḥadīth at the beginning of the episode frames prophethood in a wider context: from the very beginning Ibn Ḥibbān wants his reader to think beyond the details of the first revelation, but of “divine predetermination” more generally.

Previously mentioned, a no less important event in Prophet’s career was his hijra from Makkah to Madinah, and one ḥadīth was applied to its time and circumstance. It will be remembered that, according to Ibn Isḥāq’s work, the hijra episode took place in the night when ‘Alī replaced the Prophet in his bed. Ibn Isḥāq’s account about the hijra is based on a tradition going back to Yazīd b. Ziyād ← Muḥammad b. Kaʿb al-Qurazi. As it was recorded by Ibn Hishām, this tradition is interspersed with many shorter traditions going back to other transmitters. Numerous long and short versions of his account can be found in

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946 Ibn Ḥibbān cites Jābir’s report: “... I stayed in Ḥīrā’ for one month and when my stay was completed, I come down and went into the heart of the valley. Somebody called me aloud. I looked in front of me, behind me, on the right of my side and on my left, but I did not see anybody. I was called again and I looked about but saw nothing. I was called again and I raised my head and there was [the angel] above me seated on the throne in the sky. I was frightened by him, and I came to Khadija (returned home), saying: ‘Wrap me up!’ They wrapped me up and threw water on me. So Allāh revealed the verse, “O you who are all wrapped up!” until His word “purify!” See Al-Thiqāt, 1/51.


948 For a succinct overview of the “divine predetermination”, see Fazlur Rahmān, Major Themes of the Quran, 23.

949 Ibn Hishām, al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya, 1/484

Yet in Ibn Ḥibbān’s account there is no mention of ‘Alī’s episode that corresponds to the following ḥadīth through the isnād; Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. Qutayba al-Lakhmī ← Ibn Abī Sirrī ← ‘Abd al-Razzāq ← Maʿmar ← al-Zuhrī ← ‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr ← ‘Ā’isha.952

Ibn Ḥibbān selected the story from Ibn Isḥāq in his sīra the ḥadīth of which includes the involvement of Abū Bakr’s family members, prepared for the big event. This ḥadīth as well seems to be based on the convention that the hijra started from Abū Bakr’s house at shortly before midday.953 Next, Ibn Ḥibbān narrates the actual movement of the Prophet and Abū Bakr from Makkah to Madinah without any isnād. The topic of hijra discussed by Ibn Ḥibbān forms the final Makkan chapter in the life of Prophet.954 It is a well-known story that ʿUmar is reported to have convened a council of eminent companions for the purpose of deciding upon a uniform system of dating to be applied throughout the Islamic realm. And it was agreed to calculate dates from the beginning of the Prophet’s hijra to Madinah.955 As mentioned previously, the subsequent chapters are subordinated under the first or second or third year of the hijra and so on.956 Once in a while, Ibn Ḥibbān connects the events of one

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951 Andreas Gorke, “Historical Tradition,” 244.
952 Ibn Ḥibbān cites ʿĀ’isha’s report: “One day, while we were sitting in our house at noon, someone said to my father (Abū Bakr), “This is Allāh’s Messenger with his head covered coming at a time at which he never used to visit us before.” Abū Bakr said, “May my parents be sacrificed for him. By Allāh, he has not come at this hour except for a great necessity.” So Allāh’s Messenger came and asked permission to enter, and he was allowed to enter. When he entered, he said to Abī Bakr. “Tell everyone who is present with you to go away.” Abū Bakr replied, “There are none but your family. May my father be sacrificed for you, O Allāh’s Messenger!” The Prophet said, “I have been given permission to migrate.” Abū Bakr said, “Shall I accompany you? May my father be sacrificed for you, O Allāh’s Messenger!” Allāh’s Messenger said, “Yes.” Abū Bakr said, “O Allāh’s Messenger! May my father be sacrificed for you, take one of these two she-camels of mine.” Allāh’s Messenger replied, “(I will accept it) with payment.” So we prepared the baggage quickly and put some journey food in a leather bag. Asmāʾ, Abū Bakr’s daughter, cut a piece from her waist belt and tied the mouth of the leather bag with it, and for that reason she was named dhāt al-niṣṭaqayn (i.e. the owner of two belts). Then Allāh’s Messenger and Abū Bakr reached a cave on the mountain of Thawr and stayed there for three nights. See Al-Thiqāt, 1/117.
953 Uri Rubin, The Eye of the Beholder, 223.
955 The second year of hijra; the Battle of Badr, the Battle of Banī Quaynuqa’, the Battle of al-Suwayq
The third year of hijra; Sirya al-Farda, the battle of Uḥud
The fourth year of hijra; the battle of al-Rajib in Ṣafar, the battle of Banī al-Nadīr, Badr al-Muwa’ad, delegation of al-Khazraj to Salām b. Abī al-Haqq
The fifth year of hijra; the battle of (Dhāṭ al-Riqa in Muḥarram, Dawma al-Jandal, al-Mursayi’, al-Khandaq, Banī Qurayṣa), delegation of ʿAbd Allāh b. Unays
The sixth year of hijra; the battle of Ḥudaybiya, the battle of Dhī Qirḍ
The seventh year of hijra; the battle of Khaybar, Muslims who died in Khaybar
The eight year of hijra; towards Hawzān,
The ninth year of hijra; the battle of Rome
The tenth year of hijra; the death of the Prophet, the Prophet’s characters.
and the same year by the simple device of inserting the phrase like, “fī shahr al-rabīʿ al-awwāl (in the month of rabīʿ al-awwāl).”

Under each year, Ibn Ḥibbān inserts the section on the Prophet’s ghazawāt (military campaigns) and sarāyā (those in which he did not engage) against the infidels Quraysh and their allies which deal with some quick raids but mostly were full-scale battles. The most significant events were the battle of Badr, when the Muslims defeated the numerically superior forces of the Makkans; the battle of Uḥud, the conquest of Makka when the Muslims marched triumphantly into the city. In the closing chapters of the sīra, Ibn Ḥibbān deals with the Prophet’s death and his physical appearance. He concludes the chapter with a detailed description of the appearances of the Prophet (fair-skinned, thick bearded, and of medium height), the Prophet’s manner of speech (pleasant and deliberate in company, but loud and ringing when he delivered a sermon) and the rest. Roughly, Ibn Ḥibbān’s biography of the Prophet is the single largest section in Kitāb al-Thiqāt, amounting to one-eighth of the text. Following some of his predecessors, Ibn Ḥibbān continued his history of early Islam past 11/632 down to his own time, focusing on Islamic world rulers (caliphs and kings, according to his terminology). Their entries are much less extensive than the sīra, also Ibn Ḥibbān limits the use of annalistic heading only until 40/660.

His vision of the first two caliphs, Abū Bakr and 'Umar is typically Sunni as he asserted that the Prophet did not appoint 'Alī as his successor. Much more significantly for Ibn Ḥibbān, no other ḥadīth gives more assurance for the unambiguous righteousness of Abū Bakr and the supremacy of his suitability for the caliphate than the pillars of Islam i.e. the salāh (prayer) ḥadīth. According to this ḥadīth, the Prophet during his illness appointed Abū Bakr to take his place as the prayer leader of the Muslim community. This ḥadīth occurs in the final chapter of the sīra, just before the beginning of Chapter of Caliphs and Kings and is also found in most of the standard Sunni ḥadīth collections and chronicles. To delineate the era of the caliphate and the beginning of monarchy Ibn Ḥibbān presents the ḥadīth “the caliphate after me will last thirty years, then will come the kings.”

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957 For a comparative study of this organization, see also Michael Cooperson, “Ibn Saʿd”, 197.
958 Al-Thiqāt, 2/145-151.
959 Ibid, 2/301.
961 Al-Thiqāt, 2/131.
962 "al-khīlāfa baʾdi thalāthān sana, thumma yakūn malikā." Ibid, 2/304.
exposition is presented under the *tarjama,* “dhikr al-bayān bi-annā man dhakarnāhum kānū khulafā’, wa man ba’dahum kānū mulūkā (an account of the discussion of who we have mentioned were the caliphs and who after them were the kings).” This chapter ends with the entry of Abbasid al-Muṭī’ b. al-Muqtadir (d. 363/974) and is followed by biographies of more than sixteen thousand ḥadīth transmitters.

5.3 The *Mashāhīr al-‘Ulamā’ al-Amṣār*

Ibn Ḥibbān’s *al-Mashāhīr* is a compendium of biographies of men of learning from various regions of early Islam which contained many entries the subjects of which included came literary individuals who took an active role in encouraging the spread of knowledge. People of knowledge may be ḥadīth transmitters, judges, politicians or entrepreneurs, but these activities fall outside the scope of the *tarjama,* which focuses upon essential features that link individuals with the quality of being pious and literary centres of society. Although other activities are significant for discerning the role of the individual, yet they are not part of the reported scholarly persona.

Brockelmann and Sezgin mention that the manuscript of the *Mashāhīr* is preserved in Leipzig. In addition, Sezgin also indicates the standard printed edition of the *Mashāhīr* was first printed by Matba’a Lajna al-Ta’lif wa al-Tarjama wa al-Nashr in one volume, in Egypt in 1960. This was Manfred Fleischhammer’s edition, based on a manuscript in the University Library of Leipzig. In his introduction, Fleischhammer describes in short the available manuscript including the name, total of figures, organization, scribes or copyists, transmission of the book, and the date of composition. A quick glance at the content reveals that there is no alphabetical order in this book. However, Fleischhammer supplies alphabetical indexes of the names and the *kunya* of the men at the end of this book. These two indexes are indispensable because most of the men are mentioned by their names and a few are mentioned with the *kunya* first, usually followed by the name. Discussing first page of the manuscript, he indicates that the book was written as “*Kitāb Mashāhīr ‘Ulamā’ al-

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963 Al-Thiqāt, 2/304.
964 Ibid, 2/336.
965 EI2, 10/224.
966 GAL, 1/273. GAS, 1/191.
967 GAS, 1/191.
In his review, Şalîh al-Dîn al-Munajjîd highlighted a few mistakes which have been made in the first printed edition. He looks to the letterforms, short vowel markings, pointing in single or double dots and etc. which may be due to errors made when copying the text. He also doubted that the manuscript is complete and therefore he seems want to suggest that it was an abridgement. Since then several other re-workings of the Egyptian edition have appeared. These works, which provide a valuable addition to the many biographical dictionaries available, have been very carefully edited. Marzûq ‘Alî Ibîrîhîm re-edited the Mashâhîr and published it in 1987. The editor used manuscripts, Fleischhammer’s edition, and Ibn Hibbân’s al-Thiqât for the reconstruction of the book. He asserts the actual name of this book is Mashâhîr ‘Ulamâ’ al-Amsâr wa A’lâm Fuqahâ’ al-Aqtâr based on Ibn Hibbân’s introduction. In total, the Mashâhîr consists of biographies of which there are 1602 separate items; but as 14 of the men are duplicated, there are only 1588 separate people.

The biographies are all concise, occasionally as short as a single printed line, sometimes giving no more than the man’s name and the date of his death, but more often giving further details. However, Ibn Hibbân does not mention his sources on all of these biographies perhaps because he came from the generation after Ibn Sa’d, al-Bukhârî, Ibn Abî Ḥâtim and other scholars of the third/ninth century. In his introduction to the Mashâhîr, Ibn Hibbân explains why he wrote it. He indicates that he wished to provide a collection of distinguished men as well as to present a convenient book for students. This seems to him to have been more important than giving lengthy details of their lives and works. Even though the Mashâhîr gives comparatively little information about the men, it is important because it gives a list about men who were considered distinguished by master critics, like Ibn Hibbân in the fourth/tenth century. Paying attention to these strategies of compilation makes it possible to suggest some general tendencies in Ibn Hibbân’s representation of cities.
or regions and to interpret these tendencies in light of the historical context. Beyond question it was a source book for later biographical works.

For the most part, the book is devoted to those notable persons of subsequent generations who transmitted ḥadīth reports about the Prophet from the Companions down to the Successors of Successors. It is clear to see Ibn Ḥibbân’s general criteria for the divisions of the scholars or other men into classes. He lived in a period when this approach had made considerable advances. Ibn Ḥibbân also precisely states that the Mashāhīr is arranged according to ṭabaqāt which lists the scholars in three early generations of Islam. The exceptional feature of this biographical dictionary is that the entries are arranged first according to city, and then in each city according to generational classes (ṭabaqāt). Several organizational principles can be proposed about how Ibn Ḥibbân composed the Mashāhīr; (1) he included the noble persona (excellence in a field of knowledge), (2) occasionally, he posited them in order; relation to the Prophet for the first generation of Muslim i.e. Companions, family of the Prophet and etc., (4) he abandoned the alphabetical order for the generational classes, (4) he organized them in chronology from the lens of subsequent generations, (5) he asserted that the main theme is the centre of attraction among early Muslims.

Long before contemporary scholars began to look at knowledge as the “cultural capital” of society, early Muslim scholars correlated knowledge with social endurance. So for example, the complete title of Ibn Ḥibbân’s Mashāhīr is “Renowned Scholars of Cities and Distinguished Jurists of Regions.” In the simplest terms, place may be defined as “space to which meaning has been ascribed;” and one way of ascribing meaning to space is to represent it in writing. Thus, examining representations of spaces (limited here to towns and regions) in the written record of a society over a period of time reveals culturally and historically specific meaning and yields insight into peoples’ relationships to political and social realities.

The words by which Ibn Ḥibbân presents them – ‘Ulamā’ (Scholars/Learned), Fuqahā’ (Jurists/Law experts) – affirmed their association of status with knowledge. In order

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to associate the idea of scholars with place, Ibn Ḥibbān adopted the term *al-amsār* (cities) and *al-aqţār* (regions), as he designated some form of territoriality. Consequently, ḥadīth scholars after Ibn Ḥibbān’s generation who engaged in the composition of the sciences of ḥadīth transmission books devoted an exclusive topic to the subject of the residence and region of transmitters. For instance, Ibn Ṣalāḥ dedicated the final chapter of his book to the topic of *Maʿrifat Awṭān al-Ruwāt wa-Buldānihim* (The Residence and Lands of Transmitters). Prior to discussing the available examples of *isnād* that draw attention to where the transmitter lived, Ibn Ṣalāḥ suggested “it is commendable for the expert to give the ḥadīth with its *isnāds* and then mention the homelands of it transmitters and other facts about them”.

According to Franz Rosenthal, although by the tenth century works on biographical dictionaries began to include all kinds of scholars, litterateurs, statesmen, and even a sprinkling of wealthy businessmen, the defining feature of the majority of the biographical entries remained the individual’s engagement with religious sciences, particularly ḥadīth studies. Apparently Ibn Ḥibbān was interested in collecting these individuals biographies, for a variety of reasons. Apart from ḥadīth, some of the *ʿulamāʾ* or *fuqahāʾ* were the authors of his sources, which reflected their lives and concerns. For instance, the Rashidun Caliphs were also judges, teachers, merchants, and military leaders.

Ibn Ḥibbān does mentioned the specific condition for classification for each generation. The *luqya* (encounter) between a people with earlier generation is the essential principle for distinguishing them. In the closing chapter of Successors of Successors in Madinah, Ibn Ḥibbān says that the Companions are those who had encountered the Prophet, and the Successors are those who had encountered the Companions and so on. Perhaps the notion of this style is applied to designate a “more collective social generation.” And it is possible that it may have been modelled on the following ḥadīth in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*: “The best of men are those of my *qarn* (generation), afterwards those who (are) close to them, afterwards those who (are) close to them.” Ibn Ḥibbān offers the following *tarjama* about the ḥadīth: *dhikr al-bayān bi-anna khayr hādhih al-umma al-ṣahāba thumma al-tābiʿīn* (Report on the statement that the best of this community are the Companions followed by

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977 Ibid, 405.
979 EI2, 10/8
981 EI2, 5/8.
the Successors). Occasionally, one finds in the last entry of each region the Companions who were the last to die in the region, supported with the date if available. He states that the last Companion who died in Makkah was Abū al-Ṭūfayl ‘Āmir b. Wathila in 107/725, in Kufa was ʿAbd Allāh b. Abī Awfā in 87/705, and in al-Shām was ʿAbd Allāh b. Busr al-Sulamī in 88/706.

Obviously Ibn Ḥibbān avoids the organisation of these generations into a specific timeline. From another perspective, using the timeline classification will result in abandoning the principle of luqya. In Talqīḥ al-Fuhūm, Ibn al-Jawzī provides an example of the ṭabaqāt concerning the timeline that was used by Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī (d. 386/996). Abū Ṭālib distinguished five classes of caliph, jurist, ḥadīth scholar, reader and ascetic for every forty years up to his era. It is possible, though, the inspiration for the came as a “timeline” result of the ḥadīth: “My community will be made up of five classes: firstly forty years with charitable and pious people; they will be followed for the next 150 years by people who will live in compassion and mutual harmony; then for 160 years more there will come people who will turn their backs on each other and will separate themselves; then will come a period of scattering [and of war or of flight] and al-najā al-najā (every man for himself).” However, in the al-Majrūḥīn, Ibn Ḥibbān evaluates this ḥadīth as spurious.

Furthermore, not only did the number of biographies in each generation of the Mashāhīr increase but several places were added. From the number of Companions, it can be roughly inferred how the early ḥadīth transmission network proliferated in different regions. Ibn Ḥibbān’s ṭabaqāt presentation in the Mashāhīr is very useful for the study of cultural centres which at the same time were political centres of their eras. According to Recep Senturk, Ibn Ḥibbān has demonstrated the “polycentric structure of Islamic culture

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983 Ibn Ḥibbān, Sahīh Ibn Ḥibbān, 16/205.
984 Ibn Ḥibbān, Kitāb Mashāhīr ʿUlamāʾ al-Amṣār, 36.
985 Ibid, 49.
986 Ibid, 54.
by documenting the fluctuations in the number of scholars over time in the important cities of each period."

As mentioned earlier, the *Mashāhīr* includes a brief description of the privileged persons of each of the three early generations who lived in capitals of the Islamic world. Practically the *ṭabaqāt* dealing with the Companions, the Successors, and the Successors of Successors are subdivided into regions where many hadīth transmitters were active. The cities or regions covered range from Yemen in the south to the al-Shām frontier in the north, and from Egypt in the west to Khurasan in the east. Ibn Ḥibbān insisted that most attention had been devoted to Madinah, Makkah, Kufa, Basra, Damascus and Baghdad. A general explanation of the region is usually found in the introduction of a section. As an illustration, Ibn Ḥibbān’s usage of the simile style may dazzle a reader when he compares al-Shām like a prostrate man. He depicts a picture of a man

his head is Palestine, his neck is Jordan, his chest is Damascus, his stomach is Homs, his navel is Aleppo, his right leg is the cities above Euphrates to Iraq’s border, his left leg is the cities above Tigris to Iraq’s border, his right hand is the cities on the deserts side, and his left hand is the cities on the coasts. The name of al-Shām includes all these cities from Arish in Egypt to Sawad, but that the real al-Shām is from Balis to al-Dhamin

The first section of the book is devoted to the Companions who lived in Madinah. It begins with a short introduction that gives Ibn Ḥibbān’s purpose that selecting Madinah as the first city or region of the book. Then Ibn Ḥibbān continues with an abbreviated biography of the Prophet which describes his genealogy, birth, first revelation, duration in Makkah and Madinah, and finally his death. Next Ibn Ḥibbān presents the Companions in rank order, whereas he organizes the classification based on the Rashidun Caliphs, the Companions who were promised paradise and the rest who lived in Madinah.

Although Ibn Ḥibbān does not declare a preference for *Ahl al-Bayt* (people of the house) over others, it is possible to tell from the order of presentation that he has a certain preference for them. After the Companion’s generation, the first seven entries of Successors

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993 Sawad was the name used in Early Islamic times (first/seventh to sixth/twelfth centuries) for the southern Iraq.
994 Balis or Emar (modern Tell Meskene, Aleppo) was an ancient Amorite city on the great bend in the mid-Euphrates in north eastern Sham.
995 Fleischhammer assumes it was Siffin.
in Madinah and the first five entries of Successors of Successors in Madinah both deal with Ahl al-Bayt.\textsuperscript{997} And between the first four Caliph and the Companions who were promised paradise, Ibn Hibbân positioned Ḥasan (who succeeded ‘Ali for six or seven months) and his brother Ḥusayn.\textsuperscript{998} He also places the Ahl al-Bayt like ‘Aqīl b. Abī Ṭālib, ‘Abd Allāh b. Ja’far b. Abī Ṭālib, al-‘Abbās b. ‘Abd al-Muṭallib, ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abbās, al-Faḍl b. al-‘Abbās, and Qathm b. al-‘Abbās after the Companions who were promised paradise, preceding other Companions.\textsuperscript{999}

Coming immediately after Madinah, Ibn Ḥibbân arranged the Companions into specific regions in the following order; Makkah, Basra, Kufa, Damascus, Egypt, Yemen, and Khurasan. The next section of the Mashâhîr that deals with the Successors and Successors of Successors utilizes the same order as that used for the Companions. Only in the case of the Successors of Successors, does Ibn Ḥibbân add Baghdad and Wasit the new centres that are occupied by scholars.\textsuperscript{1000} It is not logically necessary that number of people is a measurement for determining the early centre of ḥadîth. Perhaps the best way to analyse ḥadîth scholars and ḥadîth to consider the number of ḥadîth narrated by each authority. In any case, the number of scholars who populated a city or region still can bring us a picture of commonly attracted place. And perhaps the inclination of the later school of law may also have been influenced by the residence of earlier Companions.\textsuperscript{1001}

In the era of Companions, Madinah remained the centre of scholars although new centres began to emerge. The prominent Medinese Companions in ḥadîth like Abū Hurayra, Ibn ‘Umar, Jābir b. ‘Abd Allāh, Abū Sa`īd al-Khudrī and others occupied themselves primarily with teaching the ḥadîth to younger generations i.e. the Successors. Madinah contains 152 Companions, 36 per cent of the total Companions’ generation.\textsuperscript{1002} 61 Companions live and represent the attributes that legitimate the scholarly authority in Makkah, or 14 per cent of the total; in Basra 52 Companions, 12 per cent; in Kufa 55 Companions, 13 per cent; in Damascus 55 Companions, 13 per cent; in Egypt 22 Companions, 5 per cent; in Yemen 16 Companions, 3 per cent; and in Khurasan 5

\textsuperscript{997} Ibn Ḥibbân, Kitab Mashâhîr ‘Ulamâ’ al-Amshâr, 62 and 127.  
\textsuperscript{998} Ibid, 7.  
\textsuperscript{999} Ibid, 9-10.  
\textsuperscript{1000} Ibid, 174-178.  
\textsuperscript{1001} Recep Senturk, Narrative Social Structure: Anatomy of the Ḥadîth Transmission Network 610-1505, 39.  
\textsuperscript{1002} Ibid.
Companions, somewhat more than 1 per cent. The numerical distribution of the Companion subject to region also can be seen in the following graph:

A tremendous change occurred in the time of Successors. Al-Shām with Damascus as the capital of the Umayyad Empire emerged as the highest number of entries with 172 Successors, 30 per cent of the total Successors. From Makkah, Ibn Hibbān placed 51 Successors, 9 per cent of the total; Basra 92 Successors, 16 per cent; Kufa 18 Successors, 3 per cent; Egypt 33 Successors, 6 per cent; Yemen 28 Successors, 5 per cent; Khurasan 10 Successors, almost 2 per cent. Meanwhile the number of Successors who lived in Madinah was 70, or 12 per cent, a number that later on dropped even further, during the time of the Successors of Successors which saw Iraq emerge as the new centre.

\[\text{Ibn Hibbān, } \textit{Kitab Mashāhīr Ulamāʾ al-Amṣār}, 111.\]
As can be seen in the next graph, in the time of Successors of Successors, Iraq was the most populous region; with its 229 Successors of Successors accounting for about 45 per cent of the generation. Iraq’s two most populated cities alone, Basra and Kufa, together constitute about 40 per cent of the Successors of Successors numbers. They are followed by Damascus with 81, or 16 per cent; Makkah with 58, 11 per cent; Egypt with 45, 9 per cent; Khurasan with 41, 8 per cent; Madinah with 31, 6 per cent; Yemen with 25, 5 per cent; Wasit with 20, 4 per cent; Baghdad 4, below than 1 per cent.

This section also has been scrutinized by Nurit Tsafrir who was interested in the spread of the Hanafi School of law for the period between the middle of the second/eight century until the end of the third/ninth century. She indicates that the number of Hanafi biographies in the section on the Successors of Successors in Kufa is considerably significant: of about seventy Kufis who died between 130/747 and 218/833, seventeen were “semi-
Hanafis” and only six, or about 10 per cent of the total, were Hanafis. However, she argues the difficulty to measure the proportion of Hanafis to non-Hanafis as this book deal mainly with ḥadīth transmitters. In the Mashāhīr sources the legal affiliation of a scholar is not mentioned and can only be inferred from indirect indications, such as the teachers and the students. This ambiguity in the Mashāhīr reflects the historical situation in the second/eight and third/ninth century, when there was no clear distinction between the legal affiliation of a scholar. It may be, then, in the early period Hanafi scholars were less involved in the transmission of ḥadīth.

With plenty information at his disposal, Ibn Ḥibbān himself must have been aware of the fact that some of the biographies he included in the third generation were of men whose affiliation with the various school of thought or school of law. Nevertheless, Ibn Ḥibbān was able to delegate the plan of transmitting the biography of the early Muslim community, or at least, of those member whom he deemed worthy of commemoration. It is generally accepted that work such the Mashāhīr that includes biographies of more than a thousand of people from three early period of Islam provides well-emphasized datum on ḥadīth transmitters network.
Conclusion

The foregoing chapter has provided a short analysis of the purposes, history, organization, total of figures, and basic strategies used in Ibn Ḥibbān’s biographical dictionaries. It has portrayed the important trends in ḥadīth scholarship and also indicated that the material contained in many biographical entries must be used with caution. It has not, however, produced a comprehensive examination of the wide dimension of prosopographical texts available in Ibn Ḥibbān’s works and among his contemporaries. For Ibn Ḥibbān, ḥadīth transmitters or scholars belong together in ṭabaqāt – he frequently indicates that he constructs his works in this approach. Though organized by a bibliographic rubric at the macrostructural level, and periodically chronologically too, there are other constructional principles that are made explicit by Ibn Ḥibbān: chronology (date of death), affinity, geographical origin, and fame. The relation of biographical dictionary to ḥadīth is clearly asserted and demonstrated by Ibn Ḥibbān. But the ramification of such a connection, developed by ḥadīth scholars, seems not to evoke the desirable response. It is also beneficial here, to go back to the notion, which was mentioned earlier that the aim of authenticing the biography and ḥadīth of the Prophet as well as successive generations led to the sifting by Ibn Ḥibbān of all available sources about them which resulted in biographical material on them being collected and used to assess their scholarship. Assuredly the ḥadīth transmitters whose biographies are contained in the Thiqāt and the Mashāhīr are thus presented as the successors of the Prophet. This was at the basis of the outlook that sustained and gave meaning to the biographical dictionary in the late age of the Ṣaḥīḥ movement and beyond. Through the arrangement of biographical dictionaries Ibn Ḥibbān could reveal the genealogy of authority he had constructed over the path of his career on the following generation of scholars. The Thiqāt and the Mashāhīr did this in distinct approaches. For the Thiqāt the transmitters designated in a “more collective social generation” using ṭabaqāt as the continuity of the community. As the Mashāhīr fell into focusing of important centre of ḥadīth in the course of three centuries.
CONCLUSION

The primary objective of this study has been to expound the scholarship of Ibn Ḥībbān in the fourth/tenth century through his ḥadīth collection and biographical dictionaries. Hence, the focus of Chapter One was on the history of biographical dictionaries in the Islamic world and identifying the biographical dictionaries of ḥadīth transmitters in the time of Ibn Ḥībbān and his predecessors. In general, the biographical dictionary is usually described as the purview of a history of a religion’s approach to encyclopaedic life-narratives. Biographies of the Prophet, his Companions, and other scholars, have all operated to focus Islamic faithfulness and piety. While illuminating or phenomenological studies of a few features of Islamic biographical writing exist, there remains a demand for a more analytical survey to show how biographical appearances evolved and developed. The multitudinous genres of biographical dictionaries of ḥadīth transmitters that were presented in Chapter One that had been composed over the first three centuries were celebrated as a result of this advancement.

Throughout history, the function of biographical dictionaries of ḥadīth transmitters was to categorize those who had the necessary knowledge to be qualified as authoritative in this scholarship. Interestingly, since the earliest organized disciplines in Islam included the science of ḥadīth transmission, the early biographical dictionary works are oriented towards fulfilling their requirements in general works and in the histories of scholars or particular cities and provinces. In turn this influenced the collection of biographical dictionaries of other classes of individuals investigating the Qurʾān, law, Arabic language and so forth but it never refrained from making links with the science of ḥadīth transmission. Furthermore, a thorough observation has also indicated how the genre has undergone several phases of adaption in its numerous elements. It follows therefore that the basic qualification for inclusion in the general run of biographical dictionaries is the contribution brought by the individual to the scholarship of the particular field. On the other hand, the selection of the biographer like Ibn Ḥībbān is determined by the appropriate condition to which his concern is directed and this latter in turn established as a rule for the discipline.

Moreover, coming out of the later works which were based on them, and which still exist, the general idea of this genre can be derived with a reasonable degree of certainty. Their contents consisted mainly of short descriptions of the genealogies and dates of birth and death; some biographical information; and a brief critique of their reliability, backed up with the opinions of important authorities and contemporaries. Analysis of the arrangement
of Ibn Ḥībān’s work demonstrates that all of the features mentioned above are present. Also, by utilizing the biographical dictionaries of Ibn Ḥībān’s successors, Chapter Two tries to reconstruct the biography of Ibn Ḥībān within the context not only of ḥadīth scholarship, but also Islamic history in general. It introduces Ibn Ḥībān from his early life when he began a journey to seek knowledge, building a scholarly career until the end of his life. However, because of very brief references to Ibn Ḥībān in various histories, chronological, and biographical dictionaries, his biography is treated in a general way.

Nevertheless, in Chapter Three, the focus of discussion is on examining the literature where Ibn Ḥībān is included in the ḥadīth hall of fame. It mainly examines the introduction of the Ṣaḥīḥ of Ibn Ḥībān and provides a summarised translation of the introduction. In order to situate the Ṣaḥīḥ and its author within the history of Islam and its magnificent tradition of ḥadīth scholarship, Chapter Three begins by comparing Ibn Ḥībān with several of his students, teachers, and early participants of the Ṣaḥīḥ network. The basic principles and terminology of the science of ḥadīth transmission in authenticating the status of ḥadīths mentioned could be considered as a pioneering attempt by the ḥadīth scholars at that time. It appears that Ibn Ḥībān’s theory of authenticity was established upon a set of formulas pertaining to transmission and its knowledge. By and large, this theory revolved almost entirely around the examination of isnāds. It is also clear to see that his higher objective is first to study the ḥadīth, especially on the basis of its authenticity. Then he equipped a set of legal theory which classified the relevance and degree of applicability of any given rule or precedent according to al-taqāsim (divisions) and al-anwā’ (categories) for his Ṣaḥīḥ.

Additionally, it is worth noting that there survives a second Sunnī established practise of legal theory, virtually unexplored, that operates parallel to the standard or mainstream one. The earliest surviving articulation of legal theory in al-Bukhārī, Ibn Ḥībān, Ibn Ḥādib al-Barr, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī and many others works of ḥadīth scholars have been overshadowed by the dominant tradition of uṣūl al-fiqh. It is difficult to establish whether a particular book is within a certain legal school or is particular for a certain region in the protracted and diversified history of the Muslim world. What is more, in the Ṣaḥīḥ is the tarājim which may be regarded as among the most important characteristics of the Ṣaḥīḥ as well as his other works. One can see that the advancement of ḥadīth collecting and sifting continued alongside that of exegesis, theology, legal principles and other literature. By the time of the compilation of the Ṣaḥīḥ, the considerable weight given to the study of the matn of ḥadīth resulted in a proliferation of commentaries, or in Ibn Ḥībān’s case the tarājim,
which gave extensive exploration, containing *matn* criticism, the historical connections and references of the text, theological, juridical, language matters, and the rest. And throughout the introduction and contents of the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, it shows that Ibn Ḥibbān is unique among fourth/tenth century ḥadīth compilers for both his high standards of ḥadīth-transmitter criticism and his articulation of an unstudied set of divisions and categories that approach the topics in the classical legal theory tradition. It is true that Ibn Ḥibbān’s intention was also to compose a legal theory book supported with ḥadīth. This gigantic *Ṣaḥīḥ* could only be studied advantageously and its transmitters appropriately evaluated with the holistic study of a number of technical terms in the legal theory and the science of the ḥadīth transmission.

As it has been seen above, the growing interest in the actual critical appraisal of transmitters is that this imposing body of material was perceived to be capable of authenticating ḥadīth on the basis of criteria drawn from the domain of *rijaḥ* criticism. By looking at this familiar notion, Chapter Four and Five attempt to demonstrate the essential features of Ḥibbān’s biographical dictionaries of ḥadīth transmitters. The *Majrūḥin*, *Thiqāt*, and *Mashāḥīr* were a scholarly exercise undertaken by Ibn Ḥibbān to cull the reports by earlier master ḥadīth critics who could be subordinated under the approved or impugned ḥadīth transmitters. In the *Majrūḥin*, Ibn Ḥibbān builds up a network which connects ḥadīth criticism to prominent critics or authority from preceding generations, that is to say *ṭabaqāt*. The significance of Ibn Ḥibbān’s seven-*ṭabaqāt* presentation has been discussed from the descriptions of the members of each generation as well as the identification and biographical information of the forty-three men. The *Majrūḥin* also was a technical criticism in which Ibn Ḥibbān contributed his own methodology of transmitters’ evaluation based on those of the early critics in the *ṭabaqāt*.

Substantially, by examining Ibn Ḥibbān’s *Majrūḥin* one gains an understanding into the different opinions relating to even a single transmitter among the various critics. Yet one can also detect in this discussion changes in the conception which relate directly to the question of the status and style of critical evaluation. His *Majrūḥin*’s introduction is so indispensable due to his focus on the issue of epistemology and ḥadīth criticism as well as of some of his methodological aspects which symbolize the practical functionality of *rijaḥ* criticism as a means of ḥadīth authentication at that time. More importantly, he also outlined in some detail twenty categories of impugned transmitters in the *Majrūḥin* discussing essential definitions, examples, demonstrations and related topics. On the other hand, the ḥadīth transmitters whose biographies are contained in the *Thiqāt* and the *Mashāḥīr* as
discussed in Chapter Five are presented as the successors of the Prophet or reliable transmitters. Both the *Thiqāt* and the *Mashāhīr* are oriented towards fulfilling their requirements in the genealogy of authority and in the important centre of ḥadīth in the course of three centuries. As such, not only are his works unprecedented compared to those of his contemporaries, but they also attracted further discourses and scholarly pursuits on the base work in the fourth/tenth century and beyond.

It should also be mentioned that due to the restricted capacity of this research, there is also much contention pertaining to ḥadīth scholarship and its studies that we have examined in a general way. Further study on the privileges of ḥadīth scholars as a continuation of the general theme of ḥadīth scholarship among Muslims is desirable. These encompass an assessment of the importance of the achievements of figures such as Abū Yaʿlā, Ibn Khuzayma, al-Rāmahurmuzī, al-Dāraqutnī, al-Hākim al-Naysaburī, and many others among Ibn Ḥibbān’s contemporaries, culminating in the establishment of composing works on the science of ḥadīth transmission and its discourse in the fourth/tenth century and beyond. More than that, the institutionalization of ḥadīth studies in scholarly tradition and its position in the religious debate of early Muslim are another relevant dimension that one can see.

Finally, it is not possible to illustrate the extent of the significance of Ibn Ḥibbān upon the study of ḥadīth except to say that after him there was almost no exposition of ḥadīth collections and biographical dictionaries of ḥadīth transmitters which did not come in one way or another under the influence of the works of the great Khorasan scholar, even if certain later ḥadīth critics disagreed with some of his inclusions of authentic ḥadīths and transmitters’ evaluation. His writings reach over the whole of the Islamic world; his works began to be transmitted by the students of ḥadīth and his introductions of *Ṣaḥīḥ, Thiqāt* and *Majrūḥīn*, recordings of ḥadīth, evaluations of transmitters, quoted mostly in the science of ḥadīth transmission books, and they continued to be studied and discussed today as they were one millennia ago.
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