DIROYAH
JURNAL STUDI ILMU HADIS

Methods of Assessing Hadith Authenticity in al-'Irāqī's *al-Tabṣira wa-l-Tadhkira* and *Isnād-cum-Matn Analysis*: Points of Convergence and Limits of Integration

M.Maftuh[1*], Ghilmanul Wasath[2], Ahmad Mahfudzi Mafrudlo[3], Zuhratul Aini Mansur[4],

[1] UIN Syech Wasil Kediri, Indonesia: maftuh1971@gmail.com
[2] UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, Indonesia: ghilmanul.wasath@uinjkt.ac.id
[3] STEI Fithrah Insani Bandung, Indonesia: ahmadmahfudzi@yahoo.com
[4] Universitas Muhammadiyah Prof. Dr. Hamka (UHAMKA), Jakarta, Indonesia: zuhratulaini@uhamka.ac.id
*Correspondence: maftuh1971@gmail.com

Received: 2025-12-30; Revised: 2026-10-15 Accepted: 2026-10-19; Published: 2025-110-27

Abstract: Contemporary hadith scholarship in Indonesia often equates classical hadith criticism with *isnād-cum-matn analysis* (ICMA) and treats the results of dating as evidence bearing on authenticity. What has not yet been examined is the epistemic relationship between the two in post-classical *muṣṭalaḥ* texts, including what al-'Irāqī (d. 806/1404) contributed beyond Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ. This article asks how *al-Tabṣira wa-l-Tadhkira* formulates the relationship between isnād and matn, at what level that formulation meets ICMA, and what results when both are applied to the same hadith. The corpus is al-Faryāṭī's edition of the versified *al-Tabṣira wa-l-Tadhkira*, read alongside 'Itr's edition of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's *Ma'rifat anwā' 'ilm al-ḥadīth*. The method combines comparative textual analysis with case studies of four hadiths, one of them of disputed status, based on *takhrīj*, isnād bundles, and matn synopses. The findings show that the procedures closest to ICMA, namely *i'tibār*, the detection of *'illa* through disagreement and isolated transmission, and *ziyādat al-thiqa*, are a faithful versification of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ; al-'Irāqī's explicit additions in the chapters examined are limited, the clearest being his correction of al-Tirmidhī's definition of *ḥasan*. The two approaches converge at the level of procedure but yield two different claims: probative reliability (*ḥujjiyya*) and historical dating. In the hadith on intention (*niyya*), the classical verdict reaches the Prophet, whereas ICMA stops at Yaḥyā b. Sa'īd al-Anṣārī, and the textual variants follow the branches below him. The article contributes a five-stage analytical model that keeps these two claims apart.

Keywords: alfiyyat al-ḥadīth; 'illa; al-'irāqī; isnād-cum-matn analysis; hadith authentication

Abstrak: *Kajian hadis kontemporer di Indonesia kerap menyetarakan kritik hadis klasik dengan isnād-cum-matn analysis (ICMA) dan membaca hasil penanggalan sebagai bahan pertimbangan kesahihan. Celah yang belum ditelaah adalah hubungan epistemik keduanya pada teks muṣṭalaḥ pascaklasik, termasuk apa yang sungguh merupakan sumbangan al-'Irāqī (w. 806 H) atas Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ. Artikel ini bertanya bagaimana al-Tabṣira wa-l-Tadhkira merumuskan hubungan sanad dan matan, pada tingkat apa rumusan itu bertemu dengan ICMA, dan apa hasilnya bila keduanya diterapkan pada hadis yang sama. Korpusnya adalah*

nazam al-Tabṣira wa-l-Tadhkira edisi al-Faryāṭī, dibaca berdampingan dengan Maʿrifat anwāʿ ʿilm al-ḥadīth edisi ʿItr. Metodenya adalah analisis teks komparatif dan studi kasus berbasis takhrīj, bundel sanad, dan sinopsis matan atas empat hadis, termasuk satu hadis yang statusnya diperselisihkan. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa prosedur yang paling dekat dengan ICMA, yakni iʿtibār, deteksi ʿilla melalui perselisihan dan kesendirian riwayat, serta ziyādat al-thiqa, merupakan penazaman setia atas Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ; tambahan eksplisit al-ʿIrāqī pada bab-bab yang dianalisis terbatas, misalnya koreksinya atas definisi ḥasan al-Tirmidhī. Kedua pendekatan bertemu pada prosedur, tetapi menghasilkan dua klaim berbeda, yaitu keterandalan probatif (ḥujjiyya) dan penanggalan historis. Pada hadis niyya, vonis klasik sampai kepada Nabi, sementara ICMA berhenti pada Yaḥyā b. Saʿīd al-Anṣārī dan varian redaksinya mengikuti cabang-cabang di bawahnya. Kontribusi artikel ini ada pada model analisis lima tahap yang memisahkan kedua klaim tersebut.

Kata Kunci: *alfiyyat al-ḥadīth; autentikasi hadis; ʿilla; al-ʿirāqī; isnād-cum-matn analysis*

1. Introduction

Ever since Schacht placed the isnād at the centre of the problem of hadith authenticity (Schacht, 1950, pp. 163–175), academic hadith studies have moved between two kinds of answer. The first comes from the *muṣṭalaḥ* tradition, which evaluates a report by the continuity of its isnād, the credibility of its transmitters, and its freedom from *shudhūdh* and *ʿilla*. The second comes from modern analysis of isnād networks, which since the 1990s has developed into *isnād-cum-matn analysis* (ICMA) (Motzki, 2005; Motzki et al., 2010). In Indonesia, ICMA has been introduced and applied in a number of studies (Budiman et al., 2022; Junus et al., 2025; Abdullah & Rahman, 2026).

The two traditions are often treated as parallel because both compare transmission paths and textual variants. This parallelism conceals a conceptual problem. Classical *taṣḥīḥ* produces a probative verdict, that is, a judgement on whether a report may be attributed to the Prophet and used as *ḥujja*. ICMA produces a historical date, that is, the earliest generation to which a given wording can be traced, which in practice is anchored at the *common link* or, where the data allow, at that transmitter's informant (Motzki, 2005, pp. 240–241). In some studies the results of dating are read directly as a judgement on authenticity, for instance when the Prophet is positioned as the *common link* (Budiman et al., 2022) or when ICMA results are used to affirm that two textual variants both remain acceptable (Abdullah & Rahman, 2026). Such conclusions may well be true, but ICMA cannot produce them on its own.

This article examines the problem in *al-Tabṣira wa-l-Tadhkira* by Zayn al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm b. al-Ḥusayn al-ʿIrāqī (725–806 AH), better known as the Alfiyya of al-ʿIrāqī. The text was chosen for two reasons. First, it is the most influential versification of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's (d. 643 AH) *Maʿrifat anwāʿ ʿilm al-ḥadīth* and became the principal teaching text of post-classical *muṣṭalaḥ*. Second, al-ʿIrāqī did not write theory alone. He also wrote a commentary on his own poem, critical notes on Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ in *al-Taqyīd wa-l-Īḍāḥ*, and applied verdicts on the hadiths of *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn* in *al-*

Mughnī ʻan ḥaml al-asfār. Al-ʻIrāqī wrote at a time when hadith transmission after canonization had acquired social and intellectual functions different from those of the formative period (Davidson, 2020); his framework should therefore be read as a post-canonical codification rather than as the method of the early generations of critics.

Based on this problem and background, the article poses three research questions. *First*, how does *al-Tabṣira wa-l-Tadhkira* formulate the relationship between isnād and matn, and which parts of that formulation are al-ʻIrāqī's own contribution beyond Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ? *Second*, at what level does that formulation meet ICMA, and at what level do the two differ? *Third*, what happens when both are applied to the same hadith, including one whose status is disputed?

The article argues that al-ʻIrāqī's criteria and ICMA converge on the procedure of comparing transmission paths and wordings but yield two claims of different kinds, namely probative reliability and historical dating; integrating them is therefore legitimate at the level of procedure and illegitimate at the level of verdict. After the literature review and the account of method, the results section sets out al-ʻIrāqī's criteria concept by concept, ICMA and its critics, and four case studies. The discussion draws a synthesis from this evidence and assesses where al-ʻIrāqī's framework stands in the face of historical criticism.

Indonesian-language studies of al-ʻIrāqī and *al-Tabṣira wa-l-Tadhkira* are generally descriptive. Harun (2016) sets out al-ʻIrāqī's thought in this work and judges his explanations concise as well as enriching for hadith studies but does not separate what derives from Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ from what al-ʻIrāqī added. Such a separation is in fact made possible by al-ʻIrāqī himself, who states in the prologue to his poem that he abridged the whole of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's book and added knowledge "which you will see in its place" (al-ʻIrāqī, 1428 AH, v. 6, p. 93). No study has yet used this statement as an analytical tool, let alone connected it with ICMA.

Studies of classical matn criticism provide the second background. Brown argues that early critics did practise matn criticism but expressed it in the idiom of isnād criticism (Brown, 2008), and that classical matn criticism did not operate by fixed rules (Brown, 2012). He also shows that classical critics such as al-Dāraquṭnī challenged the canonical verdicts of the Ṣaḥīḥayn (Brown, 2004). Other studies formulate the criteria of matn criticism used by the *muḥaddithūn* (al-Idlibī, 1983) and place the comparison of reports (*muʻāraḍa*) at the core of the critical method (al-Aʻẓamī, 1990). Brown's findings matter for this article because they locate the integration of isnād and matn among the earliest critics rather than among the compilers of post-classical manuals.

The third background is ICMA and the debate surrounding it, which is treated in more detail in the results section. Recent studies point in two directions. Some reinforce ICMA as a response to Juynboll's scepticism while acknowledging a structural uncertainty in the method (Junus et al., 2025) or weigh the debate between Juynboll and al-Aʻẓamī (Ulin et al., 2025). Others test the limits of ICMA. Su shows that for

single strands that do not pass through a *common link*, ICMA can only supply the earliest point at which a report is of historical value, not the moment of its origin (Su, 2026). Little proposes that ICMA be supplemented with tradition-historical criticism in order to reach the development of a report before the *common link* (Little, 2026).

Attempts to connect classical *muṣṭalaḥ* with ICMA at the epistemic level remain rare. Hallaq argues that for the *fuqahā'* the question of authenticity was largely a *pseudo-problem*, because what they needed was probative reliability, not historical certainty (Hallaq, 1999). This article positions itself in that gap. It does not apply ICMA to corroborate classical verdicts, nor does it use classical verdicts to reject ICMA. Instead, it examines a post-classical *muṣṭalaḥ* text to show where the two genuinely meet and where they answer different questions.

This is a qualitative textual study using an analytical-comparative approach, supplemented by case studies. The primary corpus is al-Faryāṭī's edition of the versified *al-Tabṣira wa-l-Tadhkira* (al-'Irāqī, 1428 AH), cited by verse number and by the page numbers of that edition. *Ma'rifat anwā' 'ilm al-ḥadīth* in 'Itr's edition (Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, 1986) serves as the point of comparison. The supporting corpus consists of *Sharḥ al-Tabṣira wa-l-Tadhkira* (al-'Irāqī, 2002) and *al-Taqyīd wa-l-Īḍāḥ* (al-'Irāqī, 1969) for al-'Irāqī's positions outside the poem, and *al-Mughnī* (al-'Irāqī, 2005) for his applied verdicts. Both principal editions were read in the digital version of al-Maktaba al-Shāmila, which follows the pagination of the printed editions.

The verses analysed were selected from the chapters bearing directly on the relationship between isnād and matn: the definition of *ṣaḥīḥ*, verdicts on the isnād and on the hadith, the conditions for transmitters, *ḍabṭ* and *ikhtilāṭ*, *shādhdh*, *mu'allal*, *i'tibār*, *ziyādat al-thiqa*, *ḥasan*, the epistemic force of *āḥād* reports, and the possibility of *taṣḥīḥ* in later periods. To separate al-'Irāqī's contribution from Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's material, the study uses the convention that al-'Irāqī himself declares in the prologue to the poem (Table 1 and the accompanying discussion). He states that whenever he uses a verb or pronoun in the singular, such as *qāla*, or mentions "al-shaykh" without a name, he means Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, while the dual form refers to al-Bukhārī and Muslim (al-'Irāqī, 1428 AH, vv. 7–9, p. 93). His own additions, in the chapters analysed, are marked by the expression *qultu* ("I say"). Each verse was then compared with the passage of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ that it versifies. Conclusions about al-'Irāqī's distinctive contribution are drawn only from material not found in Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ.

Four hadiths were selected to test the discriminating power of the two approaches. The hadith on *niyya* was chosen because it is *fard* at four levels and spreads only after Yaḥyā b. Sa'īd, so that the divergence between the classical verdict and historical dating can be observed directly. The hadith on *wiṣāl* was chosen because it is transmitted by five Companions, each with a distinctive wording. The hadith of the fly was chosen because its matn is contested and its isnād data are often misreported in the secondary literature. The fourth, the hadith on *ṭalab al-'ilm*, was chosen because critics disagree about its status and because it is one of the *Iḥyā'* hadiths that al-'Irāqī

traced in *al-Mughnī*. The first three hadiths have an established status in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī. The discriminating power of the method is therefore tested chiefly on the fourth.

The analytical procedure follows a five-stage model proposed by the authors (Figure 1). Stages one to three are procedures required by both *muṣṭalaḥ* and ICMA. Stage four is a procedure specific to ICMA. Stage five reports the two kinds of results separately. In this study, transmission paths were gathered from al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and the Sunan collections. Each path was classified by its *mukharrij*, that is, the compiler who recorded the hadith with his own isnād, such as al-Bukhārī and Muslim. Extending the *takhrīj* through *Tuḥfat al-ashrāf* (al-Mizzī, 1999) and *Itḥāf al-mahara* (Ibn Ḥajar, 1994) is noted as a limitation. Verdicts on transmitters are taken from *Taqrīb al-tahdhīb* (Ibn Ḥajar, 1423 AH). The model is applied stage by stage to each case study.

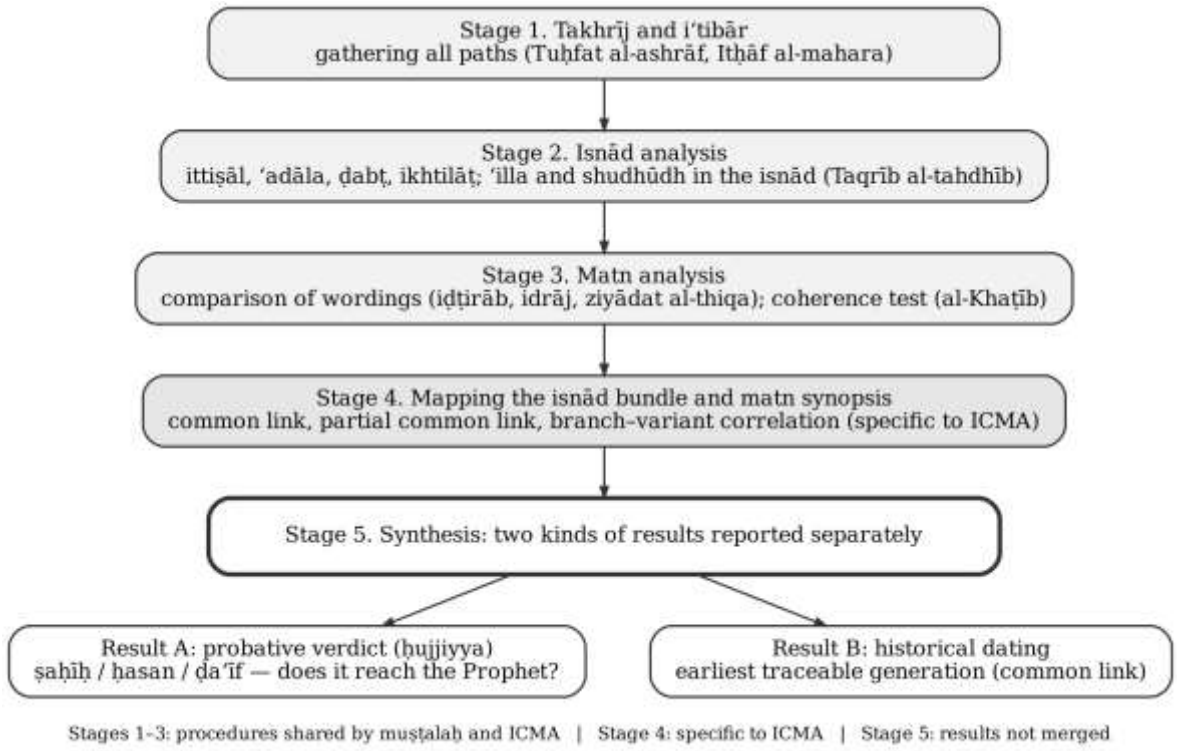


Figure 1. The five-stage analytical model used in this study (proposed by the authors)

Conclusions were drawn according to two rules. First, the *taṣḥīḥ* verdict and the ICMA dating are reported separately and are not merged into a single verdict. Second, for the fourth hadith, the theory of *ḥasan li-ghayrihi* in the Alfiyya is compared with the path data and, as far as can be verified, with al-'Irāqī's applied verdict.

Taṣḥīḥ asks whether a report meets the conditions for being attributed to the Prophet and used as *ḥujja*. Its answer takes the form of a graded verdict based on an assessment of every transmitter in the chain. ICMA asks when, and by whom, the earliest form of a given wording began to circulate. Its answer takes the form of a date

grounded in the distribution of paths and in the correlation between isnād branches and matn variants (Motzki, 2005).

The difference is most visible at the *common link*, the transmitter at whom single strands begin to fan out to many students. Juynboll regards the *common link* as the most likely originator of the wording (Juynboll, 1983; Juynboll, 1989). Motzki interprets it as the first systematic collector or professional teacher, so that the material can be dated at least to that generation (Motzki, 2005, pp. 228, 238–239). Cook argues that the spread of isnāds undermines both interpretations (Cook, 1992). The classical tradition knew a similar structural node under the name *madār al-isnād* in the *al-'Ilal* of 'Alī b. al-Madīnī (Ibn al-Madīnī, 1980), as well as the categories of *fard* and *gharīb* in the Alfiyya (al-'Irāqī, 1428 AH, vv. 186–192, pp. 110–111; vv. 748–751, p. 160), although whether the *madār* is equivalent to the *common link* is itself disputed (Junus et al., 2025).

A hadith can therefore be judged *ṣaḥīḥ* by classical standards while ICMA dates its earliest form to a *Tābi'ī*. The two assessments do not cancel each other out. Because its data consists of the distribution of paths, ICMA cannot test the single-strand segment before the *common link*. *Taṣḥīḥ* fills that segment with trust in the transmitters, grounded in *ta'dīl*. The difference lies in the epistemic status of the single links, not in the content of the report.

2. Results and Discussion

Al-'Irāqī's Criteria in the Text and Commentary

The Status of the Text and al-'Irāqī's Contribution

The prologue to the poem states plainly how the Alfiyya relates to Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's work:

نَظَمْتُهَا تَبْصِرَةً لِلمُبتَدِيْ ۞ تَذْكِرَةً لِلْمُنْتَهِي والْمُسْنِدِ
لَخَّصْتُ فيهَا ابْنَ الصَّلاحِ أَجْمَعَهْ ۞ وَزِدْتُهَا عِلْمَاً تَرَاهُ مَوْضِعَهْ
فَحَيْثُ جَاءَ الفِعْلُ والضَّمِيْرُ ۞ لِواحِدٍ وَمَنْ لَهُ مَسْتُوْرُ
كَ(قَالَ) أَوْ أَطْلَقْتُ لَفْظَ الشَّيْخِ مَا ۞ أُرِيْدُ إلاَّ ابْنَ الصَّلاحِ مُبْهَمَا
وَإِنْ يَكُنْ لاثْنَيْنِ نَحْوُ (الْتَزَمَا) ۞ فَمُسْلِمٌ مَعَ البُخَارِيِّ هُمَا

> "I have versified it as a *tabṣira* (an elucidation) for the beginner and a *tadhkira* (a reminder) for the accomplished and for transmitters. In it I have abridged the whole of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's book and added knowledge which you will see in its place. Wherever a verb or a pronoun occurs in the singular without its subject being named, such as *qāla*, or I use the word 'al-shaykh' without qualification, I mean none other than Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ. If the form is dual, such as *iltazamā*, the two are Muslim and al-Bukhārī." (al-'Irāqī, 1428 AH, vv. 5–9, p. 93)

This statement makes the title of the book its programme as well: the Alfiyya is an abridgement of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ with additions. Claims about al-ʻIrāqī's thought must therefore be distinguished from claims about Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ. Table 1 compares the concepts analysed in this article.

Table 1. Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ and the verses of the Alfiyya compared on the concepts analysed

Concept	Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ (1986)	Alfiyya verses (1428 AH)	Point of difference
Definition of *ṣaḥīḥ*	Five conditions, pp. 11–12	vv. 11–13, pp. 93–94	Follows Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ
The *ṣaḥīḥ* verdict concerns outward status, not certainty	In the discussion of *ṣaḥīḥ*, pp. 13–14	v. 14, p. 94	Follows Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ
Epistemic force of the Ṣaḥīḥayn	Yields certainty, p. 28	vv. 40–41, p. 96	Al-ʻIrāqī adds the report that the *muḥaqqiqūn* held it to yield *ẓann*, according to al-Nawawī
Taṣḥīḥ in later periods	Not possible independently, pp. 16–17	v. 39, p. 96	Al-ʻIrāqī reports al-Nawawī's dissenting view
Al-Tirmidhī's definition of *ḥasan*	Reports al-Tirmidhī's definition, p. 29 ff.	vv. 51–52, pp. 97–98	*Al-ʻIrāqī's addition (qultu):* al-Tirmidhī himself graded some isolated reports *ḥasan*
Ḥasan li-ghayrihi	Two kinds of *ḥasan*, p. 31; weakness not remedied by multiple paths, p. 34	vv. 54, 58–60, p. 98	Follows Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ ("qāla")
Verdict on the isnād and on the hadith	p. 38	v. 83, p. 100	Follows Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ
Shādhdh	Al-Shāfiʻī's definition and al-Khalīlī's report, p. 76 ff.	vv. 161–166, pp. 107–108	Follows; v. 163 reports Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's rejection of the definitions of al-Ḥākim and al-Khalīlī
Iʻtibār, *mutābaʻāt*, *shawāhid*	p. 82	vv. 171–177, p. 109	Follows Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ
Ziyādat al-thiqa	p. 85 ff.	vv. 178–185, pp. 109–110	Follows; the threefold division is attributed to "al-shaykh" (v. 179)
ʻIlla: definition and detection	pp. 89–90	vv. 193–198, p. 111	Direct versification of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's prose
ʻIlla mostly in the isnād	ʻIlla may occur in both isnād and matn, but more often in the isnād, p. 91	vv. 199–204, pp. 111–112	Follows Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ
A verdict of weakness applies per path	pp. 102–103	vv. 249–252, p. 116	Follows; the clarification is attributed to "al-shaykh" (v. 252)
Conditions for transmitters and the test of *ḍabṭ*	p. 104 ff.	vv. 257–267, pp. 116–117	Follows Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ

Table 1 shows that, in the chapters analysed, almost every comparative procedure is a faithful versification of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ. The report on the definitions of *shādhdh*, the formulation of how *ʻilla* is detected, the division of *ziyādat al-thiqa*, and the doctrine of *ḥasan li-ghayrihi* all come from his prose. The only explicit addition by al-ʻIrāqī

marked with *qultu* is found in al-Tirmidhī's definition of *ḥasan*: after versifying al-Tirmidhī's condition that a *ḥasan* hadith must not be *fard*, al-ʻIrāqī adds, «وَقَدْ قُلْتُ: حَسَّنَ بَعْضَ مَا انفَرَدْ» ("I say: al-Tirmidhī himself graded some isolated reports *ḥasan*") (al-ʻIrāqī, 1428 AH, v. 52, p. 98). This is a practice-based correction of a definition, measuring a critic's theory against his applied verdicts. Al-ʻIrāqī's contribution outside the poem, in his commentary and in *al-Taqyīd*, lies beyond the scope of this table. The discussion that follows therefore reads the Alfiyya as a post-canonical codification of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's framework.

The Epistemic Force of Āḥād Reports

The criteria of *ʻadāla*, *ḍabṭ*, and freedom from *shudhūdh* and *ʻilla* apply to *āḥād* reports. *Mutawātir* reports, which the Alfiyya treats as part of the discussion of *mashhūr* hadith, with the example of the hadith «من كذب» transmitted by more than sixty Companions (al-ʻIrāqī, 1428 AH, vv. 754–755, p. 160), are not assessed through the credibility of individual transmitters. The epistemological question that al-ʻIrāqī's text addresses is the kind of knowledge that *āḥād* reports yield. Verse 14 settles this from the outset:

وَبالصَّحِيْحِ وَالضَّعِيفِ قَصَدُوا ۞ فِي ظَاهِرٍ لاَ الْقَطْعَ

> "By (the verdicts) *ṣaḥīḥ* and *ḍaʻīf* they mean the outward (status), not certainty." (al-ʻIrāqī, 1428 AH, v. 14, p. 94)

On reports agreed upon by al-Bukhārī and Muslim, al-ʻIrāqī reports Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's view together with its rebuttal:

وَاقْطَعْ بِصِحَّةٍ لِمَا قَدْ أَسْنَدَا ۞ كَذَا لَهُ، وَقِيْلَ ظَنّاً وَلَدَى
مُحَقِّقِيْهِمْ قَدْ عَزَاهُ (النَّوَوِيْ)

> "Affirm with certainty the soundness of what the two have transmitted with an isnād; so he (Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ) held. It has also been said: (it yields) *ẓann*, and al-Nawawī attributed this view to their *muḥaqqiqūn*." (al-ʻIrāqī, 1428 AH, vv. 40–41, p. 96)

These two verses show that within the *muṣṭalaḥ* tradition itself, the *ṣaḥīḥ* verdict concerns outward status, and the degree of certainty it yields is disputed. The verdict establishes that a report may be acted upon as *ḥujja*. It is this distinction that later grounds the comparison with ICMA.

Ittiṣāl, ʻAdāla, and Ḍabṭ

وَأَهْلُ هَذَا الشَّأْنِ قَسَّمُوا السُّنَنْ ۞ إلى صَحِيْحٍ وَضَعِيْفٍ وَحَسَنْ
فَالأَوَّلُ الْمُتَّصِلُ الإِسْنَادِ ۞ بِنَقْلِ عَدْلٍ ضَابِطِ الْفُؤَادِ
عَنْ مِثْلِهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ مَا شُذُوْذِ ۞ وَعِلَّةٍ قَادِحَةٍ فَتُوْذِي

"The masters of this discipline divide the *sunan* into *ṣaḥīḥ*, *ḍa'īf*, and *ḥasan*. The first is that whose isnād is connected, through transmission by a transmitter who is upright and precise in memory, from one like him, without *shudhūdh* and without a damaging *'illa qādiḥa*." (al-'Irāqī, 1428 AH, vv. 11–13, pp. 93–94)

These verses contain the same five conditions as Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's definition, «الحديث المسند الذي يتصل إسناده بنقل العدل الضابط عن العدل الضابط إلى منتهاه، ولا يكون شاذا ولا معللا» (Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, 1986, pp. 11–12). The first three conditions concern the chain. The last two are relational, because *shudhūdh* and *'illa* can only be known by comparison with other reports. The conditions for transmitters are set out in the chapter on whose reports are accepted:

أَجْمَعَ جُمْهُوْرُ أَئِمَّةِ الأَثَرْ ۞ وَالْفِقْهِ فِي قَبُوْلِ نَاقِلِ الْخَبَرْ
بِأَنْ يَكُوْنَ ضَابِطاً مُعَدَّلاَ ۞ أيْ: يَقِظاً، وَلَمْ يَكُنْ مُغَفَّلاَ
يَحْفَظُ إنْ حَدَّثَ حِفْظاً، يَحْوِيْ ۞ كِتَابَهُ إنْ كَانَ مِنْهُ يَرْوِيْ
يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي اللَّفْظِ مِنْ إحِالَهْ ۞ إنْ يَرْوِ بالْمَعْنَى، وَفِي الْعَدَالَهْ
بِأَنْ يَكُوْنَ مُسْلِماً ذَا عَقْلِ ۞ قَدْ بَلَغَ الْحُلْمَ سَلِيْمَ الفِعْلِ
مِنْ فِسْقٍ اوْ خَرْمِ مُرُوْءَةٍ

"The majority of the imams of hadith and of law agree that the acceptance of a transmitter of reports requires that he be *ḍābiṭ* and of established *'adl* status, that is, alert and not careless; that he have memorized what he relates when relating from memory, keep his book safe when relating from a book, and understand how wording shifts meaning when relating by sense. As for *'adāla*, it requires that he be a Muslim, of sound mind, past puberty, and free in his conduct from *fisq* and from violations of *murū'a*." (al-'Irāqī, 1428 AH, vv. 257–262, pp. 116–117)

These verses correspond to Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's statement that most of the imams of hadith and law require a transmitter whose reports are used as *ḥujja* to be *'adl* and *ḍābiṭ* (Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, 1986, p. 104). What matters for this article is how *ḍabṭ* is known:

وَمَنْ يُوَافِقْ غَالِباً ذا الضَّبْطِ ۞ فَضَابِطٌ، أوْ نَادِراً فَمُخْطِيْ

"Whoever generally agrees with (the reports of) those of sound memory is *ḍābiṭ*; if he agrees only rarely, he errs often." (al-'Irāqī, 1428 AH, v. 267, p. 117)

In other words, a transmitter's *ḍabṭ* is itself established through the comparison of reports. The link between *ḍabṭ* and the stability of a wording is clearest in *ikhtilāṭ*, the deterioration of memory in a transmitter who was once reliable: «وَفِي الثِّقَاتِ مَنْ أخِيْراً اخْتَلَطْ ۞ فَمَا رَوَى فِيْهِ أَوِ ابْهَمَ سَقَطْ» ("Among the *thiqāt* are some whose memory became confused late in life; what one of them related in that period, or where the time is unclear, is discarded") (al-'Irāqī, 1428 AH, v. 985, p. 183). Biographical data on the timing of *ikhtilāṭ* thus become a tool for explaining matn variants.

Shudhūdh

وَذُو الشُّذُوذِ : مَا يُخَالِفُ الثِّقَهْ ۞ فِيهِ المَلاَ فَالشَّافِعِيُّ حقَّقَهْ
والحَاكِمُ الخِلاَفَ فِيهِ ما اشْتَرَطْ ۞ وَلِلْخَلِيلِيْ مُفْرَدُ الرَّاوِي فَقَطْ
وَرَدَّ مَا قَالاَ بِفَرْدِ الثِّقَةِ ۞ كالنَّهْيِ عَنْ بَيْعِ الوَلاَ وَالهِبَةِ
وَقَوْلُ مُسْلِمٍ : رَوَى الزُّهْرِيُّ ۞ تِسْعِينَ فَرْداً كُلُّهَا قَوِيُّ
واخْتَارَ فِيْمَا لَمْ يُخَالِفْ أنَّ مَنْ ۞ يَقْرُبُ مِنْ ضَبْطٍ فَفَرْدُهُ حَسَنْ
أوْ بَلَغَ الضَّبْطَ فَصَحِّحْ أَوْ بَعُدْ ۞ عَنْهُ فَمِمَّا شَذَّ فَاطْرَحْهُ وَرُدْ

"A *shādhdh* hadith is a report in which a *thiqa* contradicts the majority; so al-Shāfi'ī defined it precisely. Al-Ḥākim did not stipulate contradiction, and for al-Khalīlī the isolation of the transmitter alone suffices. He (Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ) refuted both with the isolated reports of *thiqāt*, such as the prohibition of selling or gifting *walā'*, and with Muslim's statement that al-Zuhrī transmitted ninety isolated reports, all of them strong. For reports that contradict no one, he chose the following: if the transmitter is close to *ḍabṭ*, his isolated report is *ḥasan*; if he attains *ḍabṭ*, declare it sounds; if he is far from it, it is among the *shādhdh*, so discard and reject it." (al-'Irāqī, 1428 AH, vv. 161–166, pp. 107–108)

This chapter reports three competing definitions and Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's choice among them. All of this is already found in Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ (Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, 1986, p. 76 ff.). What matters is that all three definitions are relational: *shudhūdh* is established through the relation between one transmitter and others, whether as contradiction or as isolation. *Shudhūdh* is therefore not a tension within a single matn.

'Illa and How It Is Detected

وَهْيَ عِبَارَةٌ عَنْ اسْبَابٍ طَرَتْ ۞ فِيْهَا غُمُوْضٌ وَخَفَاءٌ أثَّرَتْ
تُدْرَكُ بِالخِلاَفِ وَالتَّفَرُّدِ ۞ مَعَ قَرَائِنٍ تُضَمُّ، يَهْتَدِيْ
جِهْبَذُهَا إلى اطِّلاَعِهِ عَلَى ۞ تَصْوِيْبِ إرْسَالٍ لِمَا قَدْ وُصِلاَ
أوْ وَقْفِ مَا يُرْفَعُ، أوْ مَتْنٌ دَخَلْ ۞ في غَيْرِهِ، أوْ وَهْمِ وَاهِمٍ حَصَلْ

"*'Illa* denotes causes that arise, marked by obscurity and concealment, which have a (damaging) effect. It is recognized through disagreement and isolated transmission, together with accumulated indicators. By these the expert discerns that the correct version is *mursal* where the report (appears) connected, or *mawqūf* where it (appears) *marfū'*, or that one matn has entered another, or that a transmitter has made an error." (al-'Irāqī, 1428 AH, vv. 194–197, p. 111)

The second verse is the most explicit statement of comparative method in the Alfiyya, and it versifies Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's prose directly: « يُسْتَعَانُ عَلَى إِدْرَاكِهَا بِتَفَرُّدِ الرَّاوِي وَبِمُخَالَفَةِ

غَيْرِهِ لَهُ، مَعَ قَرَائِنَ تَنْضَمُّ» (Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, 1986, p. 90). It is also Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ who states that only «أَهْلُ الْحِفْظِ وَالْخِبْرَةِ وَالْفَهْمِ الثَّاقِبِ» ("those of strong memory, experience, and penetrating understanding") can discern *'ilal* (Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, 1986, p. 90). The Alfiyya then specifies where *'illa* is located:

وَهْيَ تَجِيءُ غَالِباً فِي السَّنَدِ ۞ تَقْدَحُ فِي المَتْنِ بِقَطْعِ مُسْنَدِ
أَوْ وَقْفِ مَرْفُوْعٍ، وَقَدْ لاَ يَقْدَحُ

> "*'Illa* mostly occurs in the isnād; it damages the matn by cutting off a report that (appears) connected or by making *mawqūf* a report that (appears) *marfū'*, and sometimes it does not damage." (al-'Irāqī, 1428 AH, vv. 199–200, p. 111)

The Alfiyya also gives an example of *'illa* in the matn, namely the report denying the recitation of the *basmala* because a transmitter misunderstood (al-'Irāqī, 1428 AH, vv. 202–203, p. 111), and notes that al-Tirmidhī called *naskh* an *'illa*, remarking that if what is meant is non-application in practice, the view is acceptable (al-'Irāqī, 1428 AH, v. 208, p. 112). This last remark distinguishes a defect in a report from a report's not being acted upon, a distinction taken up again in the discussion.

Verdicts on the Isnād, on the Hadith, and per Path

والحُكْمُ لِلإِسْنَادِ بِالصِّحَّةِ أَوْ ۞ بِالْحُسْنِ دُوْنَ الحُكْمِ لِلمَتْنِ رَأَوْا

> "They regard a verdict of *ṣaḥīḥ* or *ḥasan* on the isnād as lower than a verdict on the matn." (al-'Irāqī, 1428 AH, v. 83, p. 100)

This verse is the strongest textual evidence that the *muṣṭalaḥ* tradition distinguishes the assessment of an isnād from the assessment of a hadith as a whole. A critic may state that the isnād of a hadith is sound without declaring the hadith sound, because the possibility of *shudhūdh* or *'illa* has not yet been excluded. The same principle applies in the opposite direction:

وَإِنْ تَجِدْ مَتْناً ضَعِيْفَ السَّنَدِ ۞ فَقُلْ: ضَعِيْفٌ، أَيْ: بِهَذَا فَاقْصِدِ
وَلاَ تُضَعِّفْ مُطْلَقاً بِنَاءَ ۞ عَلَى الطَّرِيْقِ، إِذْ لَعَلَّ جَاءَ
بِسَنَدٍ مُجَوَّدِ

> "If you find a matn with a weak isnād, say 'weak', meaning with this isnād. Do not declare it weak absolutely based on one path, for it may have come with a good isnād." (al-'Irāqī, 1428 AH, vv. 249–251, p. 116)

Verdicts in *muṣṭalaḥ* thus attach to paths, and a verdict on a hadith can only be given once its paths have been gathered.

I'tibār, Ziyādat al-Thiqa, and Ḥasan li-Ghayrihi

الاعْتِبَارُ سَبْرُكَ الحَدِيْثَ هَلْ ۞ شَارَكَ رَاوٍ غَيْرَهُ فِيْمَا حَمَلْ

عَنْ شَيْخِهِ، فَإِنْ يَكُنْ شُوْرِكَ مِنْ ❁ مُعْتَبَرٍ بِهِ، فَتَابِعٌ، وَإِنْ
شُورِكَ شَيْخُهُ فَفَوْقُ فَكَذَا ❁ وَقَدْ يُسَمَّى شَاهِدا، ثُمَّ إِذَا
مَتْنٌ بِمَعْنَاهُ أَتَى فَالشَّاهِدُ ❁ وَمَا خَلاَ عَنْ كُلِّ ذَا مَفَارِدُ

"*I'tibār* is your investigation of a hadith: whether a transmitter is joined by another in what he relates from his teacher. If he is joined by one worth considering, that is a *mutābi'*. If it is his teacher, or a level above, who is joined, it is likewise and is sometimes called a *shāhid*. If a matn with the same meaning comes, that is the *shāhid*. What lacks all of this is called *mafārid* (isolated reports)." (al-'Irāqī, 1428 AH, vv. 171–174, p. 109)

Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ opens this chapter by stating that *i'tibār*, *mutāba'a*, and *shawāhid* are matters investigated to determine whether a hadith is isolated with its transmitter (Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, 1986, p. 82). The principle was formulated by 'Alī b. al-Madīnī: « الباب إذا لم تجمع طرقه لم يتبين خطؤه» ("If the paths of a topic are not gathered, its error does not become clear"), as quoted by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, 1403 AH, vol. 2, p. 212, no. 1641). Procedurally, *i'tibār* is the assembling of an isnād bundle, but its purpose is to assess the strength of a report, not to date it.

وَاقْبَلْ زِيَادَاتِ الثِّقَاتِ مِنْهُمُ ❁ وَمَنْ سِوَاهُمْ فَعَلَيْهِ المُعْظَمُ
وَقِيْلَ: لاَ، وَقِيْلَ: لاَ مِنْهُمْ، وَقَدْ ❁ قَسَّمَهُ الشَّيْخُ، فَقَالَ: مَا انْفَرَدْ
دُوْنَ الثِّقَاتِ ثِقَةٌ خَالَفَهُمْ ❁ فِيْهِ صَرِيْحَاً فَهُوَ رَدٌّ عِنْدَهُمْ
أَوْ لَمْ يُخَالِفْ، فَاقْبَلَنْهُ، وَادَّعَى ❁ فِيْهِ الخَطِيْبُ الاتِّفَاقَ مُجْمَعَا

"Accept the additions of *thiqāt*, whether from themselves or from others; this is the view of the majority. Some say they are not accepted, and some say they are not accepted when from the same transmitter. Al-shaykh (Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ) divided it: an addition by a *thiqa* who explicitly contradicts the other *thiqāt* is rejected; one that does not contradict is accepted, and al-Khaṭīb claimed consensus on it …" (al-'Irāqī, 1428 AH, vv. 178–181, pp. 109–110)

Ziyādat al-thiqa, an addition to the wording carried by a single reliable transmitter, is the most direct meeting point between the assessment of the isnād and the variation of the matn. Ibn Ḥajar developed this discussion further in *al-Nukat* (Ibn Ḥajar, 1984). In the language of ICMA, the same problem arises when one branch of a bundle carries a wording that the other branches lack.

The third concept is *ḥasan li-ghayrihi*. Alfiyya versifies Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's doctrine that certain weaknesses can be remedied by other paths:

فَإِنْ يُقَلْ: يُحْتَجُّ بِالضَّعِيْفِ ❁ فَقُلْ: إذا كَانَ مِنَ المَوْصُوْفِ
رُوَاتُهُ بِسُوْءِ حِفْظٍ يُجْبَرُ ❁ بِكَوْنِهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ وَجْهٍ يُذْكَرُ
وَإِنْ يَكُنْ لِكَذِبٍ أَوْ شَذَّا ❁ أَوْ قَوِيَ الضُّعْفُ فَلَمْ يُجْبَر ذَا

> "If it is asked, 'Is a *ḍa'īf* report used as *ḥujja*?', say: if its transmitters are described as having poor memory, its weakness is remedied by its coming through another path. If (the weakness) is due to lying, or the report is *shādhdh*, or the weakness is severe, it cannot be remedied." (al-'Irāqī, 1428 AH, vv. 58–60, p. 98)

This doctrine is central to the fourth case study, because it is here that the gathering of paths can raise a verdict, something ICMA cannot do.

Riwāya, Dirāya, and the Order of Reasoning

According to Ibn al-Akfānī's formulation, as quoted by al-Suyūṭī, *'ilm al-ḥadīth riwāyatan* concerns the transmission of the Prophet's sayings and deeds and the precise recording of their wording, whereas *'ilm al-ḥadīth dirāyatan* concerns the nature of transmission, its conditions, types, and rulings, and the conditions of the transmitters (al-Suyūṭī, n.d., vol. 1, pp. 25–26). Isnād criticism and all the rules in the Alfiyya thus belong to the domain of *dirāya*.

In the classical order of reasoning, isnād criticism establishes a report's initial standing, while oddities in the matn serve as a *qarīna* indicating a hidden defect. The matn does not determine the strength of the isnād. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī formulated the test of matn coherence in *al-Kifāya* as follows:

ولا يقبل خبر الواحد في منافاة حكم العقل، وحكم القرآن الثابت المحكم، والسنة المعلومة، والفعل الجاري مجرى السنة، وكل دليل مقطوع به

> "A *khabar wāḥid* is not accepted if it conflicts with the judgement of reason, with an established and unambiguous (*muḥkam*) ruling of the Qur'an, with a known sunna, with a practice that has the standing of sunna, or with any decisive proof." (al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, 1357 AH, p. 432)

This formulation may be compared with the rule that Ibn al-Jawzī cites from an unnamed scholar, as quoted by al-Suyūṭī, that a report contradicting reason or the *uṣūl* is judged fabricated (al-Suyūṭī, n.d., vol. 1, p. 327). Brown shows that early critics often expressed judgements about the matn in the idiom of isnād criticism (Brown, 2008). If this thesis is accepted, the integration of isnād and matn was strongest among the early critics, whereas post-classical codification, including the Alfiyya, tends to present the two under separate categories.

Isnād-cum-Matn Analysis and Its Critics

ICMA is a dating method that gathers all the paths of a report, arranges them into an isnād bundle, identifies the *common link* and *partial common links*, and then tests whether matn variants correlate with isnād branches. Where such correlation exists, the earliest wording can be reconstructed and dated to the generation of the *common link* (Motzki, 2005; Motzki et al., 2010, pp. xiii–xiv). This definition is used throughout the article.

The genealogy of the method begins with Schacht, who regarded many isnāds as backward projections meant to legitimize legal doctrines (Schacht, 1950, pp. 163–165). Juynboll developed isnād-bundle analysis and interpreted the *common link* sceptically (Juynboll, 1983). In response to both, Motzki and Schoeler independently developed comparable procedures in the 1990s (Schoeler, 1996). Motzki's study of the *Muṣannaf* of ʻAbd al-Razzāq is a source criticism of ʻAbd al-Razzāq's informants, showing that the material in the collection can be traced back to the first century AH (Motzki, 1991). Görke applied ICMA to ʻUrwa b. al-Zubayr's account of al-Ḥudaybiya (Görke, 2000) and, with Schoeler, to the corpus of ʻUrwa's reports as a whole (Görke & Schoeler, 2008).

Motzki himself dates material to the generation of the *common link* or its informant, such as ʻAṭāʼ b. Abī Rabāḥ or al-Zuhrī, so that the material can be placed in the first century AH (Motzki, 1991; Motzki, 2005, pp. 240–241). Such dating answers when a wording was in circulation, not whether that wording meets the conditions of *ḥujja*. ICMA therefore cannot be used to support a verdict of *ṣiḥḥa*; it can only date.

Criticism of ICMA has come from several directions. Cook argues that the spread of isnāds, the tendency of later transmitters to attribute reports to other authorities, can produce spurious *common links* and thus undermine the basis of dating (Cook, 1992). Berg tested whether the features of exegetical matns attributed to Ibn ʻAbbās correlate with their isnād paths and, finding no adequate correlation, doubted the usefulness of isnāds for dating (Berg, 2000). Shoemaker criticized Görke and Schoeler's reconstruction of ʻUrwa's reports and questioned whether the reconstructed material can be traced as far back as claimed (Shoemaker, 2011), to which the three scholars subsequently replied (Görke, Motzki, & Schoeler, 2012). Recent studies add that ICMA supplies only an earliest date for single strands that do not pass through a *common link* (Su, 2026) and needs to be supplemented by other historical methods to reach developments before the *common link* (Little, 2026).

These criticisms differ from the limitations of classical *rijāl* criticism, such as gaps in biographical data or the interpretive nature of matn criteria. The former concern the distribution of paths and the interpretation of their structure. The latter concern information about transmitters. The two are discussed separately in the discussion section.

Case Studies

Each case study follows the five stages in Figure 1. The hadith on *niyya* is presented in the most detail because it is the main case. The other three cases are presented more briefly with the same structure. Hadith numbers follow Muḥammad Fu'ād ʻAbd al-Bāqī's numbering for Muslim and Ibn Māja and the standard numbering for al-Bukhārī.

Case 1: The Hadith on Niyya and the Divergence between Verdict and Dating

عَنْ عُمَرَ بْنِ الْخَطَّابِ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ: «إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ، وَإِنَّمَا لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مَا نَوَى...»

> From ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, who said: I heard the Messenger of God say, “Actions are only by intentions, and every person shall have only what he intended …” (al-Bukhārī, 1422 AH, no. 1)

Stage 1 (*takhrīj* and *i‘tibār*). Al-Bukhārī transmits this hadith at, among other places, nos. 1, 54, 6689, and 6953 (al-Bukhārī, 1422 AH). Muslim transmits it in Kitāb al-Imāra, no. 1907, through Mālik, and then mentions seven further paths from Yaḥyā b. Sa‘īd with the expression «بإسناد مالك ومعنى حديثه» (“with Mālik’s isnād and the sense of his hadith”) (Muslim, 1955, no. 1907). All paths from the two Ṣaḥīḥs are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. *Takhrīj* of the *niyya* hadith in the Ṣaḥīḥayn: paths from Yaḥyā b. Sa‘īd

Yaḥyā’s student (branch)	Next transmitter	Mukharrij and number
Sufyān b. ‘Uyayna	al-Ḥumaydī	al-Bukhārī no. 1
Sufyān b. ‘Uyayna	Ibn Abī ‘Umar	Muslim no. 1907
Mālik b. Anas	‘Abd Allāh b. Maslama (al-Qa‘nabī)	al-Bukhārī no. 54; Muslim no. 1907
‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Thaqafī	Qutayba b. Sa‘īd	al-Bukhārī no. 6689
‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Thaqafī	Muḥammad b. al-Muthannā	Muslim no. 1907
Ḥammād b. Zayd	Abū l-Nu‘mān	al-Bukhārī no. 6953
Ḥammād b. Zayd	Abū l-Rabī‘ al-‘Atakī	Muslim no. 1907
al-Layth b. Sa‘d	Muḥammad b. Rumḥ	Muslim no. 1907
Abū Khālid al-Aḥmar	Isḥāq b. Ibrāhīm	Muslim no. 1907
Ḥafṣ b. Ghiyāth and Yazīd b. Hārūn	Ibn Numayr	Muslim no. 1907
‘Abd Allāh b. al-Mubārak	Muḥammad b. al-‘Alā’	Muslim no. 1907

Stage 2 (isnād analysis). All paths converge on a single chain: ‘Umar, ‘Alqama b. Waqqāṣ, Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Taymī, and Yaḥyā b. Sa‘īd al-Anṣārī. This structure is *fard* at four levels, which the Alfiyya classes as *fard muṭlaq* (al-‘Irāqī, 1428 AH, v. 186, p. 110). The verdicts on the transmitters in al-Bukhārī’s first path are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Verdicts on the transmitters of al-Bukhārī no. 1 according to *Taqrīb al-tahdhīb*

Transmitter	Generation	Taqrīb verdict	Taqrīb, p.
al-Ḥumaydī	Al-Bukhārī’s teacher	ثقة حافظ فقيه، أجل أصحاب ابن عيينة	506
Sufyān b. ‘Uyayna	*Atbā‘ al-tābi‘īn*	ثقة حافظ فقيه إمام حجة، إلا أنه تغير حفظه بأخرة، وكان ربما دلس لكن عن الثقات	395
Yaḥyā b. Sa‘īd al-Anṣārī (d. 143/144 AH)	*Tābi‘ī*, *common link*	ثقة ثبت	1056
Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Taymī	*Tābi‘ī*	ثقة له أفراد	819
‘Alqama b. Waqqāṣ al-Laythī	Senior *Tābi‘ī*	ثقة ثبت	689

Transmitter	Generation	Taqrīb verdict	Taqrīb, p.
ʻUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb	Companion	(Companion, not assessed)	–

These verdicts explain why the classical tradition accepts this single chain: all four transmitters are *thiqāt*. Ibn Ḥajar's note that Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Taymī "has isolated reports (*afrād*)" is in fact pertinent, since this hadith is one of them.

Stage 3 (matn analysis). A synopsis of the wording in each branch is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Matn synopsis of the *niyya* hadith by branch (comparable wordings)

Branch	Mukharrij	Opening wording	*Hijra* clause	Framing elements
Sufyān → al-Ḥumaydī	al-Bukhārī 1	إنما الأعمال بالنيات، وإنما لكل امرئ ما نوى	Second half only (worldly gain/woman)	ʻUmar speaking from the pulpit
Sufyān → Ibn Abī ʻUmar	Muslim 1907	("the sense of Mālik's hadith")	–	ʻUmar speaking from the pulpit
Mālik → al-Qaʻnabī	al-Bukhārī 54	الأعمال بالنية، ولكل امرئ ما نوى	Complete	–
Mālik → al-Qaʻnabī	Muslim 1907	إنما الأعمال بالنية، وإنما لامرئ ما نوى	Complete	–
ʻAbd al-Wahhāb → Qutayba	al-Bukhārī 6689	إنما الأعمال بالنية، وإنما لامرئ ما نوى	Complete	–
Ḥammād b. Zayd → Abū l-Nuʻmān	al-Bukhārī 6953	يا أيها الناس إنما الأعمال بالنية، وإنما لامرئ ما نوى	Complete	ʻUmar delivering a sermon
Five other branches	Muslim 1907	("the sense of Mālik's hadith")	–	–

Table 4 shows that the core wording, namely that actions depend on intentions, that each person gets what he intended, and the contrast between two kinds of *hijra*, is present in every comparable branch. The minor variants are not scattered at random but follow the branches. The plural *bi-l-niyyāt* and the loss of the first half of the *hijra* clause occurs only in al-Ḥumaydī's report from Sufyān. Ibn Ḥajar discusses whether this omission goes back to al-Ḥumaydī or to al-Bukhārī himself (Ibn Ḥajar, 1379 AH, vol. 1, pp. 15–16). The statement that ʻUmar spoke from the pulpit appears in both reports from Sufyān, while the address *yā ayyuhā al-nās* in the setting of a sermon appears only in the branch of Ḥammād b. Zayd. In terms of content, the matn accords with Q. al-Bayyina [98]: 5, and no known classical critic regarded its meaning as problematic.

Stage 4 (isnād bundle). Figure 2 shows that all paths converge on Yaḥyā b. Saʻīd, who in ICMA terms is the *common link*, with at least nine students. Sufyān b. ʻUyayna, Mālik, ʻAbd al-Wahhāb al-Thaqafī, and Ḥammād b. Zayd each have two students in the Ṣaḥīḥayn data and can thus be treated as *partial common links*. The correlation between variants and branches in Table 4 indicates that the core wording already existed with Yaḥyā, while the variation arose after him. This conclusion is limited, since Muslim does not give the wording of the other five branches.

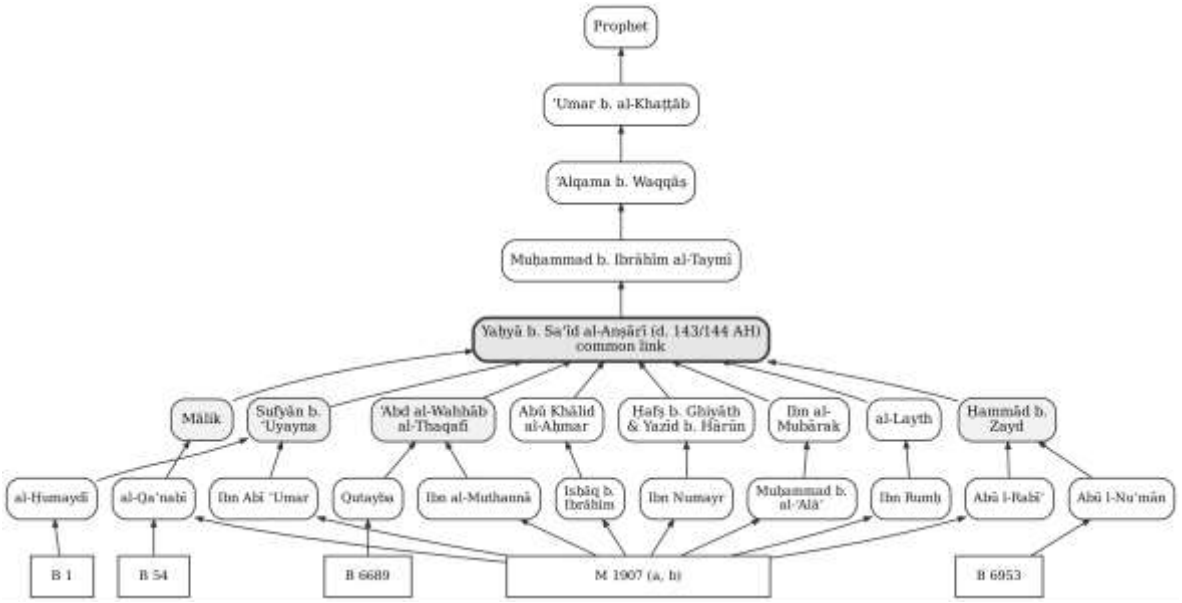


Figure 2. Isnād bundle of the *niyya* hadith in the Ṣaḥīḥayn (B = al-Bukhārī, M = Muslim)

Stage 5 (synthesis). Result A, the probative verdict, is *ṣaḥīḥ* and reaches the Prophet. Result B, the historical dating, is that the earliest reconstructable wording goes back to the generation of Yaḥyā b. Sa'īd (d. 143 or 144 AH). This divergence does not mean that either assessment is wrong. The segment from 'Umar to Yaḥyā is a single chain. ICMA has no distribution data with which to test it, whereas *taṣḥīḥ* accepts it on the basis of the *ta'dīl* of four *thiqa* transmitters. What in Juynboll's interpretation is the trace of the wording's invention becomes, in Motzki's interpretation, the trace of a professional collector, and is known in the *muṣṭalaḥ* tradition as a *fard* report that does not forfeit soundness.

Case 2: The Hadith on Wiṣāl as a Problem of Mukhtalif al-Ḥadīth

نَهَى رَسُولُ اللهِ ﷺ عَنِ الْوِصَالِ، قَالُوا: إِنَّكَ تُوَاصِلُ، قَالَ: إِنِّي لَسْتُ مِثْلَكُمْ، إِنِّي أُطْعَمُ وَأُسْقَى

"The Messenger of God forbade the *wiṣāl* fast. They said: 'But you yourself practise *wiṣāl*.' He replied: 'I am not like you; I am given food and drink.'" (al-Bukhārī, 1422 AH, no. 1962)

Stages 1–2. The wording above is Ibn 'Umar's version through 'Abd Allāh b. Yūsuf, from Mālik, from Nāfi'. The hadith prohibiting *wiṣāl* is transmitted by five Companions, each with a distinctive chain and wording (Table 5).

Table 5. *Takhrīj* and matn synopsis of the *wiṣāl* hadith by Companion

Companion	Mukharrij and number	Al-Bukhārī's isnād	Distinctive wording
Anas b. Mālik	al-Bukhārī 1961; Muslim 1104	Musaddad ← Yaḥyā ← Shu'ba ← Qatāda	لست كأحد منكم، إني أطعم وأسقى، أو إني أبيت أطعم وأسقى; in Muslim: إني أظل يطعمني ربي ويسقيني

Companion	Mukharrij and number	Al-Bukhārī's isnād	Distinctive wording
Ibn ʻUmar	al-Bukhārī 1962; Muslim 1102	ʻAbd Allāh b. Yūsuf ← Mālik ← Nāfiʻ	إني لست مثلكم، إني أطعم وأسقى
Abū Saʻīd al-Khudrī	al-Bukhārī 1963	ʻAbd Allāh b. Yūsuf ← al-Layth ← Ibn al-Hād ← ʻAbd Allāh b. Khabbāb	إني فأيكم إذا أراد أن يواصل فليواصل حتى السحر; أبيت لي مطعم يطعمني وساق يسقين
ʻĀ'isha	al-Bukhārī 1964	ʻUthmān b. Abī Shayba and Muḥammad ← ʻAbda ← Hishām b. ʻUrwa ← ʻUrwa	إني يطعمني ربي ويسقين; رحمة لهم
Abū Hurayra	al-Bukhārī 1965; Muslim 1103	Abū l-Yamān ← Shuʻayb ← al-Zuhrī ← Abū Salama	وأيكم مثلي، إني أبيت يطعمني ربي ويسقين; *wiṣāl* with them "كالتنكيل لهم"

Stage 3. This hadith contains no *shudhūdh*. *Shudhūdh* is a relation between reports, whereas the tension between the Prophet's prohibition and his own practice is a problem within the content. The matn itself also states the Prophet's special status (*khuṣūṣiyya*). The problem belongs to the field of *mukhtalif* or *mushkil al-ḥadīth*, a genre represented by, among others, Ibn Qutayba's *Taʼwīl mukhtalif al-ḥadīth* and al-Ṭaḥāwī's *Sharḥ mushkil al-āthār*. Table 5 also shows that the elements that matter for the juristic debate are distributed by Companion. The phrase *raḥmatan lahum* appears only in ʻĀ'isha's report and is used by those who reject *taḥrīm*. The permission to continue *wiṣāl* until the pre-dawn meal appears only in Abū Saʻīd's report and grounds the view associated with Aḥmad and Isḥāq. An element of rebuke appears in Abū Hurayra's report («كالتنكيل لهم») and, in another form, in Anas's report in Muslim («يدع المتعمقون تعمقهم») (Muslim, 1955, no. 1104; Ibn Ḥajar, 1379 AH, vol. 4, pp. 204–205). The legal status of the prohibition of *wiṣāl* is accordingly disputed between *taḥrīm* and *karāha*, but that dispute is a juristic disagreement over reports that are all accepted.

Stage 4. Figure 3 shows that the five reports in al-Bukhārī come from five Companions through five separate chains, with no shared node below the Companion level. In ICMA terms, there is no single *common link*. Each cluster must be analysed on its own, using paths outside al-Bukhārī, to find its *partial common link*, for instance Nāfiʻ or Mālik in the Ibn ʻUmar cluster and al-Zuhrī in the Abū Hurayra cluster. The analysis at this stage remains partial.

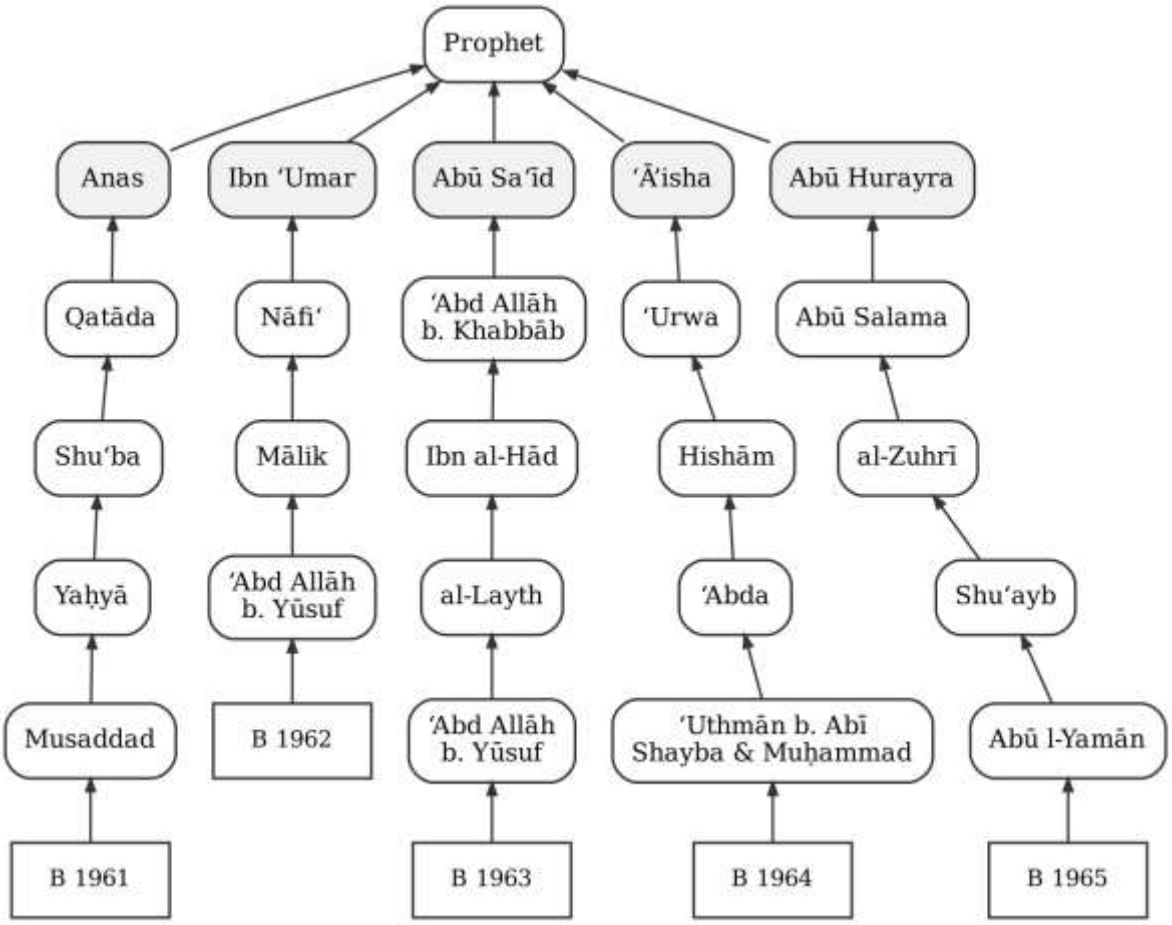


Figure 3. The five Companion clusters of the *wiṣāl* hadith in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (nos. 1961–1965)

Stage 5. Result A: all versions are accepted as *ṣaḥīḥ*, and the tension in meaning is resolved through *khuṣūṣiyya* and juristic disagreement. Result B: since there is no single *common link*, dating can only proceed cluster by cluster, which requires *takhrīj* beyond the Ṣaḥīḥayn. The case shows that tension in a matn is not always a problem of authenticity, and that wide dispersal at the Companion level in fact makes ICMA dating harder.

Case 3: The Hadith of the Fly and Variants below a Partial Common Link

إِذَا وَقَعَ الذُّبَابُ فِي شَرَابِ أَحَدِكُمْ فَلْيَغْمِسْهُ، ثُمَّ لِيَنْزِعْهُ، فَإِنَّ فِي إِحْدَى جَنَاحَيْهِ دَاءً، وَالْأُخْرَى شِفَاءً

> "If a fly falls into the drink of one of you, let him immerse it and then remove it, for in one of its wings there is disease and in the other a cure." (al-Bukhārī, 1422 AH, no. 3320)

Stages 1–2. In al-Bukhārī, Kitāb Bad' al-khalq, no. 3320, the chain is Khālid b. Makhlad, from Sulaymān b. Bilāl, from ʻUtba b. Muslim, from ʻUbayd b. Ḥunayn, from Abū Hurayra. In Kitāb al-Ṭibb, no. 5782, the chain is Qutayba, from Ismāʻīl b. Jaʻfar, from ʻUtba b. Muslim, *mawlā* of Banū Taym, from ʻUbayd b. Ḥunayn, *mawlā* of Banū Zurayq, from Abū Hurayra (al-Bukhārī, 1422 AH, nos. 3320, 5782). Abū

Hurayra's report also appears in Sunan Abī Dāwūd, no. 3844, and Sunan Ibn Māja, no. 3505, while a *shāhid* from Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī appears in Sunan Ibn Māja, no. 3504, and al-Nasā'ī, no. 4262 (Abū Dāwūd, n.d., no. 3844; Ibn Māja, n.d., nos. 3504, 3505; al-Nasā'ī, 1986, no. 4262). The verdicts on the transmitters are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. *Takhrīj* and transmitter verdicts for the hadith of the fly in al-Bukhārī

Transmitter	Position	Taqrīb verdict	Taqrīb, p.
Khālid b. Makhlad al-Qaṭawānī	al-Bukhārī no. 3320	صدوق يتشيع، وله أفراد	291
Sulaymān b. Bilāl	al-Bukhārī no. 3320	ثقة	405
Qutayba b. Sa'īd	al-Bukhārī no. 5782	ثقة ثبت	799
Ismā'īl b. Ja'far	al-Bukhārī no. 5782	ثقة ثبت	138
'Utba b. Muslim	Both paths (*partial common link*)	ثقة	659
'Ubayd b. Ḥunayn	Both paths	ثقة قليل الحديث	649

Stage 3. The two reports in al-Bukhārī show variants that follow the branches below 'Utba b. Muslim. The branch of Sulaymān b. Bilāl (no. 3320) reads «فِي شَرَابِ أَحَدِكُمْ فَلْيَغْمِسْهُ، ثُمَّ لِيَنْزِعْهُ، فَإِنَّ فِي إِحْدَى جَنَاحَيْهِ دَاءً وَالأُخْرَى شِفَاءً». The branch of Ismā'īl b. Ja'far (no. 5782) reads «فِي إِنَاءِ أَحَدِكُمْ، فَلْيَغْمِسْهُ كُلَّهُ، ثُمَّ لِيَطْرَحْهُ، فَإِنَّ فِي أَحَدِ جَنَاحَيْهِ شِفَاءً وَفِي الآخَرِ دَاءً». The differences concern the vessel (a drink or a container), the addition of *kullahu*, the verb *yanzi'hu* or *yaṭraḥhu*, and the order of disease and cure. The core command and its rationale are the same in both branches. In *muṣṭalaḥ*, differences of this kind are judged to be harmless transmission by meaning, since they do not alter the ruling. In terms of content, the hadith concerns a physical and medical claim and therefore does not fall under *ghayb* in the theological sense. Its classical defence, including al-Khaṭṭābī's response to an objector, is discussed by Ibn Ḥajar in *Fatḥ al-bārī* under Kitāb al-Ṭibb (Ibn Ḥajar, 1379 AH, vol. 10, pp. 251–252). The modern controversy, involving Rashīd Riḍā and Maḥmūd Abū Rayya, has been analysed by Brown (Brown, 2012; Brown, 2014).

Stage 4. Within al-Bukhārī, 'Utba b. Muslim is a *partial common link* with two students, each carrying a distinctive wording (Figure 4). The chains of the Abū Dāwūd and Ibn Māja paths for Abū Hurayra's report have not yet been examined, so it cannot yet be confirmed whether 'Utba is the only node for all Abū Hurayra's reports.

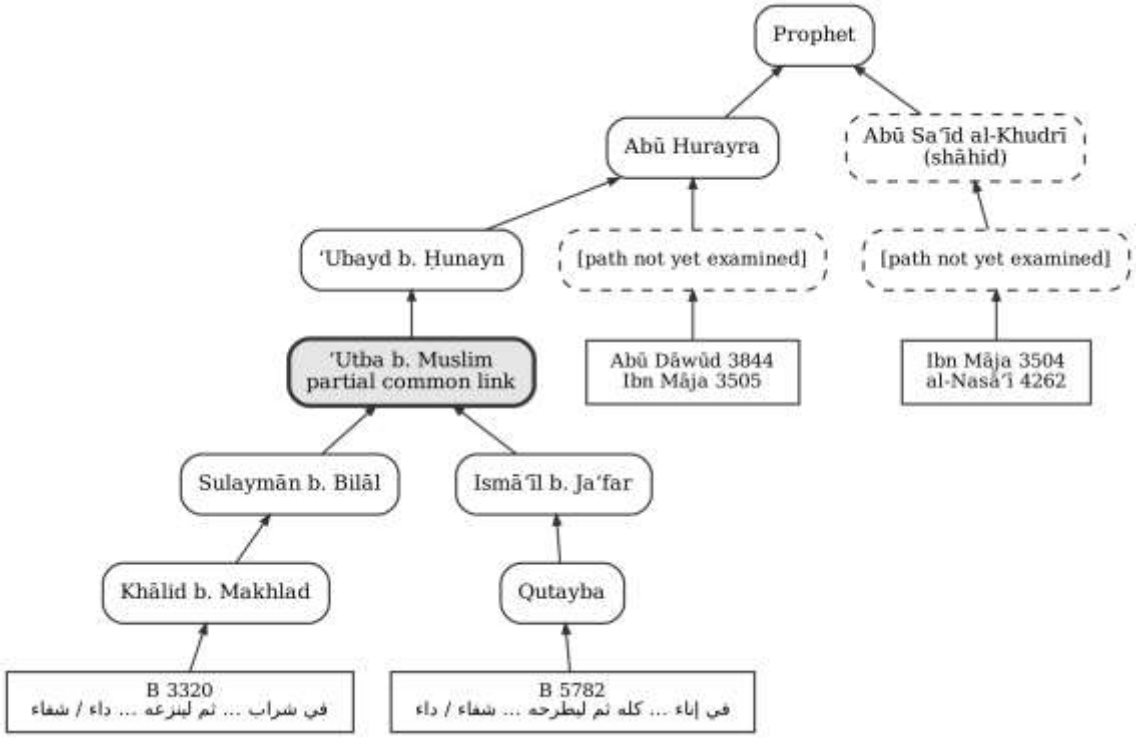


Figure 4. Isnād bundle of the hadith of the fly: ʻUtba b. Muslim as a *partial common link* in al-Bukhārī

Stage 5. Result A: the report does not meet the criteria of *munkar*, since no stronger report contradicts it, and the path of Ismāʻīl b. Jaʻfar consists of *thiqa* transmitters, although the path of Khālid b. Makhlad contains a transmitter graded *ṣadūq*. Result B: the wording of Abū Hurayra's report in al-Bukhārī can be dated no earlier than the generation of ʻUtba b. Muslim, and its variants arose in the generation of his students. The debate over its matn is a debate about the limits of rational matn criticism, not about the technical categories of *muṣṭalaḥ*.

Case 4: The Hadith on Ṭalab al-ʻIlm and the Limits of Corroboration by Paths

طَلَبُ الْعِلْمِ فَرِيضَةٌ عَلَى كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ

"Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim."

This hadith was chosen because its status is disputed and because it tests the doctrine of *ḥasan li-ghayrihi*. Ibn Māja transmits it from Hishām b. ʻAmmār, from Ḥafṣ b. Sulaymān, from Kathīr b. Shinẓīr, from Muḥammad b. Sīrīn, from Anas b. Mālik, with the addition «وَوَاضِعُ الْعِلْمِ عِنْدَ غَيْرِ أَهْلِهِ كَمُقَلِّدِ الْخَنَازِيرِ الْجَوْهَرَ وَاللُّؤْلُؤَ وَالذَّهَبَ» ("and one who imparts knowledge to those unworthy of it is like one who garlands swine with jewels, pearls, and gold") (Ibn Māja, n.d., no. 224). In his *takhrīj* of the hadiths of the *Iḥyāʼ*, *al-Mughnī*, al-ʻIrāqī writes: «رواه ابن ماجه من حديث أنس وضعفه أحمد والبيهقي وغيرهما» ("Ibn Māja transmitted it as a hadith of Anas, and Aḥmad, al-Bayhaqī, and others

declared it weak") (al-ʻIrāqī, 2005, p. 8, no. 2). He mentions only the path of Anas and does not raise its grade.

Stages 1–2. The key transmitter in the path of Anas is Ḥafṣ b. Sulaymān al-Asadī, a master of Qur'anic recitation whom Ibn Ḥajar grades in hadith as « متروك الحديث مع إمامته في القراءة» ("abandoned in hadith despite his eminence in recitation") (Ibn Ḥajar, 1423 AH, p. 257). Table 7 also lists the paths from four other Companions as compiled by al-Haythamī in *Majmaʻ al-zawā'id*, together with the transmitter responsible for each path's weakness.

Table 7. *Takhrīj* of the *ṭalab al-ʻilm* hadith and the causes of weakness in its paths

Companion	Mukharrij and number	Problematic transmitter	Verdict and cause of weakness
Anas b. Mālik	Ibn Māja no. 224	Ḥafṣ b. Sulaymān	متروك الحديث (Taqrīb, p. 257): severe weakness
Ibn Masʻūd	al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʻjam al-kabīr* no. 10439; also *al-Awsaṭ*	ʻUthmān b. ʻAbd al-Raḥmān al-Qurashī	«مجهول» (al-Bukhārī, as quoted by al-Haythamī); only al-Huzayl b. Ibrāhīm transmits from him: weakness due to *jahāla*
Abū Saʻīd al-Khudrī	al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʻjam al-awsaṭ* no. 8567	Yaḥyā b. Hāshim al-Simsār	«كذاب» (al-Haythamī): severe weakness
Ibn ʻAbbās	al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʻjam al-awsaṭ* no. 4096	ʻAbd Allāh b. ʻAbd al-ʻAzīz b. Abī Rawwād	«ضعيف جدا» (al-Haythamī): severe weakness
al-Ḥusayn b. ʻAlī	al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʻjam al-ṣaghīr*	ʻAbd al-ʻAzīz b. Abī Thābit (b. ʻImrān al-Zuhrī)	«متروك» (*Taqrīb*): severe weakness

Stage 3. The addition about "garlanding swine with jewels" appears only in the path of Ḥafṣ b. Sulaymān, whereas the first clause appears in many paths. In the language of *muṣṭalaḥ*, the addition is an isolated report from a *matrūk* transmitter and cannot be accepted. In the language of ICMA, it is a variant attached to a single branch.

Stage 4. If the paths from the other Companions are each a weak single chain and do not converge on a common node, ICMA finds no *common link* on which an early date could be based. For such paths, ICMA can only supply the earliest point at which the report is of historical value (Su, 2026). As far as Table 7 records, this is exactly the situation: the five paths converge only at the Prophet, and no transmitter after the Companion generation serves as a shared node (Figure 5).

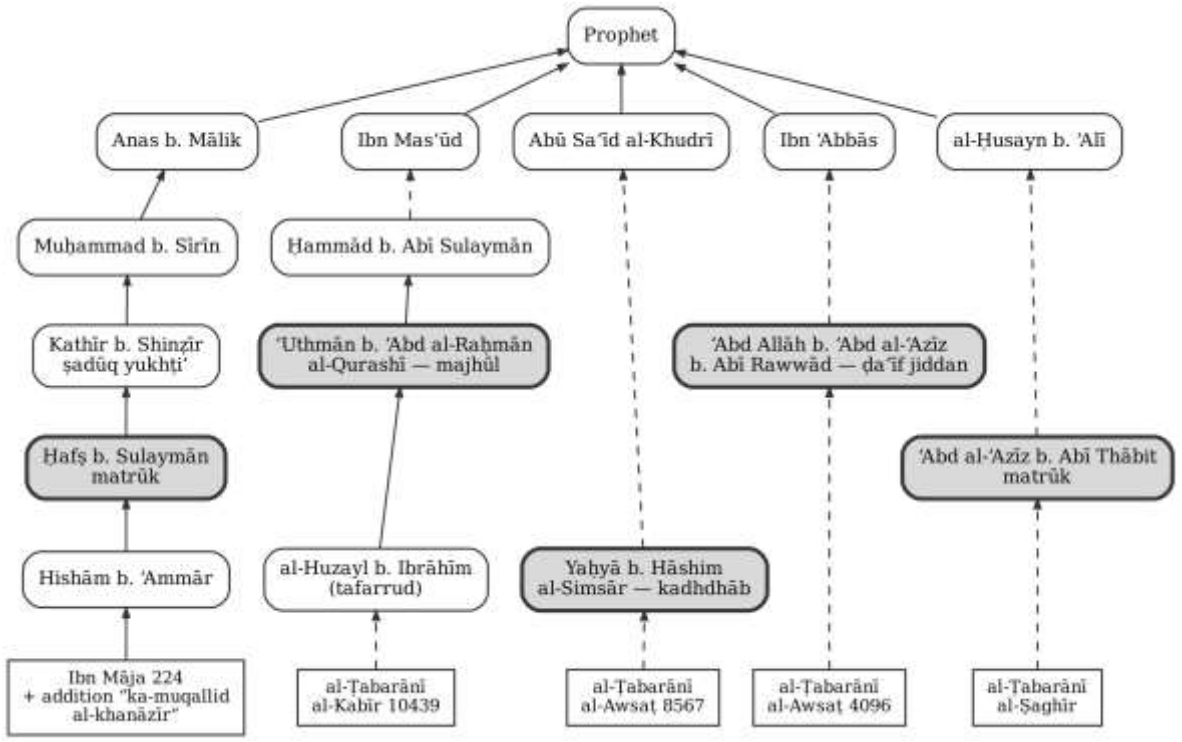


Figure 5. Paths of the *ṭalab al-'ilm* hadith: five single chains without a *common link* (dashed lines: isnād segments not detailed)

Stage 5. Table 8 compares what the theory of the Alfiyya predicts with what ICMA yields.

Table 8. The theory of the Alfiyya and the results of ICMA for the *ṭalab al-'ilm* hadith

Aspect	Theory of the Alfiyya (vv. 58–60)	ICMA result
Path of Anas through Ḥafṣ b. Sulaymān	Cannot be remedied, because its weakness is severe ("قوي الضعف")	A single branch; its additional wording attaches only to this branch
Paths from other Companions (Table 7)	Only paths with slight weakness can remedy one another; four of the five paths are severely weak	Does not push the date earlier if the paths do not converge on a single node
Al-'Irāqī's applied verdict	«ضعفه أحمد والبيهقي وغيرهما» (*al-Mughnī*, p. 8): not raised to *ḥasan li-ghayrihi*; consistent with v. 60	–

This case reveals a discriminating power not visible in the previous three. The *muṣṭalaḥ* procedure of *i'tibār* can raise a report from *ḍa'īf* to *ḥasan li-ghayrihi*, but only when the cause of weakness is slight. By verse 60, the path of Ḥafṣ b. Sulaymān cannot itself serve as corroboration. ICMA, by contrast, raises nothing, since many weak paths that do not converge on a single node do not yield an earlier date. Al-'Irāqī's applied verdict accords with this theory. In *al-Mughnī*, he notes that the hadith was declared weak by Aḥmad, al-Bayhaqī, and others, and he does not raise it to *ḥasan li-ghayrihi* (al-'Irāqī, 2005, p. 8). His position is understandable: four of the five paths in Table 7 contain severely weak transmitters, while the only path whose weakness is

not severe, that of Ibn Mas‘ūd with a *majhūl* transmitter, has no corroboration of comparable standing.

Procedural Convergence and the Limits of Integration

The four case studies show the same pattern. In stages one to three, both approaches do similar work: gathering paths, assessing transmitters, and comparing wordings. In stages four and five they part ways. In the *niyya* hadith, *taṣḥīḥ* reaches the Prophet, whereas ICMA stops at Yaḥyā b. Sa‘īd. In the *wiṣāl* hadith, the problem is not authenticity but *mukhtalif al-ḥadīth* and juristic disagreement. In the hadith of the fly, correcting the isnād data reveals a *partial common link* at ‘Utba b. Muslim, with textual variants that follow his two students. In the *ṭalab al-‘ilm* hadith, a multiplicity of weak paths can raise the classical verdict when the weakness is slight but does not push the ICMA date earlier, while severely weak paths cannot serve as corroboration in either framework.

This evidence permits a synthesis regarding the criteria of authenticity in the Alfiyya. These criteria have four features:

- a layered assessment of the isnād, covering *ittiṣāl*, *‘adāla*, *ḍabṭ*, and *ikhtilāṭ*;
- an explicit distinction between a verdict on the isnād and a verdict on the hadith as a whole;
- comparative procedures through *i‘tibār*, *mutāba‘āt*, *shawāhid*, and *ziyādat al-thiqa*;
- the detection of *‘illa* through disagreement and isolated transmission, together with *qarā’in*.

The third and fourth features meet ICMA at the level of procedure. As Table 1 shows, however, most of these features derive from Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ. It is therefore inaccurate to call al-‘Irāqī the founder of an integrative methodology. His contribution lies in a systematic and easily memorized codification, in reporting differences of opinion (for example, al-Nawawī’s views on the Ṣaḥīḥayn and on *taṣḥīḥ* in later periods), and in a few additions marked *qultu*, such as his correction of al-Tirmidhī’s definition of *ḥasan* on the basis of al-Tirmidhī’s own practice. This finding is consistent with Brown, who locates the integration of isnād and matn among the early critics (Brown, 2008) and differs from studies that treat post-classical *muṣṭalaḥ* texts as the source of an integrative method (Harun, 2016).

Ḥujjiyya and Historical Authenticity: The Standing of al-‘Irāqī’s Framework

Does al-‘Irāqī’s framework withstand the critiques of Schacht and Juynboll? The answer depends on the level of the question. Hallaq distinguishes historical authenticity from probative reliability and argues that what the *fuqahā’* needed was the latter (Hallaq, 1999). This distinction clarifies the position of this article. As a theory of *ḥujjiyya*, al-‘Irāqī’s framework is coherent. It sets out the conditions under which a

report may be acted upon, recognizes that a verdict on the isnād differs from a verdict on the hadith, and itself records the debate over the degree of certainty yielded by sound reports.

As a historical theory, the framework does not answer Schacht and Juynboll. The point they contest, the single-strand segment before the *common link*, is precisely the point that *taṣḥīḥ* accepts based on *ta'dīl*. The historical answer to Schacht's scepticism came instead from outside al-'Irāqī's framework: from critiques of Schacht's generalizations (al-A'ẓamī, 1985; Motzki, 2002) and from ICMA itself, which dates some legal material to the late first century AH. Fazlur Rahman's position represents a third alternative. He regarded hadith largely as the verbalization of the living sunna of the early generations and was sceptical of isnād-based verification (Rahman, 1965, chs. 1–2). For Rahman, the issue is not a choice between classical verdicts and modern dating but an understanding of the sunna as an evolving practice. This position rejects an assumption shared by *taṣḥīḥ* and ICMA alike, namely that wordings can be traced as units of transmission.

Nor does the *muṣṭalaḥ* tradition itself regard the matter as settled. The Alfiyya records the debate over whether *taṣḥīḥ* is possible in later periods:

وَعِنْدَهُ التَّصْحِيحُ لَيْسَ يُمْكِنُ ۞ فِي عَصْرِنَا وَقَالَ يَحْيَى مُمْكِنُ

> "In his view (Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's), *taṣḥīḥ* is not possible in our age, while Yaḥyā (al-Nawawī) said: it is possible." (al-'Irāqī, 1428 AH, v. 39, p. 96)

This debate bears directly on the premise that modern researchers can use al-'Irāqī's framework to establish soundness. In our own time, al-Malībārī has criticized the method of the *muta'akhkhirūn* and called for a return to the practice of the early critics (al-Malībārī, 2001). Using al-'Irāqī's framework for contemporary *taṣḥīḥ* is thus contested even from within the tradition.

Limitations of Both Approaches and of This Study

The limitations of classical *rijāl* criticism relate to biographical data. *Taqrīb al-tahdhīb* grades transmitters on twelve levels, among them *maqbūl* (the sixth level), *mastūr* or *majhūl al-ḥāl* (the seventh), and *majhūl* (the ninth) (Ibn Ḥajar, 1423 AH, introduction). The system has an internal procedure for dealing with such cases, namely corroboration through *mutāba'a* and *shawāhid*. The remaining limitation concerns reports that have no corroboration at all. The test of matn coherence also depends on interpretation, and the risk of judging seventh-century realities by a modern framework remains.

The limitations of ICMA are of a different kind. The method depends on the sources that have survived; the interpretation of the *common link* is still debated (Cook, 1992; Juynboll, 1989; Motzki, 2005); its reconstructions of certain materials have been contested (Berg, 2000; Shoemaker, 2011); and for single strands that do not

pass through a *common link* it supplies only an earliest date (Su, 2026). Recent scholarship notes a structural uncertainty in the method (Junus et al., 2025).

This study also has its limitations. Its case studies cover only four hadiths. The *takhrīj* is confined to the Ṣaḥīḥayn and some Sunan collections and has not yet been extended through *Tuḥfat al-ashrāf* and *Itḥāf al-mahara*. For most branches of the *niyya* hadith, Muslim gives only the sense, not the wording. ICMA for the *wiṣāl* and *ṭalab al-ʿilm* hadiths have reached only the level of Companion clusters. The isolation of al-ʿIrāqī's contribution in Table 1 is confined to the poem and to the chapters analysed and does not yet cover the commentary and *al-Taqyīd*.

Implications

The first implication concerns the use of ICMA in Indonesian hadith studies. Dating results should be reported as dating, separately from verdicts on authenticity. The five-stage model in this article provides a way of reporting them in this manner.

The second implication concerns the instruments of classical criticism. In this article, the categories of *munkar*, *shādhdh*, and *iḍṭirāb* are kept within their technical domain, namely the criticism of transmission. Transferring these categories to assess tensions between hadith and the realities of contemporary society belongs to the domain of *fiqh al-ḥadīth* and has its own history of debate, for example in the controversy surrounding the work of Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (al-Ghazālī, 1989). The same applies to the distinction between *ṣiḥḥa* and *ʿamal*. A *ṣaḥīḥ* report may go unapplied because of *naskh*, conflict with stronger evidence, or reconciliation within the framework of *mukhtalif al-ḥadīth*, as Ibn Ḥajar formalized by dividing *maqbūl* reports into *maʿmūl bihi* and *ghayr maʿmūl bihi* (Ibn Ḥajar, 2000). The Alfiyya itself points to this distinction when it notes that al-Tirmidhī's calling *naskh* an *ʿilla* is acceptable only in the sense of non-application (al-ʿIrāqī, 1428 AH, v. 208, p. 112).

The third implication concerns transparency. Presenting the *takhrīj*, the verdicts on each transmitter, the isnād bundles, and the matn synopses openly allow readers to retest the results, whether they work within the *muṣṭalaḥ* framework or within ICMA.

3. Conclusion

The first question asked how *al-Tabṣira wa-l-Tadhkira* and its commentary formulate the relationship between isnād and matn. The Alfiyya formulates it through the five conditions of *ṣaḥīḥ*, two of which are relational; through the distinction between a verdict on the isnād and a verdict on the hadith; and through the comparative procedures of *iʿtibār*, *ʿilla* detection, and *ziyādat al-thiqa*. Most of these formulations derive from Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ. In the chapters analysed, they are a faithful versification of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, in keeping with al-ʿIrāqī's own statement that he abridged the whole of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's book and added knowledge in its place. His explicit additions, marked

qultu, are limited; the clearest example is his correction of al-Tirmidhī's definition of *ḥasan* based on al-Tirmidhī's own practice. Beyond this, his contribution lies in codification and in reporting differences of opinion.

The second question asked at what level this formulation meets ICMA. The two meet at the level of procedure, namely gathering paths, assessing transmitters, and comparing wordings. They differ in the kind of claim they produce. *Taṣḥīḥ* produces probative reliability, whereas ICMA produces historical dating. Integrating the two is therefore legitimate at the level of procedure and illegitimate when the result of one is used to validate or invalidate the result of the other.

The third question asked what happens when both are applied to the same hadith. In the *niyya* hadith, the classical verdict reaches the Prophet, whereas ICMA stops at Yaḥyā b. Sa'īd, because the single-strand segment before him cannot be tested historically; its textual variants follow the branches below Yaḥyā. In the *wiṣāl* hadith and the hadith of the fly, the tension in the matn turns out to be a matter of *mukhtalif al-ḥadīth* and of the limits of rational criticism, not of authenticity. In the *ṭalab al-'ilm* hadith, the procedure of *i'tibār* can raise the verdict when the weakness of the paths is slight, whereas ICMA does not push the date earlier. The path of Anas through Ḥafṣ b. Sulaymān, who is graded *matrūk*, cannot serve as corroboration according to verse 60 of the Alfiyya. Al-'Irāqī's applied verdict in *al-Mughnī*, which records the weakness of this hadith without raising it, is consistent with that theory.

This study is limited to four hadiths and to concepts bearing directly on the relationship between isnād and matn. Further research is recommended to (1) compile a complete comparison between the Alfiyya and *Ma'rifat anwā' 'ilm al-ḥadīth* across all chapters, (2) examine al-'Irāqī's positions in his commentary and *al-Taqyīd* in order to complete Table 1, (3) compare al-'Irāqī's theory systematically with his applied verdicts in *al-Mughnī*, and (4) apply ICMA in full to multi-Companion corpora such as the *wiṣāl* hadith.

Acknowledgments: The authors thank all members of the writing team for their constructive contributions and the editorial board of *Diroyah: Jurnal Studi Ilmu Hadis* for feedback that improved this manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest in this research.

Bibliography

Abdullah, Y. G., & Rahman, Y. (2026). A critical study of disparities in charity hadith: An isnād-cum-matn analysis of Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim. *Profetika: Jurnal Studi Islam*, *27*(3), 861–872. https://doi.org/10.23917/profetika.v27i03.13864

Abū Dāwūd, S. (n.d.). *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* (M. M. al-D. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, Ed.). Beirut: al-Maktaba al-'Aṣriyya.

al-ʻIrāqī, Z. al-D. (1428 AH). *Alfiyyat al-ʻIrāqī al-musammā bi-l-Tabṣira wa-l-tadhkira fī ʻulūm al-ḥadīth* (al-ʻA. al-D. al-Faryāṭī, Ed.; ʻA. al-K. al-Khuḍayr, Intro.; 2nd ed.). Riyadh: Maktabat Dār al-Minhāj.

al-ʻIrāqī, Z. al-D. (1969). *al-Taqyīd wa-l-īḍāḥ sharḥ Muqaddimat Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ* (ʻA. al-R. M. ʻUthmān, Ed.). Medina: al-Maktaba al-Salafiyya.

al-ʻIrāqī, Z. al-D. (2002). *Sharḥ al-Tabṣira wa-l-tadhkira* (ʻA. al-L. al-Hamīm & M. Y. al-Faḥl, Eds.; Vols. 1–2). Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʻIlmiyya.

al-ʻIrāqī, Z. al-D. (2005). *al-Mughnī ʻan ḥaml al-asfār fī l-asfār fī takhrīj mā fī l-Iḥyāʼ min al-akhbār*. Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm.

al-Aʻẓamī, M. M. (1985). *On Schacht's Origins of Muhammadan jurisprudence*. Riyadh: King Saud University.

al-Aʻẓamī, M. M. (1990). *Manhaj al-naqd ʻinda al-muḥaddithīn: Nashʼatuhu wa-tārīkhuhu* (2nd ed.). Riyadh: Maktabat al-Kawthar.

al-Bukhārī, M. (1422 AH). *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (M. Z. al-Nāṣir, Ed.). Beirut: Dār Ṭawq al-Najāh.

al-Ghazālī, M. (1989). *al-Sunna al-nabawiyya bayna ahl al-fiqh wa-ahl al-ḥadīth*. Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq.

al-Haythamī, N. al-D. ʻA. (1994). *Majmaʻ al-zawāʼid wa-manbaʻ al-fawāʼid* (Ḥ. al-D. al-Qudsī, Ed.). Cairo: Maktabat al-Qudsī.

al-Idlibī, Ṣ. al-D. (1983). *Manhaj naqd al-matn ʻinda ʻulamāʼ al-ḥadīth al-nabawī*. Beirut: Dār al-Āfāq al-Jadīda.

al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, A. B. (1357 AH). *al-Kifāya fī ʻilm al-riwāya* (A. ʻA. al-Sūraqī & I. Ḥ. al-Madanī, Eds.). Hyderabad: Jamʻiyyat Dāʼirat al-Maʻārif al-ʻUthmāniyya.

al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, A. B. (1403 AH). *al-Jāmiʻ li-akhlāq al-rāwī wa-ādāb al-sāmiʻ* (M. al-Ṭaḥḥān, Ed.). Riyadh: Maktabat al-Maʻārif.

al-Malībārī, Ḥ. ʻA. (2001). *al-Muwāzana bayna al-mutaqaddimīn wa-l-mutaʼakhkhirīn fī taṣḥīḥ al-aḥādīth wa-taʻlīlihā*. Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm.

al-Mizzī, Y. (1999). *Tuḥfat al-ashrāf bi-maʻrifat al-aṭrāf* (ʻA. al-Ṣ. Sharaf al-Dīn, Ed.). Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʻIlmiyya.

al-Nasāʼī, A. (1986). *al-Sunan* [al-Mujtabā] (ʻA. al-F. Abū Ghudda, Ed.). Aleppo: Maktab al-Maṭbūʻāt al-Islāmiyya.

al-Suyūṭī, J. al-D. (n.d.). *Tadrīb al-rāwī fī sharḥ Taqrīb al-Nawawī* (N. M. al-Fāryābī, Ed.). Riyadh: Dār Ṭayba.

Berg, H. (2000). *The development of exegesis in early Islam: The authenticity of*

Muslim literature from the formative period. Richmond: Curzon.

Brown, J. A. C. (2004). Criticism of the proto-hadith canon: Al-Dāraquṭnī's adjustment of the Ṣaḥīḥayn. *Journal of Islamic Studies*, *15*(1), 1–37. https://doi.org/10.1093/jis/15.1.1

Brown, J. A. C. (2008). How we know early ḥadīth critics did matn criticism and why it's so hard to find. *Islamic Law and Society*, *15*(2), 143–184. https://brill.com/view/journals/ils/15/2/article-p143_1.xml

Brown, J. A. C. (2012). The rules of matn criticism: There are no rules. *Islamic Law and Society*, *19*(4), 356–396. https://brill.com/view/journals/ils/19/4/article-p356_1.xml

Brown, J. A. C. (2014). *Misquoting Muhammad: The challenge and choices of interpreting the Prophet's legacy*. London: Oneworld.

Budiman, A., Mu'in, F., & A'yun, Q. (2022). Dating of hadith about riba: The reflection theory of isnad cum matn analyzed by Harald Motzki. *Takwil: Journal of Quran and Hadith Studies*, *1*(1), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.32939/twl.v1i1.1236

Cook, M. (1992). Eschatology and the dating of traditions. *Princeton Papers in Near Eastern Studies*, *1*, 23–47.

Davidson, G. (2020). *Carrying on the tradition: A social and intellectual history of hadith transmission across a thousand years*. Leiden: Brill.

Görke, A. (2000). The historical tradition about al-Ḥudaybiya: A study of 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr's account. In H. Motzki (Ed.), *The biography of Muḥammad: The issue of the sources* (pp. 240–275). Leiden: Brill.

Görke, A., & Schoeler, G. (2008). *Die ältesten Berichte über das Leben Muḥammads: Das Korpus 'Urwa ibn az-Zubair*. Princeton: Darwin Press.

Görke, A., Motzki, H., & Schoeler, G. (2012). First century sources for the life of Muḥammad? A debate. *Der Islam*, *89*(2), 2–59. https://doi.org/10.1515/islam-2012-0002

Hallaq, W. B. (1999). The authenticity of prophetic ḥadîth: A pseudo-problem. *Studia Islamica*, *89*, 75–90. https://doi.org/10.2307/1596086

Harun, A. (2016). Al-Iraqi dan pemikirannya dalam kitab al-Tabshirah wa al-Tadzkirah [Al-'Irāqī and his thought in al-Tabṣira wa-l-Tadhkira]. *Tahdis: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu Al-Hadis*, *7*(2), 200–209. https://doi.org/10.24252/tahdis.v7i2.2781

Ibn al-Madīnī, 'A. (1980). *al-'Ilal* (M. M. al-A'ẓamī, Ed.; 2nd ed.). Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī.

Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, 'U. (1986). *Ma'rifat anwā' 'ilm al-ḥadīth* (N. al-D. 'Itr, Ed.). Damascus:

Dār al-Fikr; Beirut: Dār al-Fikr al-Muʿāṣir.

Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, A. (1379 AH). *Fatḥ al-bārī bi-sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifa.

Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, A. (1423 AH). *Taqrīb al-tahdhīb* (Ṣ. A. Shāghif al-Bākistānī [Abū l-Ashbāl], Ed.; 2nd ed.). Riyadh: Dār al-ʿĀṣima. Pages cited via the transmitter database of al-Maktaba al-Shāmila.

Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, A. (1984). *al-Nukat ʿalā kitāb Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ* (R. b. H. ʿUmayr al-Madkhalī, Ed.). Medina: ʿImādat al-Baḥth al-ʿIlmī bi-l-Jāmiʿa al-Islāmiyya.

Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, A. (1994). *Itḥāf al-mahara bi-l-fawā'id al-mubtakara min aṭrāf al-ʿashara* (Markaz Khidmat al-Sunna wa-l-Sīra, Ed.; Z. b. N. al-Nāṣir, Supervisor). Medina: Majmaʿ al-Malik Fahd & Markaz Khidmat al-Sunna wa-l-Sīra al-Nabawiyya.

Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, A. (2000). *Nuzhat al-naẓar fī tawḍīḥ Nukhbat al-fikar* (N. al-D. ʿItr, Ed.; 3rd ed.). Damascus: Maṭbaʿat al-Ṣabāḥ.

Ibn Māja, M. (n.d.). *Sunan Ibn Māja* (M. F. ʿAbd al-Bāqī, Ed.). Cairo: Dār Iḥyā' al-Kutub al-ʿArabiyya.

Junus, I. J., Wahyudin, D. M., Masrur, A., Najib, M., & Nur, S. (2025). The deconstruction of the common link theory: Harald Motzki's methodological critique of G.H.A. Juynboll's skepticism in hadith dating. *Diroyah: Jurnal Studi Ilmu Hadis*, *10*(1), 103–125. https://doi.org/10.15575/diroyah.v10i1.47688

Juynboll, G. H. A. (1983). *Muslim tradition: Studies in chronology, provenance and authorship of early ḥadīth*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Juynboll, G. H. A. (1989). Some isnād-analytical methods illustrated on the basis of several woman-demeaning sayings from ḥadīth literature. *al-Qanṭara*, *10*(2), 343–384.

Little, J. J. (2026). Beyond the common link: Tradition-historical criticism and the prehistory of hadiths. *Comparative Islamic Studies*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1558/cis.28969

Motzki, H. (1991). The Muṣannaf of ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ṣanʿānī as a source of authentic aḥādīth of the first century A.H. *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, *50*(1), 1–21. https://doi.org/10.1086/373461

Motzki, H. (2002). *The origins of Islamic jurisprudence: Meccan fiqh before the classical schools* (M. H. Katz, Trans.). Leiden: Brill.

Motzki, H. (2005). Dating Muslim traditions: A survey. *Arabica*, *52*(2), 204–253. https://doi.org/10.1163/1570058053640349

Motzki, H., Boekhoff-van der Voort, N., & Anthony, S. W. (2010). *Analysing Muslim traditions: Studies in legal, exegetical and maghāzī ḥadīth*. Leiden: Brill.

Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj. (1955). *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (M. F. ʻAbd al-Bāqī, Ed.). Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-ʻArabī.

Rahman, F. (1965). *Islamic methodology in history*. Karachi: Central Institute of Islamic Research.

Schacht, J. (1950). *The origins of Muhammadan jurisprudence*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Schoeler, G. (1996). *Charakter und Authentie der muslimischen Überlieferung über das Leben Mohammeds*. Berlin: de Gruyter.

Shoemaker, S. J. (2011). In search of 'Urwa's sīra: Some methodological issues in the quest for "authenticity" in the life of Muḥammad. *Der Islam*, *85*(2), 257–344. https://doi.org/10.1515/islam.2011.006

Su, I-W. (2026). The merits and limits of isnād-cum-matn analysis in dating deep dives: An evaluation based on two faḍā'il hadith. *Comparative Islamic Studies*, 1–39. Advance online publication. https://journal.equinoxpub.com/CIS/article/view/28882

Ulin, I., Elua, A. S., & Cakti, A. P. W. (2025). The dialectics of hadith authenticity: An epistemological dispute between Juynboll and Mustafa al-ᶜAzami. *Takwil: Journal of Quran and Hadith Studies*, *4*(1), 53–71. https://doi.org/10.32939/twl.v4i1.5163

© 2026 by the authors. Submitted for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY SA) license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/).