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Authenticating Hadith Manuscripts and the Methodology of Textual Accuracy

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Abstract

This research highlights the importance of manuscript verification in general, and particularly the verification of hadith manuscripts, through the efforts of hadith scholars. It aims to achieve several objectives, including guiding graduate students on the precise methodology to follow when verifying manuscripts, and raising awareness among youth about the significant role of hadith scholars in defending Islam and preserving the Prophetic Sunnah from attacks. The research also addresses the question of whether hadith scholars had a comprehensive methodology for verifying texts and preserving manuscripts or if the Islamic heritage has been subject to distortion, as some individuals attempt to spread these ideas among the youth to cast doubt on their faith. The research method follows the exploration of the applications of hadith scholars in their writings, extracting their methodology in preserving texts, verifying manuscripts, and ensuring the accurate transmission of hadith. The study's findings indicate that the scholars relied heavily on comparing narrations and manuscripts through methods such as presentation and comparison, ensuring the reliability of narrators and copyists, and preventing scribal errors. The study concluded with a proposal to establish a center dedicated to the scientific verification of heritage, aimed at preserving the

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nation's history and contributing to the development of human knowledge. This is crucial to prevent being influenced by the animalistic culture promoted by those who seek to corrupt this nation. The proposal also emphasizes the need to spread noble values and sound Islamic thought, free from deviations. Furthermore, it calls for the implementation of punitive laws for university educators who promote unethical behavior.

Keywords: Heritage verification; Verification of hadith manuscripts; Hadith studies; Methodologies of hadith scholars; Ethics of manuscript verification

INTRODUCTION

We live in an era that demands greater attention to our Islamic heritage, especially with the fierce campaigns directed against Islam and Muslims from the West, as well as from individuals living among us. These individuals are merely echoes of the doubts propagated by the West regarding Islam. Their criticisms focus on several areas. First, they target the divine essence with the aim of spreading atheism. Second, they attack the Qur'an, attempting to distort its meanings and challenge the historical authenticity of the Quranic text or its feminist interpretation. Third, they focus on the Prophetic Hadith, seeking to undermine its authenticity, starting with Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī. Additionally, they attack the Companions and Imams in an effort to erode trust in those who transmitted the Hadith. They also target the scholars, accusing them of only serving the interests of the sultans (Klaina & Yachaoui, December 2024, Criticism). They have also been keen on spreading vice through social media platforms (Klaina, Kmichou, April 2025).

This research addresses an important issue: how to benefit the knowledge-seeking youth by presenting the methodology followed by the hadith scholars to preserve narrations in their original, unaltered form, and to pass them on to future generations.

Importance of the Topic

The need to confront anti-Islamic campaigns has become more urgent than ever before, as the enemies of Islam are directing their followers, who live among us, to distort and question the Islamic faith, with the ultimate aim of leading people away from religion and toward atheism. They focus on spreading false concepts, cloaked in an appealing facade, mislabeling ideas to deceive people, as is the case with tolerance and the renewal of religious dialogue (Klaina & Putra, December 2024, and April 2024,).

Furthermore, researchers need to understand the methodology of hadith scholars in authenticating transmitted texts and circulated manuscripts, so that they can apply these methods in their own scientific research, thereby elevating it to a distinguished level.

The importance of this topic also lies in the fact that some individuals need guidance in critical thinking, so they do not blindly accept everything that is published. Instead, they must verify the information to avoid participating in the spread of falsehoods.

Objectives of the Topic

This research aims to achieve several objectives, which are as follows:

To highlight that the hadith scholars followed a distinguished methodology in verifying narrations and manuscripts, thereby preserving the purity of the Prophetic Sunnah and ensuring the reliability of the books they transmitted.

To raise awareness among the general public about the significant contributions of the hadith scholars in defending Islam in general, and the Prophetic Sunnah in particular, through their dedicated efforts to preserve and transmit the narrations and books with full integrity.

To clarify the methodology that graduate students should follow when verifying manuscripts. It has been observed that some students neglect this task, verifying books without making any effort to confirm their authenticity or to compare different manuscript versions correctly, and failing to distinguish between the varying qualities of manuscripts.

Research Problem

The research problem centers on a delicate issue: the extent to which the hadith scholars preserved narrations and verified manuscripts from an early period.

This issue raises several questions:

Did the hadith scholars take proper care in verifying narrations and manuscripts?

What methodology did the hadith scholars follow in the process of verification?

What criteria did they use in this regard?

METHODS

In this study, I adopted an investigative methodology, which involves examining the behavior of the hadith scholars in preserving texts and manuscripts, drawing insights from their applications in their books and the rules they established in them. This requires a clear effort to collect and present these practices. Additionally, I followed an analytical approach to interpret the behavior of the hadith scholars and to highlight its impact. I also employed a historical methodology, focusing on documentary research and utilizing it to prepare this study. This approach requires a careful examination of the efforts of the hadith scholars to preserve texts and manuscripts.

I. The Issue of Authenticating Hadith Manuscripts

One of the most critical challenges researchers face when working on the verification of hadith manuscripts is ensuring their authenticity and proper attribution to their original authors. Many researchers tend to neglect the correct verification process, which can lead to potential distortions in the text. As a result, the manuscript needs to be re-verified, essentially making it a case of re-verifying the verification, as the original work fails to address essential aspects of the verification process.

Upon reviewing the efforts of the scholars, it is evident that they were exceptionally diligent in ensuring the accuracy and authenticity of the texts. This meticulous approach was reflected in various methods that helped researchers confidently trust the manuscripts they were working with. While many of these methods should be adopted across all disciplines, they are even more essential when it comes to hadith manuscripts. Moreover, the hadith scholars took the initiative to establish the guidelines and rules for the transmission and validation of narrations.

Among the primary methods employed to verify the authenticity of hadith manuscripts are the following:

1. Confirming the Author's Claim of Authorship

This is crucial as it helps the researcher ensure that the manuscript was indeed written by the claimed author. However, this alone is not enough to attribute the manuscript to the author. It is possible that the manuscript was indeed written by the claimed author, but the available version might belong to another individual. The author's name on the manuscript could be the result of a mix-up in the papers, an error in

attribution, or intentional misattribution. A notable example is the case of *"Kitab al-Kaba'ir" (The Book of Major Sins)* by Al-Dhahabi, which was first published under the name of Sheikh Muhammad Abdul-Razzaq Hamza in 1355 AH. Later, after the manuscript was re-examined and corrected by Muhyi-ddin Misto, it was shown that the version published by Sheikh Hamza was not *"The Book of Major Sins"* by Al-Dhahabi, but a different work altogether (Al-Dhahabi, n. d., 5-14).

2. Ensuring the reliability of the individual who attributed the book to himself, and his claim is truthful

This step ensures that the author did not fabricate or falsely attribute narrations to themselves. Some individuals, driven by their personal or ideological biases, resorted to fabricating narrations or claiming that they received them from renowned scholars or teachers. For instance, the case of Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Al-Ash'ath Abu Al-Hasan Al-Kufi, is an example of an individual whose narrations were discredited due to the false attribution of hadiths to prominent figures. Ibn 'Adiy, who said about him, mentioned him: 'He resides in Egypt, and I wrote to him there. His strong inclination towards *Shi'ism* led him to produce a version of the book containing nearly one thousand narrations from Musa ibn Ismail ibn Musa ibn Ja'far ibn Muhammad, from his father, from his grandfather, all the way to Ali and the Prophet (PBUH). These narrations were written in fresh handwriting on new paper, and Sanad with Manākīr supports most of them, or at least most of them are. We mentioned his narration of these hadiths from this Musa to Abu Abdullah al-Husayn ibn Ali ibn al-Hasan ibn Ali ibn Umar ibn Ali ibn al-Hasan ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib – a scholar from the Prophet's family in Egypt, who was the brother of al-Nasir and older than him. He told us: 'This Musa was my neighbor in Medina for forty years, and it was never mentioned that he had any narrations, neither from his father nor from anyone else.' (Ibn 'Adiy, 1988, 6: 301, No. 1791).

3. Ensuring the accuracy of the scholars' attribution of the Book to the author

It is essential to verify whether contemporaries or later scholars attributed the book to its supposed author. This is often done by referencing the author's name in biographies or other historical works that mention their books. Scholars have a long tradition of documenting the lives of notable figures, including their teachers, students, travels, books, and the texts they have heard, with comments on their reliability or criticisms. These

biographical works, known to hadith scholars as "books of narrators," are vital sources in this area.

4. Ensuring the Book is Not Apocryphal

It is important to verify that the individual it is attributed to genuinely authored the book in question. There are instances where books are falsely ascribed to a particular author. For example, regarding the book *Musnad Anas al-Basri*, al-Dhahabi commented on it in his biography of *Sam'an bin Mahdi*, stating: "Sam'an bin Mahdi, who narrated from Anas bin Malik, is a figure not well known, and a forged manuscript was attributed to him. I have seen it, and may Allah curse the one who fabricated it." (Al-Dhahabi, 1995, 3: 328, No. 3558). It was mentioned by Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, who said: 'It is narrated by Muhammad ibn Muqatil al-Razi, from Ja'far ibn Harun al-Wasiti, from Sam'an. He mentioned the version, which contains more than three hundred hadiths, most of which are fabricated.' (Ibn Hajar, 1986, 3: 114, No. 381). Similarly, the *Mukhtasar Sahih Muslim*, attributed to al-Nawawi, has been questioned by Ibn al-Mulaqqin, who said: "It seems the author compiled this work by borrowing excerpts from his *Sharh Sahih Muslim* and then attributed it to himself." (Al-Sakhawi, 2005: 23).

5. Looking into the Book's Hearings (Sama'at al-Kitab)

It is essential for the researcher to benefit from the *Sama'at al-Kitab*, which are typically noted at the beginning or end of a book. These *Sama'at* are a valuable resource that some researchers overlook, not realizing their importance. This leads to the absence of such considerations in their studies when determining the authenticity of the book's attribution to its author. Additionally, books like *al-Baramij*, *al-Athbat*, *al-Ma'ajim*, *al-Faharis*, and *al-Mashyakhat* are indispensable sources, providing essential details on how the books were transmitted. They also offer critical information on aspects like the times and places of transmission, the methodology, the number of times the book was narrated, the accuracy of the transmission, and the conditions of the path, whether it ascended or descended, among other crucial benefits. The esteemed scholar Al-Qadi Iyad says in the preface to his book *Al-Ghunyah* regarding the reason for composing this work:

> *"Afterward, O seekers of my narrations, Ijazat, and collections, I have, due to your insistence upon me and your eager requests, decided to list for you some of the essentials, and dedicate these pages to provide details that might suffice in the matter. I refer you to the Faharis of the teachers in all fields of knowledge. I name the teachers from whom I*

> *have received readings, listening, Munawalah, and Ijazat, including those who wrote to me, whom I did not meet, and I have mentioned their reports as appropriate, with concise summaries according to the circumstances of travel and acquisition. During this, I also list the names of notable scholars whom I met, interacted with, and discussed, but did not narrate from, or heard little from, either due to a barrier that interrupted or for some other reason, or because they were not narrators or skilled in what they transmitted, or Dirayah."* ('Iyad, 1982: 25-26).

In addition to such *Fahāris*, scientific travels are equally beneficial in documenting the diverse narrations received by scholars who traveled for learning and spreading knowledge. This can be seen in works by scholars like Ibn Rushayd Al-Sabti, author of *Mil' al-'Aybah fi Ma Jama'a bi Tuwl al-Ghaybah fi al-Wijhatayn al-Karimatayn ila Makkah wa Tybah*, and Khalid bin Isa Al-Balawi, author of *Taj al-Mafriq fi Tahlīyat 'Ulama' al-Mashriq*. These scholars traveled and gathered invaluable benefits, including their narrations of books of scholars with their chains of transmission.

Given all of the above, scholars like Ibn al-Salah have stated that anyone who has not confirmed the authenticity of a book's attribution to its author should refrain from quoting it as the words of the attributed author. They must be confident in the authenticity of the version they are quoting, whether they have personally reviewed it or had it verified by someone they trust with who has consulted multiple sources (Ibn al-Salah, 1977: 179). As such, it became customary for scholars not to make definitive statements about the authenticity of a book's attribution unless they are certain of it. For instance, Ibn Kathir mentions, "... I read in a book attributed to a man from ancient times called *Afloturkhus*..." (Ibn Kathir, n. d., 1: 135). Avicenna (Ibn Sina) states, "... Hippocrates mentioned in a book attributed to him..." (Ibn Sina, 1999, 2: 513). Additionally, Ibn al-Nadim mentions, "... and there was a book attributed to one of the ancient philosophers..." (Ibn al-Nadim, 1978: 335).

6. Considering the Tibaq (a record containing the names of students who attended the lesson)

It was a common practice among scholars to document the names of students present during dictation sessions. This allows for tracing who narrated the book from the compiler and helps confirm its attribution to the author by reviewing the student's bibliography. Moreover, the existence of a *Tibaq* serves as evidence of the manuscript's

circulation among scholars. In such cases, it is difficult for anyone to claim falsely ownership of the book, as clear evidence would show that the book belongs to someone else, and these students act as witnesses to its rightful attribution.

However, a practice emerged where some individuals, daring to forge *Tibaq* records, added their names to them. Scholars have diligently addressed the issue of forging *Tibaq* records and ruled that those who tamper with them are committing forgery. Consequently, narrations attributed to such individuals are not considered reliable, as they have falsely claimed to have heard the book, violating the integrity of the chain of transmission through which the book was narrated.

Ibn Nuqtah mentioned in his biography of Abu Bakr Muhammad bin al-Hasan bin Hiba Allah bin Ahmad bin Ali bin Siwar: "He was a liar; our teacher Abu Muhammad bin al-Akhdar used to weaken him. I asked Abu al-Futuh al-Husari in Mecca about him, and he said: He was a bad man who forged *Tibaq*." (Ibn Nuqtah, 1987, 3: 252, No. 3158).

Similarly, Ahmad bin Said al-'Askari was known to have forged *Tibaq* records (Al-Dhahabi, n. d., 1: 237, No. 392).

Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Ibrahim al-Kutbi was criticized by al-Dhahabi, who said: "He heard from Ibn al-Quatiy'i and Ibn Ruzbah and narrated, but he was suspected of forging *Tibaq* records, and had little regard for religious principles." (Al-Dhahabi, n. d., 6: 45-46, No. 7151).

As for Muhammad bin 'Abdullah bin Jareer al-'Armi, Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani noted: "He heard from Abu al-Fath bin al-Batti bin Thabit and others. Ibn al-Najjar said: "I wrote from him, but he was not trustworthy, as I saw many Tibaq records in his handwriting, which he concealed using his father's handwriting, and included the name of Ibn Shakir." He would end it by saying: 'Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Jareer, and this is his handwriting, not his father's.' I have seen these *Tibaq* records with my own eyes, written by Ibn Jareer, and they do not contain the name." (Ibn Hajar, 1971, 5: 239, No. 835).

7. Verifying the accuracy of the book title and ensuring it is not altered

As any modification leads to ambiguity and can be considered a form of dishonesty in transmission. This can cause confusion among researchers and undermine the credibility of the book's attribution to its original author, especially if no book with the title mentioned has been passed down from the author. Such practices have been noted among some researchers, where books have been published under titles that were not given by

their original authors. An example is the book *Sharh Mushkil al-Athar* attributed to al-Tahawi. If we check the end of the book, we find it written: "The fifteenth part of *Bayan Mushkil al-Athar*, compiled by Imam Abu Ja'far al-Tahawi, may Allah have mercy on him. The book is completed with this part." (Al-Tahawi, 1987, 15: 485). Additionally, it contains a repeated phrase: "*Bab Bayan Mushkil ma Ruwiya 'an* ...," but nowhere in the text is the title *Sharh Mushkil al-Athar* mentioned! When Ibn Khayr referred to it in his *Fihrist* while listing his narrations from his teachers, he called it: "*Kitab Bayan Mushkil Hadith Rasul Allah (PBUH), and the extraction of its rulings, and negation of contradiction from it*, authored by Abu Ja'far Ahmad bin Muhammad al-Azdi al-Tahawi – may Allah have mercy on him – and it is one of the precious books." (Ibn Khayr, 1998: 168). This shows that the actual title of the book, as stated at the end and as mentioned by Ibn Khayr, is not the same as the title under which it was printed and circulated!

8. Comparing the text in the manuscript with what the author has quoted in another book

It is a common practice among some scholars to cite in their books what they have already written in their other works, clearly indicating that it can be found in a specific book. This is clearly visible in the works of Ibn Hazm of Andalusia, al-Qadi Abu Bakr Ibn al-'Arabi al-Ma'afiri al-Ishbili, and others. By tracing these texts and comparing them, researchers can be certain that the book being investigated is truly the one authored by the individual mentioned in the project for investigation, without any doubts.

9. Comparing the content of the manuscript with what scholars have cited from it in their works, attributing the text to the author in the book being worked on

This is done when it is impossible to rely on a direct statement from the author in his own works. There is no doubt that the original source takes precedence, and when the original is found, moving to secondary sources serves as an additional confirmation.

II. VERIFYING THE MANUSCRIPT TEXT OF HADITH: ITS IMPORTANCE, METHODS, AND ETHICS

1. The Importance of Verification

An essential aspect of manuscript verification is ensuring the meticulous accuracy of the text as originally written by the author. The objective of verification is not to assert

what the author did not intend but to confirm exactly what was recorded. Should the researcher introduce words or modifications not originally written by the author, it would distort the text and wrongfully attribute statements to the author. At the same time, this introduces errors that could be improperly assigned to those who critiqued the text, especially in cases where inaccuracies are due to carelessness, bias, or ignorance. Such actions are impermissible.

It is crucial not to overlook the scholarly comments on authors' works and the mistakes they made. Numerous scholars have written valuable books on this subject.

Abu Muhammad Abdullah bin Muslim ibn Qutaybah (d. 276 AH) in his book *Tas-hif al-ʻUlama* (The Distortion of the Scholars).

Hamzah ibn Hassan al-Asfahani (d. 360 AH) in his book *Al-Tanbih ʻAla Huduth al-Tas-hif* (On the Emergence of Distortion).

Abu Nu'aym ʻAli ibn Hamzah al-Basri (d. 375 AH) in his book *Al-Tanbihat ʻAla Aghaliṭ al-Ruwah* (Clarifications of the Mistakes of Narrators).

Abu Ahmad al-Hasan ibn Abdullah al-ʻAskari (d. 382 AH) in his book *Sharh Ma Yaqa'u Fih al-Tas-hif wa al-Tahreef* (Explanation of What Occurs in the Distortion and Alteration).

Abu al-Hassan Ali ibn ʻUmar al-Daraqutni (d. 385 AH) in his book *Tas-hifat al-Muhaddithin* (Distortions of the Hadith Scholars).

Abu Sulayman Hamad ibn Muhammad al-Khattabi (d. 388 AH) authored *Islah Khata' al-Muhaddithin* (Correcting the Mistakes of the Hadith Scholars).

Is-haq ibn Ahmad ibn Shabib (d. 405 AH) wrote *Al-Radd 'ala Hamza fi Huduth al-Tas-hif* (Refutation of Hamza on the Occurrence of Scribal Errors).

Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi (d. 463 AH) authored *Talkhis al-Mutashabih fi al-Rasm, wa Himayat Ma Ashkala Minhu Bawadir al-Tas-hif wa al-Wahm* (Summary of the Similarities in the Script, and Safeguarding What is Ambiguous from Initial Errors and Confusion), as well as *Tali al-Talkhis* (Follow-up to the Summary).

Al-Qadi ʻIyad al-Yahsubi al-Sabti (d. 544 AH) wrote *Mashariq al-Anwar 'ala Sihah al-Athar* (Sources of Light on the Authentic Narrations).

Abu al-Walid Yusuf ibn ‘Abdulaziz, known as Ibn al-Dabbagh (d. 546 AH), authored *Ma Yu’man Fihi al-Tas-hif Min Rijal al-Andalus* (What Can Be Trusted Regarding the Mistakes of the Men of Andalusia).

Along with other significant books authored by their writers to correct the scholars and narrators, and to clarify the errors they made.

In this context, al-‘Askari stated in the introduction of his book, explaining the purpose of his work (Al-‘Askari, n. d.: 1-2):

> *"...I have explained in this book the problematic words and names that appear similar in writing and are susceptible to distortion or alteration, such as in language, poetry, the names of poets, Arab days (battles), places, genealogies, and other fields. These are often distorted by ordinary people and sometimes even by some scholars. Only those proficient in the sciences, who have met scholars and narrators, and who have dedicated themselves to the craft of memorization, without relying on secondary sources or copying, can truly discern the correct meanings. Understanding the subtleties of the texts is only fully accessible to those with profound knowledge, extensive narrations, and a deep understanding of the subject matter...".*

When the editor (*Al-Muhaqqiq*) corrects the distortion found in the manuscript text, they are inadvertently contributing to the concealment of the original distortion, which could lead to associating the author of the works with carelessness, ignorance, and fabricating accusations against others. Therefore, the text should be preserved as the author originally wrote it, rather than being altered to fit the editor’s preference, with any changes or misrepresentations clearly noted in the margin.

The problem becomes even more significant if the editor attempts to correct the text based on their own assumptions, leading to further distortion and attributing words to the author that they never said. This is a serious distortion of the history of knowledge. In this regard, al-Safadi mentioned that scribal errors and distortions occurred unintentionally by some scholars, so what can be said about the general public?! However, the early scholars committed these errors only rarely, while those who came after them, known for their ignorance, committed them much more frequently (Al-Safadi, 1987: 4-7).

Hadith scholars have paid close attention to clarifying the errors made by some of them during the transmission process and explaining them, as clearly demonstrated when Al-Bayhaqi narrated through his chain from ‘Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her), who

said: 'Whenever the Prophet (PBUH) left the bathroom, he would say: 'Ghufranak.' (Al-Bayhaqi, 1404 AH, 1: 97, No. 470). He then narrated through Ibn Khuzaymah who said: 'Abu Musa Muhammad ibn al-Muthanna narrated to us, Yahya ibn Abu Bukayr narrated to us.' He mentioned it in his chain and added: *'Ghufranak*, our Lord, and to You is the final destination.' (Al-Bayhaqi, 1404 AH, 1: 97, No. 474). Then he said: 'Ibn Khuzaymah reported to us Muhammad ibn Aslam, who narrated to us 'Ubaydullah ibn Musa, from Israel, with the same chain.' The Sheikh (Al-Bayhaqi) said: 'I found this addition in the narration of Ibn Khuzaymah, who is an Imam. I also saw an old copy of Ibn Khuzaymah's book, which did not contain this addition, and it was later added in another handwriting in the margin. It is more likely that it was appended to his book without his knowledge. And Allah knows best.' (Al-Bayhaqi, 1404 AH, 1: 97, No. 475).

Al-Bayhaqi's behavior reflect his meticulous attention to returning to the original sources, which enabled him to detect the flaw in the narration, correct it, and explain the reason behind the error. For this reason, he paid great attention to the version relied upon by the narrator and clarified that it was based on the original source written by a certain person, as in his statement: 'Abu al-Hasan Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn al-Hasan ibn Is-haq al-Bazzar narrated to us in Baghdad from the original he heard from Abu al-Hasan al-Daraqutni...' (Al-Bayhaqi, 1404 AH, 2: 209, No. 3265).

2. How to Ensure the Accuracy of the Text

Scholars work to correct what they have written either through *'Ard* (Presentation to the *Sheikh* for correction) or *Muqabalah* (refers to comparing what the student has written with what is in the Sheikh's book, or with a corrected version of another student's book, in order to correct what is written in the student's book.).

'Ard has been practiced since the time of the Prophet (PBUH), while *Muqabalah* appeared and became widespread with the proliferation of books. Thus, the one receiving the dictation or the person who acquired a book would go to the Sheikh or the one holding the original manuscript to compare his copy with it, ensuring that the text is free from additions, omissions, errors, or distortions. Al-Awza'i emphasized the necessity of *'Ard* and criticized those who neglect it, saying: "The one who writes without *'Ard* for correction is like someone who enters the bathroom but does not cleanse himself." (Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, 1978, 1: 78, 'Iyad, 1979: 160).

As for *Muqabalah*, we find that the Hadith scholars regarded it as essential for verifying the accuracy of the written text, just as they did with *'Ard*. Al-Ramahurmuzi narrated from Abu Zinad who said: "In the book of my father: This is what I heard from ʻAbdul Rahman ibn Hormuz Al-A'raj. He said, 'Whenever he finished narrating a hadith, he would draw a circle. Then he would say: 'This is how every book should be.'" (Al-Ramahurmuzi, 1971: 606).

Placing circles between sentences is evidence that the book was compared, either to an original manuscript, a corrected copy, or presented to the Sheikh for approval as it was written. In this way, the hadith scholars deserve credit for their pioneering role in accuracy and scholarly integrity (Klaina, 2002: 38-39).

Hadith scholars, and subsequently other scholars, adopted a variety of tools when correcting errors in written texts. Some of these tools are common, while others are specific to the individual scholars who employed them. Therefore, it is important to understand the symbols used by scholars during the correction process, whether related to their writing or during the correction process itself. Some researchers have misunderstood these symbols or failed to notice them, leading to misattributions of the author's intent.

Due to the importance of ensuring the accuracy of manuscript texts, there was a focus on identifying the scribe and his scholarly standing to ensure he was a reliable source, and his transmission would be given preference over others. We have a set of principles that can be adopted to prioritize one version over another when comparing texts for accuracy, as outlined below:

a. Relying on what was written in the author's handwriting and establishing what is stated in it over what appears in other copies transcribed by others, due to Tahrif (distortion), Tas-hif (miscopying), or Lahn (incorrect reading)

This is evident in Al-Munawi's approach. When he commented on Al-Suyuti's statement in *Al-Jami' Al-Saghir*: When the servant finishes reciting the Quran, sixty thousand angels send blessings upon him at its completion,' Al-Munawi remarked on 'sixty' by saying: 'This is as written in the author's handwriting, while in some copies, it is written as "seventy," which is a **Tahrif**.'" (Al-Munawi, 1: 181, and 1: 439, 2: 214, 218, 327, 512, 589, 666…).

b. Confirming what is written in the original by the author, while also pointing out the correct version in case of any distortion or misrepresentation, or highlighting alternative narrations on the issue. This is the responsibility of a meticulous researcher

We can observe this approach in al-Munawi's behavior, particularly in the first instance when he commented on a narration from al-Suyuti's *Al-Jami' al-Saghir* stating: 'The believer is one of the servants of Allah.' Al-Munawi noted: 'This is as written by the author, but it is a distortion. The narration should read: 'The believer is from the protection of Allah,' meaning he is the one who protects the believers from evil and does not oppress those whom he dislikes.' (Al-Munawi, 1988,1: 705, 2: 338, 471…). In such cases, there may be other versions of the narration. The researcher should retain the author's wording as it appears. Al-Munawi demonstrated this in another example when explaining a narration in Al-Jami' al-Saghir: 'I am the first to rise on the Day of Resurrection; I am their orator when they arrive, and I am their bringer of good tidings when they despair.' Al-Munawi commented on the word 'despair' saying: 'This is as written by the author. In another version, it says 'when they are hopeless,' which is a narration from *Iblas* meaning brokenness and sorrow.' (Al-Munawi, 1988, 1: 762, 2: 271, 416…)

This method is also evident in the hadith scholars' comments on a narration in *Sunan Abu Dawood*, where the chain of transmission is as follows: Muhammad ibn Ibrahim narrated from Qais ibn 'Amr who said:

> *'The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) saw someone praying two Rak'ahs after the Subh prayer, so he said: The Subh prayer consists of (only) two Rak'ahs, "The man said: I was not able to pray the two Rak'ahs before them, so I prayed them now". So the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) remained silent.'* (Abu Dawood, 2008, No. 1267). Abu Dawood then narrated from Sufyan and said: *'Ata' ibn Abi Rabah would narrate this hadith from Sa'd ibn Sa'id.' Abu Dawood said: 'Abd Rabbih and Yahya the two son of Sa'eed, reported this hadith in Mursal form; that their grandfather Zaid prayed with the Prophet (PBUH), and he mentioned this incident'* (Abu Dawood, 2008, No, 1268).

Al-Bayhaqi noted the discrepancy in the chain, saying: 'Some narrators mentioned it as 'Qais ibn 'Amr,' while others mentioned 'Qais ibn Fahd.' The narration that mentions 'Qais ibn 'Amr' is regarded as more authentic.' (Al-Bayhaqi, 2: 269-270, No. 1308).

Although he preferred the more authentic version, he refrained from altering the original text. Shams al-Adhim Abadi (1995, 4: 103) added a comment on the phrase 'their grandfather Zayd,' stating: 'This is the version found in all current copies, and omitting the word 'Zayd' is more accurate.' Ibn Hajar also commented on this word, noting: 'Zayd is the grandfather of Yahya ibn Sa'id al-Ansari... This is what I read in the handwriting of our teacher al-Balqini in the margin of his copy of al-Dhahabi's *Tajreed*. I have not seen the word 'Zayd' in any of the authentic copies of *Sunan*, but it is written as 'our grandfather' in those copies. This should be clarified. Yahya ibn Sa'id's lineage does not include anyone named 'Zayd' except for 'Zayd ibn Tha'labah,' a distant ancestor who died in the pre-Islamic era.' (Ibn Hajar, 1992, 2: 267, No. 2958). Although omitting the name 'Zayd' is preferable and the error is clear since no such person exists in Yahya bin Sa'id's genealogy, they kept it for the sake of scholarly integrity.

c. *Relying on what is the version of a known, trusted narrator over others*

This can be observed in the practices of al-Bayhaqi when he narrated from Abu Ahmad al-Husayn ibn 'Ali al-Tamimi, who reported: "Muhammad ibn al-Musayyab al-Arghiyani narrated to us, Muhammad ibn 'Uqbah narrated to us, my father narrated to me, said Ibn al-Musayyab. And 'Abdul Salam - meaning Ibn 'Abd al-Hamid - narrated to me, 'Umar and al-Walid said: 'Al-Awza'i told us, al-Zuhri narrated to us, Hamid ibn 'Abdul Rahman ibn 'Awf narrated to us, saying: 'While I was with the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, a man came and said: 'O Messenger of Allah, I am ruined and I have ruined my family (*Halakt wa Ahlakt*).' He said: 'Woe to you! What is your issue?!' The man replied: 'I had sexual relations with my wife during Ramadan.' He said: 'Then free a slave.'" And the hadith was mentioned." The rest of the hadith continues. Al-Bayhaqi weakened the word "*Ahlakt*" (and I have destroyed my family), arguing that it was an insertion into the narration by Muhammad ibn al-Musayyab al-Arghiyani. He narrated from Abu 'Ali al-Hafiz about Muhammad ibn al-Musayyab in the first chain, excluding this word. Similarly, al-'Abbas ibn al-Walid narrated from 'Uqbah ibn 'Alqamah without it. Duhaim and others narrated from al-Walid ibn Muslim without it. All the narrators of al-Awza'i reported the hadith without this addition. None of the narrators of al-Zuhri mentioned this word except for what was narrated from Abu Thawr through Mu'alla ibn Mansur through Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah through al-Zuhri. Our *Sheikh* (teacher) used to argue that this phrase was an error in that narration, referencing his examination of the famous manuscript of al-Mu'alla ibn Mansur's book on fasting. He found that this narration did not contain this word, and all of

Sufyan's narrators reported it without it. And Allah knows best." (Al-Bayhaqi, 1404 AH, 4: 227, No. 8319).

When we refer to *Amthal al-Hadith* by al-Ramahurmuzi, we find that he narrates from his teacher, al-Husayn ibn Muhammad ibn al-Husayn al-Khayyat. He said: 'Ahmad ibn Mansur al-Ramadi narrated to us. Abu Hudhayfah Musa bin Mas'ud al-Nahdi narrated to us. Sufyan narrated to us from his father, from Abu Ya'la, from al-Rabi' ibn Khuthaym, from ʻAbdullah ibn Mas'ud, from the Prophet (PBUH) who said: "Man is like this: the square [describing the shape of the square as in the hadith] represents the end, with the center being man, and the outer circle representing hope. These letters are symptoms that attack from every direction; whenever one escapes, another takes its place. The end has blocked hope." Al-Ramahurmuzi commented: "Thus, we wrote it from the book of our teacher al-Husayn ibn Muhammad ibn al-Husayn al-Khayyat." Al-Husayn said: "Thus, we wrote it from the book of Ahmad ibn Mansur al-Ramadi." Al-Ramadi said: "Thus, we wrote it from the book of Abu Hudhayfah..." (Al-Ramahurmuzi, 1971: 169-170, No. 73). The author of *Kanz al-ʻUmmal* commented: "I wrote this from the *Amthal* manuscript of al-Ramahurmuzi, written by the great scholar ʻAbdulghani al-Maqdisi, the author of *ʻUmdah al-Ahkam*..." (Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, 1998, 3: 820, No. 8858).

This text underscores the meticulousness of the hadith scholars in clarifying how they preserved and transmitted their texts, emphasizing their reliance on original manuscripts from their esteemed teachers, which reinforced the accuracy of the recorded texts.

d. Relying on a corrected version over an uncorrected one, as narrated by the Preservers (al-Huffath)

This is clearly demonstrated in ʻAbd al-Adhim Abadi's commentary, where he stated: "The author of *Subul al-Salam* said: We reviewed *Sunan Ibn Majah* from a correct, read version, and found the following wording: (Chapter on Taslim. Muhammad ibn ʻAbdullah ibn Numayr narrated to us, ʻUmar ibn ʻUbayd narrated to us, from Abu Is-haq, from Abu al-Ahwas, from ʻAbdullah, that the Messenger of Allah used to greet on his right and left until his cheek was visible: *'Assalamu Alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakatuh.*' End of the narration). The author of *Ghayat al-Maqsud* said: However, the version of *Sunan Ibn Majah* that we have, from our teacher Nazir Hussain al-Muhaddith – which I believe was written by the hand of the late Qadi Thana'ullah – and the one in our possession, supports

Ibn Raslan's statement, as it lacks this addition. However, relying on a correct, read version from the *Huffath*, as stated by the Yemeni prince in *Subul al-Salam*, is because he personally saw this addition. Moreover, this addition was also confirmed by the narration from Ibn Majah in *al-Talkhis* and other works. And Allah knows best." Shams al-'Adhim Abadi, 1995, 3: 208).

e. Recording what is in the adopted version while noting the differences found in the other versions, without Tarjih (preference) when the reasoning is unclear, or with preference when the reasoning is clear, in the margin

The goal is to record the variations that appear in different versions of the text when the editor is unable to determine which version should be preferred. This is an issue of academic integrity. It is possible that the author transmitted both versions. There may have been an error made by one of the copyists, but the editor (Muhaqqiq) did not find the correct solution to the issue. Therefore, he records what is in the original and notes what is found in other versions. Alternatively, the discrepancy may be due to an error made by one of the narrators. If the editor cannot determine the most accurate version, they should document the original version and note the differences in the margin.

The importance of comparing different versions, determining their reliability, and returning to the quotations from the author and their associated commentaries is essential for the editor to execute properly the task of verifying the text. A clear example of this is found in Ibn Hajar's commentary, where he said: "... The phrase: "*Jama'aho Laka Sadrik*" (He gathered it in your chest) appears in most versions, where the act of gathering is metaphorically attributed to the chest, similar to saying (spring causes plants to grow), meaning that Allah made the plants grow in the spring. The 'L' in (for you) serves to clarify or explain the reason. In the narration of Karimah and al-Hamwi: "*Jama'aho Laka Fi Sadrik*" (He gathered it in your chest), which serves as an explanation of the former..." (Ibn Hajar, n. d., 1: 30).

f. Distinguishing between the text (Matn) and the commentary (Sharh)

Scholars have long emphasized the importance of making this distinction, typically marking the main text with the letter "*M*" (for *Matn*) and the commentary (*Sharh*) with the letter "*Sh*" (for *sharh*). Alternatively, they place a line over the text to prevent confusion for the reader or the copyist. Failure to notice this distinction could lead to treating the main text (*Matn*) as commentary (*Sh*) or vice versa. Qinnawji pointed out this issue in his

discussion of the commentator's explanation, where he said: "The third [type] is the mixed explanation, referred to as a 'mixed commentary,' in which the wording of the text and the commentary are blended. It is then distinguished either by the letters '*M*' and '*Sh*' or by drawing a line above the main text, which is a method commonly used by later commentators, both meticulous and non-meticulous scholars. However, this method is not immune to confusion or mistakes." (Al-Qinnawji, 1985: 101).

This passage clearly demonstrates how the Hadith scholars were diligent in clarifying their narration methods and ensuring the accuracy of their texts by referencing the original books of the scholars, while also highlighting the significance of respecting and correctly attributing their work. This attention to detail was essential for maintaining the integrity of the text.

3. The Etiquette of Dealing with the Text

The careful comparison of different versions of narrations is extremely important in the field of textual criticism. This means that the researcher must commit to balancing the various versions of a single narration to ensure it is recorded exactly as its original author narrated it. It is well-known that several transmitters from the author can narrate a book, so the researcher must ensure the accuracy of each narration by comparing the versions received from the same narrator, and then compare these versions with those from other narrators.

It would be a mistake for the researcher to rely solely on one version of a narration, such as the one by Al-Firabrī, and correct it based on the narration of Al-Kushmīhnī! Such an approach does not constitute scholarly verification; rather, it results in fabricating versions and distorting the original content, which is unacceptable according to the scholars.

For this reason, Hadith scholars give great importance to comparing various narrations to preserve accurately the words in the Hadiths and other texts. This is evident in works such as *Fath al-Bari* by Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani and '*Umdat al-Qari* by Al-'Ayni. One of the key figures in this field, and perhaps the first to truly open this area of study, was al-Qadi 'Iyad al-Yahsubi al-Sabti (d. 544 AH), who is credited with being the first to devote an entire book to this topic, *Mishariq al-Anwar ala Sihah al-Athar*. This work became widely renowned in the Islamic world.

Among the etiquettes that one should embody when engaging in this science are:

a. The necessity of benefiting from the marginal notes (Al-Turar) in the manuscript, as they contribute to a better understanding of the text

This is evident in the actions of Al-Munawi when he commented on the Hadith: "Three things bring blessings: deferred sales, barter, and mixing barley with wheat for household use, not for selling." He remarked on the word "barter" (in Arabic: *al-Mu'aradah*) by saying: "Written with an unmarked 'Ayn (ع) followed by an unmarked 'Reh' (ر)" (this means that the letter 'Ayn (ع) has no dot, so it is not a 'Ghayn (غ)', and the letter 'Reh' (ر) also has no dot, meaning it is not a 'Zay' (ز)'). In the handwriting of the author". And he wrote in the margin: 'That is, exchanging a commodity for another commodity.'" (Al-Munawi, 1988, 1: 952, and see al-'Ayni, n. d., 14: 246…). There is no doubt that the marginal notes (*al-Turar*) contain invaluable insights, particularly when made by scholars. Their comments serve to clarify the text more effectively. An example of this is Al-'Ayni, who, when discussing the Hadith about Bilal's call to prayer at night before the dawn (*Adhan al-Fajr*) in Sahih Al-Bukhari, noted regarding Is-haq, one of its narrators: "Is-haq, of unknown lineage (meaning his lineage was not mentioned). Al-Jiyani claimed that 'Is-haq from Abu Usamah' might refer to either Is-haq ibn Ibrahim al-Hanzali, Is-haq ibn Mansur al-Kausaj, or Is-haq ibn Nasr al-Sa'di. Al-Hafiz Abu al-Hajjaj al-Dimashqi, in his *Atraf*, said it was Is-haq ibn Ibrahim. In the margin of al-Hafiz al-Dimyati's handwriting, it was found: The correct version is that this Is-haq is Ibn Shahin al-Wasiti. Some scholars have disputed al-Dimyati's note about Ibn Shahin, asserting that there is no known narration from Abu Usamah by him. I say (al-'Ayni): Not being aware that Ibn Shahin did not narrate from Abu Usamah does not imply that he never did. Ignorance of something by one person does not suggest universal ignorance. If you say: 'This confusion is a flaw in the chain of narration,' I would say: 'No, because anyone from among them is a just and reliable narrator according to Bukhari's criteria.' (Al-'Ayni, n. d., 11: 130…).

b. The necessity of adhering to proper decorum in commentary

This behavior can be seen in Al-'Ayni's commentary on a certain individual without naming them. He cited Al-Mizzi's narration: "Al-Bukhari narrated the hadith 'I used to have *Suhoor* during fasting' from Muhammad ibn 'Ubaydallah and Qutaybah, both of whom narrated it from him. Khalaf mentioned the hadith from Qutaybah, but he could not find it in *Sahih al-Bukhari*, nor was it mentioned by Abu Mas'ud. Some said: I saw in the

handwriting of Al-Qutb and Mughlutay the name 'Muhammad ibn 'Ubayd,' without the additional words, which is a mistake. The correct form should be 'Ubaydallah.' I said: It is not appropriate to call it a mistake, as it appears that Mughlutay followed Al-Qutb, and it is possible that the word 'Allah' was omitted from Al-Qutb's manuscript due to a scribal error." (Al-'Ayni, n. d., 16: 335).

Al-'Ayni's commentary was especially strong when addressing Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah's statement: "What is mentioned in the Quran as (*Wa Ma Adrak*) 'What made you know' means He informed him of it, and what is mentioned as (*Wa Ma Yudrik*) 'What would make you know' means He did not inform him of it." Al-'Ayni said: "This commentary from Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah was transmitted by Muhammad ibn Yahya ibn Abi 'Umar in his *Kitab al-Iman* from the narration of Abu Hatim al-Razi, who reported from Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah. The wording is: 'Anything in the Quran with the phrase (*Wa Ma Adrak*) "What made you know" means He informed him of it, and anything with (*Wa Ma Yudrik*) "What would make you know" means He did not inform him.' He was criticized for this limitation by the verse: "*Wa ma Yudrik La'allaho Yazzaka*" 'And how can you know that he might become pure (from sins)' [Surah 'Abasa, 80: 3], as it was revealed about Ibn Umm Maktum, who was among those who purify themselves, and he benefited from the reminder." Some said: Mughlutay, as I read in his handwriting, attributed the narration of Sa'id ibn Abdul Rahman from him to the Tafseer of Ibn 'Uyaynah. I reviewed a copy of it written by hafiz al-Dhiya, but I did not find it there. End of quote. I said: "This statement contains a lack of decorum, which is evident to anyone with fair judgment. The fact that it was not found in the copy written by hafiz al-Dhiya does not necessarily imply its absence in a version written by someone else." (Al-'Ayni, n. d., 17: 163).

In Al-'Ayni's statement, there is a clear call for caution before passing judgment and the importance of being gentle in commentary. A harsh critique from the critic may later be regretted, and they may wish they had refrained from making such an assertion.

CONCLUSION

It became evident to us through this research that the verification of manuscripts in general, and specifically the verification of hadith manuscripts, is crucial. This is vital for serving the Islamic community by defending Islam and countering the doubts some individuals aim to spread within Muslim societies through their distortions and

misconceptions of the truth. At the same time, it is important to raise awareness among the youth about the efforts made by hadith scholars in defending the Prophetic Sunnah. These scholars gave considerable attention to preserving the texts, verifying manuscripts, and transmitting them accurately. The methodology they followed in their work ensures that anyone who reads such research will be assured that Muslims have safeguarded their religion from manipulation. Consequently, the doubts raised by these individuals against the Sunnah and their claim that religious discourse is flawed are groundless. Their ultimate aim is to lead Muslims away from faith and into atheism.

The preservation of Islamic heritage from decay in our time, as well as guiding graduate researchers on the appropriate methodology for verifying manuscripts, is directly tied to the history of the nation. A people without a history has no future.

We have examined the efforts of hadith scholars in authenticating hadith manuscripts, drawing from their writings. This provides a clear understanding of their approach in this area. It is clear that hadith scholars were pioneers in manuscript verification long before the West adopted such methods. Researchers in various disciplines later applied many of their principles. This encourages us to apply similar methods in documentation and verification, as well as to adhere to the ethical guidelines when commenting on texts.

What can be emphasized in the conclusion is that the efforts of Muslims still need further attention and study. They were pioneers of knowledge in the past, and we must now continue their work to advance human knowledge and uplift Islamic societies in social, economic, cultural, religious, and political realms.

Many works published in the West have their origins in the contributions of Muslims, if not outright stolen from their writings. The current decline of Muslims has led to a regression in human civilization, which has now deteriorated to the level of animalistic existence due to the spread of corrupt values and their promotion.

One of the conclusions drawn from this study is that the hadith scholars meticulously preserved the texts and verified the manuscripts with precision. They also emphasized the principles that should be applied in their work and in books related to the science of hadith. They relied on comparing texts (presentation and comparison), verifying the reliability of narrators, along with other techniques discussed throughout this study. Moreover, they did not overlook the ethical considerations that should be adhered to by

anyone undertaking manuscript verification. In doing so, they preceded the West in this field, and the West has benefited from their verification methodology. However, it is important to note that the work of hadith scholars has its own distinct characteristics, as the conditions they require for accepting a narration may not align with the standards of the West. Based on this, we can confidently assert that hadith scholars, in particular, were the pioneers in this field.

For this reason, I call for the establishment of a center dedicated to the verification of Islamic heritage across various fields and to the development of knowledge. This does not mean rejecting the benefits from others, but it does underscore that research alone is insufficient. The reality of people's lives needs reform after values have decayed and vice has spread. For true reform to occur, the reformer must possess moral integrity. Especially since we see, in some universities, individuals infiltrating who are working to undermine religion and spreading corrupt values among students. These individuals are even promoting espionage, lying, and hypocrisy to fulfill their personal interests. Therefore, special laws should be enacted to deter such behaviors that obstruct the advancement of knowledge.

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