Hadith literature often treats the “forgery” genre as a subset of the “famous hadith” genre because forgeries are often famous sayings and vice-versa. The following is a mostly chronological, mostly descriptive list of extant works in each of these two genres followed by remarks on the critical ranking of Ibn al-Jawzi’s Mawdith-ar and a brief study of al-Qari’s al-Asrar al-Marfii—a two of the most important works in the forgery genre.

Chronology of extant works in the “famous hadith” genre:

- Abu al-Faraj Ibn al-Jawzi’s (d. 597) al-Tilal al-Mutanahiya fil-Ahadith al-Wahiya (“The Excessive Defects in the Flimsy Reports”) which he described as a compilation of “very weak hadiths which some might deem not so weak and include among the fair narrations and some might deem too weak and include among the forgeries.” He himself did include many of these narrations in his Mawdith-ar and vice-versa. Al-Dhahabi summarized it.

- Ibn al-Jawzi’s descendent Shams al-Din Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya’s (d. 751) al-Manar al-Munif fil-Asaath wal-Da’ir (“The Radiant Beacon on the Sound and Weak Hadith”), in which he followed many of the exaggerations of his teacher A’mad ibn Taymiyya (d. 728) in claiming as forged many hadiths that are merely weak or even established as authentic,1 as did Mar’i ibn Yusuf al-Karmi in his slim al-Faw’id al-Mawditha fil-Ahadith al-Mawditha. Al-Qari epitomized the Manar at the end of the Asrar.


- Al-Zarkashi’s (745-794) al-Tadhkira fil-Ahadith al-Mushtahara (“Memorial of the Famous Hadiths”), critiqued and expanded by

- Al-Suyuti (d. 911) in al-Durar al-Manthura fil-Ahadith al-Mashhura (“The Scattered Pearls Concerning the Famous Hadiths”), also known as al-Durar al-Muntathira fil-Ahadith al-Mushtahara; he was outdone by his great contemporary and rival

- Al-Sakhawi’s (d. 902) with his most influential, meticulous, and comprehensive al-Maqaid al-Hasana fil-Ahadith al-Mushtahara (“The Excellent Intentions Concerning the Famous Hadiths”), al-Qari’s principal source although he also cites the previous two frequently. Al-Sakhawi may have built on

- Al-La’ali’ al-Manthura fil-Ahadith al-Mashhura mimmah Aliahu al-Tab wa-Laysa lahu Ashan fil-Shar by his teacher the peerless arch-Master Ibn Hajar al-’Asqalani (d. 852).

- The Maqaid was abridged by [1] Al-Suyuti’s student the erudite Malik Shadhili Faqih of Egypt Abu al-Hasan ‘Ali ibn Muhammad al-Minnawi (857-939) in al-Was’il al-Sunniyya min al-Maqaid al-Sakhawiyya wal-Jamii wal-Zawia’id al-Ayritiya, apparently also known as al-Durat al-Lami’a fil-Bayan Kazhir min al-Ahadith al-Sha’ya.2 Al-Qari often refers to his work under the cryptic title of al-Mukhtasar.

- [2] Al-Sakhawi’s student Ibn al-Dayba in Tamyiz al-Ayayib min al-Khabith from Yadu’i al-Nas min al-Ahadith (”Distinguishing the Good from the Wicked among the Hadiths”) which are circulating among the People.

1Such as his disputing in Minhaj al-Sunnah the authenticity of a mass-transmitted report from twenty-five Companions, “Anyone whose patron (mawali) I am, ‘Ali is his patron”? He goes on to declare “categorically false” the addition: “O Allah! Be the patron of whoever takes him as a patron, and the enemy of whoever takes him as an enemy.” However, it is also sabih narrated from ‘Ali and Zayd ibn Arqam by al-Tahawi in Mushkil al-Athar (5:18 [§1765 sabih per Shaykh Shu’ayb al-’Arni’ut), al-Nas’i in his Khasis’ ‘Ali (§79) and Fadi’il al-Sahaba (§45), al-Hakim (3:109) who declared it sound, and al-Tabarani (§4969); Zayd or Abi Sarh by al-Tirmidhi (hassan gharib); and Abi’l-Tufayl by Ahmad in his Musnad (al-’Arni’ut ed. 2,262-263 [950-952 sabih lighayrib), al-Bazzar (§2541), and al-Nas’a in al-Sunan al-Kabir (5:132-134), Khasis’ ‘Ali (p. 107-108), and Musnad ‘Ali as well as al-Hakim (3:371). On Ibn Taymiyya’s exaggerations see Ibn Hajar, Lisan al-Mis’an (6:319) and Durar (2,71), al-Lacknawi, Ra’ (p. 330), and Anwaar al-Asara (p. 174-176), Tuhfat al-Kamala in the Ra’ (p. 198-199 p.), and al-Kawthar’s still-manuscript al-Ta’aqub al-Ahadith lina Yaddith Ibnu Taymiyyaya min al-Hadith.

2This is not by Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Minnawi as erroneously thought by Muhammad Bashir Zafr in Tahdhir al-Muslimin min al-Ahadith al-Mawditha.

The “Famous Hadith” and “Forgery” Compilations and Mullâ ‘Ali al-Qari’s Use of Them

by GF Haddad – Dhul-Qi’da 1425
1. al-Sha'raḥī (d. 973) in al-Badr al-Munīr fī Ḥanīfī Aḥādith al-Bashīr al-Nadīr, in which he added selections from al-Suyūṭī's Jāmiʿ al-Kabīr, his Jāmiʿ al-Šaghīr, and its Zawā'id totalling 2,300 ḥadīths.

2. al-Zarqānī (1055-1122) – named by Abū Ghudda “the Seal of the Scholars of ḥadīth” – in his Mukhtaṣar al-Maqāṣid (“Abridgment of the ‘Excellent Intentions’”).


4. ‘Īzz al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿAmmād al-Khaṭīlī (d. 1057) authored Kashf al-Iltībās fīmī Khafī fa ‘alā Kathīr min al-Nās. This title may have inspired the Sufi Damascene Seal of the Imāms of ḥadīth Abū al-Fidāʾ Ismāʿīl ibn Muḥammad al-Jarrāsī al-ʻAṣīrī (1087-1162) with Kashf al-Khafī wa-Muẓāh al-Aḥlās ‘ummā Isṭahāra min al-Aḥādīth ‘alāl-Aḥsan, a work second to fame only to the Maqāṣid in which he abridged the latter and added notes from various other works.


Chronology of extant works devoted to forgery classification:

- Tadhkīrat al-Ḫuffāz, also known as Tadhkīrat al-Mawṣūmat, by the Malāmāt ascetic and pious example of the traveling scholars, the Ḥūṭ Abū al-Fadl Muḥammad ibn Tāhir ibn ‘Alī al-Maqṣūdī al-Qayyārānī al-Athārī al-Ẓāhirī al-Ṣūfī known as Ibn Tāhir (448-507). Apparently the earliest systematic digest of forgeries, it is unreliably severe due to its uncritical imitation of Ibn Ḥibbān’s rulings in his Duʿālā' and other overly stringent sources.4

- Al-Abātīl wal-Manākīr wal-Sīhāb wal-Maşḥūbīr by al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿIrāhīm al-Jawzaqīnī or Jawraṣānī (d. 543). Al-Dhahabī says he “benefited from it although it contains mistakes” while Ibn Ḥajar in his Nukṣat ‘alā Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ said the author filled it with wrong rulings because of his inability to reconcile with what is incontrovertibly authentic the narrations that appeared, to him, to contradict the Sunna in the same manner as Ibn Ḥibbān.5 Al-Dhahabī summarized it.

- Ibn al-Jawzī’s al-Mawṣūmat al-Kubrā, one of the largest, most influential, and least reliable encyclopedias of forgeries compiled from the four great early books of weak-narrator criticism – Ibn ʿAdī’s Kāmil and Ibn Ḥibbān, al-ʿUqaylī, and al-Āzīdī’s Duʿālā’ – in addition to Ibn Mardūqāḥ’s Taṣfīr, al-Tabārānī’s three Muṣānas, al-Dāraqūṭī’s Arīd, al-Ḥākim’s Tarihīk, al-Jawzaqīnī’s Abāṭīl, and the luxuriant, collected works of al-Khaṭīb, Ibn ʿShāhīn, and Abū Nuʿaym. Al-Dhahabī and Ibn Dirḥābī summarized it among others. Like the Abāṭīl, Ibn al-Jawzī’s Mawṣūmat was faulted by the Ulema for its abundant flaws, especially Ibn Ḥajar and his student al-Suyūṭī who followed up with no less than four critiques (see below, paragraph on al-Suyūṭī and section on “The Status of Ibn al-Jawzī’s Mawṣūmat”).

- Dyā al-Dīn Abū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar ibn Badr ibn Saʿīd al-Mawṣūlī al-Ḥanāfī (557-622) thoroughly unreliable al-Mugḥnīʿ an al-Ḫūṭī qal-Wājiṭī bi-Qawwīm Lām Yāṣīḥa Shayʿun fī Ḥimāh al-Bāb in which he tried to compile all that the early Imāms had graded unsound into an accurate forgery reference-book but failed according to al-Lacknawī, Abū Ḥudūd, and others before them such as Sirāj al-Dīn Ibn al-Mulaqūn who rewrote a critical summary of his book; al-Suyūṭī as per his dismissal of the book in Tadrīb al-Rāwī, Husām al-Dīn al-Maqṣūdī in Intiqād al-Mugḥnīʿ an al-Ḫūṭī qal-Wājiṭī which is in reality an epitome culled from al-Ṭankīt wal-Wāṣda by Ibn Ḥimmāt (see below); and Abū ʿIshāq Ḥijāzī ibn Muḥammad ibn Sharīf al-Juwaynī al-Athārī who wrote Faṣl al-Ḵūṭī qal-Naqdī Kitāb al-Mugḥnīʿ an al-Ḫūṭī qal-Wājiṭī in print – in which he said that his own student Hāmid ibn ʿIrāhīm ibn Aḥmad also wrote a refutation of the Mugḥnīʿ an al-Ḫūṭī.


4 In Abū Ghudda’s marginalia on al-Qārī’s Masāra (p. 87).

5 As pointed out by al-Lacknawī in al-Rāfī wal-Taqmil, Ahmad al-Ghumārī in Darʾ al-Durʿī, and others.

- Ibn al-Qayyim’s *Naqd al-Manqūl wal-Maḥkām al-Mumayyiz bayn al-Mardūd wal-Maqbūl* in which he lists over two hundred ḥadīths that he considers forgeries from the perspective of content to begin, before even considering the chains of transmission.

- The epilogue to the lexicographer Majd al-Dīn al-Fayrūzābādī’s (d. 817) Sifr al-Sāda is also unreliably strict in its careless inclusion of non-forgery and his imitation of Ibn Badr al-Mawṣūli as per al-Kattānī in the *Risāla Mustatratā*, as shown by its critique al-Tankīt wal-Idhār il-Takhrīj Āḥādīth Khātimat Sifr al-Sāda by Ibn Himmāt Shams al-Dīn Muhammad ibn Ḥasan al-Dimashqī (1091-1175), ‘Abd al-Haq al-Dihlawī’s *Sharḥ Sifr al-Sāda*, and al-Lacknawi’s *Tuhfāt al-Kamāla ‘alā Hawāshī Tuhfāt al-Ṭalaba*. Al-Qārī infrequently cites the *Sifr*.

- Al-Ghummāz ‘alā ‘alāl Um-māz fīl-Mawḍū‘āt al-Maḥshūrūt by the Cairene Shāfi‘ī Ḥasanī historian of Madīna Abū al-Ḥasan Nūr al-Dīn ‘Alī ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Ḥamdūl al-Sanḥūlī (844-911) which contains 340 entries with all-too-sparse rulings of one word or one line such as “weak,” “weak-chained,” etc.


- The great Damascene Ḥāfīz of Ṣāḥībiyya and author of the largest extant Sīra, Shams al-Dīn Muhammad ibn Yūsuf ibn ‘Alī al-Shāmī’s (d. 942) *al-Fawā’id al-Majmū‘a fīl-Āḥādīth al-Mawḍū‘a*.


- Al-Karmī’s (d. 1033) unremarkable al-Fawā’id al-Mawḍū‘a which we mentioned in the previous section.

- Al-Saffārīnī’s (d. 1188) large al-Durar al-Maṣūmāt al-Mawḍū‘āt, an abridgment of Ibn al-Jawzī’s *Mawḍū‘a*.  


The Status of Ibn al-Jawzî’s Mawdūʿāt

Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ said of Ibn al-Jawzî: “A contemporary that gathered together the forgeries in about two volumes went too far and included in them much that can never be proven to be a forgery and that should rather have been cited among the merely weak ḥadîths.”

The arch-Master of Ḥadîth (Amīr al-Muʿminin ʿIl-Ḥadîth), known as the absolute Shaykh al-Īslām in the books of its Science, Imām ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq al-Hāṣimī, said in his Qawāl al-Musaddad of al-Ḥākim’s Mustadrak and Ibn al-Jawzî’s Mawdūʿāt that they each contained enough mistakes to make their general usefulness nil for other than specialists, hence, neither al-Ḥākim’s ruling of sabīḥ in the Mustadrak nor Ibn al-Jawzî’s ruling of mawdūʿ in the Mawdūʿāt should be relied upon without double-checking with someone else.

The Mustadrak contains about one hundred forgeries per al-Suyūṭī’s Taʿqīqubāt as quoted by al-Kattānī in the Risāla Mustaʿrafa while the Mawdūʿāt contains no less than three hundred erroneous entries as stated by al-Suyūṭī at the end of his Taʿqīqubāt.

Ibn Ḥajar said:

He [Ibn al-Jawzî] has [wrongly] included in his book of forgeries the munkar and weak ḥadîths that are acceptable in morals (al-targhib wal-tarhib) and a few fair ḥadîths as well, like the ḥadîth of Šalāt al-Tasībah and that of reciting ṭiyāt al-Kursī after the prayer, which is sabīḥ…. As for weak ḥadîths in absolute terms, there are many in his book…. Ibn al-Jawzî has another book titled al-ʿIlāl al-Mutanāhiya fil-ʿĀdīth al-Wahīya in which he cited many forgeries, just as he cited many merely flimsy reports in his book of forgeries. Yet, he incorrectly left out [from each book] ḥadîths of both kinds to the amount or more than what he did include!8

Al-Dhahabī, al-Suyūṭī, ʿAbd al-Dawwār, and Abū Ghudda said that Ibn al-Jawzî was fooled by the rejection of certain chains for certain ḥadîths in the books of narrator-criticism and took this to mean the ḥadîth itself was forged because of his ignorance of the matn and his failure to research it.9

In addition, Ibn al-Jawzî ignored his own rulings by including a large proportion of forgeries in his exhortative works. Shaykh ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ Abū Ghudda said:

Our reliance is on Allāh! Ibn al-Jawzî composed a great big book on ḥadîth forgeries so that jurists, preachers, and others may avoid them, then you will see him cite in his exhortative works forged ḥadîths and rejected stories without head nor tail, without shame or second thought. In the end one feels that Ibn al-Jawzî is two people and not one!... For this reason Ibn al-Athîr blamed him in his history entitled al-Kāmil with the words: “Ibn al-Jawzî blamed him [al-Ghazzâlî] for many things, among them his narration of unsound ḥadîths in his exhortations. O wonder that Ibn al-Jawzî should criticize him for that! For his own books and exhortative works are crammed full with them!10 And the ḥadîth Master al-Sakhâwī said in Sharḥ al-ʿAlîyya: “Ibn al-Jawzî cited forgeries and their likes in high abundance in his exhortative works.”11

Among those that wrote book-length critiques of Ibn al-Jawzî’s failings in the Mawdūʿāt is Shaykh Muḥammad Ṣibḥat Allāh al-Madrâsî.

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8 Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, ʿUlamāʾ al-Ḥadīth, chapter on the Mawdūʿāt.
10 Al-Dhahabī as cited in al-Suyūṭī’s Taḍīrī (1:329, chapter on the mawdūʿ); al-Suyūṭī, ʿArāʾī (1:106=1:117); Ahmad al-Ghumârî, al-Muthnawnî wal-Battûr (p. 172) and Darʾ al-Dîrî (p. 191-95); and Abū Ghudda, marginalia on al-Lacknawī’s Rafʿ (p. 325-327).
12 Abd al-Fattāḥ Abū Ghudda, notes to al-Lacknawī’s Rafʿ (p. 420-421).
Al-Qârî’s al-Asrâr al-Mafî`a fîl Akhbar al-Mawdû`a is the second and, with 625 entries, largest of two compilations he devoted to forgeries, the second being the earlier al-Masnû` fîl Ma`rifat al-Hadîth al-Mawdû`a with 417 much sparser entries. The Asrâr expands on the Ma`rifat both in the number of entries and in the treatment al-Qârî devotes to many of them. The all-too-small number of these entries is explained by the fact that the last part of the Asrâr refers to many more forgeries obliquely, without devoting separate entries to them, by way of summarizing and commenting on Ibn al-Qayyim’s al-Manâr al-Munnîf.

Al-Qârî devoted himself to fiqh, particularly Hanafi jurisprudence, and did not attain the rank of Hâfiz like his two principal sources, al-Sakhâwî and Ibn al-Qayyim. He shows no knowledge of some of the important early works on forgeries such as Ibn Tahir al-Maqdisî’s Tadhkirat al-Mawdû`a, al-Jawzaqînî’s Abûtîl, Ibn Arrâq’s Tanzih al-Sharî`a, and al-Fattanî’s Tadhkirat al-Mawdû`a.

Like his sources, al-Qârî often refers a hadîth to the Ilhyâ’, one of the most acclaimed books in Islam which nevertheless contains a sizeable proportion of very weak or forged narrations.

Al-Qârî said, “al-Suyûtî said of this hadîth, ‘Its chain is sound except that one transmitter was not named.’ So then, its chain becomes fair.”

He tends to authenticate the hadîths more than disauthenticate them and, in both cases, does not always hit the mark. The reason for this is that he takes certain assumptions as axioms and follows them consistently in his book when they are inaccurate to begin with. Among the examples for these methodological flaws are the following:

1- Al-Qârî’s assumption that if a hadîth is cited by Imâm al-Suyûtî in al-Jâmî` al-Saghîr it must necessarily not be forged because the latter made it his pre-condition for including it in the Jâmî`. This overlooks the possibility that al-Suyûtî is not infallible in this and it is a fact that he fell short of his pre-condition about 450 times and so did include forgeries by the hundreds according to Ahmad al-Ghumârî in al-Mughrî`at al-Aâmîthâ’i al-Mawdû`a, al-Jâmî` al-Saghîr (“The Raider on the Forgeries Contained in the Jâmî` al-Saghîr”).

Al-Suyûtî himself in the La`âlî makes the same false axiomatic assumption about any and all hadîths narrated by al-Bayhaqî in any of his books on the basis of al-Bayhaqî’s identical purported criterion, as illustrated in al-Qârî’s entry “The believer’s heart is sweet, he loves sweetness.”

2- His incorrect axiom that the mursal is a proof for the Jumhûr. See on this Shaykh Shu`ayb al-Arna’ûtî’s detailed survey of the views of the Salaf on this issue in his introduction to Abû Dâwûd’s Marâsîl.

3- His idiosyncratic use of the term thâbit to mean a hadîth that merely has a chain of transmission (a`sl) when in fact thâbit is used by the scholars of hadîth as a synonym for sahib as are qawî and jayyid.

4- Similarly, al-Qârî understands lâ yathbut to mean lâ a`sl lahu when it means lâ ya`isih. In a fiqhi discussion lâ yathbut and lâ ya`isih mean that the hadîth falls short of the rank of sahib but in a hadîthic discussion of forgeries such terms mean the hadîth is forged.

5- His unheard-of assumption that it suffices for a hadîth to have a chain of transmission to preclude that it be forged.

12 Ibn al-Subkî and al-`Irâqi provided thorough documentations of those narrations and stressed that al-Ghazzâlî did not excel in the field of hadîth cf. Tabaqât al-Subkîyya fîl-Kubrâ (6:287-389). For various reasons certain Mâlikîs such as al-Turtûshî and al-Mâzarî and Hanbalis such as Ibn al-Jawzd and Ibn Taymiyya exaggerated the proportion of forgeries in the Ilhyâ’. Two Hanafi hadîth Masters wrote superb documentations of its hadîths – Ibn Qurtûshîgû and Murtadhâ al-Zâbidî – while Muhammad Amin al-Suwâvi (d. 1246) compiled al-Mawdû`a, al-Mawdû`a min al-Jâmî` al-Kabîr fîl-Azhar lil-Suyûtî al-Munawwî by `Abbas Ahmad Saçr and Ahmad `Abd al-Jawzd.

13 See also al-Ahadîth al-Mawdû`a, al-`Abd al-Jawzd.

14 Cf. the end of the chapter on the sahib in Dr. `Itt’s Manhaj al-Naqd.
6- His assumption that it suffices for a hadith to be cited by one of the Daylamis – father and son – (in the Firdaws or its documentation the Musnad al-Firdaws) to have an asl even if it is actually cited chainless.

7- He follows al-Zarkashi, Ibn `Arraq, and others in their misunderstanding of the term “inauthentic” (lā yaṣīḥh) to allow that a hadith is not necessarily forged whereas in discussions of forgeries and strictly hadithic, non-fiqh literature that term is strictly synonymous with “forged,” “baseless,” and other such descriptions used by the Masters in the books specifically devoted to forgeries as demonstrated by Abū Ghudda in his introduction to the Maṣūḥ and elsewhere.

These flaws are illustrated in the following entries among many others:

- The entry for the saying, “Whoever plays chess is cursed” contains three major inaccuracies: the claim that the mursal is a proof for the Jumhūrī; the deduction that a hadith is not a forgery merely on the basis that al-Suyūṭi cites it in al-Jāmī' al-Ṣaghīr, and the claim that there are firmly-established hadiths blaming chess.

- The entry for the saying “To look at a beautiful face is worship” contains the claim that since al-Suyūṭi cites the saying, “Looking at a beautiful woman and at greenery strengthens eyesight” in al-Jāmī' al-Ṣaghīr, it follows that it is not forged.

- The entry for the saying, “The traveller and his money are at risk.” Al-Qārī states that “al-Daylamī narrates it from Abū Hurayra [/png], from the Prophet [p] chainless,” only to conclude, “So then, it is established and not forged”!

- The entry: “Whoever receives a present while he has company, the latter are his partners in it” where he says: “Ibn al-Jawzī wrongly included it in the Mawdū‘at since ‘Abd ibn Humayd narrates it from Ibn ‘Abbās[C] and others from ‘A‘isha [/png]”!

- In the entry, “Whoever circumambulates this House seven times, prays two rak‘as behind the Station of Ibrāhīm, and drinks Zamzam water, all his sins shall be forgiven as many as they may be” al-Qārī cites al-Sakhwī’s ruling of lā yaṣīḥh, i.e. forged, but al-Qārī goes on,

Al-Sakhwī’s statement that the hadith is inauthentic does not preclude its being weak or fair unless he meant to convey that it is unestablished (lā yathbutu). It seems al-Minnawī understood the latter since he says, in his Mukhtaṣar [of al-Sakhwī’s Maqāsid], “It is a falsehood (būṭil) without basis (lā aṣlā lahu).”

In reality both al-Sakhwī and al-Minnawī are asserting the same thing, namely, that the hadith is forged; but al-Qārī follows two of his idiosyncrasies: first, he misunderstands al-Sakhwī’s statement to mean other than “forged”; second, he uses the terms “unestablished” and “without basis” indifferently.

- The entry, “The white rooster is my friend and the friend of my friend and the enemy of my enemy” where al-Qārī positively affirms that it is not forged without forwarding any proof.

Al-Qārī often discusses what he might call “sound meaning regardless of Prophetic authenticity”; this lengthens his text but improves its didactic benefits at the expense of hadithic sharpness. For even if the Prophetic Hadith is Divinely-revealed and incomparable to the rest of human discourse, it is not a precondition that a saying must be spoken by the Prophet [p] to be beneficial to humankind or Sharī‘a-worthy of discussion, explanation, and even recommendation. Benefits are found in the sayings of the Companions and Successors, the Imams of fiqh, the Sufis, the Israelite reports, the ancient philosophers and physicians, etc. As related from our liege-lord ‘Ali ibn Abī Tālib [p], “Wisdom is the lost property of the believer, wherever he finds it he has the right to take it.” Similarly, Imām Ahmad said, “I seldom look into a book except I benefit.” Hence al-Qārī’s very frequent remark that a hadith may be “baseless” (lā aṣlā lahu) or “untrue (ghayr saḥīḥ) in its phrasing (mabnā`) or wording (lafţ) but true (saḥīh) in its meaning (ma’nā).” He takes this interesting stance notably when he discusses famous Sufi hadiths such as “I was a Treasure unknown...” and “Whoever knows himself knows his Lord” but also in many other entries such as “Among you women are those that spend half their lives not praying!”, “The Arabs are the leaders of the non-Arabs”; “The believer speaks truth and believes what he is told”; “The believer’s back is a qibla”; “The best worship is the hardest one” the wording, “when there was no Ādam nor water nor clay” in the entry, “I was a Prophet when Ādam was still between water and clay”; etc. – Allāh have mercy on him!

15Although our Sufi Masters tell us that not one single good teaching reaches us except it was revealed to and transmitted by our Prophet [p] first, whether in, before, or after his time as Imām al-Būṣīrī said: “And each without exception takes from the Messenger of Allāh [p]” while Shaykh Yūsuf al-Nabhānī said: “And every single favor in creation comes from Allāh to him [p], and from him to everything else.”