

Critical Study and Manuscript Analysis of Musnad Abū Ya'la al-Mawṣilī

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Abstract: This article is an analysis of the manuscript of Musnad Abū Ya'la Al-Mūṣilī. The analysis of Al-Mūṣilī's work aims to reveal the contents of the Musnad based on the manuscript approach. Musnad Abū Ya'la Al-Mūṣilī uses the manuscript identification approach and manuscript content analysis. From the results of the identification and analysis, it was found that Abū Ya'la had two versions of the Musnad, Al-Kabīr and Al-Ṣagīr - which were termed by scholars after him as differentiators. The newly discovered manuscript is only Al-Ṣagīr. This Musnad has advantages because of the sanad 'ālī it has, but it is not free from the shortcomings of the absence of commentary on the hadiths contained in it.

Keywords: Abū Ya'la Al-Mawṣilī, analysis, Musnad, manuscripts.

Abstrak: Artikel ini adalah analisa terhadap naskah Musnad Abū Ya'la Al-Mūṣilī. Analisa atas karya Al-Mūṣilī ini bertujuan mengungkap isi kandungan musnad berdasarkan pendekatan naskah. Musnad Abū Ya'la Al-Mūṣilī ini menggunakan pendekatan identifikasi naskah dan analisa isi naskah. Dari hasil identifikasi dan analisa ditemukan bahwa Abū Ya'la memiliki dua versi Musnad, Al-Kabīr dan Al-Ṣagīr -yang diistilahkan oleh para ulama setelahnya sebagai pembeda. Naskah yang baru ditemukan adalah Al-Ṣagīr saja. Musnad ini memiliki keunggulan karena sanad 'ālī yang dimilikinya, namun tidak lepas dari kekurangan dari sisi tidak adanya komentar terhadap hadis-hadis yang ada di dalamnya.

Kata kunci: Abū Ya'la Al-Mūṣilī, analisa, Musnad, naskah

1. Introduction

The *Musnad* is the first authentic, systemic *ḥadīth* book to appear in the *ḥadīth* historiography of the Prophet Muhammad (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). This is because the period prior to the *Musnad's* appearance focused on two categories only, namely: (1) traditions mixed with legal judgements (*fiqh*) coming from the caliphs and Companions; and (2) pure traditions without adequate organisation of material (M. M. Azami, 1977).

The first category was pioneered by the Companion Zayd ibn Ṣābit (d. 45 AH) in his book *Farā'id*, which deals with marriage and divorce (M. M. Azami, 1977). After that, the *Muṣannafāt* and *Muwatta'* books emerged. These were based on jurisprudence and were not purely traditions of the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) but also included the reports of the Companions and *tābi'īn* as well as personal opinions (al-Gaurī, 2010). The second category does not

even deserve the name *Kitāb*. According to Azami, in pre-classical times the term *kitāb* referred more to a form of *risālah*—not a personal letter, *nuskhah*, or *ṣaḥīfah* (M. M. Azami, 1978). The book in question contains only fragments of a single successor, such as *al-Ṣaḥīfah al-Ṣādiqah* of ‘Abdullāh b. ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ, or Hammām’s *Nuskhah Mashhūrah* which he quotes from Abū Hurayrah.

It was only later, according to Ibn Ḥajar’s account, that the *Musnad* was pioneered by ‘Ubaydullāh ibn Mūsā al-‘Absī al-Kūfī, Musaddad b. Musarhad al-Baṣrī, Asad b. Mūsā al-Umawī, and Nu‘aym b. Ḥammād al-Khuzā‘ī. After that, almost all traditionists compiled books of traditions in the *Masānīd* (plural of *Musnad*) system (Ibn Ḥajar, n.d.).

Musnad is the object form (*maf‘ūl*) of the verb *asnada*, which means *aḍḍāfa* or *nasaba* (al-Minshāwī, n.d.). It is derived from the word *sanad*, which can mean two things: (1) high and rising ground at the foot of the mountain, because the correspondent “leans” it to the source; and (2) trustworthy (al-Ḥashīsh, 2003). From this etymological aspect, the *sanad* is then understood as the line of *al-rijāl al-mūṣilah li-l-matn*, the connection of *ḥadīth* narrators that leads to the *matn* (content of the *ḥadīth*) (al-Ṭaḥḥān, 2004). Thus, the *Musnad* tradition can be loosely interpreted as “corresponded information.”

Based on this etymological aspect, al-Baghdādī terminologically defines it as a tradition that is connected between the correspondent and the source. That is, if there is a connected *sanad*, it can be called *Musnad*. This includes *marfū‘*, *mawqūf*, and *maqṭū‘*. This view is followed by Ibn al-Ṣabbāgh in *al-Uddah* (al-Suyūṭī, n.d.). However, he does not doubt that most *ḥadīth* scholars use it specifically for the Prophet’s traditions (al-Baghdādī, n.d.), as also mentioned by al-Ḥākim (al-Ḥākim, 1977). The third opinion comes from Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr—a contemporary of al-Baghdādī—who does not require connectivity (*ittiṣāl*). This means that if it is attributed to the Prophet (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him), even if there is a disconnection (*inqiṭā‘*), it is valid as a *Musnad* (Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, 1837 AH; Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, 1986). Al-Suyūṭī summarises these three different opinions in his composition:

المُسْنَدُ: الْمَرْفُوعُ ذَا اتِّصَالٍ ... وَقِيلَ: أَوَّلٌ، وَقِيلَ: التَّالِي

The systematic writing of the *Musnad* is also divided into three forms, as mentioned by al-Baghdādī, namely: alphabetical arrangement of the names of the Companions (*mu‘jamah*); alphabetical arrangement of the closest tribe to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him); and alphabetical arrangement of the Companions based on their pioneering status (*al-sawābiq*) and contribution to the religion (al-Baghdādī, n.d.; al-Kattani, 2000). All three treat the Companions as *aṣl al-riwāyah* as the reference for the systematic writing of *Musnad* books, although with variations in definition. This makes them historiographically different from previous genres that emphasized certain themes (*abwāb*), especially *fiqh*. However, it should be noted that even the above definition cannot deny the diverse realities related to the writing of *Musnad* books.

There are *Musnad* books that depart from the standard, including: (a) *Masānīd* that are composed from a single source or a combination of specific categories—examples: *Musnad Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq*, *Musnad al-Arba‘ah*, *Musnad al-Asharah*, *Musnad al-Muqillīn*, *Musnad al-Ṣaḥābah*

alladhīna nazalū Miṣr, etc.; (b) *Masānīd* deliberately organized by *fiqh* chapters, such as the *Musnad* of Baqī ibn Makhlad al-Andalūsī (d. 276); (c) *Masānīd* organized according to selected themes (*abwāb*), such as the *Musnad* of al-Sirāj (d. 313 AH). Even the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* fall under the category of *Musnad*, given that the nomenclature is explicitly included in the title *al-Jāmi‘ al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, and the traditions are corresponded. There are also *Masānīd* organized in alphabetical order—more similar to al-Suyūṭī’s *al-Jāmi‘ al-Ṣaḥīḥ*—such as al-Daylamī’s *Musnad al-Firdaws* (d. 558 AH); and *Masānīd* organized by selected sentences, similar to Ibn al-Athīr’s *Jāmi‘ al-Uṣūl* but not in alphabetical order, such as al-Qudā‘ī’s *Musnad al-Shihāb* (d. 454 AH) (al-Gaurī, 2010).

Among the *musnad* that is quite important especially according to experts are *Musnad Abū Ya‘lā al-Mawṣilī* (al-Mawṣilī, 2017), which is regarded as having among the highest *sanad* profiles, as it shares many similarities with the teachers of the authors of the *Kutub al-Sittah*. Therefore, it is important that this *Musnad* be analysed in greater depth.

2. Literature Review

The study of *Musnad* books has a long history in *ḥadīth* studies. M. M. Azami (1977, 1978) asserts that before the emergence of the *Musnad* genre, *ḥadīth* works were only divided into two categories: first, traditions mixed with *fiqh* law as found in the works of Zayd ibn Ṣābit such as *Farā‘id*; and second, pure but poorly organised traditions, such as *al-Ṣaḥīfah al-Ṣādiqah* by ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ and *Nuskhah* Hammām ibn Munabbih. Subsequent developments were marked by the emergence of *Muṣannafāt* and *Muwaṭṭa‘āt*, which were *fiqh* in nature, until *Masānīd* became the model for the systematic codification of *ḥadīth*.

According to Ibn Ḥajar, the pioneers of *Musnad* writing were ‘Ubaidullāh ibn Mūsā al-‘Absī, Musaddad ibn Musarhad, Asad ibn Mūsā, and Nu‘aim ibn Ḥammād. From this point, the *Musnad* genre developed, which arranged *ḥadīths* based on the names of the Companions who narrated them. Al-Baghdādī and al-Kattānī added that the systematics of *Musnad* writing varied: some were based on the alphabet, the tribes closest to the Prophet, or the status of the Companions as pioneers. These methodological differences show that *Musnad* occupies a unique position in *ḥadīth* historiography compared to the thematic genre of *fiqh*.

Some notable *Musnad* works include the widely known *Musnad Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*, the *Musnad* of Baqī ibn Makhlad, which is organised according to chapters of *fiqh*, and the thematic *Musnad al-Sirāj*. Even *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* can be categorised as *Musnad* because they explicitly mention *al-Jāmi‘ al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ*. In this context, *Musnad Abū Ya‘lā al-Mawṣilī* has received attention because it has a high *sanad* (*sanad ‘ālī*) and is often compared to the teachers who compiled *Kutub al-Sittah*.

Modern manuscript studies, such as those conducted by Ḥusain Salīm Asad, Irsyād al-Ḥaqq, and *Markaz al-Buḥūs*, identify two versions of Abū Ya‘lā’s work: *al-Kabīr* and *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*. Unfortunately, the only manuscript that has survived is *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*. Analysis of the manuscript shows its superiority in terms of the number of high *sanads*, but also its weakness due to the absence of comments or assessments of the quality of the *ḥadīth*. In fact, some *ḍa‘īf ḥadīths* and a small number

of *mawḍūʿ ḥadīths* have been found. Thus, previous studies emphasise the importance of in-depth philological and *ḥadīth* criticism of Abū Yaʿlā's work, both in terms of the structure of the manuscript and the quality of the narrations it contains.

3. Method

This study employed a manuscript identification approach to trace and verify the existence of different versions of *Musnad Abū Yaʿlā al-Mawṣilī*. The researcher referred to catalogues and archival references, such as the collections preserved in *Maktabah Sulaimāniyah*, *Dār al-Kutub al-Khalīliyyah*, *Dāʾirah al-Maʿārif al-ʿUṣmāniyyah*, *Maktabah al-Fātiḥ*, and *Maktabah al-Azharīyyah*. In addition, earlier reports from scholars like Ḥusain Salīm Asad and Irsyād al-Ḥaqq were consulted, which mention both the *al-Kabīr* and *al-Ṣaghīr* versions of the *Musnad*. Through this stage, the study established that only *al-Ṣaghīr* has been preserved in full, while *al-Kabīr* remains fragmented in citations and secondary references.

The second methodological step involved manuscript content analysis, focusing on the internal structure and arrangement of narrations in the *Musnad*. This included an examination of how Abū Yaʿlā organized *ḥadīth* according to the names of the Companions, beginning with *al-ʿAsharah al-Mubashsharah* (the ten promised Paradise), then participants of Badr, Ḥudāibiyah, *Ahl al-Bayt*, and other groups of Companions. The analysis also assessed the style of narration, the recurrence of identical reports, the presence of high transmission chains (*sanad ʿālī*), and the absence of evaluative comments on *ḥadīth* authenticity.

The study applied critical textual evaluation to determine the reliability of the content. Data from previous editors, such as Asad's calculation of 7,555 narrations with approximately 15.3% categorized as weak (*ḍaʿīf*), were revisited and compared with other scholarly findings reporting even fabricated (*mawḍūʿ*) narrations. This critical approach highlighted both the strengths and weaknesses of the *Musnad*, underscoring the need for further comparative research with parallel works like *al-Maṭālib al-ʿĀliyah* of Ibn Ḥajar and *Itthāf al-Khairah al-Mahrah* of al-Būṣīrī to position Abū Yaʿlā's work accurately within the broader landscape of *ḥadīth* literature.

4. Results and Discussion

Abū Yaʿlā Al-Mawṣilī

His name is Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn Al-Muṣannā ibn Yaḥyā ibn ʿIsā ibn Hilāl Al-Tamīmī, Abū Yaʿlā Al-Mawṣilī. He was born on the 3rd of Shawl in 210 AH in Mosul. Mosul (Mawṣil) is the land of Jazīrah between Dijlah and Furāt. There were scholars and imams of all kinds and disciplines. According to al-Ḥamuwī, it was one of the beacons of Islam, with few equals (al-Ḥamuwī, 1995). It is said that it was so named because from there one could reach between the lands of Sinjār and Hādīshah. Another opinion states that it was the name of the king for whom Mosul was named. The city was conquered by the Muslims during the time of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb in 20 AH through the then governor of Azerbaijan, 'Utbah ibn Farqad al-Sulamī (al-Ḥamuwī, 1995).

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Abū Ya'lā grew up in an academic and respectable family where his father, uncle, and grandfather were hadith scholars. There is no doubt that this had a great influence on his intellectual development. He learned knowledge at an early age and traveled to various countries and studied with hadith scholars with the help of his father and uncle (al-Mawṣilī, 1988). He first studied with the authorities in his home country of Mosul. At the age of fifteen he traveled (*riḥlah*) to Makkah, Madīnah, Bagdād, Baṣrah, Kūfah, Egypt, Hamazān, Abadān, Rayy, Nail, Harāh, Nasā, Wāsiṭ, Alepo, Later, he studied with 275 hadith scholars as listed in his *Mu'jam* (al-Mawṣilī, 1986).

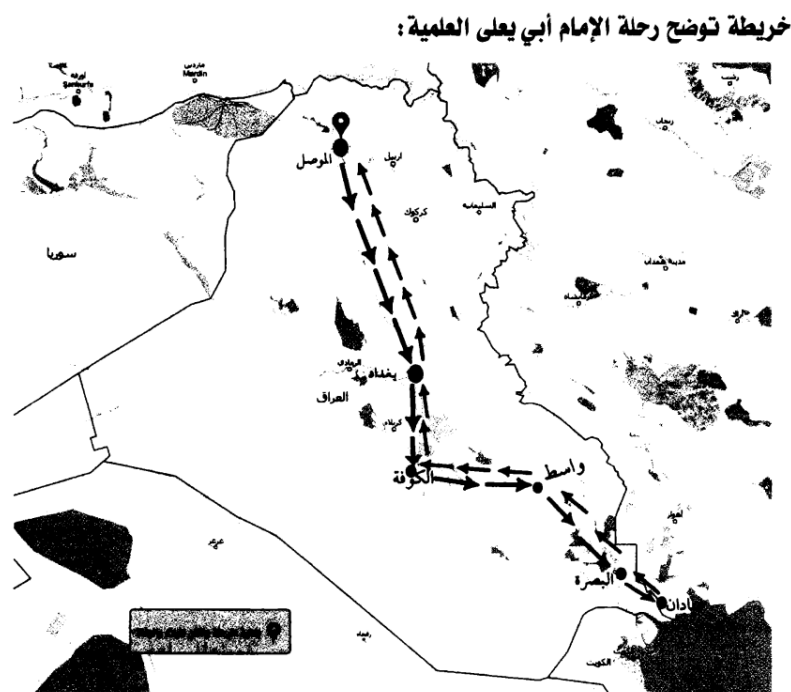


Figure. 1

Born in 210 AH/825 CE, Abū Ya'lā is categorized in the *ṭabaqah* after those of al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others (the twelfth *ṭabaqah*). However, he studied with many of their teachers, such as Ibn Abī Shaybah, Abū Khaythamah, 'Alī ibn al-Madīnī, Yaḥyā ibn Ma'īn, Abū Zur'ah, and even his own teacher Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (al-Mawṣilī, 1988). He was only five years older than al-Nasā'ī, but he possessed a higher *sanad* than him. Therefore, Ibn Ḥibbān included him in the category of those who narrated from the *Tābi' al-Tābi'īn* (tenth degree), because there were only three people

between him and the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) (Ḥibbān, 1973).

Not only his teachers, but Abū Ya'la's students were also prominent figures, such as al-Nasā'ī, Ibn Ḥibbān, al-Ṭabarānī, Ibn al-Sunnī, Ibn 'Adī, al-Rāmahurmuzī, and many others. *Ḥadīth* scholars are unanimous about his expertise (*thiqqah*), as expressed by the father of Ibn Mandah when he visited him: "I am visiting you because of the consensus of today's scholars on your credibility and capability (*thiqqah wa itqān*)" (al-Ḍahabī, 2006).

Nevertheless, there are a few oblique remarks that call him a *mudallis* (concealing an intermediary in transmission). Ibn 'Adī, as quoted by al-Ḍahabī when discussing Sulaimān b. Dāwūd al-Syāzakūnī—a weak (*ḍa'īf*) narrator—said: "Abū Ya'la and al-Ḥasan b. Sufyān, when narrating from him, both said: 'Sulaimān Abū Ayyūb told us (*ḥaddathanā*),' but they did not add the intermediate narrator. They both practiced *tadlīs* and concealed it" (al-Ḍahabī, 2006). However, this attribution of *tadlīs* is not valid, given that Abū Ya'la explicitly mentions al-Syāzakūnī in his *Mu'jam al-Shuyūkh* with the full mention of his name and *laqab*. The same occurs when he narrates from him in several places in the *Musnad*, stating "Sulaimān al-Syāzakūnī" (al-Mawṣilī, 1988).

Therefore, there is no doubt about the credibility of Abū Ya'la. Al-Ḥākim said: "I saw Abū 'Alī al-Ḥāfiẓ admiring Abū Ya'la al-Mawṣilī for his memorization and accuracy in *ḥadīth*, to the extent that nothing was missed except a little." Then al-Ḥākim declared him as "*thiqqah ma'mūn*" (al-Ḥākim, 1977). Abū 'Amr b. Ḥamdān was asked why he favored Abū Ya'la over al-Ḥasan b. Sufyān. He replied: "Abū Ya'la taught the *ḥadīth* seeking reward (*iḥtisāb*), while al-Ḥasan sought income (*iktisāb*)" (al-Ḍahabī, 2006).

Abū Ya'la al-Mawṣilī raḥimahu-Llāh lived 97 years and passed away on Thursday, 14 Jumādā al-Ūlā 307 AH (919 CE). The marketplaces were closed on the day of his death, and his funeral was attended by a great multitude. He was buried on Friday.

His name is remembered through his works, which include: *al-Musnad al-Kabīr* (transmitted by al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Muqri'), reportedly comprising 42 large volumes (al-Sam'ānī, 1962); *al-Musnad al-Ṣaghīr* (transmitted by Abū 'Amr ibn Ḥamdān); *al-Mu'jam* (a register of his teachers); *al-Mafārīd*; *Kitāb al-Tafsīr* (mentioned by Ibn Taymiyyah; see Taymiyyah, 1995); *Musnad al-Magāribah* (mentioned by Ibn Ḥajar in *al-Mu'jam al-Mufahris*); *Mu'jam al-Ṣaḥābah* (mentioned by al-Bābānī in *Ḥadiyyah al-Ārifīn*); *Juz fih Talāṣah Majālis*; and *Juz ākhār li Abī Ya'la* (mentioned by Ibn Ḥajar and Ḥājī Khālīfah in *Kashf al-Zunūn*) (al-Bābānī, 1951; al-Ṣafadī, 2000).

Manuscript Identification

Musnad Abī Ya'la al-Mawṣilī is a highly important work that has received much praise from scholars. Al-Sam'ānī reports the statement of Ismā'īl ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Faḍl al-Tamīmī: "I read many *musnads* such as *Musnad al-Adanī* and *Musnad Aḥmad ibn Manī'*, and they are like rivers. But the *Musnad of Abī Ya'la* is like an ocean that combines rivers" (al-Sam'ānī, 1962).

It should be emphasized, as mentioned earlier regarding Abū Ya‘lā’s works, that his *Musnad* is divided into two: *al-Kabīr* and *al-Ṣaghīr*. This was hinted at by al-Ḍahabī, who stated: “Correct. Without exception, the *Musnad* in the hands of the people of Iṣbahān from Ibn al-Muqri’. Unlike the *Musnad* that we narrated from Abū ‘Amr ibn Ḥamdān, it is a summary of it” (al-Ḍahabī, 2006). Al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar in *al-Maṭālib al-‘Āliyah bi Zawā’id al-Masānīd al-Ṭamāniyyah* as well as al-Būṣīrī in *Ittiḥāf al-Khairah al-Mahrah bi Zawā’id al-Masānīd al-‘Asharah* also refer to the narration of Ibn al-Muqri’, as transmitted by al-Sam‘ānī from his teachers in *al-Taḥbīr* and *al-Ansāb* (Ibn Ḥajar, 1998; al-Būṣīrī, 1999; al-Sam‘ānī, 1962).

As for *Musnad al-Ṣaghīr*, it was narrated by Abū ‘Amr ibn Ḥamdān and is the version that has reached us today. Al-Haythamī refers to it in *Majma‘ al-Zawā’id wa Manba‘ al-Fawā’id* and *al-Maqṣad al-‘Alī fī Zawā’id Musnad Abī Ya‘lā al-Mawṣilī* (al-Haythamī, 1994). Based on existing manuscripts, Abū Ya‘lā’s biographical sources, book catalogues, and excerpts from the book, there is a consensus to refer to it simply as *al-Musnad*. Although *al-Musnad al-Kabīr* is also often referred to as *al-Musnad*, some scholars add the word *al-Kabīr* for distinction.

The first manuscript that Ḥusain Salīm Asad used for publication was the copy from *Shahīd ‘Alī Bāsyā* in Turkey. This was later followed by *Markaz al-Buḥūs*, which relied on other manuscripts such as: (a) *Maktabah Sulaimāniyah*, (b) *Dār al-Kutub al-Khalīliyyah*, (c) *Dā’irah al-Ma‘ārif al-‘Usmāniyyah*, (d) *Maktabah al-Fātiḥ*, and (e) *Maktabah al-Azhariyyah* (Asad, 1990s; Sazkīn, 1991).

Prof. Irsyād al-Ḥaqq also mentioned two manuscripts that he personally consulted in his research: (1) the copy preserved in *Maktabah Shahīd ‘Alī Bāsyā* (which is identical to the one catalogued in *Maktabah Sulaimāniyah*), and (2) the manuscript found in *Maktabah al-Shaykh Muḥibbu-Llāh al-Rāshidī al-Sandī*. In addition to these two, he also noted the existence of several other important manuscript holdings, including those in *Maktabah al-Fātiḥ* in Fes (Morocco), *Maktabah Ṣā’ib* in Ankara, *Maktabah Āṣifīyyah* in Hyderabad (India), and *Maktabah Shaykh Badī‘ al-Dīn al-Rāshidī* (Irsyād, 2005; Sazkīn, 1991). The wide geographical spread of these manuscripts—from the Ottoman sphere to the Indian subcontinent and North Africa—demonstrates the extent to which *Musnad Abī Ya‘lā* was transmitted, preserved, and studied across different Islamic intellectual centers. Abū Ya‘lā’s *Musnad* remains a significant *ḥadīth* reference, even though some of its text is missing or incomplete.

In a related note, al-Mubārakfūrī in his *Muqaddimah Tuḥfah* pointed to another significant witness: a complete copy of al-Syawkānī’s writings that has been preserved in *al-Khazānah al-‘Almāniyyah* (Germany) (al-Mubārakfūrī, 1990s). Although this does not represent a direct manuscript of *Musnad Abī Ya‘lā*, the fact that later major scholars such as al-Syawkānī engaged with and transmitted parts of Abū Ya‘lā’s work demonstrates its intellectual vitality and continued relevance in the broader tradition of *ḥadīth* scholarship. These further highlights how Abū Ya‘lā’s *Musnad* remained an influential text, not only in the medieval period but also in later centuries, bridging classical and modern *ḥadīth* criticism.

As has been emphasized, both versions of the *Musnad* of Abū Ya‘lā were transmitted through a single primary narrator: Ibn al-Muqri’ for *al-Kabīr* and Ibn Ḥamdān for *al-Ṣaghīr*. This fact

underlines the limited but traceable isnād network through which the work reached subsequent generations. The editions published by Irsyād al-Ḥaqq and *Markaz al-Buḥūs* did not provide a full *sanad* for the text of *al-Kabīr*, largely because the complete text has not survived in extant manuscript form. Consequently, their critical editions rely more heavily on *al-Ṣaghīr* and its transmission chain. Nevertheless, Ibn Ḥajar and al-Būṣīrī, two authoritative hadith scholars, did record the *sanad* of the *Musnad al-Kabīr*, thereby preserving its chain of transmission in their supplementary works (*zawā'id*) (Ibn Ḥajar, 1998; al-Būṣīrī, 1999).

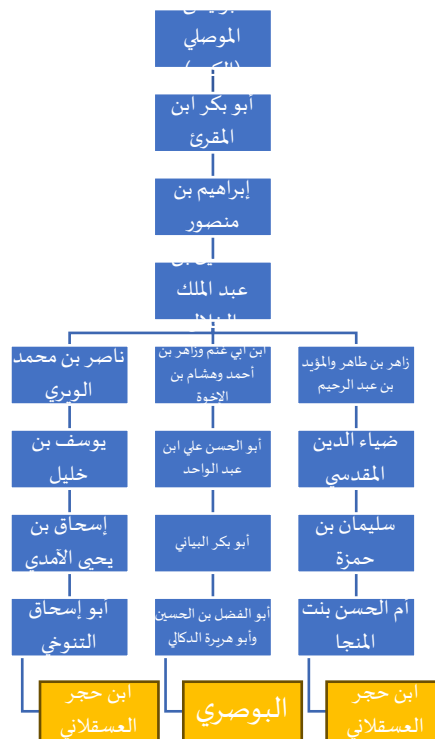


Figure. 2

Zāhir also added another transmission line from Sa'īd ibn Abī al-Rajā', who narrated from Ibrāhīm ibn Manṣūr and Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Nu'mān from Abū Ya'lā (al-Sam'ānī, 1962). This additional chain demonstrates the diversity of routes through which Abū Ya'lā's *Musnad* circulated in scholarly circles. The narration of *al-Ṣaghīr* was also received by Ibn Ḥajar through Zāhir, further underscoring the reliability of this transmission. In this case, Zāhir narrated from Abū Sa'd Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Kanjarūzī, from Abū 'Amr Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥamdān, who directly transmitted from Abū Ya'lā (Ibn Ḥajar, 1998). This detail is crucial, as it links the preserved version of *al-Ṣaghīr* to a verified and recognized chain of transmission that was later acknowledged in the works of leading hadith critics.

This narration through al-Kanjarūzī is not merely preserved in literary references but is also corroborated by extant manuscripts. Notably, in the *al-Sandiyyah* manuscript, the Zāhir route is documented via Abū al-Qāsim Tamīm ibn Abī Sa'īd from Abū Rauḥ 'Abd al-Mu'izz ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥarawī. The presence of this isnād in manuscript evidence provides important confirmation of its authenticity and continuity in the tradition of *Musnad Abī Ya'lā*. Furthermore, this transmission

path is explicitly cited by al-Ḥābīb in several of his works, thereby reflecting its acceptance and circulation among authoritative historians of hadith (al-Ḥābīb, 2006). The recurrence of these references in multiple sources suggests that the route was well known and widely acknowledged among hadith specialists, thus reinforcing the credibility of *al-Ṣaghīr*.

Meanwhile, Ibn al-Athīr introduced yet another narrator, Abū al-Faḍl al-Manṣūr ibn Abī al-Ḥasan al-Makhzūmī. However, he did not complete the *sanad* and instead mentioned only the phrase “*bi isnādihi ilā Abī Ya‘lā*” (al-Āthīr, 1989). Although fragmentary, this note is significant because it demonstrates how the reputation of Abū Ya‘lā’s *Musnad* allowed even incomplete chains to be cited as sufficient indications of authenticity. The presence of this additional narrator enriches the mapping of Abū Ya‘lā’s transmission network, while also reflecting the challenges of reconstructing complete chains from dispersed manuscript traditions.

This fragmentary reference by Ibn al-Athīr was later confirmed through the work of al-Haythamī, who, in his *Zawā'id*, explicitly added a narration from Abū Sa‘d al-Janzarūzī (identified as identical with al-Kanjarūzī), as narrated by Zāhir ibn Ṭāhir (al-Haythamī, 1994). By consolidating these reports, al-Haythamī effectively bridged earlier fragmentary citations with later comprehensive compilations. His inclusion of the Zāhir–Kanjarūzī route not only validates its historical continuity but also highlights its significance in preserving the integrity of *Musnad Abī Ya‘lā al-Ṣaghīr*. Collectively, these various testimonies—from manuscript witnesses, medieval hadith historians, and later critical compilers—affirm the multi-layered transmission history of Abū Ya‘lā’s work and provide valuable insight into the dynamics of hadith preservation across centuries.

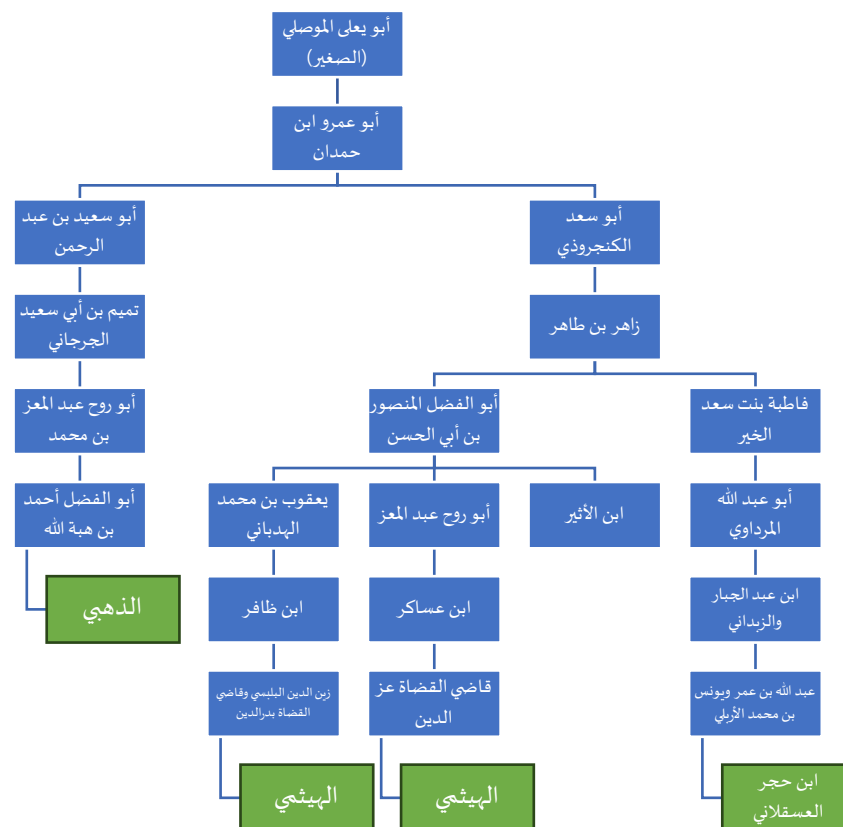


Figure. 3

Script Content Analysis

Abū Ya'la did not arrange his *Musnad* in the order of the names of the Companions according to the letters of the *muḥjam*, nor by tribe beginning with Banī Hāshim, nor by the earliest Companion to embrace Islam. Instead, he began with the *al-ʿAsharah al-Mubashsharah* (the ten promised Paradise), followed by the participants of the Battle of Badr, the Treaty of Ḥudaibiyah, and so on (al-Mawṣilī, 1988; al-Haythamī, 1994). In the *Musnad* (especially *al-Ṣaghīr*), Abū Ya'la narrates from 211 Companions, with most of the traditions being *marfūʿ* (directly connected to the Prophet), although some are not (Ibn Ḥajar, 1998).

The organization of the narrations in the *Musnad* follows the pattern of *Masānīd al-Ṣaḥābah*, often based on the quantity of traditions narrated from each Companion. For example, he gives precedence to the caliphs—who are four of the ten Companions guaranteed Paradise—yet no *Musnad* for ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān is found in the primary manuscripts used as references. The marginal notes in the *Sulaimānīyah Manuscript* indicate that the second volume closes with the *Musnad* of ʿUmar, followed in the third volume by the *Musnad* of ʿAlī and the *Musnad* of ʿUthmān. However, the *Musnad ʿUthmān* section is absent in the narration of Abū Saʿd al-Janzarūzī from Abū ʿAmr ibn Ḥamdān (al-Samʿānī, 1962; al-Ḥākim, 1977).

After that, Abū Ya'la enumerated a few *masānīd* of Companions who were *muqillīn* (those who narrated few traditions) and some *mubham* (anonymous) Companions. Then he compiled the *Masānīd al-Mukṣirīn mina al-Ṣaḥābah*, i.e., the Companions who narrated many traditions, such as Jābir ibn ʿAbdillāh, ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās, Anas ibn Mālik, ʿĀʾishah, ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd, ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUmar, and Abū Hurayrah (al-Būṣīrī, 1999).

Furthermore, he lists the *Masānīd Ahl al-Bayt*, including: al-ʿAbbās ibn ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, al-Faḍl ibn al-ʿAbbās, Fāṭimah bint Rasūlillāh, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn (the sons of ʿAlī), ʿAbdullāh ibn Jaʿfar, and ʿAbdullāh ibn al-Zubayr. After that, the Companions who were *muqillīn*, including female Companions (beginning with some of the *Ummuhāt al-Muʾminīn*), are mentioned again, except for ʿĀʾishah and Fāṭimah as they have already been included in the group of *mukṣirīn* and *Ahl al-Bayt*. The *Musnad* then closes with another male Companion, the last tradition being attributed to Sahl ibn Saʿd al-Sāʿidī.

Several important points can be highlighted regarding Abū Ya'la's methodology in compiling the *Musnad*:

1. Integration of multiple Companions' *Masānīd*: He incorporates the *Musnad* of a Companion into that of another. For instance, in the *Musnad* of ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd, there is a narration from Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī (no. 5067) and one from Abū al-Dardāʾ (no. 5121) (al-Mawṣilī, 1988).
2. Inclusion of *mursal* and *mawqūf* traditions: He also inserted *mursal* and *mawqūf* traditions from Companions or *tābiʿīn* into the *Musnads* of other Companions. For example, the narration of ʿIkrimah, the *mawlā* of Ibn ʿAbbās, appears in the *Musnad* of ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd (no. 5408).

3. Inconsistencies in organization: Some traditions are placed under the names of Companions without following a consistent pattern but stand independently.
4. Repetition of identical traditions: Occasionally, the same traditions with identical *sanads* are repeated in different sections.
5. Absence of *takhrīj* or grading: Abū Ya‘lā does not classify the traditions as *ṣaḥīḥ*, *ḥasan*, or *ḍa‘īf*, nor does he generally comment on the narrators with *tawthīq* (validation) or *tajrīḥ* (criticism)—except in very rare cases.

٢٢٢ - حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ سَالِمِ الْمَفْلُوحِ ثِقَةً

٧٣٢٧ - حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ عَامِرِ بْنِ زُرَّارَةَ الْحَضْرَمِيُّ الْكُوفِيُّ ثِقَةً

٣٦٢١ - حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ أَبِي بَكْرٍ الْمُقَدَّمِيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا الْحَسَنُ بْنُ دِعَامَةَ، حَدَّثَنَا عَمْرُ بْنُ شَرِيكِ، عَنْ

أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَنَسٍ، أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: «اِخْتَضِبُوا بِالْحِنَاءِ؛ فَإِنَّهُ طَيِّبُ الرَّيْحِ يُسَكِّنُ الدَّوْخَةَ»،

قَالَ أَبُو يَعْلَى: «لَا أُدْرِي شَرِيكَ هَذَا هُوَ ابْنُ أَبِي نَمِرٍ أَمْ لَا»

He is very careful and deep in his history. Example:

٧٣٨٢ - أَخْبَرَنَا أَبُو يَعْلَى قَالَ: وَجَدْتُ فِي كِتَابِي، عَنْ سُؤَيْدٍ. وَلَمْ أَرِ عَلَيْهِ عَلَامَةَ السَّمَاعِ، وَعَلَيْهِ (صَحَّحَ)

فَشَكَّكْتُ [ص: ٣٧٤] فِيهِ، وَأَكْبَرُ ظَنِّي أَنِّي سَمِعْتُهُ مِنْهُ. عَنْ ضِمَامِ بْنِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ الْمُعَاوِيَّ

The number of traditions in the *Musnad* of Abū Ya‘lā, as counted by Dr. Ḥusayn Salīm Asad, is 7,555. Based on his examination of the first 1,000 traditions, it was found that 152 are *ḍa‘īf* traditions that cannot be used as proof. The remainder consists of *ṣaḥīḥ*, *ṣaḥīḥ li-ghayriḥ*, *ḥasan*, and *ḥasan li-ghayriḥ*—all of which may serve as valid legal evidence (Asad, 1990s). Thus, the percentage of *ḍa‘īf* traditions unsuitable for proof stands at 15.3%. According to Asad, this percentage reflects the relative “cleanliness” of *Musnad Abū Ya‘lā* from unreliable traditions.

However, Asad’s view warrants critical reconsideration. First, the proportion of approximately 15% *ḍa‘īf* traditions is still significant. Second, both Irsyād al-Ḥaqq and reports from *Markaz al-Buḥūs* note the presence of nine *mawḍū‘* (fabricated) *ḥadīths* within the *Musnad* (Irsyād, 2005; Markaz al-Buḥūs, 2010s). This raises the question of whether the *Musnad* can still be considered “clean.”

It is also important to note that Abū Ya‘lā himself did not provide any *takhrīj* or explicit assessment of the quality of the *ḥadīths* in his *Musnad*—whether *ṣaḥīḥ*, *ḥasan*, or *ḍa‘īf*. This follows the methodological approach of his teacher, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, who likewise refrained from explicitly classifying the traditions he narrated. In this regard, Abū Ya‘lā differs from al-Bazzār, who in his *Musnad* occasionally indicated the status of the traditions (al-Ḍahabī, 2006; Azami, 1977).

Another notable limitation is the absence of certain Companions’ *masānīd* in the *Musnad*, such as those of Ubayy ibn Ka‘b, ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān, and Asmā’ bint Abī Bakr al-Ṣiddīq. Scholars suggest three possible explanations for these omissions: (1) they were lost during the compilation process, (2) they were not available to Abū Ya‘lā at the time of writing, or (3) he intended to add them later in life but passed away before completing the work (Ibn Ḥajar, 1998; al-Mawṣilī, 1988).

5. Conclusion

Abū Ya‘lā was born and raised in a prominent family, and his strong family support enabled him to study with confidence and to learn from *ḥadīth* scholars beyond his own generation. For this reason, his *al-Musnad* has been regarded as one of the most highly esteemed *masānīd*. However, his *Musnad* was transmitted in two versions, *al-Kabīr* and *al-Ṣaghīr*, as later traditionists classified them. Unfortunately, only *al-Ṣaghīr* has survived. Even then, it is deficient both in the number of *masānīd* it contains and in its overall quality. This may suggest that Abū Ya‘lā did not have sufficient time to complete it.

In the future, further research should be devoted to the *Musnad* of Abū Ya‘lā al-Mawṣilī. There remain many opportunities to investigate it more comprehensively, particularly by comparing it with *al-Kabīr*, which can still be reconstructed through the *zawā'id* collections, such as Ibn Ḥajar's *al-Maṭālib al-Āliyah* and al-Būṣīrī's *Ittiḥāf al-Khairah al-Mahrah*. Such comparative studies will allow Abū Ya‘lā's *Musnad* to be more accurately situated within the broader framework of *ḥadīth* literature.

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