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# Mapping Contemporary Hadith Studies: Beyond the *Riwāyah–Dirāyah* Bifurcation

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**Abstract:** The *riwāyah–dirāyah* distinction has long served as a foundational map for hadith studies, especially in matters of transmission, verification, and understanding. However, contemporary hadith research now extends into wider questions of authority, interpretation, application, pedagogy, digital preservation, spirituality, and civilisation. This article proposes a complementary, function-oriented map of contemporary hadith studies based on qualitative documentary reading of dissertation records, conference proceedings, and classificatory works in *ʿulūm al-ḥadīth*. Rather than using bibliometric counting, the study identifies recurring research orientations through conceptual saturation. The main finding is that contemporary hadith studies can be mapped into seven overlapping domains: Form, Conception, and Terminology; Maqāṣid, Function, and Authority; Transmission, Historiography, and Verification; Text, Meaning, and Interpretation; Application, Implementation, and Practice; Preservation, Pedagogy, and Continuity; and Philosophy, Spirituality, and Civilisation. These domains do not replace the riwāyah–dirāyah framework, but place it within a broader disciplinary cartography. The inherited pair remains central to transmission, verification, and interpretation, while the newer domains make visible contemporary developments such as living hadith, digital and computational hadith studies, pedagogical continuity, and civilisational reflection. The article also argues that this map is descriptive rather than normative: it can locate tradition-affirming scholarship, orientalist source criticism, and contemporary hadith scepticism within the same analytical field without validating their assumptions. The study contributes a provisional heuristic for understanding the expanded landscape of contemporary hadith studies while preserving its classical centre.

**Keywords:** *contemporary hadith studies; dirāyah; riwāyah; sunnah; thematic mapping.*

**Abstrak:** Pembedaan *riwāyah–dirāyah* telah lama menjadi peta dasar dalam kajian hadis, terutama dalam persoalan periwayatan, verifikasi, dan pemahaman. Namun, riset hadis kontemporer kini berkembang ke arah yang lebih luas, mencakup otoritas, penafsiran, penerapan, pedagogi, preservasi digital, spiritualitas, dan peradaban. Artikel ini menawarkan peta komplementer yang berorientasi fungsi untuk membaca kajian hadis masa kini, berdasarkan pembacaan dokumenter kualitatif

terhadap catatan disertasi, prosiding konferensi, dan karya-karya klasifikasi dalam *ʿulūm al-ḥadīth*. Alih-alih menggunakan penghitungan bibliometrik, kajian ini mengidentifikasi arah-arah riset yang berulang melalui kejenuhan konseptual. Temuan utama artikel ini menunjukkan bahwa kajian hadis kontemporer dapat dipetakan ke dalam tujuh ranah yang saling beririsan: Bentuk, Konsepsi, dan Terminologi; Maqāṣid, Fungsi, dan Otoritas; Transmisi, Historiografi, dan Verifikasi; Teks, Makna, dan Penafsiran; Aplikasi, Implementasi, dan Praktik; Preservasi, Pedagogi, dan Kesinambungan; serta Filsafat, Spiritualitas, dan Peradaban. Tujuh ranah ini tidak menggantikan kerangka riwāyah–dirāyah, tetapi menempatkannya dalam kartografi keilmuan yang lebih luas. Pasangan klasik tersebut tetap menjadi pusat bagi kajian transmisi, verifikasi, dan interpretasi, sementara ranah-ranah baru memperlihatkan perkembangan kontemporer seperti living hadith, kajian hadis digital-komputasional, kesinambungan pedagogis, dan refleksi peradaban. Artikel ini juga menegaskan bahwa peta tersebut bersifat deskriptif, bukan normatif: ia dapat menempatkan kesarjanaan pendukung tradisi, kritik sumber orientalis, dan skeptisisme hadis kontemporer dalam satu medan analisis tanpa membenarkan asumsi-asumsinya. Kajian ini berkontribusi dengan menawarkan heuristik awal untuk memahami perluasan lanskap kajian hadis kontemporer sambil tetap menjaga pusat klasiknya.

**Kata kunci:** *kajian hadis kontemporer; dirāyah; pemetaan tematik; riwāyah; sunnah.*

## 1. Introduction

Hadith did not enter Islamic learning as a mute archive of religious reports. From its earliest formation, it stood at the crossing point of memory and authority, language and law, piety and communal formation, narration and scholarly judgement. The hadith corpus preserved reports attributed to the Prophet, his Companions, and early authorities; yet it also generated a demanding scholarly tradition concerned with acquisition, transmission, criticism, arrangement, interpretation, and application. Its procedures did not remain confined to reports. They entered the making of law, theology, language, ethical instruction, pedagogy, and religious authority.[1]

Among the older concepts by which this disciplinary inheritance was described, the pairing of riwāyah and dirāyah has proved especially durable. Riwāyah directs attention to narration, reception, conveyance, and the preservation of what is reported. Dirāyah, by contrast, points to knowledge, scrutiny, rules of assessment, and the intellectual labour through which transmitted material is examined. Yet the two terms were not used with complete uniformity. In some formulations, ʿilm al-ḥadīth riwāyah denotes the transmission of what is attributed to the Prophet, while ʿilm al-ḥadīth dirāyah refers to the rules governing transmission, transmitters, and transmitted materials. In other discussions, dirāyah is enlarged to include much of the technical apparatus by

[1] See Mustafa Shah, ed., *The Hadith: Articulating the Beliefs and Constructs of Classical Islam*, Critical Concepts in Islamic Studies (London: Routledge, 2009); Mustafa Shah, "Ḥadīṯ, Language Of," in *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics Online*, ed. Lutz Edzard and Rudolf de Jong (Leiden: Brill, 2011), https://doi.org/10.1163/1570-6699_eall_EALL_SIM_000003.

which both sanad and matn are evaluated.[2] The distinction is therefore part of the inherited grammar of the discipline, and it remains more supple than the modern shorthand "transmission and interpretation" sometimes allows.

The present paper does not set out to unsettle the inherited riwāyah–dirāyah pair. To do so would be to misconstrue the architecture of hadith learning. Reports reach later generations through acts of transmission; they become objects of responsible knowledge through scrutiny, comparison, judgement, and disciplined understanding. The difficulty arises only when riwāyah and dirāyah are asked to bear the whole descriptive weight of contemporary hadith studies. Present research still asks whether a report has been reliably transmitted and soundly understood, but it also asks other questions. It asks how hadith and sunnah are defined, how authority and maqāṣid are argued, how the history of transmission, writing, codification, and criticism is narrated, how texts are explained across different interpretive registers, how sunnah is invoked in law, ethics, education, spirituality, public life, and digital settings, and how hadith is drawn into wider philosophical and civilisational debates.

This widening can be seen in the documentary record. Dissertation indexes show that research has moved from authentication and narrator criticism into terminology, historiography, commentary, authority, pedagogy, application, and contemporary engagement.[3] Conference proceedings register a similar movement, though often with a more immediate sensitivity to emerging concerns: interpretive method, spirituality, sustainability, finance, future planning, modern challenges, and the relation between revelation, science, and society.[4] Such materials do not suggest that the older centre of the discipline has receded. They suggest, rather, that this centre has generated several routes which the older binary, when used by itself, does not name with sufficient precision.

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[2] On the wider technical apparatus associated with hadith criticism, see ʿUthmān ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, *An Introduction to the Science of the Ḥadīth: Kitāb Maʿrifat Anwāʿ ʿIlm al-Ḥadīth*, trans. Eerik Dickinson (Reading: Garnett Publishing, 1999); Jonathan Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: OneWorld Publications, 2017).

[3] Markaz Tadwīn li al-Buḥūth wa al-Dirāsāt al-Ḥadīthiyyah, *Fihris ʿAnāwīn al-Rasāʾil al-Jāmiʿiyyah fī al-Sunnah wa al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah fī Qawāʿid Bayānāt Markaz Tadwīn li al-Buḥūth wa al-Dirāsāt al-Ḥadīthiyyah*, 1st ed. (Riyadh: Markaz Tadwīn li al-Buḥūth wa al-Dirāsāt al-Ḥadīthiyyah, 2022); Abū Saʿd al-Athārī, *Dalīl al-Rasāʾil al-Jāmiʿiyyah fī ʿulūm al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī fī Muʿẓam al-Jāmiʿāt al-Islāmiyyah ḥattā ʿĀm 2002*, with Lujnah al-Bibliyughrāfiyyah al-Islāmiyyah (al-Maktabah al-Shāmilah al-Dhahabiyyah, n.d.).

[4] See, for instance, Markaz Buḥūth al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah, "al-Nadawāt," accessed 1 May 2026, https://nadwa-hadith.com/ar/; Kulliyyat al-Dirāsāt al-Islāmiyyah wa al-ʿArabiyyah bi-Dubayy, ed., *al-Ḥadīth al-Sharīf wa-Taḥaddīyāt al-ʿAṣr: Nadwah ʿIlmiyyah Dawliyyah Thāniyah* (Dubai: Kulliyyat al-Dirāsāt al-Islāmiyyah wa al-ʿArabiyyah bi-Dubayy, 2005); Kulliyyat al-Dirāsāt al-Islāmiyyah wa al-ʿArabiyyah bi-Dubayy, ed., *ʿulūm al-Ḥadīth: Wāqiʿ wa-Āfāq: Nadwah ʿIlmiyyah Dawliyyah*, 2nd ed. (Dubai: Kulliyyat al-Dirāsāt al-Islāmiyyah wa al-ʿArabiyyah bi-Dubayy, 2006); Department of Qurʾān and Sunnah Studies, International Islamic University Malaysia, ed., *Engagement with Obscure Qurʾanic Verses and Ḥadīth Texts in Classical and Modern Literature: The Inaugural Jamalullail Chair for Prophetic Sunnah International Conference (JCIC1)* (Kuala Lumpur: International Islamic University Malaysia, 2020).

The present paper is not the first attempt to chart the territory of hadith scholarship, and it does not claim to be. Several substantial maps of the field already exist, though they are drawn on different cartographic principles and answer different questions. Fuat Sezgin's *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums* offers a philological and chronological catalogue of the hadith literature, organising works by author, period, and manuscript transmission; its concern is the textual history of the corpus itself, not the thematic shape of present-day research about it.[5] Gautier H. A. Juynboll's *Encyclopedia of Canonical Ḥadīth* maps the field through the biographies and transmission patterns of individual narrators, providing an indispensable narrator-centred index to the canonical collections.[6] Jonathan Brown's *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World* offers a historical-thematic survey written for students and general readers, tracing the formation of hadith authority across centuries and contested modern debates.[7] These three works are invaluable, but they are bibliographic, narrator-based, and historical-narrative maps respectively; none of them sets out to chart the thematic and functional shape of the field as it is currently being researched, taught, and produced. The present paper occupies that different cartographic register: rather than cataloguing texts, narrators, or historical periods, it asks what kinds of scholarly questions contemporary hadith research is actually asking, as evidenced in the documentary trail of dissertations and conferences, and how those questions might be gathered into a map that complements, rather than duplicates, the bibliographic and narrator-based cartographies already available.

The premise of the article is modest, but not incidental. The riwāyah–dirāyah frame remains foundational, yet it cannot bear the whole cartographic burden of the present field. It gives orientation, yet it does not supply the entire map. The task, then, is not to unsettle the inherited pair, nor to multiply categories for novelty's sake, nor to replace the bibliographic and narrator-based maps already produced by Sezgin and Juynboll. It is to place riwāyah and dirāyah, and the existing scholarly cartographies of the field, within a complementary arrangement of recurrent thematic domains, so that the breadth of current research production may be seen without dislodging the classical centre of the discipline or the value of prior mapping efforts.

This paper asks how the riwāyah–dirāyah distinction functions as an inherited classificatory frame, what thematic domains come into view when dissertation records, conference proceedings, and classificatory works are read together, and how these domains may be ordered without diminishing the significance of the inherited pair or the contribution of existing bibliographic and narrator-based maps. It proposes seven domains of contemporary hadith studies. These are not

[5] Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, vol. 1, *Qurʾānwissenschaften, Ḥadīth, Geschichte, Fiqh, Dogmatik, Mystik bis ca. 430 H* (Leiden: Brill, 1967); on Sezgin's philological-chronological cataloguing method, see also Christopher Melchert, "The ʿIjlī Family," *Journal of Abbasid Studies* 7, no. 1 (2020): 1–38, https://doi.org/10.1163/15700585-12341555.

[6] Gautier H. A. Juynboll, *Encyclopedia of Canonical Ḥadīth* (Leiden: Brill, 2007); Gautier H. A. Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition: Studies in Chronology, Provenance and Authorship of Early Ḥadīth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

[7] Jonathan Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: OneWorld Publications, 2017).

closed compartments, but regions of inquiry. A study of maqāṣid al-sunnah may sit most naturally within the domain of Maqāṣid, Function, and Authority, while still bearing upon interpretation and application. Digital hadith work may belong to preservation and pedagogy, yet also alter the conditions of verification, transmission, and access.

The paper's contribution lies in drawing a field map from observed patterns of academic production, rather than from an abstract search for symmetry or a restatement of existing bibliographic and narrator-based cartographies. It also suggests that such cartographic work may be useful beyond hadith studies, especially in disciplines where inherited classifications remain necessary but no longer name all the paths taken by contemporary research.

## 2. Method

This paper employs a qualitative documentary mapping method. The concern here is not to produce a bibliometric census of contemporary hadith research, nor to calculate the frequency with which themes recur. This methodological choice requires an explicit qualification. The seven domains proposed below are an interpretive-conceptual heuristic, arrived at through thematic saturation in qualitative reading rather than through statistical counting: once additional dissertation titles, conference sessions, or classificatory entries ceased to generate thematic categories not already captured by the seven domains, the reading was treated as having reached conceptual saturation for the purpose of this exploratory mapping.[8] This is an appropriate first step for a field that, to the author's knowledge, has not previously been mapped at this thematic-functional level of abstraction; it is not, however, a claim that the seven domains are statistically dominant, evenly weighted, or exhaustively verified, and the paper does not present them as such. Systematic coding of dissertation titles and abstracts against a fixed schema, and the production of frequency tables comparable to those used in scientometric studies of, for instance, maqāṣid research, would be a necessary and valuable next step, and is identified explicitly as a limitation and an agenda for future research in the concluding section.

The inquiry undertaken here is, accordingly, of an exploratory and interpretive kind. It follows the directions in which hadith-related research has moved and asks how those directions may be gathered into a more intelligible conceptual map. The method is therefore exploratory, interpretive, and cartographic. Titles, proceedings, bibliographical classifications, and selected writings on ʿulūm al-ḥadīth are read as traces of the ways in which the field has been ordered, practised, and imagined across different scholarly settings.

[8] On qualitative coding and the use of thematic saturation rather than frequency counts as a criterion of sufficiency in conceptual mapping, see Greg Guest, Arwen Bunce, and Laura Johnson, "How Many Interviews Are Enough? An Experiment with Data Saturation and Variability," *Field Methods* 18, no. 1 (2006): 59–82, https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X05279903.

The documentary materials used in this study fall into three groups. The first consists of dissertation and thesis records related to hadith, sunnah, sīrah, and the sciences of hadith. These include large bibliographical indexes, such as the Tadwīn index of university dissertations in sunnah and sīrah, as well as earlier guides to dissertations in ʿulūm al-ḥadīth. Such records matter not only because they list titles, but because they preserve choices made over time by students, supervisors, departments, and universities. They show what a field has chosen to ask, repeat, extend, and retrieve. The second group consists of selected conference proceedings and programme books on hadith, sunnah, interpretive method, spirituality, sustainability, finance, future planning, and contemporary challenges. Conference materials are useful because they often catch scholarly concerns while they are still in motion, before they settle into monographs, dissertations, or curricula. The third group consists of selected classical and modern works that discuss the meaning, scope, and classification of hadith knowledge, with particular attention to the distinction between riwāyah and dirāyah.[9] These works provide the inherited conceptual horizon against which the contemporary materials are read.

The materials were selected purposively. Relevance to contemporary hadith research, breadth of theme, and usefulness for comparing inherited and contemporary classifications were the main considerations. Dissertation records were read mainly through titles and, where available, through metadata such as degree level, institution, year, and subject classification. Conference materials were read through titles, general themes, session headings, and abstracts where these were available. Classificatory works were read for the ways in which they arranged, explicitly or implicitly, the field of hadith knowledge.

The analysis proceeded in three stages. The first stage involved open thematic reading, in which recurring terms and research concerns were identified. These included, among others, sunnah, hadith, khabar, athar, authority, ḥujjiyyah, maqāṣid, isnād, tadwīn, takhrīj, rijāl, al-jarḥ wa al-taʿdīl, ʿilal, sharḥ, fiqh al-ḥadīth, mukhtalif, mushkil, tanzīl, application, education, curriculum, digitalisation, spirituality, civilisation, and philosophical engagement. The second stage involved clustering these recurring concerns into broader thematic orientations. The third stage involved comparing these clusters with the inherited riwāyah–dirāyah frame, and with the bibliographic and narrator-based maps of Sezgin and Juynboll, to determine whether existing cartographies were sufficient as a contemporary functional map of the field.

The resulting domains should therefore be understood as analytical regions rather than rigid categories. Some studies fall clearly within one domain, while others cross several. A work on the

[9] On definitions of ʿilm al-ḥadīth riwāyah and ʿilm al-ḥadīth dirāyah, see ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Siddīq al-Ghumārī, *Tawjīh al-ʿInāyah li Taʿrīf ʿIlm al-Ḥadīth Riwāyah wa Dirāyah*, 3rd ed. (Cairo: Maktabah al-Qāhirah, 2008); Fathiddin Beyanouni, "ʿIlm al-Ḥadīth bayna al-Riwāyah wa al-Dirāyah," *Majallat al-Dirāsāt al-Islāmiyyah wa al-Buḥūth al-Akādīmiyyah* (Cairo) 56, no. 1 (2015): 187–257; al-Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad Shawwāṭ, *ʿIlm al-Ḥadīth Riwāyah wa ʿIlm al-Ḥadīth Dirāyah: Sīrat al-Muṣṭalaḥ wa Ḥadduhu wa Mafhūmuhu* (al-Alūkah, 2015); Jaʿfar al-Subḥānī, *al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī bayna al-Riwāyah wa al-Dirāyah* (Qom: Muʾassasah al-Imām al-Ṣādiq, 1998).

history of tadwīn, for example, may begin with transmission, historiography, and verification, yet it may also touch preservation, pedagogy, and the changing forms through which hadith knowledge is carried. A study of maqāṣid al-sunnah may address function and authority most directly, while its conclusions may alter the work of interpretation and application. The purpose of the map is therefore not to press every work into a separate compartment, but to make the larger shape of the field visible.

The study is subject to four qualifications. It draws upon selected documentary materials; it reads dissertation and conference records thematically rather than statistically; it treats the proposed map as provisional and conceptually, rather than frequency-, validated; and it represents a first attempt at a thematic-functional cartography of the field, complementing rather than supplanting the bibliographic and narrator-based maps of Sezgin and Juynboll. These qualifications do not weaken the purpose of the paper. They define it. The aim is not to offer a census, but to propose a disciplined and conceptually grounded map of the present field, whose quantitative validation is left as an explicit task for subsequent research.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### *3.1. The Riwāyah–Dirāyah Bifurcation as an Inherited Frame*

The distinction between riwāyah and dirāyah belongs to the inherited language of hadith learning. It is more than a terminological convenience. It names two obligations towards the Prophetic legacy: that reports be transmitted with care, and that what is transmitted be approached through disciplined understanding.[10] The first obligation attends to wording, chain, routes of transmission, reception, and conveyance. The second concerns meaning, evaluation, implication, and the intellectual disciplines through which both narrator and narrated material are assessed. In this compact pairing, hadith scholarship found a way to speak of preservation and comprehension without separating one from the other.

Yet the history of this distinction is not entirely simple. The inherited literature does not present a single, uniform account of the relationship between riwāyah and dirāyah. In some formulations, ʿilm al-ḥadīth riwāyah denotes the science concerned with transmitting what is attributed to the Prophet, including his statements, actions, approvals, qualities, biography, campaigns, and aspects of his life, while ʿilm al-ḥadīth dirāyah denotes the rules by which the conditions of transmission, the states of transmitters, and the categories of transmitted materials are known. In other formulations, however, dirāyah expands to include the rules governing both sanad

[10] For the classical formation of hadith learning and its concern with transmission, reception, narrator conduct, and disciplined understanding, see Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī ibn Thābit al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *al-Kifāyah fī Maʿrifat Uṣūl ʿIlm al-Riwāyah*, ed. Ibrāhīm ibn Muṣṭafā al-Dimyāṭī (Cairo: Dār al-Hudā, 2003); Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥākim al-Naysabūrī, *Maʿrifat Anwāʿ ʿulūm al-Ḥadīth wa Kammiyat Ajnāsihi*, ed. Aḥmad ibn Fāris al-Sallūm (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2003); Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, *An Introduction to the Science of the Ḥadīth*; ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Bakr al-Suyūṭī, *Tadrīb al-Rāwī fī Sharḥ Taqrīb al-Nawāwī*, ed. Naẓar Muḥammad al-Fāriyābī (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Kawthar, 1994).

and matn, and therefore includes what many modern readers might instinctively associate with authentication, criticism, and technical evaluation.[11] The distinction, accordingly, does not always correspond neatly to the modern assumption that riwāyah means transmission while dirāyah means interpretation. It carries a more layered history, and its precise contours vary according to the classificatory purpose of the scholar employing it.

This elasticity partly explains the continuing usefulness of the pair. The tradition did not treat riwāyah and dirāyah as two sealed compartments. They operated rather as broad orientations under which a range of practices could be gathered: acquisition, audition, memorisation, writing, transmission, narrator criticism, textual scrutiny, comprehension, reconciliation, commentary, and juridical derivation. The breadth of dirāyah in some definitions is itself instructive. It shows that the transmitted report was not regarded as bare material awaiting use, but as material already surrounded by rules of judgement. Nor was riwāyah a merely mechanical act of narration. To transmit hadith was to assume a discipline of trust, precision, restraint, and attentiveness to the conditions of conveyance.

For this reason, the present paper does not treat the riwāyah–dirāyah frame as exhausted. Such a judgement would be historically careless. The pair remains indispensable because it preserves two elementary facts about hadith: that it reaches later generations through transmission, and that it becomes meaningful through disciplined knowledge. It also retains its pedagogical force. For the beginner, it offers a first grammar of the field: the world of hadith studies concerns not only the routes by which reports are received, but also the criteria, habits, and intellectual disciplines through which they are weighed, evaluated, and understood.

The difficulty arises when the inherited pair is expected to function as a complete map of contemporary hadith studies. Contemporary research materials show that the field now operates through a wider array of questions: the concept and terminology of hadith and sunnah, the authority and function of sunnah, the history of transmission and codification, the interpretation of difficult or contested texts, the application of hadith in social and ethical contexts, the pedagogy and preservation of hadith learning, and the place of hadith in philosophical, spiritual, and civilisational discourses. These concerns may be linked to riwāyah and dirāyah, but they are not always adequately named by the bifurcation. Nor, as noted above, are they adequately named by the bibliographic cartography of Sezgin or the narrator-based cartography of Juynboll, both of which serve different and equally indispensable purposes.

A brief qualification is needed here. It is possible, at the level of further theoretical reflection, to ask whether the inherited pair of riwāyah and dirāyah may be complemented by riʿāyah,

[11] For the wider technical apparatus associated with hadith criticism, including transmission, narrator evaluation, sanad, matn, ʿilal, and classification of reports, see Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, *An Introduction to the Science of the Ḥadīth*; Jonathan Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World*.

understood as ethical, spiritual, and practical attentiveness to hadith.[12] Such a question is significant when the recognition of hadith is viewed not only as a matter of transmission and understanding, but also as a matter of embodiment, care, responsibility, and action. The present paper, however, does not pursue riʿāyah as a third dimension within the internal epistemology of hadith recognition. Its concern is different: to map contemporary hadith studies as a research field.

Seen from this angle, the task is not to abandon the inherited pair, but to place it within a more expansive cartography. Riwāyah and dirāyah remain the foundational coordinates of hadith learning. They name enduring commitments without which the discipline would lose its classical centre. Yet a map of contemporary hadith studies must also account for the wider research territories into which the field has moved: conceptual, functional, historical, interpretive, applied, pedagogical, institutional, spiritual, philosophical, and civilisational. The seven-domain map proposed in this paper is meant to make these territories visible while preserving the significance of the inherited frame and the contribution of existing bibliographic and narrator-based cartographies.

### *3.2. Documentary Materials and the Expansion of the Field*

A further indication that hadith studies cannot be sufficiently mapped through a narrow reading of the riwāyah–dirāyah bifurcation may be found in the bibliographical classification of dissertations and theses. Such indexes are not theoretical treatises in the strict sense, yet they are important witnesses to the practical organisation of a discipline. They preserve not only the titles of individual works, but also the classificatory instincts of compilers, departments, supervisors, and scholarly communities. If a field is partly known through the way its research is recorded, arranged, and made retrievable, then thesis indexes provide a valuable point of entry into the actual contours of hadith studies.

One useful older example is the guide to university dissertations in the sciences of Prophetic hadith up to 2002.[13] The guide arranges master's and doctoral theses thematically rather than merely alphabetically, and its categories include uṣūl al-ḥadīth, muṣṭalaḥ, takhrīj, naqd al-ḥadīth, al-jarḥ wa al-taʿdīl, ʿilm al-ruwāt, manāhij al-muḥaddithīn, riwāyat al-ḥadīth, al-ḥadīth al-mawḍūʿī, zawāʾid, sharḥ al-ḥadīth, fiqh al-sunnah, ʿilal al-ḥadīth, mukhtalif, mushkil, and the language of hadith. This arrangement is revealing because it shows that the inherited study of hadith had already been operationalised through a plurality of research headings. Even before the more recent expansion into

[12] The idea of riʿāyah as a possible complement to riwāyah and dirāyah is mentioned here only as a passing theoretical allusion. It is not developed in the present article, since it belongs to a separate inquiry into the internal epistemology of recognising, embodying, and acting upon hadith. Khairil Husaini Bin Jamil, "'Ilm al-Riʿāyah dalam Lapangan Pengajian Hadis" (presentation slides, Wacana Intelektual Pengajian al-Qur'an dan Hadis, Siri ke-4, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 23 November 2023).

[13] Abū Saʿd al-Athārī, *Dalīl al-Rasāʾil al-Jāmiʿiyyah fī ʿulūm al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī fī Muʿẓam al-Jāmiʿāt al-Islāmiyyah ḥattā ʿĀm 2002*. This guide is used here as a bibliographical witness to earlier thematic classification of postgraduate hadith research.

digital tools, social application, future studies, and civilisational discourse, the bibliographical organisation of hadith theses was already more differentiated than a simple opposition between transmission and understanding.

The more recent Tadwīn index of university dissertations in sunnah and sīrah enlarges the picture considerably.[14] By recording more than 8000 dissertation titles, it provides a broad view of the research energies directed towards hadith, sunnah, Prophetic biography, and related fields across universities in Saudi Arabia, the Gulf, the wider Arab world, and other Islamic contexts. Alongside familiar works on individual transmitters, specific collections, takhrīj, authenticity, and the methods of earlier scholars, one finds studies on educational, social, ethical, communicative, medical, economic, and contemporary questions. A recent regional study of doctoral theses in Türkiye likewise shows how dissertation records can reveal patterns of institutional contribution, chronological growth, and thematic distribution within contemporary hadith studies.[15] Such variety does not undermine the classical centre of the field. Rather, it shows that the classical centre has generated multiple research trajectories.

Conference proceedings show the same expansion in a more immediate form. A particularly instructive example is the series of international symposia organised in Dubai under the broad concern of hadith and sunnah studies. The first symposium, held in 2003, was devoted to ʿulūm al-Ḥadīth: Wāqiʿ wa-Āfāq, a title that remained close to the internal sciences of hadith and their prospects. The second, held in 2005, addressed al-Ḥadīth al-Sharīf wa-Taḥaddīyāt al-ʿAṣr, thus placing hadith explicitly in relation to contemporary challenges. Subsequent symposia moved through themes such as civilisational values in the Prophetic sunnah, sound understanding and renewal, foresight and future planning, excellence and skills development, finance and business, civil peace, national protection, human dignity, and sustainable development in the sunnah.[16] This sequence is valuable not merely as a list of events, but as evidence of how conference research moves from internal disciplinary questions to wider civilisational, social, ethical, developmental, and future-oriented concerns.

Other conference materials reinforce this picture. Proceedings on Qurʾān and sunnah interpretation show that the field of hadith studies often operates in conjunction with Qurʾānic

[14] Markaz Tadwīn li al-Buḥūth wa al-Dirāsāt al-Ḥadīthiyyah, *Fihris ʿAnāwīn al-Rasāʾil al-Jāmiʿiyyah fī al-Sunnah wa al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah*. The index is used here as a large contemporary title-index of university dissertations in sunnah and sīrah.

[15] Zeynep Armutlu, "Rasāʾil al-Duktūrah fī al-Ḥadīth wa-ʿulūmih fī Turkiyyā bayna ʿĀmay 1997–2024: Dirāsah Istiqrāʾiyyah Taḥlīliyyah," *Hadith* 12, no. 10 (2024): 99–140, https://doi.org/10.61218/hadith.1469727.

[16] See *ʿulūm al-Ḥadīth: Wāqiʿ wa-Āfāq*; *al-Ḥadīth al-Sharif wa-Taḥaddīyāt al-ʿAṣr*; Markaz Buḥūth al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah, "al-Nadawāt," which lists the sequence of symposia and their themes, including civilisational values, sound understanding and renewal, future planning, finance and business, civil peace, human dignity, and sustainable development in the sunnah.

studies, tafsīr, legal theory, and hermeneutics.[17] Conferences on obscure or problematic hadith texts bring attention to meaning, ambiguity, contradiction, and interpretive responsibility. Thematic conferences on finance, spirituality, sustainability, and the future of humanity draw hadith and sunnah into questions of values, social order, human well-being, economic conduct, mental health, and the moral direction of contemporary life. These concerns do not belong simply to takhrīj, narrator criticism, or hadith commentary, although they may depend upon all of them. Their central concern is the movement from report and precedent to meaning, application, preservation, and higher reflection.

These documentary materials also caution against treating contemporary expansion as if it were merely a concession to modern trends. The broadening of hadith studies arises partly from the internal richness of the hadith tradition itself. The hadith corpus contains statements, actions, approvals, descriptions, legal materials, ethical teachings, devotional guidance, social instructions, historical reports, eschatological narrations, linguistic expressions, and accounts of Prophetic conduct. It is therefore unsurprising that the study of hadith gives rise to questions of authenticity, history, meaning, law, ethics, education, spirituality, society, and civilisation. The plurality of research headings in thesis indexes and conference proceedings reflects the plurality of materials and concerns embedded in the corpus itself.

At the same time, bibliographical and conference classifications have their limits. They usually arrange materials according to inherited subjects, institutional themes, or the immediate needs of retrieval. They are not always designed to produce a conceptual map of the field. A thesis on a particular hadith scholar, for instance, may be classified under the methodology of hadith scholars, although its actual content may involve historiography, verification, interpretation, law, and pedagogy at once. A paper on thematic hadith may address application, spirituality, social reform, or civilisational questions. Thus, documentary categories are useful indicators, but they do not always reveal the full analytical structure of the research.

For this reason, the seven-domain map proposed in this paper should not be viewed as a rejection of earlier bibliographical arrangements, nor as a rejection of the philological cartography of Sezgin or the narrator-centred cartography of Juynboll. It is better understood as an attempt to read those arrangements, and the field they describe, at a higher level of functional abstraction.[18] Older classifications name recognised subfields and practical research headings; Sezgin and Juynboll name texts, authors, and narrators; the present map seeks to identify the larger functional domains

[17] See *Engagement with Obscure Qurʾanic Verses and Ḥadīth Texts in Classical and Modern Literature*; Department of Qurʾān and Sunnah Studies, International Islamic University Malaysia, ed., *3rd International Conference on Qur'an and Sunnah Studies (ICQS3'2024): Revelation and Science in Contemporary Society* (Kuala Lumpur: International Islamic University Malaysia, 2024).

[18] For the argument that documentary classifications can be read as evidence of disciplinary organisation rather than merely as lists of titles, see also Khairil Husaini Bin Jamil, "Between Traditionalising and Futuring: Applying the Broader Maqasid Paradigm to Hadith Studies," *Asia Pacific Journal of Educators and Education* 39, no. 2 (2024): 183–96.

into which such headings, texts, and narrator-studies may be placed. The question is no longer only where a particular thesis or paper is filed, but what kind of scholarly question it asks and to which wider domain of hadith studies it contributes.

### *3.3. The Seven Domains of Contemporary Hadith Studies*

The documentary materials surveyed above point towards a field that is neither formless nor adequately contained by a single inherited binary. Contemporary hadith studies may be diverse, but its diversity is not without pattern. When dissertation records, conference proceedings, bibliographical classifications, and selected works on the scope of hadith learning are read together, seven recurrent domains become visible. These domains do not represent a chronological sequence, nor do they form a hierarchy of scholarly value. Rather, they function as analytical regions within which the principal questions of contemporary hadith studies may be located.

The proposed map is arranged according to a wider disciplinary logic. Every field may be asked what its object is, what function that object performs, how it reached the present, how it is interpreted, how it is applied, how it is preserved and taught, and how it enters higher orders of thought. In the case of hadith studies, these questions take the form of seven domains: (1) Form, Conception, Terminology; (2) Maqāṣid, Function, Authority; (3) Transmission, Historiography, Verification; (4) Text, Meaning, Interpretation; (5) Application, Implementation, Practice; (6) Preservation, Pedagogy, Continuity; and (7) Philosophy, Spirituality, Civilisation.

| No. | Domain | Central question | Typical research indicators |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Form, Conception, Terminology | What is hadith and how is it conceptually delimited? | waḥy, naṣṣ, ḥadīth, sunnah, khabar, athar, report, precedent, practice, matn, isnād, definitional boundaries |
| 2 | Maqāṣid, Function, Authority | What does hadith do, and why does it matter? | maqāṣid al-sunnah, ḥujjiyyah, normativity, sunnah as bayān, relation to the Qurʾān, legislation, guidance |
| 3 | Transmission, Historiography, Verification | How did hadith reach us, and how is it verified? | riwāyah, tadwīn, taṣnīf, history of hadith, isnād, rijāl, al-jarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl, ʿilal, takhrīj, Goldziher, Schacht, Juynboll, Motzki |
| 4 | Text, Meaning, Interpretation | How is hadith understood? | dirāyah, sharḥ al-ḥadīth, fiqh al-ḥadīth, mukhtalif, mushkil, gharīb, asbāb al-wurūd, contextualisation |
| 5 | Application, Implementation, Practice | How is hadith lived, applied, or operationalised? | law, ethics, family, society, finance, medicine, governance, environment, living hadith, policy, spiritual conduct |
| 6 | Preservation, Pedagogy, Continuity | How is hadith sustained across generations? | teaching, curricula, memorisation, ijāzah, sanad programmes, institutions, dār al-ḥadīth, digital corpora, machine learning, public education |
| 7 | Philosophy, Spirituality, Civilisation | How does hadith enter higher intellectual and civilisational discourse? | philosophy, metaphysics, taṣawwuf, kashf, epistemology, civilisation, modernity, human sciences, kalām |

The first domain, Form, Conception, Terminology, concerns the object of hadith itself. It asks what hadith is, how it is distinguished from sunnah and whether it should be, how khabar and athar are related to it, and how terms such as matn, isnād, naṣṣ, waḥy, report, precedent, practice, and norm are used. It also concerns the concept of hadith as scripture, tradition, cultural memory, and identity. This domain is foundational because disagreement over the object of study affects subsequent discussions of authority, history, interpretation, and application.

The second domain, Maqāṣid, Function, Authority, asks what hadith and sunnah do within the structure of Islamic knowledge and life. It includes discussions of ḥujjiyyat al-sunnah, the relationship between Qurʾān and sunnah, the role of sunnah as bayān, the legislative and non-legislative functions of hadith, and the objectives of the sunnah. It is in this domain that studies on maqāṣid al-sunnah are principally located, although their implications often extend into interpretation and application.

The third domain, Transmission, Historiography, Verification, preserves the strongest continuity with what is commonly associated with riwāyah and the technical sciences of hadith criticism. It includes studies of isnād, narrator criticism, rijāl, al-jarḥ wa al-taʿdīl, ʿilal, takhrīj, hadith collections, manuscript transmission, tadwīn, taṣnīf, and the history of hadith. The inclusion of historiography is important because many contemporary studies examine not only the authenticity of individual reports, but also the historical development of hadith as a scholarly phenomenon. This domain is also the natural home of the modern Western critical literature on hadith origins and transmission, beginning with Ignaz Goldziher's *Muhammedanische Studien*, which argued that much of the hadith corpus reflects later doctrinal disputes rather than direct Prophetic utterance.[19] Joseph Schacht extended this scepticism to legal hadith specifically, arguing in *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence* that many legal traditions emerged only in the formative period of Islamic law rather than from the Prophet himself.[20] Gautier H. A. Juynboll refined the isnād-critical method through the analysis of common links and partial common links, while compiling the narrator data later systematised in his *Encyclopedia of Canonical Ḥadīth*.[21] Harald Motzki's isnād-cum-matn method, by contrast, used the same source-critical apparatus to argue for an earlier dating of substantial portions of the corpus than Schacht and Juynboll had allowed, demonstrating that source-critical scepticism and source-critical revision can proceed from shared method to divergent conclusions.[22] The domain therefore accommodates not only the inherited Muslim sciences of riwāyah, but also this entire

[19] Ignaz Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien*, 2 vols. (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1889–90), esp. vol. 2; on Goldziher's influence and its critical reception, see Tengku Azhar, "Hadith Isnad Study in the Discovery of Islamic Law: Critique of the Thoughts of Goldziher and Schacht," *Eduvest* 4, no. 9 (2024): 7891–7905.

[20] Joseph Schacht, *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950).

[21] Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition*; Juynboll, *Encyclopedia of Canonical Ḥadīth*.

[22] Harald Motzki, *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence: Meccan Fiqh before the Classical Schools*, trans. Marion H. Katz (Leiden: Brill, 2002); Harald Motzki, *Analysing Muslim Traditions: Studies in Legal, Exegetical and Maghāzī Ḥadīth* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

current of Western source-critical scholarship, together with the Muslim scholarly responses it has generated.

The fourth domain, Text, Meaning, Interpretation, concerns the work of understanding hadith once it is received and recognised as an object of study. It includes sharḥ al-ḥadīth, fiqh al-ḥadīth, gharīb al-ḥadīth, mukhtalif al-ḥadīth, mushkil al-ḥadīth, asbāb al-wurūd, contextual interpretation, linguistic analysis, and hermeneutical reflection. While this domain is often associated with dirāyah, it should not be reduced to a generic idea of understanding, since it includes several distinct practices of explanation, reconciliation, contextualisation, and judgement.

The fifth domain, Application, Implementation, Practice, concerns the point at which hadith passes from interpretation into forms of use, conduct, and institutional life. It is not confined to what a report means in a commentary, although that question remains prior. It includes studies on jurisprudence, moral formation, ʿamal ahl al-Madīnah, communal practice, family life, finance, medicine, environmental ethics, governance, public policy, reform, and ordinary religious conduct. It also accommodates what is often described as living hadith, where the concern is with the reception, circulation, enactment, ritualisation, and social intelligibility of hadith within communities.

The sixth domain, Preservation, Pedagogy, Continuity, addresses the continuing life of hadith learning across generations: its preservation, teaching, renewal, and future transmission. It includes memorisation, samāʿ, qirāʾah, ijāzah, sanad programmes, writing, codification, manuscript transmission, print culture, dār al-ḥadīth institutions, public classes, curricular design, scholarly networks, digital databases, online learning, and computational retrieval. This domain is not confined to teaching, although pedagogy remains central. It also attends to the changing vessels of hadith preservation, from oral retention and written codification to manuscript, print, digital, and computational forms, together with the future responsibilities these forms create. Recent digital-humanities scholarship illustrates this expansion concretely: linguistic and machine-learning approaches to hadith authentication, corpus construction, and automated classification have begun to constitute a distinct strand of research that depends on, while also reframing, the inherited concerns of preservation and transmission.[23] "Continuity" is used here deliberately, in place of a more technical or unfamiliar coinage, to name the wider intellectual, institutional, technological, and communal processes through which hadith remains a living discipline, not merely an inherited archive.

[23] For computational and digital-humanities approaches to hadith authentication, classification, and corpus analysis, see Emad Mohamed and Raheem Sarwar, "Linguistic Features Evaluation for Hadith Authenticity through Automatic Machine Learning," *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities* 37, no. 3 (2022): 830–43, https://doi.org/10.1093/llc/fqab092.

The seventh domain, Philosophy, Spirituality, Civilisation, concerns a higher order of inquiry. It includes studies that relate hadith and sunnah to theology, philosophy, metaphysics, epistemology, taṣawwuf, spiritual psychology, civilisational thought, and the human sciences, as well as to the contested intellectual languages of modernity and its later idioms, including postmodernity, post-normality, and post-truth discourse. Concrete examples of this strand of scholarship include studies that read hadith and sunnah through the epistemology of kashf and spiritual disclosure in the Sufi tradition, work situating taṣawwuf as continuous with, rather than separate from, the disciplines of kalām and Islamic philosophy, and scholarship examining how Prophetic tradition has been mobilised within broader projects of Islamic epistemology and civilisational self-understanding. This domain differs from the previous six because it does not name one internal procedure of hadith studies, such as transmission, verification, interpretation, or application. Its question is larger: how hadith is placed within structures of meaning, and how it enters discussions of knowledge, selfhood, society, order, and civilisation.

The seven domains are best read as overlapping regions, not as closed territories. A study of mushkil al-ḥadīth, for example, may begin in Text, Meaning, Interpretation, yet the difficulty it raises may draw in theology, legal theory, language, history, and the defence of authority. A work of takhrīj may sit most readily within Transmission, Historiography, Verification, but the same work becomes pedagogical when it is used to train judgement, caution, and scholarly taste. A study of maqāṣid al-sunnah may be located under Maqāṣid, Function, Authority, while its consequences may appear in interpretation, application, and higher-order reflection. The map is therefore not a set of boxes into which works are permanently filed. It is a way of identifying the main pressure point of a research question while allowing the density of actual scholarship to remain visible.

### *3.4. Boundary, Normativity, and Disciplinary Transferability*

The value of the seven-domain map lies partly in its ability to handle boundary cases. Hadith research rarely moves in straight lines. A title may carry one question on its face and several others beneath it. A work on mushkil al-ḥadīth may begin with textual difficulty, but soon enter theology, legal theory, language, history, and the defence of hadith authority. A study of takhrīj may appear to belong only to verification, yet in an educational setting it also becomes training in method, judgement, caution, and disciplinary inheritance. The map is useful precisely because it identifies the main centre of gravity of a study without denying the secondary questions that gather around it.

This point is especially important when dealing with controversial or contesting discourses. A map of contemporary hadith studies should be able to locate such discourses without absorbing their premises. Classical orientalist treatments of hadith, exemplified by Goldziher's and Schacht's source-critical scepticism, belong principally to the domain of Transmission, Historiography, Verification, because they ask questions about dating, ascription, codification, source development, and the historical reliability of reports. Current hadith scepticism may belong to the domain of function and

authority when it contests the binding status of hadith, or to the domain of transmission and verification when it disputes the inherited mechanisms of transmission, as in continuing debates over the conclusions reached by Schacht and Juynboll and the partial revisions proposed by Motzki. Arguments premised upon Qurʾān-absolutism may belong to the domain of authority when they challenge the relationship between Qurʾān and sunnah, or to the domain of interpretation when they read scriptural authority through a radically restrictive lens.[24]

To locate these discourses is not to validate them. A field map is not a fatwa, a creed, or a ruling in theology. Its task is more limited: it shows where questions arise, including questions that are difficult, controversial, or wrongly premised. The work of evaluation belongs to the relevant disciplines, including hadith criticism, legal theory, theology, epistemology, and the learned defence of sunnah authority. The map offers orientation; it does not replace judgement.

The seven domains also guard against two familiar reductions of the field. One reduction is technical: hadith studies is reduced to authentication, narrator criticism, takhrīj, and the mechanics of transmission. These sciences are indispensable, and without them the field loses its root. Yet hadith is not exhausted by verification alone. The other reduction is thematic: hadith is approached mainly as a reservoir for contemporary application, ethical reflection, or social relevance, while its transmissive, critical, and interpretive disciplines are left too thinly attended. The seven-domain map holds these concerns together by placing verification, interpretation, application, pedagogy, and higher-order reflection within one disciplinary landscape.[25]

The same arrangement has practical consequences for curriculum, supervision, and research planning. A curriculum shaped by this map would not present students with scattered courses alone, but with a view of the architecture of the field. In postgraduate supervision, it may help identify the primary domain of a proposed study, its secondary connections, and the difference between object, method, and contribution. In research planning, it can help centres and departments identify neglected areas, overrepresented themes, and possible interdisciplinary connections.

The seven-domain arrangement also has methodological value beyond hadith studies. Any field may be asked about its object, authority, history, interpretation, application, preservation, pedagogy, and higher intellectual significance. In Qurʾānic studies, for instance, the same pattern may be used to examine the form and terminology of Qurʾānic discourse, the authority and maqāṣid of revelation, the history of compilation and transmission, the interpretation of the text, its application, its pedagogy and preservation, and its relation to philosophy, spirituality, and civilisation. In fiqh, kalām, taṣawwuf, Islamic education, history, sociology, psychology, or the

[24] Daniel W. Brown, *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Mustafa Shah, ed., *The Hadith: Articulating the Beliefs and Constructs of Classical Islam*; Jonathan Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World*.

[25] For an earlier discussion of the need to move hadith studies beyond both inherited technical containment and ungrounded contemporary application, see Bin Jamil, "Between Traditionalising and Futuring."

broader human sciences, a similar exercise may help scholars move from isolated topics towards a more coherent disciplinary map.[26]

This transferability should be handled with care. Each discipline has its own internal history, sources, methods, and inherited classifications. Still, the pattern is suggestive. To map a discipline is not merely to list its inherited terms or to gather its newest themes. It is to attend to the relations between object, authority, history, interpretation, application, pedagogy, and higher thought. The field of hadith studies supplies the case examined here, but the cartographic procedure may have wider value where inherited classifications and contemporary research agendas no longer meet neatly.

## 4. Conclusion

This paper has argued that the inherited riwāyah–dirāyah bifurcation remains indispensable for hadith studies, although it cannot by itself carry the full burden of mapping the contemporary field, and that existing bibliographic and narrator-based maps of the discipline, exemplified by Sezgin's philological catalogue and Juynboll's narrator-based encyclopaedia, serve different cartographic purposes that this paper's thematic-functional map is intended to complement rather than replace. The pair preserves the discipline's classical centre: reports must be transmitted with integrity, and what is transmitted must be approached through disciplined knowledge. Yet dissertation records, conference proceedings, bibliographical classifications, and contemporary research themes show that the field of hadith studies now moves across a broader terrain. Narration and understanding remain foundational, but they no longer exhaust the range of questions through which the field is pursued.

The documentary materials examined in this paper point to seven recurrent domains: Form, Conception, Terminology; Maqāṣid, Function, Authority; Transmission, Historiography, Verification; Text, Meaning, Interpretation; Application, Implementation, Practice; Preservation, Pedagogy, Continuity; and Philosophy, Spirituality, Civilisation. These domains place the inherited pair within a wider disciplinary cartography. Some remain close to the classical concerns of transmission, verification, and interpretation, and to the modern Western source-critical literature represented by Goldziher, Schacht, Juynboll, and Motzki. Others bring into clearer view the field's expansion into application, pedagogy, computational and digital methods, institutional preservation, spirituality, civilisational thought, and higher-order intellectual discourse.

The map is descriptive and heuristic, and it is offered as a conceptually saturated reading of the documentary record rather than as a statistically validated taxonomy. Tradition-affirming

[26] On curriculum and disciplinary self-understanding in Islamic Revealed Knowledge, see Khairil Husaini Bin Jamil, "Reasserting the Maqāṣid of Islamic Revealed Knowledge Curricula: The Experience of the Department of Qurʾān and Sunnah Studies in IIUM," *al-Burhān: Journal of Qurʾān and Sunnah Studies* 4, no. 2 (2020): 1–25.

scholarship and controversial or contesting engagements may both be located as objects of analysis without being granted equal normative standing. Evaluation remains the task of the relevant disciplines, including hadith criticism, legal theory, theology, and epistemology. Future work should subject the seven domains to systematic coding of larger title and abstract datasets, comparable to scientometric approaches already applied elsewhere in Islamic studies, in order to test the relative weight, regional variation, and possible refinement of the proposed domains.

Beyond hadith studies, the proposed arrangement gestures towards a wider habit of disciplinary mapping. Any field may be examined through its object, authority, history, interpretation, application, preservation, pedagogy, and higher intellectual significance. Such transferability must be handled with care, since every discipline carries its own inherited classifications and internal logic. Even so, the exercise may help scholars move beyond scattered topics towards a clearer sense of disciplinary shape. The present paper offers an initial cartography of contemporary hadith studies: a way of seeing the field in its breadth without surrendering its centre, and without displacing the bibliographic and narrator-based cartographies already contributed by Sezgin and Juynboll. Future studies may refine, expand, quantitatively test, or contest the proposed domains through larger datasets and comparative disciplinary analysis.

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