

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS ON THE HISTORY OF HADĪTH TRANSMITTER CRITICISM

Ricâl Tenkit Tarihine Dair Karşılaştırmalı Bir Analiz

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Öz

2./8. asrın ilk çeyreğinin son yıllarında Şu'be b. el-Haccâc ile sistematik olarak icra edilmeye başlayan ricâl tenkit ilminin tekâmül süreci diğer ilimler gibi kademeli olarak tamamlanmıştır. Bu çalışmanın amacı, bu ilmin hicrî ilk üç asırdaki doğuş ve gelişim döneminin bazı temel özelliklerini tespit etmek ve içtihat açısından durağan mı yoksa dinamik bir yapıya mı sahip olduğunu münekkitlere ait değerlendirmeleri mukayese metoduyla inceleyerek ortaya koymaktır. Bu konuda yapılacak tespitlerden hareketle bazı önermelerin veya ön kabullerin belirlenmesi söz konusu olacaktır. Bu disiplinin gelişim tarihinin karakteristik yapısıyla ilgili elde edilecek yaklaşımların ricâl tenkit metotlarının doğuş ve gelişimi, ricâl tenkit derslerinin işleniş yöntemleri, terimlerin manalarının nesiller arasındaki aktarımı, bir münekkidin diğer münekkitlere ait ricâl değerlendirmelerini görme imkânı gibi ricâl tenkit tarihinde kritik öneme sahip birçok konunun analiz edilmesinde kilit rol oynadığı vurgulanmalıdır. Bunlara ilaveten bu araştırmada sistematik öncesi tenkit dönemi-sistematik tenkit dönemi ayrımının da temellendirmesini oluşturan cerh ve ta'dîl dağılımını, genel-özel değerlendirme miktarlarını ve teknik olmayan ifade-terim kullanım oranlarını sebep-sonuç ilişkisi

içerisinde analiz ederek ricâl tenkit ilminin gelişim aşamalarına dair genel bir çerçeve çizilmesi hedeflenmektedir. Bu konuların tahlilinin, asırdan ziyade nesil ve münekkit merkezli yapılması, özellikle kavramsal gelişim sürecinde etkili olan nesillerin, hatta öne çıkan münekkitlerin belirlenmesine imkân sağlayacaktır. Nesiller arasında özel değerlendirme-genel değerlendirme ile teknik olmayan ifade-terim kullanım oranları, söz konusu disiplinin aslında 2./8. asırda olmadığı ancak ricâl tenkit ilmine otantiklik kazandırmak amacıyla dönemin bazı âlimlerinin münekkit diye gösterilmeye çalışıldığıyla ilgili tezlerin de değerlendirilmesinde kritik veriler olacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hadis, Cerh-Ta'dil İlmi, Ricâl Tenkidi, Şu'be b. el-Haccâc, Cerh-Ta'dil Lafızları

Abstract

The development process of transmitter criticism, who commenced to be made systematically with Shu'ba ibn al-Ḥajjāj in the last years of the first quarter of the 2nd/8th century at the latest, has been completed gradually like other Islamic sciences. The aim of this paper is to delineate some essential features of the birth and development period of this science in the first three centuries of hijra and to reveal whether it has a stationary or a dynamic structure by comparison method. Thus, based on these determinations, it will be possible to establish some propositions or presuppositions. It is obvious that the approaches to be developed with respect to the characteristic structure of its development history play a key role in the analysis of many critical issues of in the history of transmitter criticism, such as the birth and development of criticism standards, ways of processing criticism courses, transfer of meanings of terms between critics, the opportunity for a critic to access other critics' critical judgments etc. In addition, this research aims to present a general framework for the development stages of the science of the transmitter criticism by analyzing the distribution of al-jarḥ wa al-ta'dīl, general-specific assessment amounts, non-technical expressions-term usage rates in a cause-effect relationship. Our preference to make the analysis of these parameters as generation and critic-centered rather than centuries enabled us to identify generations that were particularly influential in the conceptual development process, and even prominent critics. Our preference for generation and critic-centered analysis

rather than centuries will enable us to identify generations that are particularly influential in the conceptual development process, and even prominent critics. Special-general assessment and non-technical expression-term usage rates among the generations will be vital data in the critique of the thesis of that this discipline was not actually in the 2nd/8th century, but some scholars of the period were shown as narrator critics in order to give it authenticity.

Keywords: Ḥadīth, The Science of Transmitter Criticism, ‘Ilm al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta’dīl, Shu’ba ibn al-Ḥajjāj, Expressions of al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta’dīl

Introduction

Due to the possibility of the transmitter’s mistake and the fabrication of the text, the acceptance of narrative information including the ḥadīth, depends on the results of the research on the text that is narrated and the transmitter(s) of the text. According to the understanding of Ahl al-Ḥadīth, the chain of the transmitter (al-isnād) is in the centre of evaluations regarding the soundness of the ḥadīth and transmitters are in the focus of the analysis of the chain. Furthermore, these transmitters are the main subject of the transmitter science (‘ilm al-jarḥ wa al-ta’dīl).¹

The transmitter criticism, which is one of the fundamental branches of the ḥadīth science, has completed its genesis and development process over a long period of time, as in other scientific disciplines. The 2nd/8th century is crucial in the scientification; the 3rd/9th century is of importance in the history of development of transmitter criticism, which can be said to have preserved its current value even in the 21st century considering the work written by Bashshār ‘Awwād Ma’rūf and Shu’aib al-Arnāuṭ (Ma’rūf - al-Arnāuṭ, 1417/1997), criticizing Ibn Hajar’s evaluations. The 2nd/8th century, the reliability of narrators, which constitute the subject of this discipline, began to be examined at a limited rate according to certain principles. One should not understand from our statements that the evaluation of narrators was not made in the period before the transmitter criticism became a science. In addition, this period, which we call pre-systematic

¹ It should not be understood from our statement that while critics made evaluations about transmitters, they did not examine the texts that narrated by comparing them.

transmitter criticism, played a vital role in the formation of critical mind structure, which is one of the main conditions for the scientification of the transmitter criticism. The main actors of this science also grew during this era. Therefore, it will be appropriate to touch upon this period briefly.

1. Pre-Systematic Transmitter Criticism

This period that lasted until 125/743 at the latest and consisted of the al-jarḥ (impugning) and al-ta'dīl (approving) made by companions and successors. Indeed, due to the change in content and purpose in criticism, this era can be divided into two periods as pre-fitnah (civil war) transmitter criticism and post-fitnah transmitter criticism. Since the evaluations of the pre-fitnah era were generally made with the aim of correcting the mistakes caused by human weaknesses such as forgetting, not memorizing well, missing or wrong learning, and not understanding the ḥadīth well. On the other hand, in the post-fitnah period, the narrators were criticized in terms of al-'adālah (uprightness) in addition to evaluating them in terms of al-ḍabt (precision). Another feature of the pre-fitnah criticism is that the assessments of this period were not generally reached by comparing all or most ḥadīths of the narrator. Therefore, it is not possible to evaluate all narrations of the transmitter as weak by taking these assessments into account.

al-Fitnah or, Civil war, which have very significant consequences in Islamic sciences and political history, has been a critical point of time in the history of ḥadīth. Because the disruption of the trust and the beginning of the narrative fabrication with the civil war made it necessary to examine the transmitter of the ḥadīth. Ibn Sīrīn explains the relationship between the use of the isnād and civil war as follows:

They used not to ask about isnāds, but when the fitna took place, they began to say: 'Name your narrators for us.' Then, narrator was generally investigated: if the narrator was found to be an adherent of the Sunnah, his ḥadīth was accepted; whereas if the narrator was found to be an adherent of bid'ah, his ḥadīth was rejected (Muslim, 1412/1991, 1/15).

Although various interpretations are made about what was meant by the fitna mentioned in the above statement (Schacht, 1975; Robson, 1953; Az(a)mī, 1978; Juynboll, 1973), Islamic scholars generally mean the wars that occurred as a result of 'Uthmān's martyrdom (d. 35/656) (A'zamī, 1400; al-Sibā'ī, 2000; al-Şāliḥ, 1984). However, it is not possible

to say that the fabrication of the narration started intensely shortly after the fitna. Because, as in other sociological events, it is clear that the formation of the sects, which is the main cause of the ḥadīth fasciation, require a certain process. At this point, the significant issue is to determine the period when the ḥadīth fabrication began to spread. There is some information that will help us to identify when ḥadīth falsification became widespread. Among them, the transmission including a speech between Ibn ‘Abbās (d. 68/687) and Bushayr ibn Ka‘b al-‘Adawī (d. 81/700-90/709) takes the first place. Bushayr is reported to have come to Ibn ‘Abbās and narrated ḥadīths before him. Ibn ‘Abbās asked him to repeat the first ḥadīth. Bushayr, then, wondered: “I am not certain whether you recognized all my ḥadīths and denied this one, or recognized this one and denied all my ḥadīths”. Ibn ‘Abbās replied: “We used to report the Prophet’s ḥadīths as no one was attributing lies to him. But when the people became careless about sayings and deeds, we abandoned the practice of reporting his ḥadīths.” (Muslim, 1412/1991, 1/12-13). Another narration that complements this information is this: “The chain started to be asked during the reign of al-Mukhtār [ibn Abī ‘Ubayd] al-Thaqafī (d. 66/685-67/687)” (Ibn Ḥanbal, 1408/1988). It is necessary to determine what years are meant by the expression of “the reign of al-Mukhtār” in the narration. It is more appropriate to understand “the reign of al-Mukhtār” as the period when the supporters of Ahl al-Bayt started to gather around al-Mukhtār al-Thaqafī, that he was influential in the political field and his desire on being a caliphate was dominant. This is the period from the end of 64/683 at the earliest to al-Mukhtār al-Thaqafī’s date of death 67/687. Considering this information, it is understood that the period in which ḥadīth fabrication increased was the second half of the first century.

We should emphasize that there is a relationship between the proliferation of ḥadīth fabrication and the amount of people who criticized transmitters. Examining the lists of critics belonging to scholars such as Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn (d. 233/848), ‘Alī ibn al-Madīnī (d. 234/848-49), Aḥmad ibn Sa‘īd al-Dārimī (d. 253/867), Ṣāliḥ Jazara (d. 293/906), Ibn Abī Ḥātim (d. 327/938), Ibn Ḥibbān (d. 354/965), Ibn ‘Adī (365/976), al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348), Ibn Rajab (d. 795/1393), al-Sakhāwī, who made a statement concerning who were critics, including successors, we realize that the

prominent ones² passed away in 94/712 and later. In addition, successors who criticized more narrators during this period died in the 2nd/8th century.³ This shows that criticism increased in parallel with the spread of ḥadīth fabrication and the rate of error in the ḥadīth narration. It should not be understood from these statements that the critics of the successors discredited all the transmitters who fabricated ḥadīths or made mistakes. Thus, Yaḥyā ibn Maʿīn, ʿAlī ibn al-Madīnī and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855), the eminent critics of the first period of the 3rd/9th century, evaluated some successors who were not previously assessed.⁴ It is not right to expect all narrators to be evaluated when it is remembered that transmitter criticism, like other Islamic sciences, had not become a scientific discipline yet. It is not probable to claim that all narrators were evaluated in the first century of the hijra, when formal tadwīn (compilation and collection of the ḥadīth) did not begin, and therefore the systematic ḥadīth narration period did not commence. In addition, such an approach is against the thesis that the science of al-jarḥ-al-taʿdīl developed in the natural process.

We should highlight the important point about the pre-systematic period. The lack of intensive biographical evaluations during the period in question and the fact that the systematic ḥadīth narration period did not start had significant consequences in the history of transmitter criticism. In the 3rd/9th century, the critics who evaluated the transmitters not discredited or accredited during their lifetime by analyzing their narrations, had to give verdict of majhūl (unknown) on some of them due to their method. The reason for the fact that there were very few determinations of the ikhtilāṭ (to have problems in the mind and memory functions) in the first century of the hijra is that the transmitter criticism did not become a scientific discipline in that period.⁵

2 What we mean by critics is those who at least two scholars said they criticized transmitters.

3 Critics who evaluated more narrators than others are ʿĀmir al-Shaʿbī (d. 104/722), Ibn Sīrīn, Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 124/742), Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī (d. 131/749) and Ibn Ishāq (d. 151/768).

4 For the evaluations made by ʿAlī ibn al-Madīnī about the successors that had not been assessed before, see Turhan, 2019.

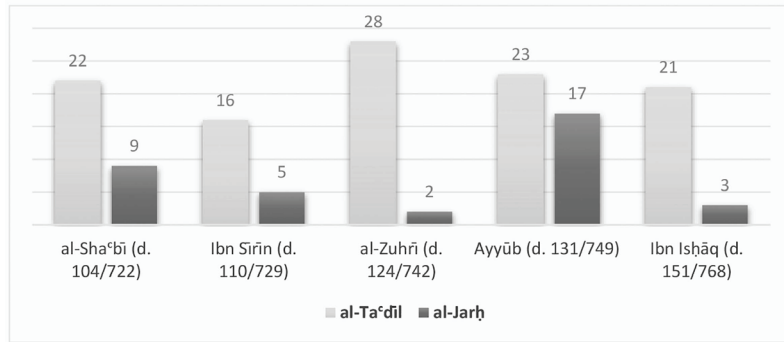
5 For analysis that the progression of the science of al-jarḥ wa al-taʿdīl is compatible with determinations of the ikhtilāṭ, see Turhan, 2019.

It is an issue to investigate how unreliable narrators⁶ who were not evaluated were approached in the pre-systematic period. It is not possible to give a definitive answer to this question due to insufficient information for that period. Based on the fact that these narrators had few students and few narrations, it can be interpreted that there was an opinion that such people were weak in that period. For example, Mīnā' ibn Mīnā' (d. ?), Abū Mācid (or Mācidah) 'Āidh (d. ?), Sufyān ibn Abū al-'Awcā' (d. ?), Shu'aib ibn Maymūn (d. ?), 'Abbād ibn 'Abdillāh al-Asadī (d. ?), 'Uqba ibn 'Alqama (d. ?), Yazīd ibn Bilāl (d. ?) were the narrators in the kibār al-tābi'īn or awsaṭ al-tābi'īn layer and it is not known that the scholars of their time reached a verdict about their reliability. Evaluations that these people were not reliable were made years after their death. The reason for the low interest in learning ḥadīths from these narrators may be the existence of information in the scientific circle that they were untrustworthy. At that time, there were scholars like Saīd ibn Musayyab (d. 94/713), 'Urwa ibn al-Zubayr (d. 94/713), Ibrāhīm al-Nakha'ī (d. 96/714), Ṭāwūs ibn Kay-sān (d. 106/725), Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī (d. 131/749) who were committed to narrating from reliable transmitters as well as scholars like Ibn 'Abbās who adopted the principle of conveying the ḥadīths that they knew well (al-Shāfi'ī, n.d.; Muslim, 1412/1991; Ibn Abū Ḥātim, 1371/1952; al-Mizzī, 1403/1983; Ibn Ḥajar, 1325-1328/1907-1910). In addition, some scholars warned disciples that they must learn ḥadīths only from reliable people (al-Shāfi'ī, n.d.). Some narrators were even criticized at that time for transmitting ḥadīths from everyone without making a reliable-unreliable distinction (al-Bājī, 1406/1986; Ibn 'Asākir, 1416/1995). In the light of this information, it can be said that some students gained awareness that the ḥadīth must be learned only from reliable transmitters and they carefully followed only those who learned ḥadīths from trustworthy people. In short, the awareness of transmitting ḥadīths from reliable people was likely to decrease the interest in the people mentioned above and their narrations. It is also possible that there was no need to declare that such persons were unreliable because of the consensus.

6 We learn from the reviews of the later critics that these transmitters were untrustworthy.

In order to see whether al-jarḥ or al-ta'dīl is intense in the evaluations of pre-systematic critics, we have prepared the following chart:

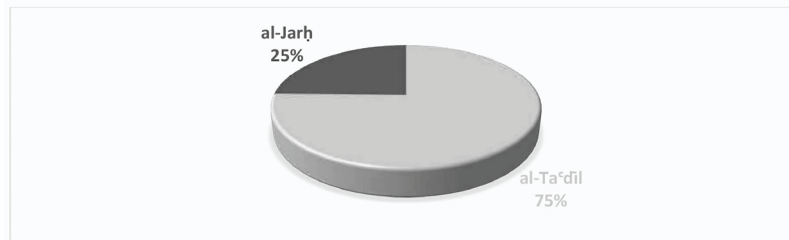
Chart 1: The Distribution of al-Jarḥ-al-Ta'dīl in The Pre-systematic Criticism Period



According to this chart, the rate of al-ta'dīl in pre-systematic transmitter criticism is higher in all critics. While Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī is the critic who has the greatest difference between al-jarḥ and al-ta'dīl; the least one is Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī. Another conclusion from this chart is that the distribution of al-jarḥ-al-ta'dīl varies according to the critic, not the time. More clearly, it cannot be inferred that the gap was opened or closed as time progressed.

It is clearly seen that the rate of al-ta'dīl is quite high in the chart 2 made based on all evaluations for the period in question:

Chart 2: al-Jarḥ-al-Ta'dīl Rate in the Pre-Systematic Transmitter Criticism Period



Finally, we should state that the criticisms of al-'adālah (uprightness) made in this period are related to narrative fabrication and being the belief in an innovated matter (Turhan, 2015).

2. Systematic Transmitter Criticism

The person who played a role in such a categorization of the transmitter criticism is Shu‘ba ibn al-Ḥajjāj (d. 160/776). Interested in poetry previously, he was impressed by a ḥadīth’s isnād (a chain of narration) and chose the science of ḥadīth as his profession. Essentially, this preference of his was a milestone in the science of ḥadīth and the transmitter criticism in particular.

The determination of when systematic transmitter criticism began depends on establishing when Shu‘ba appeared on the stage of history as a critic. Many arguments suggest that Shu‘ba began systematically inquiring the isnād at the latest in the last years of the first quarter of the 2nd/8th century. In fact, this dating is consistent with the determination of when the isnād was systematically used.

Another important issue in the context of the place of Shu‘ba in the history of transmitter criticism is that, as far as we can identify, he initiated the lessons devoted to the transmitter criticism. Thus, Indeed, this is clearly understood from the following narration:

We [Abū Zayd Saīd ibn Aws (d. 214/829)] came to Shu‘ba to listen to ḥadīth on a rainy day. However, Shu‘ba refused his request by saying to him: “This is not the day to narrate the ḥadīth! This is the day of backbiting. Let’s backbite liars today! (al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, n.d., 45; Id, 1407/1986, 2/494).

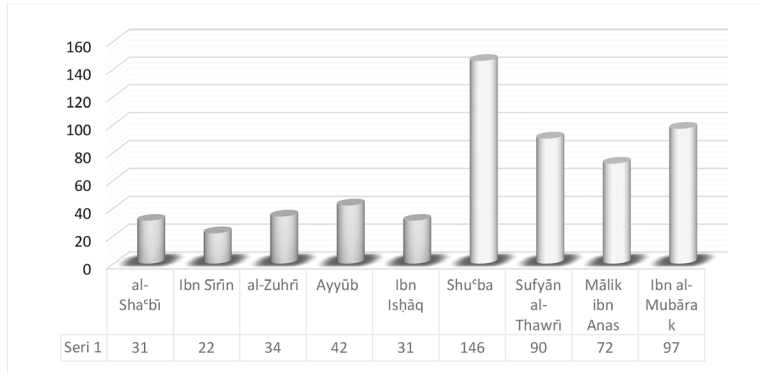
These narrations also show that Shu‘ba did intensive criticism lessons: “Let’s backbite for the sake of Allah!” (al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, n.d., 45), “Let’s backbite for the sake of Allah for a while and mention the flaws of the adherents of the ḥadīth (Aṣḥāb al-Ḥadīth)!” (Ibn Ḥibbān, 1412/1992, 1/19).⁷

A significant increase is observed in the number of narrators thanks to the transmitter criticism courses held by Shu‘ba. In fact, a considerable increase in the amount of evaluations belonging to Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161/778), Mālik ibn Anas (d. 179/795), ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Mubārak (d. 181/797), outstanding critics of the same period, is also noteworthy

⁷ What is meant by backbiting in these narrations, as Ibn Rajab stated, is to impugn and approve transmitters (Ibn Rajab, 1407/1987).

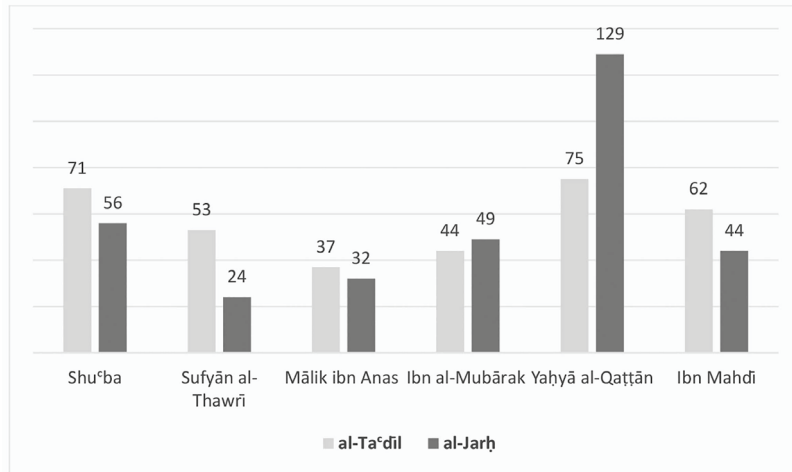
though not as much as Shu'ba. It is clear in the chart below that the amount of evaluations of critics of this era is considerably higher than the assessments of the previous period.

Chart 3: Comparison of Evaluation Amounts of Critics



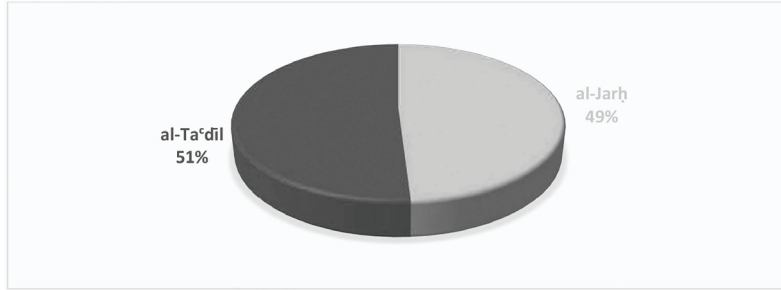
In the first period of the systematic criticism, the difference is not only observed in the evaluation amount but also in al-jarḥ-al-ta'dil rates. The distribution of al-jarḥ-al-ta'dil belonging to the four leading critics of the period is as follows:

Chart 4: The Distribution of al-Jarḥ-al-Ta'dil in the First and Second Periods of the Systematic Transmitter Criticism



Critics other than Ibn al-Mubārak and Yahyā al-Qaṭṭān are similar to the pre-systematic period in terms of the amount of al-ta'dīl more than al-jarḥ. However, the gap between al-jarḥ and al-ta'dīl in the pre-systematic period significantly decreased in all but Sufyān al-Thawrī. This is more obvious in the chart 5, which is prepared by considering the evaluations of all the critics in question.

Chart 5: al-Jarḥ-al-Ta'dīl Rate in the First and Second Periods of the Systematic Transmitter Criticism



We have found that the critics of this period criticized the narrators for fabricating ḥadīths or being an adherent of bid'ah in terms of justice. We could not determine that critics of the period criticized someone for lying in his ordinary speech.

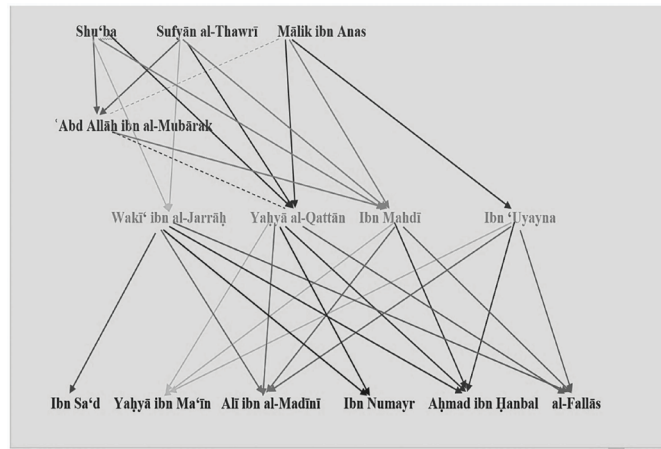
3. The Essential Features of the Development of Transmitter Criticism

Among the priority questions about the history of transmitter criticism became “What is the main characteristic of the development of transmitter criticism?”, “How did the critics of the second and third centuries of hijra reach the accumulation of al-jarḥ and al-ta'dīl? In other words, how was the flow of information of criticism between generations of critics?”

Critics are the primary data sources that should be considered in writing and interpreting the development history of this science and thus, in responding the questions mentioned above. The findings of the critics' upbringing and their connection with the previous generation of critics will provide significant clues about the improvement process of this science. The following diagram is prepared in order to illustrate the relationship

among the first three generations of leading critics in the science of transmitter criticism between the first quarter of the 2nd/8th century and the first half of the 3rd/9th century.

Chart 6: The Relationship Between the First Three Generations of Critics Playing a Role in the Development of Transmitter Criticism



In the chart above, we should pay attention to two points:

1. Critics chain/network: It is the critics of the previous generation who are involved in raising a person as a critic. To put it bluntly, the person who acts as a critic after a generation educates himself in the theory and practice relationship by attending the lectures of the upper generation critic or critics.

“The critic chain/network” provides an important clue to how critics gained reviews of previous generations of critics. For example, I found that ‘Alī ibn al-Madīnī received an important part of Shu‘ba’ assessments through Yahyā al-Qattān.⁸ Also he received some of the assessments of Muhammad ibn Sīrīn⁹ (d. 110/729), Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī¹⁰, Hishām ibn

8 For examples see al-Ka‘bī, 1421/2000, 1/154; al-Uqaylī, 1404/1984, 1/166; 4/415; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, 1/ 39, 81, 136, 146, 147, 153, 157, 172; 2/432, 473; 3/141, 201, 422; 6/118, 363; 8/234; Ibn ‘Adī, 1418/1997, 1/345, 448; 3/521; 5/99, 150; 7/154; 8/41; 9/32; al-Mizzī, 1403/1983, 23/513; Ibn Ḥajar, 1325-1328/1907–1910, 8: 354.

9 For instances, see Ibn Abī Ḥātim, 1371/1952, 3/230; al-Bājī, 1406/1986, 2/506.

10 For examples, see Ibn Abī Khaysama, 1424/2004, 2/198.

‘Urwa¹¹ (d. 146/763), al-‘A‘imash¹² (d. 148/765), ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Awn¹³ (d. 151/768), Muḥammad ibn Ishāq¹⁴ (d. 151/768), Zāida ibn Qudāma¹⁵ (d. 161/777), Sufyān al-Thawrī¹⁶ and Mālik ibn Anas¹⁷ through Yaḥyā al-Qaṭṭān.

We do not claim that all the criticisms have been transmitted through this system of critics. What we want to emphasize is that this system provides an important basis for subsequent critics to reach the evaluations of previous critics.

2. Multi-master system: The critics evaluating more narrators than other critics during their periods and pioneering the development of evaluation statements, i.e. al-jarḥ and al-ta‘dīl terminology, seem to be disciples of all or most of the critics belonging to the previous generation. For instance, Yaḥyā al-Qaṭṭān and Ibn Maḥdī, who made the highest number of evaluations among the second-generation critics, were the disciples of Shu‘ba, Sufyān al-Thawrī and Mālik. Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn, ‘Alī ibn al-Madīnī, Ibn Numayr, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and ‘Amr al-Fallās, who are among the third generation critics, were the disciples of Wakī‘ ibn al-Jarrāḥ, Yaḥyā al-Qaṭṭān, Ibn Maḥdī and Ibn ‘Uyayna, who were among the previous critics. The fact that a person in the process of growing up as a critic was a disciple of almost all the authorities of criticism of the period gave him the opportunity to learn the principles of the transmitter criticism comparatively and also to compare the pros and cons of an opinion comparatively. This accumulation helped him to create his own perspective on the subject.

The best example of this is a dialogue between Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn and ‘Alī ibn al-Madīnī. According to the narration, ‘Alī ibn al-Madīnī asked Yaḥyā al-Qaṭṭān to assess Ibn Maḥdī’s approach to the narration of the people of heresy (al-‘Uqaylī, 1404/1984). Again ‘Alī ibn al-Madīnī desired

11 For examples, see Ibn Ḥajar, 1325-1328/1907-1910, 6/174.

12 For examples, see Ibn Abī Ḥātim, 1371/1952, 2/325.

13 For examples, see Ibn ‘Adī, 1418/1997, 6/147.

14 For examples, see al-‘Uqaylī, 1404/1984, 2/188; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, 1371/1952, 4/338; Ibn ‘Adī, 1418/1997, 5/64.

15 For examples, see al-Mizzī, 1403/1983, 4/7.

16 For examples, see Ibn al-‘Ca‘d, *Musnad Ibn al-‘Ca‘d*, 1405/1985, 116; al-Jūzjānī, *Aḥwāl al-rijāl*, 1405/1985, 42; al-‘Uqaylī, 1404/1984, 3/43; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, 1371/1952, 1/82; 6/10, 26; 8/156; 9/34; Ibn Ḥibbān, 1412/1992, 2/101; Ibn ‘Adī, 1418/1997, 7/3; Moghultay ibn Kılıç, 1422/2001, 12/ 216.

17 For instances, see Ibn Abī Ḥātim, 1371/1952, 1/23.

Yaḥyā al-Qattān to appraise Ibn Maḥdī's critical judgement that the two transmitters were trustworthy. These examples show that Alī ibn al-Madīnī had the opportunity to compare the criteria of criticism or opinions about the reliability of transmitters. By this method, it has become clear that 'Alī ibn al-Madīnī aimed to form this opinion by learning the perspectives and comments of both critics comparatively.

4. The Dynamic Structure of the Transmitter Criticism in the First Three Centuries

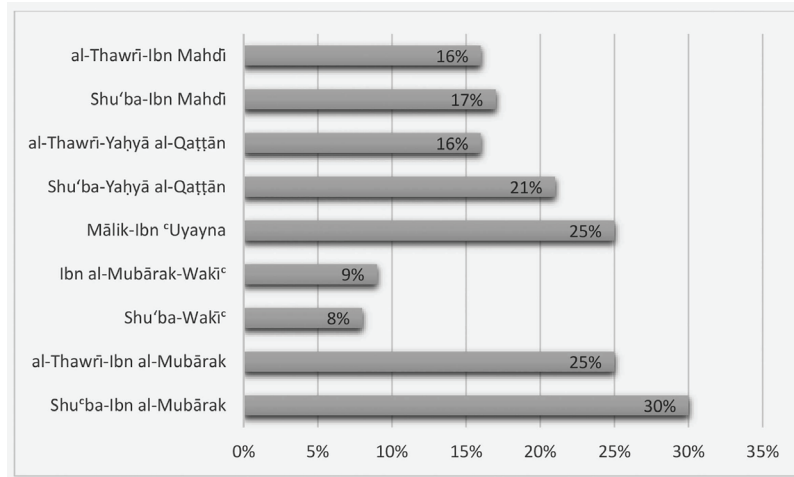
Given the structure of the discipline of transmitter criticism developed within the relationship between master-disciple, it is necessary to examine whether this relationship between critics causes stability in the mechanism of ijtihād. Or, to put it another way, is it possible to say that the assessments of the previous critics were accepted as unquestionable truths by the later critics and that narrators were not reevaluated by the later critics?

Before answering these questions, we should highlight a critical issue. On the one hand, someone criticizes this discipline for bringing out contradictory evaluations and claims that this arises from subjective evaluations. On the other hand, the other talks about the probability that this science would turn from dirāya (understanding, knowing, or comprehending) to riwāya (narration), that is, stability since the 3rd/9th century (Kırbaçoğlu, 1999). It is clear that there is a paradox between these two discourses since it is inevitable to have different views in an ijtihād-based science.

In the context of transmitter criticism, one can attribute two meanings to subjectivity. The first is the inappropriate words of the critic about the transmitters, acting with his feelings, which are not scientifically valuable. The term in question is also used to indicate that the knowledge produced by this science conveys al-ẓann (probability) and there are conflicting assessments regarding a transmitter. We think that it is not accurate to evaluate conflicting al-jarḥ and al-ta'dīl which can be explained consistently within the scope of subjectivity. Also, addressing the issues through a generalist approach over some selected examples leads to misleading results. Instead of this, handling and discussing the subject according to the statistical data to be obtained by comparison method will provide more accurate results. For

this purpose, the rate of disagreement among critics should be determined in the 2nd/8th century. The chart below shows the rate of conflict between first generation and second generation critics (Turhan, 2015, 487-504).¹⁸

Chart 6: Disagreement Rates Between the Critics of the 2nd/8th Century

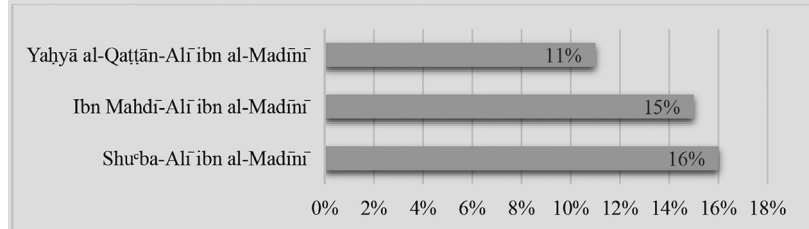


The average of the disagreement rates is 17,7%.

In order to determine the rate of conflict between the critics of the 3rd/9th century and the previous generation critics, the evaluations attributed to Shu'ba, Ibn Mahdī and Yahyā al-Qaṭṭān are compared with the al-jarḥ and al-ta'dīl of Ibn al-Madīnī. Thus, the opportunity to compare the period in which the science of transmitter criticism was born and primitive in terms of terminology with the era in which transmitter were intensely evaluated will be obtained. The aim in the selection of Shu'ba, the founder of this discipline, is to determine whether there are different opinions in the theoretical field between the second and third centuries of the hijra and how they appear in practice, if any. The purpose in the selection of Ibn Mahdī and Yahyā al-Qaṭṭān is that these critics are the masters of Ibn al-Madīnī and they were the ones who made the most evaluations in their time. The rate of disagreement between Ibn al-Madīnī and these three critics is as follows:

18 We should also note that we use the reviews of the critics that we later identified in this study.

Chart 7: The Rate of Conflict Between Ibn al-Madīnī and Three Critics



The average of the disagreement rate between Ibn al-Madīnī and three critics is 14%.

One of the key results from these comparisons is that the evaluations of previous critics were not regarded as unquestionable truths by the later generation of critics. This phenomenon is of significance in terms of demonstrating that the mechanism of *ijtihād* has a dynamic structure in the history of narrator criticism. Thus, I am convinced that the scholars of the 3rd/ 9th century, which played a vital role in making the evaluations of the 2nd/8th century come to the present day, are not only a narrator but also a *mujtahid*. In the light of this information, we should underline that the assumptions that the science of criticism transformed from *dirāya* into *riwāya* in the 3rd/9th century did not reflect the truth. As a result of the comparisons, it has become apparent that the claims that many of the critical judgements ascribed to early scholars like Shu'ba and Mālik are wholly inconsistent with the findings of later critics (Dickinson, 2001) and that there are disagreements related to many people among the critics who have a master-disciple relationship (Topgül, 2018)¹⁹ did not reflect the truth.

At this point, we should draw attention to a crucial issue respecting the disagreement rates. The disagreement rate would be expected to be high among critics, especially among critics who had a master-disciple relationship. However, the disagreement rates above the reasonable limit

19 However, Topgül did not provide statistical data that led him to this view. This suggests that what he says is an assumption not based on evidence. The fact that Topgül gave up his opinion in his later work due to the research results of Scott C. Lucas (Lucas, 2004) and Muhammed Sadık Özbek (Özbek, 2019) confirms this (Topgül, 2019). In order to avoid contradiction and to be in accordance with the scientific method, he should have stated that he changed his view in his last work.

are problematic in that they show that critics cannot have a common ground in terms of criticism methods. Dickinson's claim that many of the critical judgments ascribed to the critics of the 2nd/8th century like al-Awzā'ī, Shu'ba and Mālik were wholly inconsistent with the findings of later critics is of importance from this point. According to him, making early scholars critics caused this, namely, the fact that the science of criticism did not exist in the 2nd/8th century caused the evaluation of the critics of this era to contradict the critical judgments attributed to the later critics evaluating transmitters according to the standards of narrator criticism. We should take Dickinson's claim into account in terms of basing the high rates of disagreement on the absence of this science, in other words, on the lack of standards of transmitter criticism. The comparisons show that his thesis is unprovable, the existence of the science of criticism in the 2nd/8th century, and that narrators were evaluated according to the standards of criticism.²⁰

5. Historical Course of Evaluation Statements in the First Three Centuries

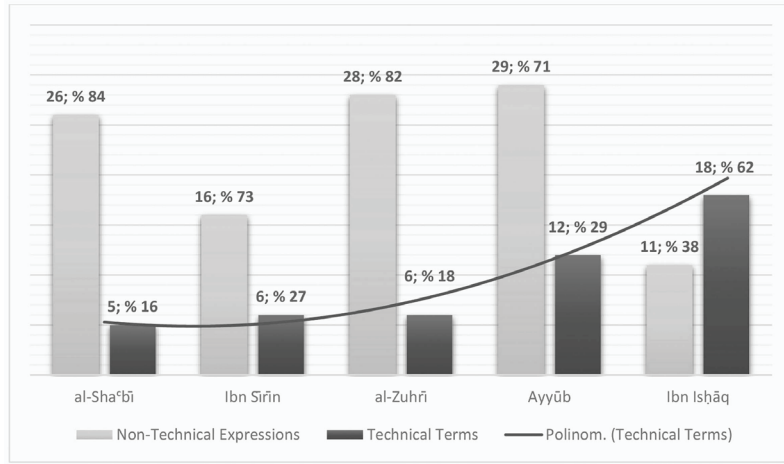
The terminology, which can be expressed as the language of the science, is expected to develop in parallel with the course of the science of transmitter criticism. Hence revealing the development course of terminology actually means to reveal the development course and stages of the relative discipline. From this angle, the conclusions to be reached concerned with the development course of the terminology will provide crucial data in checking Eerik Dickinson's hypothesis that the early scholars were made critics by Ibn Abī Ḥātim in order to give this discipline a greater veneer of authenticity and historical depth is true or not. Needless to say, the presence of anachronism in the development of a science casts doubt on its authenticity.

20 When comparing the evaluations of the critics, we did not consider the classification such as *thiqa* (reliable), *ḍa'īf* (weak) and *matrūk* (abandoned) because it was not used widely in the 2nd/8th century. Because the people we compared, except Ibn al-Maḍīnī, are the critics of the 2nd century. Instead, we used the classification as reliable and unreliable for comparisons. For a comparison we made considering the triple classification, see. Turhan, 2017.

In order to read the improvement course of the terminology of transmitter criticism correctly, we will analyze the evaluation statements in two ways: the rates of non-technical expressions-technical terms and the rates of general evaluations-special evaluations. Developments in non-technical expressions-technical terms and general evaluations-special evaluations will provide an important data/evidence in determining the authenticity of this science, as well as in the al-ta'dîl of the classification made as pre-systematic criticism period and systematic criticism period.

Initially, we will try to determine to what extent the terms are among the expressions. Thus, we will try to determine the conceptualization rate in the 2nd/8th century. For this purpose, the following chart is prepared to determine who contributed to conceptualization in the pre-systematic criticism period.

Chart 8: The Rates of The Terms and Non-Technical Expressions Employed in the Pre-systematic Criticism Period



The total rate of non-technical statements among the critics making the most evaluation of the period is 70%. In the first half of the 2nd/8th century, the technical terms increase steadily over time, in other words, the trend line goes up regularly. This result is of significance in terms of showing that the rate of term usage increased in a natural process. In critics other than Ibn Ishaq, the proportion of non-technical expressions is higher than technical terms. Indeed, considering his teachers, Ibn Ishaq should be in the era of t̄abi' al-t̄ab'in (the generation after the successors) rather than

the successors. More importantly, at least the last twenty-five years of his life coincided with a period of systematic criticism. The only technical expression employed by Ibn Ishāq is the term *thiqa* (reliable), which was used in the first century and common in the 2nd/8th century. It is obvious that Ibn Ishāq, who was not included in the critic lists until al-Dhahabī, did not contribute to the diversification of the terminology of transmitter criticism, but only made contribution into the spread of the *thiqa*. Since not having his work *al-Sīra (Kitāb al-Maghāzī)*, in which his critical judgements were most likely included, we have limited opportunity to make a comment on his contribution to this discipline.

Another issue we will consider when analyzing the progress of the terminology of this discipline is the purpose of the evaluations. In this context, we consider the assessments in two groups as general and special evaluations. Special statements are used to indicate whether the transmitter has the license to narrate; general statements are commonly employed to demonstrate the person's authority in Islamic sciences or in a science other than *ḥadīth*. The technical statements mentioned above should not be confused with special evaluations since special evaluations are more general than evaluations made with technical terms. Therefore, every technical expression is also a special assessment. On the other hand, there is no obligation to use the term in every special evaluation as the critic can explain with a non-technical expression whether the transmitter has the license to narrate or not.

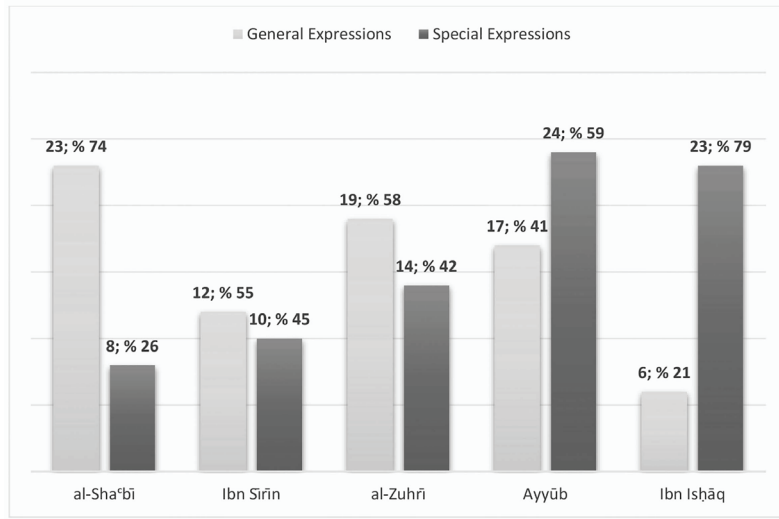
In addition, there is a difference between non-technical expressions and general expressions. For example, the statement “do not take *ḥadīth* from this person” is not included in the general statements category because it shows that the transmitter the license to narrate. On the other hand, this expression is in the category of non-technical statements.

Expressions such as “as long as he lives, knowledge will continue in Madinah” (al-Dhahabī, 1405/1985, 7: 36), “he is a scholar” (el-Mizzī, 1403/1983, 8/488), “he is comprehensive” (al-Fasawī, 1410/1990, 2/96) can be cited as an example of general evaluations. Such statements should not be assessed in the category of analysis carried out to determine the license to narrate as in the period of systematic criticism. We should note that this information was recorded in books in order to indicate the place

of the person in the world of science especially during his life. It can be inferred from most of such evaluations, not made directly to determine the transmitter's license to narrate, that the person had a criterion of uprightness (al-'adālah).

The rate of use of these expressions in the pre-systematic period is as follows:

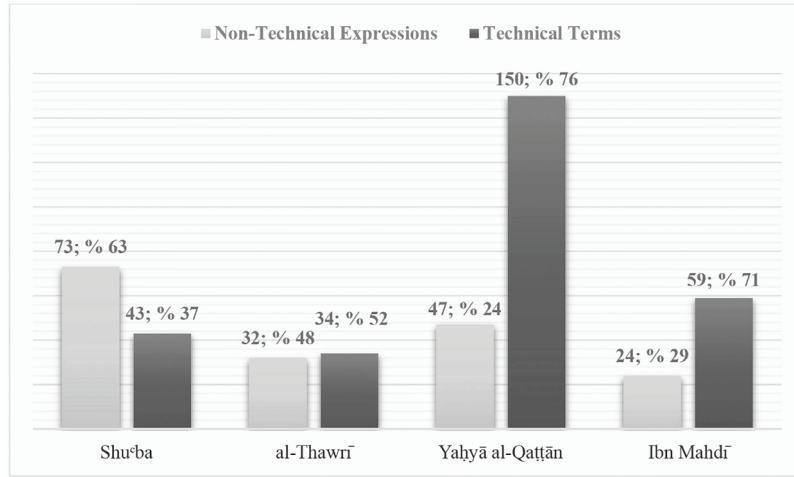
Chart 9: The Rate of Usage of General and Specific Evaluations in the Pre-systematic Period



The proportions of the evaluation statements in the two groups are almost half (the rate of general expression is 49%). In essence, this is a predictable result in the pre-systematic criticism period as people whose profession was the discrediting and accrediting of ḥadīth narrators did not grow at that time. Another remarkable point is that in the assessments of al-Sha'bī, the first representative of the period in the chart, the rate of general evaluations is much higher than the general average and this rate generally decreased in the following years. In the assessments of Ayyūb and Ibn Ishāq, who are the last representatives of the period, the rate falls below the overall average. This result shows that as the period of systematic criticism approached, the rates of term use and specific evaluation increased.

In order to clearly see the changes that took place over the years during the 2nd/8th century, we demonstrate separately the first and second generation critics in chart 6. To this end, we show two critics making more reviews among the first and second generation in the chart. These scholars are Shu‘ba and Sufyān al-Thawrī from the first generation; Yaḥyā al-Qaṭṭān and Ibn Mahdī from the other generation. First, the chart below illustrates the distribution of statements in terms of non-technical expressions and technical terms (Turhan, 2015, 519 etc.)²¹:

Chart 10: The Rates of The Terms and Non-Technical Expressions in the First and Second Generation



The highest rate of non-technical expression in Shu‘ba indicates that although being the founder of this science, he made a limited contribution to the spread of terms. Although Shu‘ba’s technical term use rate is close to the overall average of the systematic pre-period (70%), the amount of term he employed is higher than the critics of that period. When comparing the usage amounts, Shu‘ba’s contribution to spreading the term use is even more than Sufyān al-Thawrī.

In addition to the intensive utilization of technical terms (average 73.5%), the variety of it commenced in the second generation. Second generation critics, notably Yaḥyā al-Qaṭṭān, played a role in the creation of

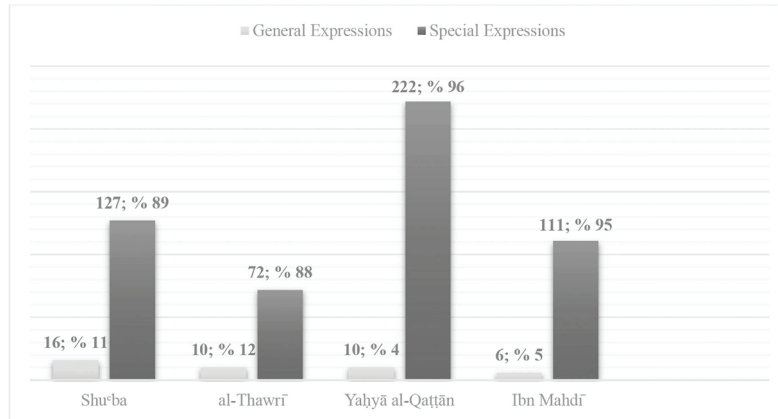
21 It should be noted that we also use the critical judgments of the critics that we later identified in this study.

new terms used extensively in the following years such as “laysa bi dhaka or lamyakun bi dhaka”²², “wasat”²³, “lam yakun bi al-qawī”²⁴, “ḍa’īf al-ḥadīth”²⁵, “munkar al-ḥadīth.”²⁶

The fact that the technical term usage rates are close to each other in the second generation critics in the chart can be interpreted that this success is periodic rather than individual and that the technical term usage rate was reached at a certain standard in the last quarter of the 2nd/8th century at the latest. However, the amount of technical terms employed by Yaḥyā al-Qaṭṭān is almost three times more than the amount utilized by Ibn Maḥdī. Hence, I am convinced that the critic who plays a major role in the spread of the terms as well as the creation of new terms in the 2nd/8th century is Yaḥyā al-Qaṭṭān.

It has become obvious from the chart below that the success of the first and second generation critics in the special evaluation is far beyond the success achieved in the use of the technical term:

Chart 11: The Use Rate of General and Specific Evaluations in the First and Second Generation



22 For examples, see al-'Uqaylī, 1404/1984, 4/252; al-Bājī, 1406/1986, 3/1228; al-Mizzī, 1403/1983, 5/365.

23 For examples, see al-'Uqaylī, 1404/1984, 4/252; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, 1371/1952, 2/460; 8/413.

24 For examples, see Ibn Abī Ḥātim, 1371/1952, 2/132; al-Mizzī, 1403/1983, 2/212; 8/443.

25 For examples, see al-'Uqaylī, 1404/1984, 1/67.

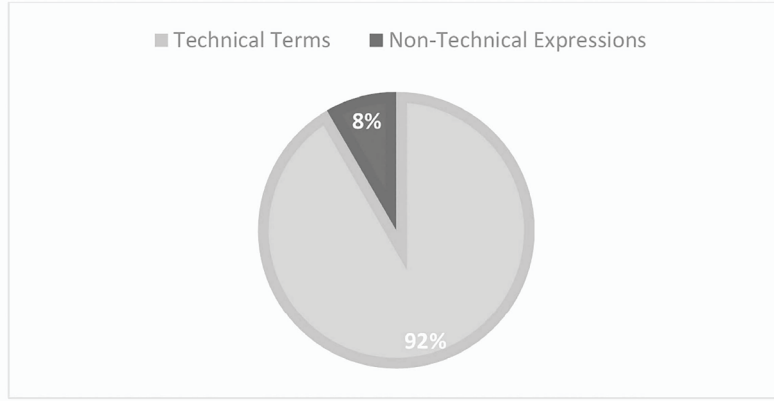
26 For examples, see al-Mizzī, 1403/1983, 24/15.

One of the remarkable points in this chart is that Shu'ba, who is at the same level with the pre-systematic criticism period in the use rate of the technical term, achieved significant success in the special evaluation. Indeed, the fact that the special evaluation rate of al-Thawri is nearly the same can mean that this achievement is periodic rather than individual (the average of special evaluation in the first generation is 88.5%). The important issue at this point is how these rates should be interpreted. These rates clearly demonstrate the al-ta'dīl of the transmitter criticism history being divided into two as (1) the pre-systematic and (2) the systematic and the initiation of the systematic criticism period with Shu'ba and Sufyān al-Thawrī. The fact that the main target in the criticism was to determine the status of the transmitters in the ḥadīth narration, that is, their reliability, directly affected the increase of the special evaluations.

When comparing the amount of term used with special evaluation amounts, an important point emerges in the development of terminology. In all critics of the 2nd/8th century, the amount of special expressions is more than the technical term amount. For instance, when looking at Shu'ba's assessments, he made only forty-three of the hundred and twenty-seven special-valued critical judgements in technical terms (34%). This result indicates that, as in other Islamic sciences, a certain process was needed for the development of the terminology of this discipline. Expecting a technical language in the produced information in a newborn science is not compatible with the development logic of the sciences.

Although there was a serious increase in the rate of technical terms in the last quarter of the 2nd/8th century, it is a fact that a considerable amount of non-technical terms was used. In the third century there was a great success in the creation of terms as well as widespread use of technical terms. Then the chart below shows that Alī ibn al-Madīnī, who was among the critics of the first period of the 3rd/9th century and was determined to have made more than eight hundred critical judgments (Turhan, 2019), achieved this success.

Chart 12: Proportions of Terms and Expressions Employed by Alī ibn al-Madīnī



In line with the increasing use rate of technical term in the 3rd/9th century, new terms were also created. In the 3rd/9th century, there were crucial developments especially in the formation of technical terms related to transmitters whose ḥadīths were recorded and be taken into consideration as al-i'tibār. For instance, terms such as “wasat walam yakun bihi ba's”, “yuktabu ḥadīthuhu”, “ḍa'if laysa bi al-qawī”, “laysa bi dhāka ḍa'if” started to be used in this period (Turhan, 2019).²⁷

Conclusion

In the period of systematic pre-transmitter criticism, which lasted until 125/743 at the latest and consisted of biographical evaluations made by companions and successors, the scholars who made more biographical assessments than other scholars died in the 2nd/8th century. Also, these critics belong to the layers after kibār al-tābi'īn. This determination shows that even though the activities of transmitter criticism extend to companions, the partial increase in their evaluations occurred at the end of the 1st/7th century and the beginning of the 2nd/8th century. The first point that attracts our attention in the evaluations of this period is the rate of al-jarḥ and al-ta'dīl distribution. Biographical evaluations consist of 75 % al-ta'dīl; 25% al-jarḥ. As it is known, issues such as narrative fabrication and increase

²⁷ For the terms al-Bukhārī brought to this science, see Mustafa Taş, 2016.

of the mistakes caused by human weaknesses were effective in increasing the transmitter criticism activities. This could create an expectation that the rate of al-jarḥ should be higher. This expectation is not borne out by the result presented. It is more appropriate to consider issues such as narrative fabrication and increase of the mistakes as reasons that require the strengthening of a critical approach.

146 reviews belonging to al-Shaʿbī, Ibn Sīrīn, al-Zuhrī, Ayyūb, Ibn Ishāq, who made more biographical criticisms than other scholars, have been identified. This result shows that these scholars did not evaluate most of the narrators of the period. The lack of intensive biographical evaluations during this period has had significant consequences in the history of transmitter criticism. For example, we think that one of the most important reasons for the high rate of majhūl (unknown) narrators in this period is that transmitter criticism activities were not carried out intensively during this period. These narrators, who had few students or narrations probably because the systematic narration of ḥadīths did not start in the period before 125/743, were regarded as majhūl in later periods.

In addition to the rise in the amount of biographical evaluation there are also differences in the rates of al-jarḥ and al-taʿdīl in the systematic transmitter criticism period, when lessons devoted only to transmitter criticism. Even when we consider the example of Yaḥyā al-Qaṭṭān, we see that the amount of al-jarḥ far exceeds the amount of al-taʿdīl. This consequence shows that with the systematic period, the jarḥ was given more weight in the transmitter criticism lessons compared to the previous period.

We have identified the existence of two key features that are effective in the development of transmitter criticism science and which we conceptualize as critics chain/network and multi-master system. Critics chain/network refers to the teacher-student relationship between critics, and this system provides an important basis for subsequent critics to reach the evaluations of previous critics. Thanks to the multi-master system, a critic was able to raise himself from many sources/masters, not a single source. In other words, this system gave a person the opportunity to learn the principles of the transmitter criticism comparatively and also to compare the pros and cons of an opinion comparatively.

One of the crucial conclusions we reached in this research is the relationship between master-disciple causes stability in the mechanism of ijti-hād. Also, the assessments of the previous critics were not accepted as unquestionable truths by the later critics and that narrators were reevaluated by the later critics. We also found that contrary to the claims of some researchers, the disagreement rates among critics are reasonable.

The result we reached regarding the development process of evaluation statements is that the rate of term usage increased in a natural process, in other words, the terminology was developed in parallel with the course of the science of transmitter criticism. Term usage rate and concept diversity among second generation critics increased significantly compared to previous periods. Although there was a serious increase in the rate of technical terms in the last quarter of the 2nd/8th century, it is a fact that a considerable amount of non-technical terms was used. In the third century there was a great success in the creation of terms as well as widespread use of technical terms. These conclusions show that Eerik Dickinson's hypothesis that the early scholars were made critics by Ibn Abī Ḥātim in order to give this discipline a greater veneer of authenticity and historical depth is not true. Because an anachronism has not been detected in the development history of criticism terminology.

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