Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī (d. Basra, 275/889) was a prominent collector of prophetic hadīth. He seems to have collected in Iraq, Mecca, and Syria A.H. 220-35, then Khurāsan till the early 240s, then Iraq, Syria, and Egypt till around 250. He claimed to have collected 500,000 in all. He spent most of the years 250-70 in Tarsus, composing his famous Sunan, then the last five years of his life teaching near Basra. This article reviews Abū Dāwūd’s known works, especially al-Sunan, which became one of the Six Books. The Sunan was transmitted from him in slightly different versions by nine named traditionists. A little under 90 percent of it goes back to the Prophet. It is distinguished from other collections by its concentration on hadīth that classify actions (aḥkām). Abū Dāwūd’s express comments within the Sunan concern alternative versions, legal applications, and rijāl criticism. Because it seldom repeats hadīth under multiple topics, it is probably the largest of the Six Books. It must be admitted that Abū Dāwūd was unusually careless at identifying men in asānīd. In his personal piety, Abū Dāwūd stood above all for modesty. His separate collection of hadīth on renunciation, al-Zuhd, comprises mainly the sayings of Companions. In law, Abū Dāwūd was close to Ahmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855). In theology, he adhered to the ninth-century ahl al-sunnah wa-l-jamāʿah. He is also said to have admired and been admired by the proto-Sufi Sahl al-Tastarī (d. 283/896?).

Key words: Abū Dāwūd; Sijistānī; Hadīth; Six Books; Islamic Asceticism.

Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī (m. en Basora, 275/889) fue un eminente recopilador de hadīces proféticos. Parece que esa labor de compilación la hizo en Iraq, La Meca y Siria entre los años 220-35 H.; en Jorasán hasta principios de la siguiente década y, ya nuevamente en Iraq y Siria, además de Egipto, hasta el año 250 H. Afirmó haber recopilado 500.000 hadices en total. Entre 250 y 270 H. permaneció fundamentalmente en Tarso, componiendo su famosa al-Sunan y dedicó los cinco últimos años de su vida a enseñar cerca de Basora. Este artículo revisa los trabajos conocidos del autor, especialmente al-Sunan, que llegará a ser uno de los “Seis libros” (compilaciones canónicas de hadīz). Esta obra fue transmitida, con pequeñas variaciones, por nueve tradicionistas que la tomaron de él. Casi el 90% de las tradiciones se remontan al Profeta. Esta obra se diferencia de otras colecciones porque se centra en hadīces que clasifican acciones (aḥkām). Los comentarios expresos de Abū Dāwūd dentro de la obra se refieren a versiones alternativas, aplicaciones legales y la ciencia del rijāl. Dado que pocas veces repite un mismo hadīz bajo diferentes epígrafes, se trata probablemente de la más larga de las seis colecciones canónicas de hadīces. Debe reconocerse que Abū Dāwūd era bastante descuidado a la hora de identificar individuos en las cadenas de transmisión. Su colección independiente de hadīces relativos a la renuncia ascética, al-Zuhd, comprende fundamentalmente dichos de los Compañeros del Profeta. Por lo que se refiere al derecho, Abū Dāwūd estaba cerca de Ahmad b. Ḥanbal (m. 241/855). En teología se adheriría al movimiento de los ahl al-sunnah wa-l-jamāʿah del siglo IX. Se dice que admiraba y era admirado por el proto-sufi Sahl al-Tustarī (m. 283/896?).

Palabras clave: Abū Dāwūd; Sijistānī; hadīz; seis colecciones canónicas de hadīz; ascetismo islámico.

THE LIFE AND WORKS OF ABŪ DĀWŪD AL-SIJISTĀNĪ
VIDA Y OBRAS DE ABŪ DĀWŪD AL-SIJISTĀNĪ

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Abū Dāwūd Suyūṭī b. al-Ashʿath b. Iṣḥāq b. Bāṣhīr (or Bishr) b. Shaddād b. ‘Amr b. Āmīr (or ‘Imrān) al-Aẕḏī al-Sijistānī (d. Basra, 275/889) is mainly important as a collector of prophetic hadith, whose Sunan early won third place among the Six Books most highly regarded by Sunni Muslims.¹ He was also an important collector of the legal opinions and rijāl criticism of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. Baghdad, 241/855). The following account of his life and works (of which an extract will appear in The Encyclopaedia of Islam, third edition) offers a fuller account of his travels and a longer list of his works than have appeared hitherto. It also offers some new characterizations of the Sunan and Zuhd.

Life

According to Ibn Khallikān, some interpreted Abū Dāwūd’s nisba as referring to a village of Sijistan or Sijistanah in the environs of Basra.² However, most biographers suppose him to have come from the region of Sijistan south of Khurasan.³ From his name and tribal nisba, he appears to have been ancestrally Arab. His ancestor ‘Imrān is said to have perished at Šīffīn, fighting with ‘Alī.⁴ No biography inspected by me indicates that he was not ancestrally Arab, un-


³ Note al-Samʿānī, Kitāb al-Aṣnāb, Muḥammad Aḥmad Ḥallāq (ed.), Beirut, 1999 (based on three MSS. unlike earlier editions), 3:21, s.n. Sijistānī.

like al-Bukhārī, whose great-grandfather was named Bardizbah, and Muslim, whose ancestry is never traced further back than his grandfather. Writing somewhat more than a century after his death, al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī (d. Nishapur, 405/1014) states that Abū Dāwūd and his descendants had properties in Sijistan until his own time. 5 Al-Ḥākim also describes him as hearing hadith in Khurasan, particularly in his own locality and Herat, before travelling to Iraq. 6

We have a few biographical data attributed to Abū Dāwūd directly. Abū ‘Ubayd al-Ājurri quotes him as saying he was born in 202/817-18. 7 He entered Baghdad when he was around 18, in time to pray at the funeral of ‘Affān (d. Rabī’ II 220/February-March 835). 8 He may have been accompanied by an older brother, Muḥammad, also a traditionist. 9 He entered Basra three months later, just after the death of ‘Uthmān b. al-Haytham (d. Rajab 220/July 835). 10 Abū ‘Īsā al-Azraq quotes him as saying he entered Kufa for the first time in 221/835-6. 11 He must have made his first trip to Syria not long thereafter, for he is quoted as saying that he saw Abū l-Nadr Ḫishāq b. Ibrāhīm (d. 227/841-2) in Damascus and wrote hadith at his dictation in 222/836-7. 12 He was back in Basra in 223/837-8, when he attended the funeral there of Muḥammad b. Kathīr al-‘Abdī. 13 He was probably in Syria again in 227/841-2, when he took dictation from ‘Abbās b. al-Walīd b. Mazyad (d. 270/883?) of Beirut, although Abū Dāwūd does not expressly say where this took place. 14

Al-Dhahabī believes that he must have made the pilgrimage to Mecca at the end of 220/November-December 835, hearing hadith

9 Al-Dhahabī, Siyār, 13:221.
10 Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, Ta’rīkh, 9:56, l. 15 10:77.
11 Ibidem, 9:56, ll. 8-9 10:77.
13 Ibidem, 1:25, 442.
there from al-Qa‘nabī (d. Mecca? 221/835?) and Sulaymān b. Ḥarb (d. Basra, 224/839), among others. The list of shaykhs from whom Abū Dāwūd heard hadith is the principal evidence for Abū Dāwūd’s travels. Interpretation is not always straightforward. Usually, one infers from a traditionist’s being identified as, say, a Basran or a Damascene that Abū Dāwūd heard hadith from him in Basra or Damascus, respectively. Sometimes, however, we are told expressly that he heard hadith from someone in a different place. For example, Sulaymān b. Ḥarb has just been mentioned as someone from whom Abū Dāwūd heard hadith in Mecca, although he was by all accounts a Basran who died in Basra. Moreover, a fair proportion of Abū Dāwūd’s shaykhs are unidentified in the biographical sources as to either place or date of death. (Indeed, a date of death or even an approximation is attached to only about 40 percent of all transmitters in the Six Books, to judge by Ibn Hajar, Taqrib al-Tahdhib).

Working with what we have, though, we may infer the outlines of Abū Dāwūd’s travels as follows. Except for Ibrāhīm b. Mūsā al-Ṣaghīr of Rayy (d. 220s/835-45), Abū Dāwūd’s shaykhs to the East, mainly the Jibal, Khurasan, and Transoxania, all died 238/852-3 and later; therefore, although he may have made a trip to Rayy in the 220s, the more likely alternative is that he caught Ibrāhīm b. Mūsā when they were both in Baghdad or Mecca and that Abū Dāwūd made his major trip to the East in the later 230s. Death dates for Abū Dāwūd’s Iraqi shaykhs run from the early 220s to the early 270s/mid-830s to the mid-880s, so he presumably frequented the area more or less throughout this period. His Egyptian shaykhs died in 248/862-3 and later, so he presumably travelled to Egypt only then or a little before. This is confirmed by a report that he shared his Egyptian shaykhs with his son, with whom he cannot have travelled to Egypt before 241/856.


18 Al-Khalīlī, al-Iṣḥād fi ma‘rifat ‘ulamā’ al-hadīth, ‘Āmir Ahmad Ḥaydar (ed.), Mecca, 1414, 192. There is also a story that he deliberately disguised his son in order for
of these shaykhs turns out to have lived most of the year in Rabadhah, on the road between Kufa and Mecca, spending mainly the two festivals in Medina. Therefore, it seems doubtful whether Abū Dāwūd ever actually travelled to Medina. It is striking that he apparently quotes nothing in his major books of shaykhs whom he heard in Khurasan in his youth, before travelling to Iraq in 220/835. It was not an absurd suggestion that he was named for a village near Basra rather than a district near Khurasan.

Abū Dāwūd relates a considerable volume of material from Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, on which more below. Of interest now is what it means for the chronology of Abū Dāwūd’s collecting hadith. Aḥmad was arrested near the beginning of the Inquisition in 218/833, then flogged and released by al-Muʿtaṣim in (probably) 220/835, while Abū Dāwūd was collecting hadith in Basra for the first time. Aḥmad then kept to his house until the accession of al-Wāṭhiq on 18 Rabīʿ I 227/5 January 842. At that point, he returned to the mosque and resumed relating hadith. Reports vary as to just when Aḥmad swore not to relate hadith any longer, but one that sounds especially plausible places this at 26 Shaʿbān 227/10 June 842, after a qāḍī had denounced him to the caliph but before the caliph had actually commanded him to stop relating hadith. Abū Dāwūd must have been in Baghdad during these five months writing down hadith from Aḥmad and probably his legal opinions and evaluations of traditionists as well. Aḥmad spent the rest of Wāṭhiq’s caliphate out of sight. However, Abū Dāwūd met with him at least once not long thereafter, for he recalls being the first to tell Aḥmad of the death of his Basran teacher Musaddad b. Muṣarradh (d. 228/842–3).  

him to take dictation from Aḥmad b. Šāliḥ (d. 248/862-3) of Old Cairo, who normally refused to have adolescents in his circle, although Dhahabī admittedly prefers an alternative story not involving Abū Dāwūd (al-Dhahabī, Siyar, 13:227, 231).


23 Al-Ājurri, Suʿālāt, 1:21, 2:54.
Other data come from the life of Abū Dāwūd’s son Abū Bakr ‘Abd Allāh (d. Baghdad, 316/929), a traditionist of vast knowledge in his own right although somewhat disreputable. An estimate of Abū Bakr’s age at his death indicates that he was born about the first half of Jumādā II 230/second half of February 845. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī assumes that this was in Sijistan. By contrast, though, al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī suggests that Abū Dāwūd first took his son to hear from Ishāq b. Rāhawayh (d. Nishapur, 238/853?), then went to Sijistan to look after his affairs there. (By the way, this also tells us how Abū Dāwūd was supported all those years of collecting hadith, mainly by remittances from home, probably agricultural rents. Compare al-Ṭabarī [d. 310/923], supported by remittances from Tabaristan.)

It is possible that Abū Dāwūd also travelled to the adjacent regions of Tabaristan, Quhistan, and Transoxania at this time; however, since there is over ten times more material in the Sunan from shaykhs of Khurasan than from shaykhs of these other three regions combined, it seems more likely that he caught shaykhs from there when they were visiting Khurasan. If we except the hadith he related from Ibrāhīm b. Mūsā al-Ṣaghīr, we may add Rayy as well to this list of places he probably never visited, since he otherwise related so little from Razi shaykhs. For Rayy, we have additional negative evidence in Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī’s personal recollection of Abū Dāwūd: “I

27 Al-Dhahabī, Siyar, 13:218, presumably quoting Taʾrīkh Naysābūr.
29 Al-ʾAjurrī, Suʿalāt, 1:19, 185.
saw him in Baghdad. He came to salute my father.” 31 Had Abū Dāwūd passed through Rayy, Ibn Abī Ḥātim ought to have mentioned his father’s meeting him there. 32 Abū Dāwūd presumably returned to Syria in the early 240s. A direct quotation places him in Tarsus by 242/857, for there and then he missed the funeral of Hāmid b. Yaḥyā al-Balkhī on account of rain. 33 He is quoted as saying that he collected 500,000 hadith reports altogether. 34

Abū Dāwūd is also quoted as saying, “I lived in Tarsus for twenty years writing al-Musnad (properly attested hadith). I wrote four thousand hadith reports. Then I observed that the four thousand turned on just four of them.” 35 The point of the statement is the comprehensiveness of just four hadith reports (on which more below), so “twenty years” need not to be taken precisely. However, it does suggest that after his early travels in search of hadith, he retired for about that length of time to Tarsus, which probably means approximately the years 250-70/864-83. He must also have made periodic trips back to Iraq during this time, for a substantial number of his shaykhs in the Sunan are Iraqis who died only in these two decades. Moreover, Ibn Dāsah went to hear him relate hadith for four years in al-Ubullah, about 20 kilometres outside Basra. 36 It is possible that these were the last four years of his life, on which more below. However, Ibn Dāsah is also said to have heard the masā’il of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal from Abū Dāwūd several years earlier, in 266/879, so it is possible that the stay in al-Ubullah took place around then. 37

32 Abū Ḥātim lived at home in Rayy from 221/835-6 to 242/856-7 (Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Kitāb al-Jarḥ, 1:360), so Abū Dāwūd would have been able to find him had he visited Rayy in the later 230s. Ibn Abī Ḥātim was born in 240/254-5 or 241/855-6. He travelled to the West with his father 255-6/869-70 (al-Dhahabī, Siyar, 13:266), which is when they must have met Abū Dāwūd in Baghdad.

37 Abū Dāwūd, Kitāb Masāʾil al-imām Aḥmad, Muḥammad Bahjah al-Bayṭār (ed.), Al-Qaṣṭara (AQ) XXIX 1, enero-junio 2008, pp. 9-44 ISSN 0211-3589
Al-Khaṭṭābī, the first commentator on Abū Dāwūd’s Sunan, relates a conversation between Abū Dāwūd and al-Muwaffaq, the effective ruler behind the nominal caliph al-Muʿtamid, his half-brother. The speaker is an Abū Bakr b. Jābir, servant to Abū Dāwūd: 38

I was with him in Baghdad. We prayed the sunset prayer. Then there was a knock on the door, so I opened it, and lo, there was a servant saying “This is the amīr Abū Ahmad al-Muwaffaq, asking permission to enter.” I went in to Abū Dāwūd and informed him where he was. He gave him permission so he came in and sat down. Then Abū Dāwūd went to him, asking, “What has brought the prince at this time?” He said, “Three needs.” He said, “What are they?” He said, “That you move to Basra and take it up as your residence so that students of hadith may go to you from the corners of the Earth. This way, you will be the means of its being inhabited, for it has been ruined and its populace driven away by what has happened through the tribulation of the Zanj.” He said, “This is one.” He said, “That you relate Kitāb al-Sunan to my sons.” He said, “Yes. Tell me the third.” He said, “That you arrange a session exclusively for them, for caliphs’ sons do not sit with the general.” He said, “There is no way to do this. When it comes to religious knowledge, people are equal, the noble and the base.” So they came and sat... with a screen between them and the people, hearing along with the general.

Muwaffaq finally suppressed the Zanj revolt in 270/883, which provides a terminus post quem for the story. It ends with a point about Abū Dāwūd’s piety, sounding suspiciously similar to stories about other traditionists. For example, Bukhārī is said to have got in trouble near the end of his life for refusing to offer private lessons to another amīr’s children. 39 We may be dealing with a topos, likely inspired by the story of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and the caliph al-Mutawakkil, who asked him to teach one of his sons, the future caliph al-Muʿtazz. 40
However, neither the fact of a transfer to Basra nor even the sponsorship of Muwaffaq need be dismissed as a fiction. 41

Abū Dāwūd is said to have left Baghdad for the last time at the beginning of 271/June-July 884. 42 Abū Dāwūd died in Basra, 15 or 16 Shawwāl 275/20 or 21 February 889. 43 He requested that his corpse be washed by Muḥammad b. al-Muthannā (d. 294/907). This was an aged Basran traditionist (born two years before Abū Dāwūd) who would not relate hadith until told to do so in a dream, evidently after Abū Dāwūd’s death; however, the main issue was presumably that Abū Dāwūd trusted him to perform the rite correctly, for he also named precisely the book containing the hadith to guide them if Muḥammad b. al-Muthannā should decline. 44 He was prayed over by an ʿAbbās b. ʿAbd al-Wāḥid al-Hāshimī and buried next to the famous traditionist and jurisprudent Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. Basra, 161/777?).

Works

I have come across twenty-one works altogether attributed to Abū Dāwūd.

1. ْAl-Sunan. 46 A collection of sound hadith from the Prophet, on which more below.

43 The later date, quoted in a number of subsequent biographies, goes back to al-Ājurri, Suʿālāt, 2:296. The earlier date, quoted in even more subsequent biographies, goes back to al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, Taʾrīkh, 9:59, ll. 2-4 10:81, likewise quoting al-Ājurri.

Al-Qanṭara (AQ) XXIX 1, enero-junio 2008, pp. 9-44 ISSN 0211-3589
2. Al-Marāṣil. 47 A collection of 544 hadith reports related by some Follower (tābi‘) directly from the Prophet, without any named Companion in between. Arranged by topic. The published text evidently combines recensions from Ibn ‘Abd? and Ibn Dāsah, further identified below among transmitters of the Sunan. 48 Ibn Khayr al-Ishbīlī knew the recension of al-Lu’lu’ī, likewise further identified below, which he says Lu’lu’ī related in Basra in 325/936-7. 49 It is said to survive in manuscript. 50 Ibn Ḥajar knew the recension of Ibn Dāsah. 51 The Risālah ilâ ahl Makkah implies that it is an integral part of the Sunan. 52

3. Al-Risālah ilâ ahl Makkah. 53 An introduction to al-Sunan, on which more below.

4. Kitāb al-Ba‘th. 54 Eighty hadith reports (90 percent going back to the Prophet) about death and resurrection, often with dubious asānīd.

by Haytham b. Nizār Tamīm (Beirut, Dār al-Arqām, 1999), and that with no named editor (Beirut, Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 1998), the last not recommended.


48 E.g. v. Abū Dāwūd, Marāṣil, Kitāb al-Șalāh 6 (ed. Sayrāwān, 79).


52 Abū Dāwūd, “Risālah al-imām Abī Dāwūd al-Sijistānī ilâ ahl Makkah fī waṣf Sunanīh”, in Thalāth rasāl fī ‘ilm muṣṭalāh al-hadīth, ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ Abū Ghuddah (ed.), Beirut, Dār al-Bashā’ir al-Islāmiyyah, 1997, 29-54, 51. Confirmed by al-Ishbīlī, Fihrah, 91, n.º 155, which states that al-Marāṣil was sometimes annexed to al-Muṣannaf. He does say the same of al-Zuhd (al-Ishbīlī, Fihrah, 92, n.º 156), whereas Abū Dāwūd’s Risālah states expressly that the Sunan does not include al-Zuhd, among other topics (Abū Dāwūd, Risālah, ed. Abū Ghuddah, 54). However, there is also some manuscript evidence for al-Marāṣil annexed to al-Sunan: v. GAS, 1:152, VII (Reisūlkūṭṭap and Köprüli MSS.) and Khalaf, Istīdrākāt, n.º 695. A parallel is Kitāb al-‘ilāl normally annexed to al-Tīrmdīh, al-Jāmi’ al-/XML (al-Sunan).

53 First published as Abū Dāwūd, Risālat Abī Dāwūd al-Sijistānī fī waṣf ta‘līfī li-Kitāb al-Sunan, Muhammad Zāhid al-Kawtharī (ed.), Cairo, Maṭā‘at al-Anwār, 1369. There have been many subsequent editions, of which I happen to use Risālah, ed. Abū Ghuddah. The Risālah is short enough that all quotations should be easy to trace.

54 Abū Dāwūd, Kitāb al-Ba‘th, Abū Ishāq al-Huwaynī al-Âthārī (ed.), Beirut, 1988. This is the only edition I have examined, but others have appeared.

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5. **Al-Zuhd.** A collection of hadith (perhaps two collections) on renunciation of the world, on which more below.

6. **Masā’il al-imām ʿAḥmad.** Juridical opinions from Abū Dāwūd. Ḥanbal, with a very few additional comments from others, mainly on orthodox belief, on which more below.

7. **Su’ālāt li-ʿAḥmad b. Ḥanbal.** Identifications and evaluations of traditionists, 98 percent from Abū Dāwūd. Ḥanbal, on which more below. Mostly arranged by city. The sole known manuscript is missing the beginning and a section in the middle, so there is no history there of its transmission from Abū Dāwūd; however, its editor has found 71 apparent quotations in *Ta’rikh Baghdad*, each with an isnād, which suggest that we have the recension of al-Ḥusayn b. Idrīs b. Khurram (d. 301/913-14). 58

8. **Su’ālāt Abī ʿUbayd al-ʿĀjurri.** Identifications and evaluations of traditionists, mostly from Abū Dāwūd, as collected by Abū ʿUbayd Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-ʿĀjurri (d. early fourth/tenth century?). Arranged by city. The sole known manuscript is missing the beginning.


11. **Al-Tafarrud.** On hadith found among the traditionists of only one city. Ibn Khayr al-Ishbīlī and Ibn Ḥajar knew the recension of Ibn Dāsah. Not extant.


57 *Idem*, Su’ālāt. This is the *Kitāb fi l-rijāl* noted in GAS, 1:152, n. VIII.

58 Introduction to Abū Dāwūd, Su’ālāt, 123-7, 134. Ten interpolations into the text from someone named al-Ḥusayn (listed ibid., 129) constitute further evidence.

59 Al-ʿĀjurri, Su’ālāt.


12. *Dalā‘il al-nubūwah.* Presumably a collection of hadith showing that Muhammad was a genuine prophet, probably also comparing him with earlier prophets. Ibn Khayr al-Ishbīlī and Ibn Ḥajar knew the recension of Ibn Dāsah. Not extant.


15. *Faḍā‘il al-anṭār.* Presumably a collection of hadith extolling the Medinese who adhered to the Prophet’s cause on his transferring there from Mecca. Not extant.

16. *Musnad Mālik.* Presumably a collection of hadith transmitted by Mālik b. Anas (d. Medina, 179/795). *Musnad* in the title is ambiguous. It may indicate that the collection was arranged by Companion as opposed to topic, like Aḥmad’s *Musnad*. It may indicate that it comprised only hadith with complete asānīd, similar to the *Musnad Mālik b. Anas* of al-Qāḍī Ismā‘īl b. Iṣḥāq (d. 282/895). In this case, it would be opposed to the *Kitāb al-Sunan min Muwaṭṭa‘ Mālik b. Anas* to which Abū Dāwūd refers in the *Risālah ilā ahl Makkah*, which expressly included a good share of marāsīl. Finally, and most likely, it may indicate exactly the book referred to in the *Risālah*, with *musnad* meaning simply that every hadith report in it came with some form of isnād, unlike some of the hadith in the *Muwaṭṭa‘*. Transmitted from Abū Dāwūd by Ismā‘īl b. Muḥammad al-Ṣaffār (d. 341/952). Not extant.

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66 Mentioned by ibidem, 1:150, and Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhib*, 1:6, l. 5.


18. *Akhbār al-khawārij.* Most likely a history of the movement, but also possibly a collection of hadith from Khawārij, for Abū Dāwūd is quoted as saying that no heretics had sounder hadith than they. Not extant.


21. *Kitāb al-*kunā. Presumably a list of past traditionists by kunyah (“teknonymic” seems to be the leading English equivalent.) Not extant.

A book called *al-Ādāb al-sharʿīyah*, presumably treating personal conduct as suggested by revelation, appears on one list of Abū Dāwūd’s works, but this seems to be a mistake. The later Hanbali writer Ibn Mufliḥ al-Qāqūnī (d. Damascus, 763/1362), in the introduction to his own book on personal conduct, refers to Abū Dāwūd as the earliest of seven others who had written on the topic. But when Ibn Mufliḥ

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70 Mentioned by Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhib*, 1:6, l. 12.
71 Mentioned by *ibidem*, 1:6, l. 13.
73 *Ibidem*, 1:36, 320.
75 Introduction to al-Jayyānī, *Tasmiyah*, ed. Fajjī, 22, citing Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Ḥsābah ʿfi tamyẓ al-ṣahābah*, 3:437. Unfortunately, Fajjī must be using some edition of *al-Ḥsābah* other than the three I have been able to check, so I have not been able to confirm his citation.
76 To judge by some searching on Google, 8 August 2006. The alternatives “teknonym”, “teconym”, and “teconymic” were not to be found. Franz Rosenthal proposed that the correct English word, if one existed, would be “hyionymic” or “paidonomic”: *A History of Muslim historiography*, Leiden, 1968, 169 fn. Google shows that the alternative spellings “paedonym” and “paedonomic” have some currency among word fanciers, while “paidonomic” has at least been taken up by someone in our field: v. Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, *An Introduction to the science of the ḥadīth*, Eerik Dickinson and Muneer Fareed (transl.), Reading, 2005, 249-57.
quotes Abū Dāwūd in the body of his work, it is a matter of hadith found in the *Sunan*, so we need not suppose a separate work on *adab*. 79

**The *Sunan***

Abū Dāwūd’s most famous work was the *Sunan*. It has usually been counted the next soundest of the Six Books after those of Bukhārī and Muslim, followed in descending order by the collections of al-Tirmidhī, al-Nasā’ī, and Ibn Mājah. 80 A few later critics did say Nasā’ī’s collection was the more thoroughly reliable. 81 The *Sunan* comes with no preface parallel to Muslim’s for his collection of sound hadith; however, there is extant the letter to the people of Mecca that describes it (n.º 3 on the above list of works). Our text of that letter evidently comes not from the Meccan to whom the letter was originally addressed but from someone who took it down from Abū Dāwūd’s dictation in Basra, repeating what he had earlier written “to the people of Mecca and elsewhere”. 82 It is an early witness to Abū Dāwūd’s having assembled a book called *al-Sunan*, which is expressly how he refers to it. 83 Its remarks about the *Sunan* fit the book we know, such as Abū Dāwūd’s declaration that he has often abridged hadith reports for the sake of emphasizing their juridical applications. 84

Abū Dāwūd’s letter stresses hadith with legal applications. 85 “I have collected in *Kitāb al-Sunan* only *ahlkām* (ordinances). I have not collected the books of renunciation, the virtues of works, and so on. These 4,800 all concern ordinances. As for the many sound hadith concerning

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79 E.g. ibidem, 1:58, 59, 60.
83 Ibidem, 33. Cf. what is commonly known as the *Sunan* of al-Tirmidhī, more properly entitled *al-Jāmi’ al-ṣaḥīḥ*, and the *Sunan* of al-Nasā’ī, more properly *al-Mujtabā*.
84 Ibidem, 32.
85 Ibid., 54.
renunciation, the virtues of works, and so on, I have not brought them out”. My own content analysis generally confirms the stress.

**TABLE 1.—Contents of three major hadith collections**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Abū Dāwūd</th>
<th>Muslim</th>
<th>Ahmad b. Ḥanbal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aḥkām</strong></td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Al-targhīb wa-l-tarḥīb</strong></td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History, including prophetic biography</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sunan al-dīn</strong></td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devotions (e.g. sample prayers)</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reward and punishment</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eschatology</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qur’ānic glosses</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In discussions of *uṣūl al-fiqh, aḥkām* has been properly translated as “assessments” or “categorizations.” Hadith reports of *aḥkām* are characteristically those that indicate in which category a given act belongs. Since “recommended” and “discouraged” are important categories in Islamic law, it must sometimes be difficult to distinguish between hadith of *aḥkām* and of *al-targhīb wa-l-tarḥīb*, “making to aspire and making to fear” (i.e. encouraging piety and discouraging impiety). Very likely, another analyst would classify these samples somewhat differently. However, the starting point for the enumeration of the above categories is a statement by Muslim in the introduction to his *Sunan al-dīn, aḥkām, reward and punishment, al-targhīb wa-l-tarḥīb*, and so forth”, so I am not imposing an alien distinction here. I take it any analyst would classify something like this saying of the Prophet as *al-targhīb wa-l-tarḥīb*: “There are three

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86 Figures for Muslim’s *Ṣaḥīḥ* and Ahmad b. Ḥanbal’s *Musnad* from Melchert, “The Musnad of Ahmad b. Ḥanbal”, 45. Based on randomly collected samples of 104 hadith reports from Abū Dāwūd’s *Sunan*, 89 from Muslim’s *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 273 from Ahmad’s *Musnad*, so “none” means “very few” and percentages should be taken mainly as showing orders of magnitude.

prayers that will doubtless be answered: that of a parent, that of a trav-
eller, and that of someone wronged.” 88 And the Sunan undoubtedly in-
cludes whole books without legal application; e.g. Kitāb al-malāḥim on
the Last Days to come. Still, it apparently does include much more on
ahkām than the collections of Muslim and Ahmad, for example, and
significantly less on the early history of the community.

Earlier jurisprudents and collectors whom Abū Dāwūd mentions
in the letter (the categories still overlap somewhat) are Ibrāhīm
al-Nakha‘ī (d. Kufa, 96/714-15?), Yazīd b. Abī Ḥabīb (Egyptian, d.
128/745-6), al-Awzā‘ī (d. Beirut, 157/773-4?), Sufyān al-Thawrī,
Ḥammād b. Salamah (d. Basra, 167/784), Mālik b. Anas, Ibn
al-Mubārak (d. Hit, 181/797), Abū Yūṣuf (d. Baghdad, 182/798?),
Wakī’ b. al-Jarrāḥ (d. Fayd, 197/812?), al-Shāfī‘ī (d. Old Cairo,
204/820), ‘Abd al-Razzāq (Yemeni, d. 211/827), Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal,
and al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī al-Khālīl (Meccan, d. 242/856-7). The list is not
surprising for a Baghdadi traditionalist of his generation. Abū Dāwūd
expresses no systematic preference for the jurisprudents of any partic-
ular city, as his contemporary Ibn Qutaybah (not so thorough a tradi-
tionalist) does for those of Medina. 89

More surprising is Abū Dāwūd’s declaration, “I know of no one
else who has collected to the extent that I have.” Al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī
al-Khālīl had collected about 900 hadīth reports, he goes on, while
Ibn al-Mubārak had asserted that there were altogether about 900
sunan from the Prophet. By contrast, he had selected 4,800. 90 This
seems an odd history of collecting hadīth. If we exclude repeats (sub-
stantially the same hadīth reports with alternative asānīd), then Abū
Dāwūd’s Sunan is indeed the most comprehensive of the Six Books,
followed by Muslim, then Ibn Mājah, then Tirmidhī; still, not by a
margin of thousands. 91 Probably, Abū Dāwūd was unaware of rival
collections from Khurasan, where he had not travelled since before

89 Melchert, C., “How Ḥanafism came to originate in Kufa and traditionalism in Me-
dina”, ILS, 6 (1999), 318-47, 345-6; idem, “Traditionist-jurisprudents and the framing of
90 Abū Dāwūd, Risālah, ed. Abū Ghuddah, 35.
91 Muslim’s Sahīh has been estimated as including 12,000 hadīth reports including
all variant asānīd, 4,000 without variants: Ibn Hajar, al-Ṭabarānī, ed. Medina, 1:296, ed.
‘Ājmān, 1:151. Cf. Hamdān, N., Muwaṭṭa‘at al-imām Mālik, Damascus, 1992, 319, re-
porting 11,000 altogether, 3,033 without repeats.

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242/856-7. Ahmad b. Hanbal’s *Musnad*, which includes some 5,200 hadith reports without repeats, was redacted only by Ahmad’s son ‘Abd Allāh (d. Baghdad, 290/903), hence unavailable in Abū Dāwūd’s lifetime. But the *Muṣannaf* of ‘Abd al-Razzāq includes almost 5,000 items from the Prophet, that of Ibn Abī Shaybah (d. Kufa, 235/849) over 7,000. Perhaps Abū Dāwūd overlooked them because they did not collect exclusively either sound hadith or prophetic; alternatively, he overlooked them because both *Muṣannafs* were actually redacted posthumously. Certainly, alongside al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī al-Khallāl’s present obscurity, it is further evidence that reputations normally took some time to establish, so that scholars and books that look like giants from our perspective may have been all but unknown to their contemporaries, while others that looked like giants in their time have since shrunk out of sight.

Abū Dāwūd is emphatic that he has included all the sound hadith available, at least concerning *aḥkām*. “This is a book such that you will never come across a *sunnah* from the Prophet... with a sound *isnad* but that it is included.” He also declares that he has provided a warning wherever he has had to include something less than certain. “When it contains a questionable (*munkar*) hadith report, I have pointed out that it is questionable, there being nothing else on its topic.” “Whatever is in my book by way of hadith with some severe weakness, I have made it clear.” This description of his method of selection has puzzled commentators for a long time, for Abū Dāwūd

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93 For studies of the redaction of ‘Abd al-Razzāq’s *Muṣannaf*, v. Motzki, H., *The Origins of Islamic jurisprudence: Meccan fiqh before the classical schools*, Marion H. Katz (transl.), Leiden, 2002, chap. 2, and idem, “The Author and his work in the Islamic literature of the first centuries: the case of ‘Abd al-Razzāq’s *Muṣannaf*”, *JSAL*, 28 (2003), 171-201. Neither study has convinced me that ‘Abd al-Razzāq himself must have redacted the collection we know. However, I do not see that there is a strong case against Motzki, either, and their stress on post-prophetic hadith (over 75 percent of ‘Abd al-Razzāq’s *Muṣannaf*, 80 percent of Ibn Abī Shaybah’s) seems an additional reason to suppose that the two *Muṣannafs* did predate the Six Books.
95 Idem. 33. The definition of *munkar* changed over time, apparently from outright “rejected” in the generation before Abū Dāwūd to designating a hadith report known by only one chain of transmitters (something like *shāhdh*) among systematizers of the eleventh century and after. Abū Dāwūd’s usage seems already intermediate. V. Eerik Dickinson’s discussion in Ibn al-Ṣalāh, *Introduction*, 59fn.
seems to have included much questionable material. For example, Dhahabī says, “He makes clear what is plainly weak but is silent when it comes to what is probably weak. It cannot be that whenever he is silent, it is fairly sound (hasan) in his view, rather there may be a certain weakness to it.” Ibn Ḥajar treats the problem sensibly. There are many discontinuous (munjati’) asānīd in the Sunan, so Abū Dāwūd’s silence is not to be taken as an indication that something is perfectly sound as hadith; rather, if he is silent about something, it means he thinks it good enough to be adduced as a legal proof (li-l-hujjah). One must bear in mind that Abū Dāwūd preferred weak hadith to qiyās. 98

It is not easy to measure the Sunan’s renown. It evidently reached Mecca in Abū Dāwūd’s lifetime, hence the Risālah. Nine men (listed below) are remembered as transmitting it from Abū Dāwūd, which is more than are remembered as transmitting most of the other Six Books. Our earliest extant biography of Abū Dāwūd, from Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. Rayy, 327/938), has been quoted already. It lists a few of his shaykhs, recalls how he came to salute his father in Baghdad, and concludes, “He was trustworthy.” 99 There is no hint that Abū Dāwūd was responsible for a massive collection of sound hadith. However, Ibn Abī Ḥātim likewise fails to mention that Bukhārī and Muslim had major collections of sound hadith. 100 Also, the Sunan may have been noted in other biographies now lost to us. Abū Bakr al-Khallal (d. Baghdad, 311/923), author of the earliest anbali biographical dictionary, described him as having “unprecedented knowledge of bringing out (useful things in) the sciences, for which he knew where to look”, which might well be an allusion to the Sunan. 101 A Cordovan, Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Malik b. Ayman (d. 330/942), compiled a Sunan after the pat-

98 Ibn Ḥajar, Nukat, ed. ‘Ajmān, 1:279.
101 Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, Tārikh, 9:57 10:79. It is hard to say whether this is a quotation from Khallāl’s Tabaqāt, of which only an abridgement survives apart from quotations, for which v. GAS, 1:512, n. 2. Ibn Abī Ya’lā, who includes Abū Dāwūd in his biographical dictionary of the Hanbali school, does not quote Khallāl concerning Abū Dāwūd but does include him among those whom Abū Dāwūd taught (Tabaqāt al-banābilah, Muhammad Hāmid al-Fiqī (ed.), Cairo, 1952, 1:59-62). Al-‘Umarī is non-committal as to whether al-Khaṭīb quotes Khallāl from his Tabaqāt: al-‘Umarī, Akram Ḍiyā’, Mawārid al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī fi Ta’rikh Baghdādī, n.p., Maṭba’at

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tern of Abū Dāwūd’s, which shows that it reached al-Andalus in the lifetime of its transmitters from Abū Dāwūd himself. 102 Al-Khaṭṭābī (d. Bust, 388/998?), its earliest commentator, states that it is the most popular collection of hadith among the people of Iraq, Egypt and the Maghrib, among other places, although the people of Khurasan are devoted above all to the ṣaḥīḥ collections of Bukhārī and Muslim. 103 Khāṭṭābī was also author of the first extant commentary on Bukhārī’s ṣaḥīḥ collection. 104 Ibn Khayr al-Ishbīlī (d. Cordova, 575/1179) calls Abū Dāwūd’s collection al-Muṣannaf, referring to its arrangement by topic. 105 He relates that an Abū l-Qāsim Khalaf b. al-Qāsim (d. 393/1002-3) preferred Bukhārī to Nasā’ī but Abū Dāwūd to Bukhārī. This was going too far, according to Ishbīlī, but Abū Dāwūd’s collection had reached the Cordovans long before Bukhārī’s, hence their excessive regard for it. 106

Four recensions were available to Ibn Khayr al-Ishbīlī. 107


Muḥammad Hāshim al-Kutubī, 1975, 180. “Bringing out” is of course a literal translation of takhrīj. One of the referees for this article has objected that this means precisely to “cite a tradition with a full isnād”, adducing Roy Mottahedeh, review of Bulliet: The Patricians of Nishapur, in JAOS, 95 (1975), 491-5. Although regretting to disagree, I am certain it does not always refer to quoting hadith with full isnād (most importantly, v. Hallaq, W.B., Authority, continuity, and change in Islamic law, Cambridge, 2001, 43-56, for its meaning in a juridical context) and I doubt whether it means here no more than quoting hadith, to the exclusion of pointing out legal implications.

102 Presumably a series of hadith reports with the same content (matn) as hadith in Abū Dāwūd’s collection but with different chains of transmitters (isnād), mentioned by Dhahabī (Siyār, 15:242).

103 Al-Khaṭṭābī, Maʿālīm, 1:6 (both eds.). Khāṭṭābī’s estimate of the Sunan’s popularity in Iraq is confirmed by its prominence in al-Jaṣṣāṣ al-Rāzī (d. Baghdad, 370/981), Abkām al-Qurʾān, which I thank Michael Cook for pointing out to me; however, it is perhaps contradicted by the Sunan’s absence from Ibn al-Nadīm (d. 380/990), Kitāb al-Fihrisṭ, 232-3, fann 6, maqālah 6.


106 Ibidem, 90-1, n.° 81; Robson, “Abū Dāwūd’s”, 580.

107 Al-Ishbīlī, Fārāsah, 88-9, n.° 81.


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4. Abū ‘Alī Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ‘Amr al-Lu‘lī (d. 333/944-5), on whom v. Dhahabī, Siyar 15:307, with further references. V. Mizzī, Tuḥfah, n.° 8874, 16619. Lu‘lī is said to have recited the Sunan for twenty years. 110


8. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. Baghdad, 463/1071), on whom v. EI, s.n., by R. Sellheim. V. Mizzī, Tuḥfah, n.° 17910. This recension must go back to Lu‘lī’s but was evidently different enough from others to stand by itself.

One more is named by Ibn Ḥajar alone:

9. Abū Usāmah Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Malik b. Yazīd al-Rawwās, otherwise untraced by me, unless he is the traditionist described by al-Sulamī as sometime disciple to the Sufī Abū Ḥamzah al-Baghdādī (d. Baghdad, 269/882-3?). 112

by Bashshār ‘Awwād Ma‘rūf, Beirut, Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1999. Each has different pagination but the same item numbers. Ma‘rūf’s edition appears to be more faithful to Mizzī’s text.

109 Al-Ishbīlī, Fahrasah, 89, n.° 154.

110 Al-Dḥahabī, Siyar, 15:407.


Ibn Ḥajar personally received the *Sunan* in four recensions, n.º 1, 2, 4, and 8 above. 113

As with Abū Dāwūd’s *Sunan*, so with the rest of the Six Books: literary sources mention a higher number of transmitters than whose recensions can actually be traced; that is, than those whose handing down to later scholars can be traced and from which readings can be identified.

Inasmuch as Nasā’ī’s larger collection, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, has traditionally not been included among the Six Books (and until recently was thought lost), it appears that the *Sunan* of Abū Dāwūd is textually the most securely attested of the lot.

According to Muhammad Muḥyī l-Dīn ʻAbd al-Hamīd, who edited the *Sunan* in the 1930s, the recension of al-Lu’lu’ī, n.º 5 above, was the most popular in the Mashriq, whereas that of Ibn Dāsah, n.º 1, was the most popular in the Maghrib. 115 ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd also alleges that there is no difference between them except as to the order of

TABLE 2.—Transmitters of the Six Books 114

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Recensions</th>
<th>Traceable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bukhārī</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abū Dāwūd</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tirmidhī</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasā’ī, <em>al-Sunan al-kubrā</em></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasā’ī, <em>al-Mujtabā</em></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibn Mājah</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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hadith reports, by contrast with the recension of Ibn al-Aʿrābī, n.º 3 above, which was missing some parts. Ibn Khayr al-Ishbīlī quotes an Abū ʿAlī al-Ghassānī as naming those missing parts. 116

To the contrary, however, Ibn Khayr al-Ishbīlī of the Maghrib had, as we have seen, both of these recensions and two more besides. Moreover, Kaṭṭābī of the Mashriq seems to have heard the Sunan from Ibn Dāsah, n.º 1, and Ibn al-Aʿrābī, n.º 2. He never mentions Luʿluʿī. As for order, Kaṭṭābī’s commentary presents books in a different order from what we are accustomed to, presumably reflecting his use of Ibn Dāsah’s recension rather than Luʿluʿī’s. Within each book, he reviews hadith reports in very near the familiar order. 117 As for missing hadith, Dhahabī mentions Ibn al-Aʿrābī’s recension as having “additions as to both mutān and asānīd”. He does not mention missing parts. 118 Mizzī, Tuhfat al-ashrāf mentions three hadith reports found in the recension of Ibn Dāsah (among others) but not, implicitly, in that of al-Luʿluʿī. (Dhahabī states that the additional hadith reports in Ibn Dāsah’s recension were ones that Abū Dāwūd himself struck out at the very last, doubting their asānīd. 119) Mizzī also mentions ten hadith reports found in the recension of Ibn ʿAbd, n.º 2 above, but not elsewhere, three in the recension of Ibn al-Ushnānī, n.º 7 above, but not elsewhere, as well as one in the recension of Ibn al-Aʿrābī but not elsewhere. 120 Therefore, it seems likely that (1) Ghassānī’s copy of Ibn al-Aʿrābī’s recension was defective, (2) different recensions differed substantially as to the order of books but not of topics within books, and (3) the different recensions were very similar but not, contra ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, identical.

According to ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, again, the version of the Sunan available today is composite, not corresponding to any one of the recensions listed above. He had presumably observed how the present text of the Sunan expressly names four redactors (all of n.º 1 to 4) in one place or another. 121 This seems decisive evidence contra Robson, who identi-

116 Also Robson, “Abū Dāwūd’s”, 581.
118 Al-Dhahabī, Siyar, 15:408.
120 My starting point here was Abū Dāwūd, al-Sunan, ed. Khālīdī, 3:571. The numbers just named are restricted to what I have been able to trace, which includes most but not all of Khālīdī’s references.
121 E.g. Abū Dāwūd, Sunan, n.º 330, tahārah 124, bāb al-tayammum fī l-hadār Ibn Dāsah; n.º 24, tahārah 13, fī l-rajul yābūl bi-l-layl, Ibn al-Aʿrābī; n.º 3991, al-ḥūrūf

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fies the version of the Sunan available today as Lu’lu’t’s. However, when Mizzī, Tuhfat al-ashrāf observes that Ibn ‘Asākir overlooked this or that hadith report, it suggests that Ibn ‘Asākir, at least, was working with Lu’lu’t’s recension, which thus may have been the medieval standard. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd’s edition introduced numbers for individual hadith reports in the Sunan. These make it easy to trace citations of individual hadith reports. Their disadvantage is that they inhibit the reintroduction of missing hadith from Mizzī. The more helpful editions also indicate kitāb and bāb after Mizzī, Tuhfat and Wensinck, Concordance (commonly referred to in Arabic as al-Mu’jam).

A little under 90 percent of the hadith in the Sunan go back to the Prophet. Some of the rest cite Companions and Followers as themselves authoritative expounders or examples of the law; for example, of Hamnah bint Jaḥsh, Abū Dāwūd reports with isnād “that when she was mustahādah [had an issue of blood distinct from menstruation], her husband had sexual intercourse with her.” Others cite someone’s legal application of a given hadith report from the Prophet; e.g. “Makīnūl [al-Shāmī, d. 116/734-5?] used to say that no one had a right to do that after the Messenger of God.” Abū Dāwūd takes the examples of Followers very seriously. For example, he offers two hadith reports by which the Prophet forbade letting the hands hang at the sides in the course of the ritual prayer, in both of whose asnād appears the Meccan Follower ‘Āṭā (d. 114/732-3?). Then he offers a report by which ‘Āṭā himself was seen praying with his hands hanging. Abū Dāwūd comments, “This weakens that hadith report.” His reasoning is evidently that ‘Āṭā cannot have believed that the Prophet had forbidden this posture, hence also that he doubtfully would have transmitted a hadith report by which the Prophet had.

wa-l-qirāʿatum 23, ad Q. 56:89, Abū ‘Īsā (al-Ramlī); n.° 4924, adab 52, bāb karāhiyat al-ghinā wa-l-zamr; Abū ‘Alī al-Lu’lu’t.  
122 Robson, “Abū Dāwūd’s”, 581, 584.  
124 Abū Dāwūd, Sunan, n.° 310, tahārāh 119, bāb al-mustahādah yaghshahā zawjuhā. The unnamed authority in this case is her husband Ṭalḥah, a leading Companion.  
The proportion of non-prophetic material in the *Sunan* may explain a number in Abū Dāwūd’s *Risālah ilā ahl Makkah* that has puzzled some commentators. Abū Dāwūd refers there to having collected 4,800 hadith reports, yet the present text of the *Sunan* comprises 5,274 in the standard numbering. 127 If one counts only items in the *Sunan* going back to the Prophet, however, they do come to more like 4,800 (although 4,700 would have been a still closer estimate). Alternatively, Abū Dāwūd simply did not count exactly, just guessed. After all, he refers at the same place to “about 600 *marāṣīl*”, whereas the extant collection *al-Marāṣil* comprises 544, suggesting an error of about the same size, 10 percent. 128 (Abū Ghuddah offers two explanations, neither of which seems likely to me. First, he proposes that the discrepancy between 5,274 and 4,800 comes of differing recensions; however, Mizzī suggests that the eight different recensions known to him were much more similar than this. Second, Abū Ghuddah proposes that 4,800 omits repeats with similar *asānīd*. By my estimate, however, alternative *asānīd* comprise somewhere around 250 items in the *Sunan*, not four or five hundred. Most of its alternative *asānīd* are not numbered separately). 129

Abū Dāwūd offers an express comment on about a fifth of the hadith reports in the *Sunan*. Most often, he provides one or more alternative versions of the hadith report just mentioned; e.g. “Al-Layth b. Sa‘d, al-Awzā‘ī, Manṣūr b. al-Mu‘tamir, and ‘Irāk b. Mālik all related it with the same gist as Ibn ‘Uyaynah [whose version has just been given in full]. Al-Awzā‘ī added, ‘and ask God’s forgiveness’.” 130 Also fairly often, he glosses a word; e.g. “*Istihdād* means shaving the pubes.” 131 He also identifies men in *asānīd*; e.g. “Abū l-Ḥawrā‘ was Rabī‘ah b. Shaybān.” 132 But equally often he ventures his own express comment on the legal application of a particular

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128 Admittedly, there are also a few *marāṣīl* within the *Sunan*; e.g. n.o 381, *Kitāb al-Tahārah*, 136, bāb al-ard yuṣībuhā al-bawl.

129 E.g. Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, n.o 996, *Kitāb al-Ṣalāh* 184, bāb fi l-salām, with nine variant *asānīd*. Abū Dāwūd relates about one hadith report in thirteen from more than one shaykh.

130 Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, n.o 2391, sawm 38, bāb kaffārat man atā ahlahu fi Ramadān.

131 *Ibidem*, n.o 4201, tarafajul 16, bāb fi akhdh al-shārīb.

hadith report; e.g. “This is an argument for the man who takes some-
thing to which he has a right.” 133 A few comments seem clearly spon-
taneous, added at some particular session of dictation; e.g. “AbūDāwūd was asked, ‘Had al-Qa‘nabī anything from Shu‘bah besides
this hadith report?’ AbūDāwūd said, ‘No.’”134

AbūDāwūd collected over a third of the hadith in the Sunan in
Basra, about half that much in Baghdad, and somewhat over a tenth in
Kufa. Altogether, two-thirds of it was collected in Iraq. Mecca, Syria,
Egypt, and the East account for roughly a tenth each. This distribution
is most similar to that of Bukhārī’s collection, among the Six Books.

AbūDāwūd apparently includes an extraordinarily large number of
hadith reports with unidentified persons in the asāniḍ: “Ibrāḥīm b. Abī
‘Ulbah < a man”, “Ismā‘īl b. Abī Khālid < his brother”, and so on.
Al-Husaynī (d. Damascus, 765/1364) appends a list of such ambiguities
(mubhamāt) to his list of transmitters in the Ten Books (the Six Books plus
one for each eponym of a surviving Sunni school of law) comprising 443
names. Here are the percentages of the 443 included in each collection.

(Percentages add up to more than 100 because many ambiguous
names appear in more than one collection). It is hardly surprising that
Āḥmad’s Musnad should lead the way, for it is over twice as large as
any other collection here considered. Similarly, it is unsurprising that
Nasā‘ī’s collection should come in second, for the book under consid-
eration is al-Sunan al-kubrā, over twice as large as Abū Dāwūd’s
Sunan. What Abū Dāwūd’s high percentage probably reflects is not
mainly carelessness but rather his traditionalist desire to answer every
juridical question by means of relevant hadith. That is, in order to
minimize resort to qiyāṣ and other rational procedures, he cites a
hadith report every time he possibly can, even if the best one avail-
able is formally weak, as by having an ambiguity in the isnād.

Several lists are available of commentaries on Abū Dāwūd’s
Sunan, which I cannot complete. 135 The earliest and most significant
commentary is that of Abū Sulaymān al-Khaṭṭābī, which offers com-
ments on about a third of the hadith in the Sunan. 136 Khaṭṭābī is prin-

133 Ibid., n.º 3752, aṭ‘imah 5, bāb mā jā‘a fī l-diyāfah.
134 Ibid., n.º 4997, adab 6, bāb fī l-hayā‘.
135 Al-Ḫabashi, ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad, Jāmi‘ al-shurūḥ wa-l-ḥawāshī, Abu Dhabi,
136 Al-Khaṭṭābī, Ma‘ālīm.

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cipally concerned with legal applications (as opposed to, say, isnād criticism), and normally argues for the position of al-Shāfi‘ī when there is disagreement among schools. A number of scholars have identified Khaṭṭābī as a traditionalist, whereas Daniel Gimaret normally locates him with the Ashā‘īrah and other semi-rationalist Sunni theologians in the middle of the theological spectrum. I expect future research to confirm Gimaret’s identification. 137 Otherwise, the most remarkable features of the list of commentaries seem to be how many of the medieval ones were never finished and how many of the rest have come from the Indian subcontinent.

### His Piety

An important part of Abū Dāwūd’s authority lay in his personal piety. 138 Al-Khallāl’s praise has been cited already: “the imām, exalted in his time, having unprecedented knowledge of bringing out (useful things in) the sciences, for which he knew where to look, peerless in his age, a scrupulous man who was exalted.” 139 The word

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commentary</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abū Ḥanīfah</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mālik</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shāfi‘ī</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmad b. Ḥanbal</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bukhārī</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abū Dāwūd</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tirmidhī</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasā‘ī</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibn Mājah</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


139 Al-Khaṭṭāb al-Baghdādī, Tārīkh, 9:57 10:79.
translated here as “scrupulous” is wari’, indicating someone unusually careful to avoid whatever had the least possibility of being wrong. Another early biographer, Abū Ishāq b. Yāsīn al-Ḥaddād (d. 334/946), described him as “One of those in Islam who preserved the hadith of the Messenger of God, its weaknesses and chains of transmission (who lived) in the highest degree of austerity, chastity, uprightness and scrupulosity; one of the knights of hadith.”

As noted above, Abū Dāwūd is quoted as saying, “I lived in Tarsus for twenty years.” The main reason for Tarsus would have been pious, mainly the opportunity to participate from there in the holy war against the Byzantines. Alternatively, since he was in his fifties and sixties at that time and doubtfully useful for actual fighting, he would have dwelt there to soak up the piety of a frontier outpost, perhaps to support the actual fighters at their staging area and all the Muslims in case of Byzantine attack.

The four hadith reports he named as sufficing for a man’s faith were these: “Works are (judged) by intentions”; “Among the comely elements of a man’s Islam is his ignoring what does not concern him”; “A believer is not a believer until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself”; and “The licit is clear and the forbidden is clear, between them being ambiguous matters.” Although, oddly, only two of the four turn up in Abū Dāwūd’s Sunan, the same four are named in a quotation from Ibn ībīl-Dāsah as well as the mysterious Muḥammad b. Ṣāliḥ al-Ḥāshimi, so it seems reasonable to suppose that they did constitute Abū Dāwūd’s guide to righteous living. (Abū Dāwūd may also have included all four in the lost prophetic version of Kitāb al-Zuhd). The last of the four is a clear injunction to be scrupulous, sticking to what is clearly permitted and no more, but the second may also involve this quality.

Abū Dāwūd himself wore a garment with one sleeve wide and one narrow. Asked the reason for it, he explained, “The wide one is for (car-

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141 Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, Taʾrīkh, 9:57 10:78-9; al-Nawawī, Tahdīḥ, 2:226. Doubtfully by coincidence, all four of these (or at least versions thereof) are found among Nawawī’s famous forty essential hadith, for which v. Pouzet, L., Une herméneutique de la tradition islamique: le commentaire des Arbaʿīn an-Nawawīya, Beirut, 1982, n.º 1, 12, 13, and 6, respectively.

rying) notebooks, whereas the other is not needed." 143 No one would have argued that non-utilitarian clothing was forbidden, but Abū Dāwūd would have felt that a useless sleeve was a temptation to pride, and so he preferred to be on the safe side by doing without it. It seems a good example of tension with the world among third/ninth-century traditionalists.

Pride is also the danger against which Abū Dāwūd warned in an original aphorism often quoted in biographies: “The innermost desire is love of leadership (ḥubb al-riyāsah).” 144 The main thrust of the first of his four essential hadith reports is also a warning against pride, mainly engaging in devotional works for the sake of being seen and applauded by men. Abū Dāwūd would have been aware of the temptation to perform works for worldly renown both in fighting the Byzantines and in relating hadith.

Abū Dāwūd’s chief contribution to the literature of piety was al-Zuhd (besides al-Du‘ā’, no longer extant). 145 What survives of it is a collection of 521 sayings on the life of renunciation; for example < Ziyād b. Ayyūb < Ismā‘īl < Śāliḥ b. Rustam < ‘Abd Allāh b. Abī Mulaykah: “I travelled with Ibn ‘Abbās from Medina to Mecca and from Mecca to Medina, and he stayed up half the night.” 146 Ibn Khayr al-Ishbīlī distinguishes between a recension from Ibn Dāsah comprising hadith from the Prophet and another from Ibn al-A‘rābī comprising hadith from Companions and Followers. 147 Ibn Hajar seems to have known it in two recensions, one from Ibn Dāsah, the other from an Ismā‘īl b. Muḥammad (b.) al-‘Ayzār. 148 Some 80 percent of all items in the extant text go back to Companions, so what we have is presumably the recension of Ibn al-A‘rābī. (The one extant manuscript includes no account of its transmission from Abū Dāwūd). Here are some other collections for comparison.

Table: Some early, extant works on zuhd

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Collection</th>
<th>Author</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, al-Zuhd</td>
<td>(actually collected by ‘Abd Allāh b. Aḥmad, from whom about a third of it comes independently of his</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

145 Abū Dāwūd, Kitāb al-Zuhd, ed. Ḩusayn. V. al-Ājurrī, Su‘ālāt, 34.
146 Abū Dāwūd, Kitāb al-Zuhd, ed. Ḩusayn, 178, n.º 342.
147 Al-Ishbīlī, Fihrasah, 92, n.º 156, 157.
father). 149 About 2,400 items, very roughly arranged biographically. About a fifth each from the Prophet and Followers, a third from Companions. (Unusually, earlier prophets and anonymous Israelites account for another fifth).

2. Ibn al-Mubarak, Kitāb al-Zuhd. 150 About 1,600 items (of which about a fifth come from al-Ḥusayn b. al-Ḥasan al-Marwāzī (d. 246/860-1) independently of Ibn al-Mubarak), 2,050 including additions from another recension (98% from Ibn al-Mubarak), roughly arranged by topic. Prophetic sayings 10%, Companion 23%, Follower 33%.

3. Ibn Abī Shaybah (d. Kufa, 235/849), Kitāb al-Zuhd, a section of al-Muṣannaf. 151 About 1,500 items, most roughly arranged biographically but some by topic. Prophetic sayings 10%, Companion 33%, Follower 43%.

4. Hannād b. al-Sarī (d. 243/857), Kitāb al-Zuhd. 152 1,443 items, roughly arranged by topic. Prophetic sayings 45%, Companion 28%, Follower 24%.


6. Wakī‘, *al-Zuhd*. 154 539 items, randomly arranged. Prophetic sayings 42%, Companion 28%, Follower 21%.


A history of the genre is difficult inasmuch as n.º 1, 2, 4, and 6 on this list were redacted a generation or two later than their putative authors. Certainly, Abū Dāwūd’s *Zuhd* is comparatively short and comprises comparatively much material from Companions. Its principle of arrangement seems closest to that of the *Zuhd* of Aḥmad and his son. In the list above, n.º 5 and 7 are part of the *adab* tradition. Jāḥīẓ is especially attracted to elegant locutions and usually omits *asānīd*, while Ibn Abī l-Dunyā is likewise attracted to elegant locutions and more subtly to the humorous side of his material. 157 Abū Dāwūd was obviously rather in the hadith tradition. He includes many glosses of the Qur’an (about 12 percent of all items) but no poetry. Abū Dāwūd evidently collected the material in *al-Zuhd* (in descending order) in Basra, Kufa, Baghdad, Syria, and elsewhere. Here also, his collection seems closest to the *Zuhd* of Aḥmad and his son, although that has relatively more items collected in Baghdad and fewer in Syria.

**Abū Dāwūd’s relations with other authorities of his time**

Abū Dāwūd’s association with Ahmad b. Ḥanbal has arisen several times hitherto. Two of his works are mainly quotations from

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Aḥmad (n.° 6 and 7 on the list of his works above, with over 100 additional quotations in n.° 8). 158 Ahmad b. Ḥanbal is quoted in the Sunan 323 times. 159 (Additionally, there is a report that Abū Dāwūd showed his Sunan to Ahmad, who expressed warm approval. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī indicates mistrust of the report by introducing it with the words, “It is said”, as well as by mentioning no isnād). 160

Abū Dāwūd has also been mentioned already in connection with members of the nascent Ḥanbalī school. Abū Bakr al-Najjād, transmitter of Nasīkh al-Qur’ān, was a prominent Ḥanbalī, teacher to Ibn Ḥāmid. 161 Abū Dāwūd’s son Abū Bakr is sometimes identified as leader of the Ḥanbalī assault on al-Ṭabarī at the end of his life. 162 Another extensive account of Ṭabarī’s trouble admittedly names other Ḥanābilah, not Abū Bakr. 163 But Abū Bakr is also said to have become a Ḥanbalī apart from the trouble with Ṭabarī. 164

Abū Dāwūd is claimed for the Shāfī‘ī school by two leading biographical dictionaries, those of al-‘Abbādī (d. Herat, 458/1066) and al-Subkī (d. Damascus, 771/1370). 165 He did spend time with Abū Thawr (d. Baghdad, 240/854) and al-Rabī‘ b. Sulaymān al-Murādī (d. Old Cairo, 270/884), disciples to Shāfī‘ī in Baghdad and Old Cairo, respectively. The Sunan includes seven hadith reports from Abū Thawr and ten from al-Rabī‘. 166 However, Abū Iṣḥāq al-Shīrāzī (d.

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158 Introduction, al-Ājurri, Su‘ālāt, 1:86.
159 Al-Jayyānī, Tasmiyah, ed. Zaghlūl, 60 fn. Two shaykhs are the source of more material: Musaddad b. Musarhad, 651 hadith reports, and al-Qa‘nabī, 345 (ibid., 102fn, 105fn).
166 Al-Jayyānī, Tasmiyah, ed. Zaghlūl, 66fn, 79fn.
Baghdad, 476/1083), who had no particular interest in exaggerating the size of the Ḥanbalī school, lists Abū Dāwūd in the first generation of Ḥanbalī jurisprudents. 167 Al-Khallāl probably included him in the earliest Ḥanbalī biographical dictionary, as Ibn Abī Yaʿlā certainly did in the earliest extant one, and Ibn Muḥīṭ al-Qāqūnī names him alongside half a dozen Ḥanbalī writers.

It is difficult to point to distinctively Ḥanbalī juridical positions that Abū Dāwūd’s Sunan can be seen to endorse. 168 For example, the early Ḥanbalī school called for raising the hands at the initial takbīr of the ritual prayer as far as the shoulders. Abū Dāwūd relates hadith in favour both of raising the hands to the ears and to the shoulders, which might seem to deliberately avoid endorsing the Ḥanbalī position; however, Aḥmad himself does the same. 169 Concerning the penalty for adultery, Abū Dāwūd does relate hadith in favour of flogging and stoning together for the sometime-married adulterer, the Ḥanbalī position, but no hadith in favour of stoning alone, the position of the Mālikī, Shāfiʿī, and Hanafi schools. 170 To the contrary, however, the Sunan includes a notice that Abū Dāwūd was asked whether the ritual prayer at night (voluntary, not required) was to be performed by twos (mathnā); that is, with a salutation (taslīm) after every two sets of bowings (rakʿatayn). He said, “If you like, by twos, and, if you like, by fours.” 171 This is contrary to what he himself related of Aḥmad, that the night prayer is by twos. 172

168 Al-Mazāḥīḥī, Abū Dāwūd, 41-2 for a list of allegedly Ḥanbalī positions, actually no more than a tendency to rigour.
171 Abū Dāwūd, Sunan, n.º 1296; al-tasawwūr 13, bāb fī ṣalāt al-nahār. Oddly, there later comes a hadith report from the Prophet expressly confirming that the night prayer is by twos: n.º 1326, al-tasawwūr 24, ṣalāt al-layl mathnā mathnā.
The *Sunan* includes a few comments on juridical matters from Aḥmad; for example, “It pleases me that, in the required prayer, one pray using what is in the Qur’ān.” 173 The next latest authority he quotes with any frequency on juridical matters is Mālik. 174 Otherwise, Abū Dāwūd quotes mainly Followers and Companions; e.g. Makhḥūl, mentioned above, on letting a man marry for no higher a bride price than teaching his wife some chapters of the Qur’ān, or Ibrāhīm al-Nakha’ī and ‘Abd Allāh b. Shaddād (d. 81/700-1) on how often a woman with an issue of non-menstrual blood need wash herself. 175 At the level of theory, his express disdain for books of law, as opposed to hadith, seems highly similar to Aḥmad’s. 176 His implicit preference for weak hadith over *qiyyās*, noted by Ibn Ḥajar, likewise sounds very Ḥanbali. Formal schools of law in the classical sense formed only after Abū Dāwūd’s lifetime, and he plainly did not feel bound to agree with Aḥmad on every point. However, it seems safe to say that Abū Dāwūd was as much a Ḥanbali as any of his contemporaries.

In theology, Abū Dāwūd strictly adhered, so far as we know, to ahl al-sunnah wa-l-jamā’ah. But he was part of the transition to the catholic Sunnism of the later third/ninth century and after, not so extreme as his shaykh Ahmad b. Ḥanbal’s Sunnism. He did not discriminate strictly on theological grounds among traditionists. On the one hand, he admittedly refused to take dictation from ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ṣāliḥ, a Kufan who lived in Baghdad (d. 235/849-50), because “He wrote a


174 E.g. Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, n.º 769, al-šalāh 118, bāḥ mā yustaftahū bihi l-šalāh min al-du’ā’ī: < al-Qa’nābī < Mālik: “There is no harm in du’ā’ in the course of the ritual prayer, whether at the beginning, middle, or end, in the required or non-required.” Shāfi’i appears occasionally; e.g. at n.º 1897, al-manāsik 53, bāḥ ṣawā’if al-qārin.


176 Abū Dāwūd quotes Ahmad disparaging the ra’y of Mālik and others (Abū Dāwūd, *Kitāb Masā’il*, 275-7, 282), but the only book he quotes him as disparaging is admittedly Abū ‘Ubayd, *Kitāb al-Gharīb* (i.e. Gharīb al-ḥadīth), which he blames for distracting people from learning ‘ilm (i.e. hadith; *Masā’il*, 282). Ahmad’s most striking disparagement of books comes from ‘Abd Allāh: “This Abū Ḥanīfah wrote a book, then Abū Yūsuf came and wrote a book, then Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan (al-Shaybānī) came and wrote a book —there is no end to this—. Whenever a man comes along, he writes a book. This Mālik wrote a book, al-Shāfi’ī came and wrote a book, too, and this one (meaning Abū Thawr) has come and written a book. These books that he has written are an innovation. Whenever a man comes along, he writes a book and abandons the hadith of the Messenger of God” (‘Abd Allāh, *Masā’il*, 437).
book on the faults of the Companions of the Messenger of God’, a standard complaint about the Shi’ah. 177 On the other hand, although he observed that ‘Bishr b. al-Ḥārish would not talk to Sulaymān b. Ḥarb because he disparaged Mu‘āwiyah’, Abū Dāwūd himself sought him out in Mecca, as we have seen, and included 56 hadith reports from him in the Sunan. 178 Conversely, the Basran Ahmad b. ‘Abdah b. Mūsā al-Dabbī (d.245/859) was accused of naṣb, meaning excessive regard for Mu‘āwiyah and contempt for ‘Alī, yet Abū Dāwūd included 17 hadith reports from him in the Sunan. 179 He wrote hadith from Ismā‘īl b. Mūsā (d.245/859-60) even though he considered him a Shi‘i and Wahb b. Muhammad al-Bunānī even though he considered him a Qadari. 180 He did deliberately refuse to write hadith from the Basran ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Mutawakkil (d.a little after 230/844-5), offering as explanation that he used to teach al-ḥān; that is, recitation of the Qur’ān to tones, rejected by traditionalists. 181 He does not mention Abū Ḥanīfah or al-Shaybānī among the jurists who interest him, but he speaks less contemptuously than Aḥmad, again, of Awzā‘ī and Sufyān al-Thawrī. He scorned involvement with rulers and rulership, lamenting that his son Abū Bakr should have sought a judgeship; 182 yet he did accept Muwaffaq’s commission to teach in Basra.

Two stories associate Abū Dāwūd with the important renunciant Sahl b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Tustarī (d. Basra, 283/896?). According to one, Sahl warned Abū Dāwūd’s disciple Ibn Dāshah that it would do him no good to collect Abū Dāwūd’s hadith and become in his turn an equally sought-after traditionist. Hearing of it, Abū Dāwūd himself went to visit Sahl. In the course of their conversation, Sahl explained a troublesome hadith report (“Everyone born is born after the original nature...”), provoking Abū Dāwūd to bend down and kiss his foot. 183

177 Al-Ājurri, Su’ālāt, 2:302.
183 Al-Silāfī, Muqaddimah, 369-70 (ed. Muhammad, 336-7). Abū Dāwūd, Sunan, includes a variant of this hadith report at n.8 4714, al-Sunnah 17, bāb fī dharārī
According to the second story, Sahl came to Abū Dāwūd, who welcomed him and had him sit down. Sahl asked a favour of him, refusing to name it until Abū Dāwūd had agreed to it. The favour he asked was that he stick out his tongue, with which he had related hadith of the Messenger of God, for Sahl to kiss. Abū Dāwūd dutifully stuck out his tongue and Sahl kissed it. 184

Sufi literature is replete with fictional meetings. Perhaps the most famous are those in which al-Hasan al-Bašrī (d. 110/728) meets Rābi‘ah al-‘Adawiyah (d. 185/801-2?), related by ‘Aṭṭār (fl. sixth/twelfth cent.) to establish the superiority of mysticism to mere renunciation. 185 Michael Cooperson has interpreted stories relating Ahmad b. Ḥanbal and Bishr al-Ḥāfi as a debate over the relative merits of traditionists and renunciants. 186 Stories relating Sahl and Abū Dāwūd seem most likely to have to do not with a debate between traditionists and renunciants but rather between the Ḥanābilah and Sālimiyah (Māliki in law) over the legacy of Sahl al-Tustarī. The Sālimiyah were a party of renunciants named for Ibn Sālim (d. early 4th/10th cent.), disciple to Sahl. 187 The Ḥanbalī jurisprudent Abū Ya‘lā b. al-Farrā‘ (d. Baghdad, 458/1065) assembled a famous list of their errors. 188 The Ḥanbalī biographical tradition makes out Sahl to have been master to al-Barbahārī (d. Baghdad, 329/941), a major Ḥanbalī. 189 The Ḥanābilah would have been happy to associate Sahl with Abū Dāwūd, another of theirs, as well. Abū Dāwūd is also re-

l-mushrikīn, with a gloss from Ḥammād b. Salamah at n.º 4716 connecting it with the day when God asked all Adam’s progeny, “Am I not your Lord?” (Q. 46:172). Sahl’s explanation is the usual one, that Jewish and Christian parents mislead their children into becoming Jews and Christians, although he goes on to make a less usual point about the relative responsibilities of parents (great) and Satan (negligible). For a comprehensive treatment of the problem, v. Gobillot, G., La ḥiṭra. La conception originelle. Ses interprétations et fonctions chez les penseurs musulmans, Cairo, 2000, with special attention in chaps. 4-5 to Ahmad b. Ḥanbal, who sometimes interpreted “original nature” (jiṭrah) to mean Islam, as here, but also sometimes to mean God’s predestination.

184 Al-Silafī, Muqaddimah, 370 (ed. Muḥammad, 337); Ibn Khallikān, Wafayāt, 2:404-5.
186 Cooperson, Classical Arabic biography, chap. 5.
188 Massignon, L., Essay on the origins of the technical language of Islamic mysticism, Benjamin Clark (transl.), Notre Dame, 1997, 201-3. I expect future research to confirm more of the list than Radtke allows in EF, s.v. “Sālimiyya”.
189 Ibn Abī Ya‘lā, Ṭabaqāt, 2:18.
membered as denouncing four renunciants of the late second/eighth century for *Zandaqah*, probably meaning secret unbelief. 190

We know almost nothing of Abū Dāwūd’s private life. What we know of his relations with his son Abū Bakr is that he supervised his earliest collection of hadith; that he was pleased to hear from whom he had first collected hadith on his own, in Tus; that they travelled together to the Hijaz and Egypt, among other places; and that Abū Bakr eventually disappointed him. His disapproval of Abū Bakr’s ambition to become a *qāḍī* has been mentioned already. Of his reliability as a traditionist, Abū Dāwūd is quoted as saying, “This son of mine, ‘Abd Allāh, is a liar (*kadhdhāb*).” 191

Abū Dāwūd seems historically significant mainly insofar as he represents hadith science in his time. The proportion of hadith from the Prophet in his *Sunan* (almost 90 percent), by contrast with the proportion in, say, Ibn Abī Shaybah’s *Muṣannaf* (scarcely 20 percent), illustrates the rapid shift of attention among the jurisprudents of his time away from Companion and Follower hadith towards prophetic. His announced concern to provide hadith supporting the juridical opinions of an earlier generation illustrates a new willingness to make hadith science ancillary to jurisprudence, all the more notable for Abū Dāwūd’s association with the extremist, Ḣanbali wing of nascent Sunnism. It contrasts with Ahmad b. Ḣanbal’s conflation of hadith and jurisprudence, expecting hadith to speak for themselves and disdaining the supposed jurisprudent with a limited repertory of hadith at his command. (Whether it also illustrates the way hadith were generated in the first place, mainly to support rules arrived at earlier by other means, stubbornly remains controversial.) He seems to have had little time for anything but hadith. It must depend on personal taste whether stories of his austere living and devotion to frontier warfare make him a more or less attractive figure.

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