The Buldāniyyāt of as-Saḥāwī (d. 902/1496)
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by Mohammad Gharaibeh

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Abstract

This paper offers new approaches to analyze ḥadīṯ collections and to make them useable for social and intellectual history. While focusing on the so called buldāniyyāt (geographical ḥadīṯ collections) – a sub group of the forty ḥadīṯ collections – the study asks for the new forms of knowledge that an author includes into his collection to make it innovative for his reference group. Since the idea of what an innovative work should be like heavily depends on the shared ideas of the reference group to which an author belongs and/or for which he writes, a thorough analysis of the structure and content of the collection reveals something about this very reference group and its shared ideas. Putting their contributions in the light of previous works, authors usually choose a strategy of knowledge specialization or knowledge brokerage to develop innovative moments in their work. Therefore a comprehensive study of a scholarly pieces needs to contextualize both the social context of the author and the intellectual references he makes. In this paper, the focus shall lie on the buldāniyyāt of Šams ad-Dīn Muḥammad as-Saḥāwī (d. 902/1496) that will be compared with previously written buldtāniyyāt and situated in the intellectual context of his time.
1. Introduction

To gain recognition and status within an intellectual community, a young and aspiring scholar needs to prove his scholarly acumen and capability by compiling scholarly pieces. These works should add forms of knowledge to the intellectual landscape that are perceived by the community as new and innovative. Hence the scholar needs to consider mainly two things whilst compiling a work. First, it is important for him to refer to the (present) shared ideas of the reference group to which he belongs and/or for which he writes. These shared ideas represent the cultural capital of the group and include ideas about how a work has to look like, what an innovative work is and what a work needs to include or to refer to etc. Second, and resulting from the first point, he also needs to regard the previously written works in the field to set his work apart from them and to contribute something new and innovative.

Generally spoken, two main tendencies can be observed, when it comes to intellectual developments: knowledge specialization and knowledge brokerage. While knowledge specialization leads to a more detailed and specialized work in one aspect of knowledge, knowledge brokerage can be described as a (re)combination of different aspects of knowledge or setting old knowledge in a new context. The intellectual products of both are perceived by the community as new and innovative forms of knowledge.

This paper will show how Šams ad-Dīn Muḥammad as-Saḥāwī (d. 902/1496) rose to the challenge of compiling an innovative ḥadīṯ collection that should meet the expectations of his community. The analysis focuses on the buldāniyyāt – a sub group of the forty ḥadīṯ collection that can be translated as geographical forty ḥadīṯ collection\(^1\) – that lists the Prophetic ḥadīths according to the cities in that the scholar heard the ḥadīṯ. For the purpose of the paper, first, the buldāniyya of as-Saḥāwī will be compared to previous ones, namely those of Abū Ṭāhir as-Silafī (d. 576/1180), Abū l-Qāsim ʿAlī Ibn ʿAsākir (d. 571/1175), Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī al-Bakrī (d. 656/1258). The comparison will reveal the characteristics of the buldāniyya text group in general, as well as the peculiarities of each collection with which the authors tried to present a different and innovative collection. Having accomplished that, it is possible to point out the means with which as-Saḥāwī, on the one hand, tried to build on the text group and, on the other hand, to contribute something new and innovative. Using the results of the comparison, second, the study sets the results in the context of the intellectual landscape of his time, namely Cairo of the 9th/14th century, to answer the question of why as-Saḥāwī chose these very peculiarities and not other.

The paper will give a short introduction into the theoretical and methodological approaches used following by a history of the arbaʿīnāt and buldāniyyāt under the aspect of knowledge specialization and brokerage. Then, the analysis and comparison will focus on the aspects of the structure and the content of the buldāniyya mentioned. It will be shown that the buldāniyya of as-Saḥāwī differ from the other collection by an increasing specialization through borkerage represented by a more detailed isnād analysis, a larger variety of isnāds, an increasing number of cities included, and the inclusion of non Prophetic sayings and poems into the collection.

This paper is part of a larger study (post doctoral project) and is still in progress. Hence the interpretations and results are of preliminary character and require further investigation.

\(^1\) I followed the translation of Garrett Davidson in his PhD thesis Tradition, 249.
2. Theoretical and methodological remarks

2.1. Reference Group and Shared Ideas

It is a widespread assumption that ideas are developed by individuals and geniuses. However, from the perspective of the sociology of knowledge, it is rather groups of intellectuals or individuals within groups who develop ideas through intellectual interactions, like reading circles, discussions, lectures, schools etc. This assumption emphasizes the importance of the intellectual landscape of an intellectual in general, and his closer community in particular. While usually assuming that the intellectuals can be perceived as one “class”, “stratum” or “layer” of the society, other sociological approaches propose to imagine the society much more fragmented, meaning that individuals enter and leave several more or less distinctive “units” of interaction groups (or networks) in their daily life. Intellectuals, too, are engaged in several networks of alliances and rivalries – besides normal daily life interaction. Assuming that intellectual’s actions are mostly, even if not necessarily always, driven by the motivation to gain status within a certain group, a reference group shall be defined as any person or group with whom one has a status-power relationship. These groups are characterized also by the fact that they hold on set of shared ideas. The members of the group deem these ideas as true and defend them, not necessarily because of the content or logical adequacy of the ideas but because of the fact that the other members of the social circle supports these ideas. Moreover, the shared ideas represent the cultural capital of the reference group that every member needs to refer to when attempting to gain status or recognition. They contain not only the (present) state-of-the-art knowledge but also define the common intellectual (past) sources that are often described as intellectual authorities or traditions.

In the context of Islamic intellectual history, reference groups usually are expressed through maḏhab affiliations or schools of thought, like the Baṣrī and Kūfī grammar school or the Egyptian and Syrian school of historiography etc. However, speaking of reference groups allows a certain flexibility that the use of maḏhab affiliation usually embezzle. Because, in some – if not in most cases, scholars are engaged in different fields of knowledge, and therefore in different reference groups and have access to a variety of shared ideas. This also means, that, like in the case of ḥadīṯ studies, members of distinctive reference groups are engaged in one field forming a new reference group with a much more heterogeneous set of shared ideas.

2.2. Recombinant Knowledge Growth

Starting from the question why certain domains of (mostly technical) knowledge grow fast while others grow slowly or stagnate, economic theorists and theorists of the sociology of knowledge developed the concept of recombinant knowledge growth. This concept states that nearly every new (form of) knowledge always derives from recombinations of existing

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2 This is mainly a contribution of Randall Collins to the sociology of knowledge. See his Sociology of Philosophies. For a comprehensive overview of the different theories and approaches of the sociology of knowledge see Knoblauch, Wissenssoziologie and Maasen, Wissenssoziologie. For an introduction into the approach of Collins see also Savelsberg, Collins.

3 Zur Fragmentierung der Gesellschaft und zur Vorstellung einer komplexen Kultur in Gesellschaften siehe DiMaggio, „Cultur,“ 264-265.

4 See Kemper, Status, 34. Status is defined as “[…] the rank or standing in amount of worth or prestige or other designation of merit and value that attaches to a person or social position in a group.” Ibid, 13.

5 Kemper, 34.
knowledge.\textsuperscript{6} Further, depending on what kind of knowledge has been (re)combined new knowledge can be identified either as knowledge specialization or knowledge brokerage. If the new knowledge is a recombination of homogeneous knowledge it is described as knowledge specialization, while a recombination of heterogeneous knowledge is described as knowledge brokerage.\textsuperscript{7} Hence the process of knowledge specialization is characterized by an increase of efficiency and produces more specialized knowledge. By contrast knowledge brokerage combines knowledge across disparate domains and yields novelty and thereby boosts knowledge generation.\textsuperscript{8}

While this concept has been developed in the fields of technical knowledge and economic theory, it offers a fruitful approach for the study of intellectual changes in the field of humanities. Here too, developments in the history of ideas and concepts seem to be mostly driven by recombination of existing knowledge and leads either to a process of knowledge specialization or knowledge brokerage.

Hence, knowledge specialization yields to scholarly pieces that are characterized by comparatives. They use to be longer than the previous one, include more material, focus on certain aspects but enlarge the discussion on it, show a greater variety of examples, are based on more sources, reveal more specialized aspects of a topic and so on. With regard to the study of the Islamic intellectual history this development can be observed on several fields of knowledge. Let it be the field of historiography, grammar, poetry, fiqh or the hadīth studies. Biographical dictionaries for example start with a collection of important personalities and end up collecting persons from a certain madhab, profession or city.

However, one problem of the process of knowledge specialization is that not only is the amount of possible and meaningful combination of homogenous knowledge is limited,\textsuperscript{9} the community will accept only a certain level of a specialization until it perceives the product as too much of everything. That could be for example, that the work has become too long, or the focus too narrow, the examples are too many or the interpretations too far so that the specialization does not fulfill the original purpose anymore and the knowledge growth slows down or even stops. By contrast, knowledge brokerage, through combining heterogeneous knowledge, brings ideas of one field into another or – when the understanding of knowledge brokerage is expanded – sets old ideas in a new context.\textsuperscript{10} It provides new ideas and material that can be combined with existing knowledge and again yields new forms of knowledge. This becomes especially important when a process of knowledge specialization has been driven so far, that the knowledge has become too homogeneous and the knowledge growth has come to an end. Then, knowledge brokerage reopens the way for knowledge growth. Therefore, a balance of knowledge specialization and knowledge brokerage leads to the highest and effective knowledge growth.\textsuperscript{11}

\textsuperscript{6} Carnabuci, Bruggeman, \textit{Knowledge Specialization}, 608.
\textsuperscript{7} Carnabuci, Bruggeman, \textit{Knowledge Specialization}, 608.
\textsuperscript{8} Carnabuci, Bruggeman, \textit{Knowledge Specialization}, 608.
\textsuperscript{9} See for this argument Carnabuci, Bruggeman, \textit{Knowledge Specialization}, 617.
\textsuperscript{10} For this understanding Hargadon, \textit{Brokering Knowledge}, 41.
\textsuperscript{11} See for this argument Carnabuci, Bruggeman, \textit{Knowledge Specialization}, 631.
2.3. Methodological Concept of this Paper

For the purpose of this study, both concepts will be combined and two main conclusions can be drawn. First, the set of shared ideas within a reference group form a set of mostly homogeneous knowledge. Hence, knowledge growth within a reference group will be characterized by a process of knowledge specialization. This is true for works that are compiled by members of one group for the same group. Knowledge brokerage will only appear if heterogeneous knowledge from outside the group is brought in, successfully integrated in the new environment as well as successfully accepted by the members of the group. This happens either if the knowledge specialization process has gone so far, that a further specialization would not make sense anymore and the group feels the need of importing new ideas of other fields of knowledge or from another reference group. Or, if members from another reference group join the first group and bring with them existing knowledge in a new environment that is hence perceived as new (and heterogeneous) knowledge.

Second, the wide spread assumption that there is a transregional or even a transtemporal knowledge of one field is irritating and does not meet the fact of the sociality of ideas and knowledge. Rather, even the set of ideas of one field of knowledge exists within the set of shared ideas of a reference group. This is not to say that every knowledge is just regional or temporal. Ideas, books and intellectuals spread and travel transregionally and transtemporally, but they do so as travelling concepts and within networks and become therefore always part of the shared ideas of a reference group or become a member of this group. On the one hand, it follows that what is usually described as the knowledge of a field is actually the interpretation of one reference group that can either correspond or differ from the interpretation of another reference group. And on the other hand, it follows that new ideas that are developed in another region or time do not exist in the perception of a reference group until they are integrated into the set of shared ideas, and therefore are not considered in the intellectual output before their integration.

The present study is, hence, driven by the idea that the intellectual output tells something about the reference group and the set of shared ideas. Moreover, an analysis of both, the group structure and the ideas, reveal why the work is composed as it is. In addition, the analysis also shows if the author decided to specialize more (knowledge specialization) in a field and thus to recombine homogeneous knowledge of the shared ideas of a reference group or to recombine heterogeneous knowledge (knowledge brokerage) from outside the reference group.

However, it should be noticed that due to the preliminary character and the initially state of this project only few aspects can be regarded in this paper.

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12 This is actually the study interest of the sociology of knowledge see Knoblauch, Wissenssoziologie, 14.
13 For the concept of „travelling concepts” see Neumann, Travelling Concepts, 1-22.
3. From the Forty Ḥadīṯ Collections to the Buldāniyyāt – A History of Knowledge Specialization and Knowledge Brokerage

It is striking how many ḥadīth collections have been gathered in the form of the arbaʿīnāt, the forty ḥadīth collection.⁴ Inspired by the Prophetic ḥadīth – even if it was deemed daʿī – “Whoever memorizes/preserves for my community forty ḥadīths from my Sunna, I will be his intercessor on the Day of Judgment”⁵ the genre of the forty ḥadīth collection became one of the most popular form of ḥadīth collections till the present days. When and by whom exactly the first collection has been written is hard to tell.⁶ However, for a history of this text group from the perspective of knowledge specialization and knowledge brokerage it is not necessarily important who really wrote the first collection. Rather it matters, whom a certain reference group perceived to be the first author of this collection.⁷ The oldest preserved collection seems to be the one of Abū 1-Ḥasan Muḥammad b. Aslam at-Ṭūsī (d. 856) with the title “k. al-Arbaʿ in ḥadīṭan.” He arranged the collected ḥadīṯ according to the chapters of the larger ḥadīth collection.⁸ The following collections of the 9th century seem to be arranged topicaly like the one of at-Ṭūsī.⁹ A first process of knowledge specialization in combination with knowledge brokerage seems to have taken place in the second half of the 10th century with the collection of Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. al-Muqarrab al-Bahdādī al-Karḥī (d. 974).¹⁰ The title of the work reveals a specialization in the topic and a brokerage in the structure. His “k. fīhi Arbaʿūn ḥadīṭan ‘an arbaʿ in šayḥan fi arabʿ in maʿnan wa-faḍīla” contains forty different topics what is actually a specialization with regard to the previous collections, but also is transmitted by forty different scholars. Here the growing importance of the isnād, that is characteristic for the post-canonical period,¹¹ were brought into the collection reflected by the fact that the author gathered forty traditions each of which was transmitted by a different narrator (šayḥ).¹²

Both kinds of variations, the topically and structurally (meaning variations in the isnād), experienced further specialization processes being reflected in works such as the “k. al-

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⁴ Therefore it is more astonishing how little this genre has been subject of studies. There are only a few books devoted to this genre such as Marco Schöller, an-Nawawī, and Mourad, Lindsay, Intensification. A longer and comprehensive chapter on the forty ḥadīth collections has been written by Davidson, Tradition. He sets the text group of the buldāniyyāt together with the ‘awālī collection in the context of the post canonical period and points out the rising importance of the isnād within those collections. See ibid, 234-278 with a short sub chapter on the buldāniyya 249-254. A PhD thesis on the forty ḥadīth collection is currently prepared by Swantje Bartschat in München.

⁵ See Brown, Ḥadīth, 55; Davidson, Tradition, 235; Schöller, an-Nawawī, 309-313 gives further information for the meaning and function of the number forty in the Islamic culture. See also as-Silāfī, al-Buldāniyya, 35, who lists a lot more narrations and variations of ḥadīth about the advantages of the forty collections 34-37.

⁶ Davidson identifies ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Mubārak (d. 181/797) to have been the first scholar to compose a collection of forty ḥadīth. See idem, Tradition, 235.

⁷ Since this study focuses on the buldāniyyāt, the history of the development of the forty ḥadīth collection will be drawn only for purpose of study and not in a detailed manner.

⁸ See Schöller, an-Nawawī, 314.

⁹ Schöller names the collections of ‘Abd ar-Rahmān b. Abī Dāra al-Marwazī (d. 912) and Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Ḥasan b. Sufyān an-Nasawī (d. 916), 314. See for the collection of an-Nasawī also Davidson, Tradition, 235. How far all three authors, at-Ṭūsī, al-Marwazī and an-Nasawī, were connected with each other, hence belonged to one reference group and shared the same ideas has still to be studied.

¹⁰ Schöller, an-Nawawī, 315.

¹¹ See for this Brown, Ḥadīth, 46-49.

¹² See Schöller, an-Nawawī, 315; al-Muqarrab, Arbaʿūn.
Arba’în fî Shuyîh aṣ-ṣâﬁyya”\textsuperscript{23} that contains in every isnâd one important Šüfî, or the “Al-
Arbâ’în fî ʿāḥlâq aṣ-ṣâﬁyya” that is topicically devoted to the Šufism.\textsuperscript{24} The production of forty ḥadîth collection witnessed then a peak during the 11\textsuperscript{th} century that was accompanied by an increase of a specialization process. In the 12\textsuperscript{th} century, this development came to an end. However, the most interesting fact of this development till the 12\textsuperscript{th} century is that it was almost exclusively an undertaken of scholars from Iran and Irak.\textsuperscript{25} The phenomenon of this regionality can be explained with the concept of reference groups, their shared ideas and the recombinant knowledge growth concept. Certainly, the authors of these collections were either personally connected to each other or their ideas and concepts travelled between the intellectual centers of Iran and Irak, became part of the set of shared ideas of the different reference groups and, thus, lead to a recombination of more or less homogeneous knowledge. This explanation, though further studies need to be done, is supported by the findings of Brown’s study on the canonization process of the sahih works of al-Bûhârî and Muslim. He could prove that the genre of the sahih collections as well as the whole sahih movement was more or less an undertaken of Šâﬁ’î scholars from Iraq and Iran.\textsuperscript{26} Only from the second half of the 12\textsuperscript{th} and the beginning 13\textsuperscript{th} century on, both movements, the sahih movement and the text group of forty ḥadîth collections, were taken up in Syria and later in Egypt to witness another popularity. This went hand in hand with the general transition of ḥadîth studies in particular, and probably of the other fields of Islamic studies in general, from Irak and Iran to Syria and Egypt.\textsuperscript{27} For the history of the forty ḥadîth collections, this development is crucial and the emergence of the first buldâniyya is associated with one particular scholar, who travelled from Isfahân to Alexandria via Baghdad and Cairo, i.e. Abû Ṭâhir as-Silafî. Bringing ḥadîth material from Iran and Iraq that hasn’t existed in Syria and Egypt before, as-Silafî became a key figure in the process of transmission of knowledge from Isfahan to Alexandria.\textsuperscript{28} When he was requested to compose an innovative collection, all he needed to do was recombining his existing knowledge of the forty ḥadîth collections in Isfahan with the fact he was characterized by in the new context, namely the fact that he traveled much.\textsuperscript{29} The result of this knowledge brokerage was the first buldâniyya\textsuperscript{30} that actually was composed as a forty ḥadîth collection that contains ḥadîths from forty different cities. Soon his buldâniyya spread in Egypt and Syria and the Damascene contemporary scholar Ibn ʿAsâkir took up this new text sort. Then, the buldâniyya, that was a result of knowledge brokerage and that provided the field of forty ḥadîth collections with a fresh ideas, became subject of its own specialization process. While the

\textsuperscript{23} Collected by Abû Saʿd Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Anṣârî al-Harawî al-Malînî (d. 412/1022), see Schöller, an-Nawawî, 316.
\textsuperscript{24} Collected by Abû ʿAbd ar-Raḥmân Muḥammad b. al-Husayn as-Sulamî, see Schöller, an-Nawawî, 316.
\textsuperscript{25} See Schöller, an-Nawawî, 319.
\textsuperscript{26} Brown, The Canonization, 135-144.
\textsuperscript{27} For the growing importance of Syria and later Egypt for the ḥadîth studies from the second half of the 12\textsuperscript{th} century on see Lucas, Constructive Criticism, 101-112.
\textsuperscript{28} See Lucas, Constructive Criticism, 103; Schöller, an-Nawawî, 319.
\textsuperscript{29} Davidson, Tradition, 250.
\textsuperscript{30} As-Salâhî identifies ʿAṭîq b. ʿAli b. Dâwûd as-Samanṭârî (d. 464/1071-2) a student of Abî Naʿîm al-Iṣbahānî to have been the first scholar to compose a geographical forty ḥadîth collection (buldâniyya) that apparently hasn’t been preserved. See as-Salâhî, al-Buldâniyya, 32. But even if as-Samanṭârî has been the first author and as-Silafî was aware of this previous collection, it would not change the fact that the buldâniyya of as-Silafî was perceived as the first collection in Egypt and hence was a product of a knowledge brokerage, since he brought existing knowledge into a new context.
collection of as-Silafī do not have a certain topical arrangement and its main characteristic is the fact that each ḥadīṯ is narrated from a different city, Ibn ʿAsākir prides himself for collecting forty ḥadīṯ from forty narrators from forty cities from forty Companions on forty topics (what is also the title of the collection, Arbaʿīn ḥadīṯan ʿan arbaʿīn šaʿḥan min arbaʿīn madīna li-arbaʿīn ʿina min aṣ-ṣaḥāba).\(^{31}\)

From then on, several buldāniyyāt were composed by scholars while the number of them was relatively small compared to the forty ḥadīṯ collections. During the seventh/thirteenth and the eighth/fourteenth century, the buldāniyya enjoyed increasing popularity while during the ninth/fifteenth century only few buldāniyya were composed. It seems that the last couple of them all have been compiled by members of a reference group in Cairo and Damascus. Al-Mizzī, ad-Ḍahabī and al-Birzālī were all connected – in this order – through a teacher-student relationship in Damascus. The same is true for al-ʿIrāqī, Ibn Ḥaḍar and as-Sahāwī (d. 902/1496), who all were active in Cairo.\(^{32}\) However, between Cairo and Damascus has been an active exchange of knowledge and ideas so that it can be assumed that to a certain extent the scholars of the two cities shared the same ideas and knowledge. Probably the last buldāniyya of certain significance were composed by Ibn ʿUṭlūn (953/1546), also a Damascene scholar of the late Mamluk and early Ottoman period.\(^{33}\)

4. al-Buldāniyyāt of as-Sahāwī – Comparison and Analysis

Unfortunately, not every buldāniyya has been preserved to be studied. From the 22 buldāniyya that as-Sahāwī mentioned in introduction to his buldāniyya\(^{34}\) only four are printed and another four were preserved in form of manuscripts.\(^{35}\) For the present study only three

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\(^{31}\) See Ibn ʿAsākir, *al-Buldāniyya*.

\(^{32}\) See Davidson, *Tradition*, 252-253.

\(^{33}\) See Davidson, *Tradition*, 253.

buldāniyyāt will be recognized. Those are the buldāniyyāt of as-Silafi, Ibn ʿAsākir, al-Bakrī. Although the comparison of only three other collections with that of as-Sāḥāwī seems little, it still make sense to so for one good reasons. The study aims to answer the question how as-Sāḥāwī compiles his buldāniyya to be an innovative one in relation to the previous buldāniyyāt and with regard to the idea of innovation of his reference group. For this, the analysis focuses on processes of knowledge specialization and knowledge brokerage and how the reference group influenced as-Sāḥāwī’s compilation. However, to be able to reconstruct the process of knowledge recombination it is important to know what the existing knowledge was that as-Sāḥāwī specialized in or recombined with heterogeneous knowledge. In other words, it is more important to know what as-Sāḥāwī has actually read and what was part of the shared ideas of his reference group. These information are giving in his introduction. While he list up 22 scholars who compiled a buldāniyya it turns out that only a few of them has reached as-Sāḥāwī. Only the buldāniyya of as-Silafi, which has reached him through sound chains of transmission (ittasalat binā bi-l-asānūd al-bayina), the one of Ibn ʿAsākir which as-Sāḥāwī has heard and read (sami’tuhā wa-qara’tuhā), the one of ar-Ruhāwī of which as-Sāḥāwī said that he heard only a part of it (wa-qad waqa’ a lī ba’dhūhu bī-samā‘ al-muttaṣil), the one of al-Bakrī that as-Sāḥāwī read through two different narrations (wa-qad qara’tuhā bi-sanadayn) and finally the one of aḏ-Ḏahabī that he read in the handwriting of aḏ-Ḏahabī (ra’ayt bi-ḥaṣṭtiḥ). The information about the other collections, as-Sāḥāwī apparently took from secondary sources such as biographical dictionaries or maṣyaḥāt but did not see the collections themselves. Even the buldāniyya of his teacher Ibn Ḥaḍar has not been finished as a complete product and hence might had given as-Sāḥāwī some inspirations but cannot be used for a comparison. Therefore, a comparison of as-Sāḥāwī’s buldāniyya with that of as-Silafi, Ibn ʿAsākir and al-Bakrī will bring meaningful and significant results.

4.1. A Geographical Forty Ḥadīt Collection or Geographical (Ḥadīṭ) Collection?
When does a singular experiment become a text group of its own right, is a question that is not always easy to answer. Probably the best way to come close to an answer, though, is by asking the authors for their perception of their own contribution. With regard to the buldāniyyāt, all four authors give a detailed description of how they perceive their work. While the first three authors, as-Silafi, Ibn ʿAsākir and al-Bakrī, refer to genre of the forty ḥadīt collections, as-Silafi and Ibn ʿAsākir do so in a way that shows that they see their work as a variation of the forty ḥadīt collection. The (sub)title of their work already supports this assumption. The buldāniyya of as-Silafi bears the (sub)title “al-Arbaʿūn al-mustaqīm bi-ta‘yīn mā ḵīh ‘an al-mu‘īn” and is an indication of the criteria of the

36 His buldāniyya has been edited and printed as-Silafi, al-Buldāniyya.
37 Ibn ʿAsākir, al-Buldāniyya.
38 That hasn’t been edited now, al-Bakrī, al-Buldāniyya.
39 As-Sāḥāwī, al-Buldāniyyāt, 33.
40 As-Sāḥāwī, al-Buldāniyyāt, 33.
41 As-Sāḥāwī, al-Buldāniyyāt, 35.
42 As-Sāḥāwī, al-Buldāniyyāt, 36.
43 As-Sāḥāwī, al-Buldāniyya, 38.
44 As for the buldāniyya of ar-Ruhāwī and aḏ-Ḏahabī, the first one only a small part has survived and the second could not be considered for the present paper but will be included in the larger study.
collection. Ibn ‘Asākir who wrote his buldāniyya as a reaction of as-Silafi’s entitled his collection “arba’una ḥadīṯan ‘an arba’īn šayḫan min arba’īn madīna li-arba’īn as-saḥāba” and also pointed to the criteria of his collection already reveals the innovative characteristic of his collection. He chose forty ḥadīṯ whose transmitter came from different cities and in addition each ḥadīṯ is also transmitted from the Prophet by forty different Companions (ṣaḥāba). Moreover Ibn ‘Asākir searched for ḥadīṯ that were devoted to forty different topics. In addition, both the authors refer in their preface to the forty ḥadīṯ collections. Then they list a number of forty ḥadīṯ collections pointing out the characteristics of these collection to explain why their collections form an innovation within the text group of the forty ḥadīṯ collections.

Therefore, it actually can be questioned whether the main title “al-Arba’īna al-Buldāniyya” (of the editions) and the designation as such found in biographical dictionaries and historical works is an implication of the authors of the those dictionaries at a stage where this subgroup has already became famous as buldāniyyāt.

A change in perception is already noticeable in the work of al-Bakrī. Even though the beginning of the manuscript is lost and the (sub)title of the work is unknown, al-Bakrī names the criteria of his collection. Having already compiled a forty ḥadīṯ collection that was a compilation of forty ḥadīṯ from forty forty ḥadīṯ books, al-Bakrī refers in the introduction of this collection explicitly to the text group of geographical forty ḥadīṯ collections. Hence, he just mentioned those previous collections that were compiled according to the criterion of forty different cities. As a result of this analysis of the criteria of the previous collections, he explains the innovative characteristic of his collection, i.e. to include only those ḥadīṯ that were narrated by forty different narrators from forty different cities from forty different ṣaḥāba and from forty different tābi‘īn.

A fundamental change, however, took place in the work of as-Saḥāwī. While al-Bakrī has already perceived the buldāniyya as a distinctive text group different from the normal forty ḥadīṯ collection still the main common characteristic of his collection and those of his predecessors was the reference to the forty ḥadīṯ collections. All of them, as-Silafi, Ibn ‘Asākir and al-Bakrī, understood their collection as a variation of the arba’īnāt even though al-Bakrī perceived the buldāniyya already as a distinctive sub group of the arba’īnāt. Therefore, all authors referred to the ḥadīṯ that praised the memorization of forty ḥadīṯ and emphasized the importance of this genre. As-Saḥāwī, however, followed a totally different approach. He did not bring the buldāniyyat together with the arba’īnāt, hence sees them not as al-Bakrī did as a sub group of the arba’īnāt, but as distinctive and independent text group. According to as-Saḥāwī the main characteristics of this text group is not the collection of forty ḥadīṯ but the

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45 To answer the question what exactly the criteria of his collection were it is necessary to analysis the collection in detail and to study of expectations of his reference group that he tried to meet with his collection. However, this would go beyond the scope of this paper.

46 See as-Silafi, al-Buldāniyya, 28; Ibn ‘Asākir, al-Buldāniyya, 36.

47 See as-Silafi, al-Buldāniyya, 29-30; Ibn ‘Asākir, al-Buldāniyya, 36-38.

48 This collection is available as a printed edition. See al-Bakrī, al-Arba’īn.

49 He mentions five previous collections. Besides those of as-Silafi and Ibn ‘Asākir, which he identifies as the first geographical forty ḥadīṯ collection, he lists one of Abū Ya’qūb Yūsuf b. Ahmad b. Ibrāhīm aṣ-Ṣīrāzī al-aṣl al-Baġdādī d-dār (d. Ramadan 585) who arranged the cities alphabetically, Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Qādir b. ‘Abd Allāh ar-Ruḥāwī who arranged the cities according to the chronology of his travel route, and an unknown man from Egypt whose collection was not much innovative. See al-Bakrī, al-Buldāniyya, 15.

50 Al-Bakrī, al-Buldāniyya, 16.
geographical aspect of the works. This is why he did not refer in his introduction to the ḥadīth that praised the forty ḥadīth collections nor did he mention in any other way that the buldāniyya belongs to the arbaʿīnāt. Instead, he emphasizes the regionality of ḥadīths that could lead in some cases to the fact that some ḥadīth were spread only in certain regions or cities. This proves this aspect as the main characteristic of the buldāniyya, as-Saḥāwī actually projects his perception onto the previous collection and designates them as buldāniyya. Because of this fundamentally different perspective two main differences can be observed in comparison to the previous collections that are perceived as results of knowledge specialization through knowledge brokerage, i.e. the number and content of the collection of as-Saḥāwī.

The first striking structural feature of the buldāniyya of as-Saḥāwī is the number of the narrations he collected. Since the other collections understood themselves as sub-texts of the forty ḥadīth collections, they collected forty ḥadīths – even if the exact number could be a bit more or less than forty ḥadīth as it is the case for al-Bakrī’s collection who lists forty one ḥadīths. This is also true for the al-buldāniyya that as-Saḥāwī mentioned in his introduction. All of them were entitled or at least identified later as “al-Arbaʿūna al-buldāniyya.” As-Saḥāwī, by contrast, did not limit his buldāniyya to forty narrations and thus deviated purposely from the forty ḥadīth genre tradition. He actually doubled the number and includes in his collection eighty narrations, hence also eighty cities. With this he brings new forms of knowledge into the field of the buldāniyya making them a distinct and independent text group.

The second and probably more striking feature of the buldāniyya of as-Saḥāwī is the content, i.e. the medium that was collected. The previous collections all collected Prophetic ḥadīth, mostly sayings but in some cases also descriptions of the Prophetic deeds. Since both, the sayings of the Prophet and the description of his deeds, belong to the sunna of the Prophet, all collections are clearly devoted to the study, transmission and collection of the Prophetic sunna. As-Saḥāwī, however, deviates from this line. Not only did he set himself apart by compiling about eighty narrations, he even add poems and sayings as well as anecdotes of other scholars to his collection. From the eighty narrations/cities in total fifty four are ḥadīth, twenty four poems and two anecdotes/sayings of scholars.

Both aspects, the increased number and the heterogeneous content, are examples of how as-Saḥāwī brings new knowledge in the field of the buldāniyya (knowledge brokerage), transforms slightly the characteristics of this text group and presents a more specialized collection than his predecessors (knowledge specialization). In addition to that, his collection is full of further specialization aspects that could only be indicated in the present paper. He presents more information on the cities he visits, including the mention of important scholar who visited the city as well. He discusses in a more detailed way the tahrij of the ḥadīth and

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51 As-Saḥāwī, al-Buldāniyya, 41.
52 This supports the assumption that no transregional and transtemporal knowledge of one field of knowledge exists but instead ideas and concepts always were transformed and interpreted by a reference group even though it refers to past ideas and knowledge.
53 See al-Bakrī, al-Buldāniyya. This is also true for the al-Arbaʿūna al-ʿusāriyya of az-Zayn al-İrāqī (see al-İrāqī, al-ʿUsāriyya). Slightly deviating from the number of forty was probably not perceived as a shortcoming with regard to the condition of the genre.
54 As-Saḥāwī, al-Buldāniyya, 32-41.
55 As-Saḥāwī, al-Buldāniyya.
integrates more collections in his analysis. The isnād variation is much larger and he mentioned for example an isnād in which all narrators were from Damascus (dimasqiyūn), or in which the first six were from Alexandria (iskandariyūn). He also includes a discussion on the elevation (‘ulūw) of the asānīd he cites.

4.2. Between the Conventions of the Text Group and the Shared Ideas of the Reference Group
So far, the focus of the study lied on the aspect of how as-Sahāwī composed an innovative collection with regard to the knowledge specialization and knowledge brokerage processes. In what follows, it will be shown how the particular concretization of this process were deeply influenced by the shared ideas of his reference group, i.e. the idea of the reference group of how a collection should be opened.

The following analysis focuses on the first ḥadīth that as-Sahāwī included in his collection with which he opens is collection. The comparison of the previous collections shows clearly that the first city to mention was Mecca and the second Medina. The explanation for this is as simple as convincing from the perspective of a Muslim scholar. Mecca is the first of two ‘holy’ cities in Islam and houses the Ka’ba, God’s house. The second holy city is Medina, the city of the Prophet where he is buried. As-Silāfī, Ibn ’Asākir and al-Bakrī begin their collection with these two cities and cite ḥadīths they collected there. The convention of beginning with these two cities was taken so seriously by al-Bakrī that although he did not hear any ḥadīth in Medina he put the city on the second place of his collection. He admits that he entered Medina four times but did not get to hear a ḥadīth in it. In order to keep to the order of the Holy Cities, he narrates from a scholar from Medina that he met in Mecca, so that his collection did not lack Medina and its blessing. However, at the same time, to fulfill the criterion of including only narrations he heard in the city in question and to collect forty ḥadīth, he mentioned an additional city with his samā’ in his collection that therefore consists of forty one ḥadīth instead of just forty.\footnote{Al-Bakrī, al-Budāniyya, 18.}

To keep to the order of the Holy Cities, the selection of the opening ḥadīth is already limited. While scholars usually chose a ḥadīth that suits the collection with regard to the topic and content, it is more or less ‘unpredictable’ what ḥadīth a scholar would find in Mecca or Medina. Hence, the criterion of the city was more important than the criterion of the content. All the better if both criteria could be combined. At the present state of the analysis of the budāniyyāt, only Ibn ’Asākir seemed to have been able to combine both criteria. He opens his collection with the famous ḥadīth “The deeds are according to the intention” (innamā l-‘a’māl bi-n-niyyāt).\footnote{Ibn ’Asākir, al-Budāniyyāt, 47-48.} While he is convinced that every collection and work of other disciplines should begin with this ḥadīth,\footnote{Ibn ’Asākir, al-Budāniyyāt, 50-51.} al-Buḫārī (d. 256/870) seems to be the first who used it instead of an introduction.\footnote{See al-Buḫārī, Sahih, chapter 1, sub chapter 1, first ḥadīth.} Ibn ’Asākir explain the importance of this ḥadīth by citing a saying of aš-Shāfi’ī in which he said that this ḥadīth contains about third of the knowledge (yadhulu fī ḥadīth al-‘a’māl bi-n-niyyāt ṭulūṭ l-‘ilm).\footnote{Ibn ’Asākir, al-Budāniyyāt, 50.} In addition, he cites later scholars who confirm the practice of beginning a work with this ḥadīth.\footnote{Ibn ’Asākir, al-Budāniyyāt, 51.} However, the combination of both criteria...
forced Ibn ʿAsākir to include a narration of this ḥadīṯ that was not the shortest he possessed, wherefore he adds higher narrations he collected during his long scholarly life. The practice of beginning a collection or a work with the “al-Aʾmāl bi-n-niyāṭ”-ḥadīṯ that Ibn ʿAsākir felt obliged to, was still valid in the time of as-Saḥāwī. He emphasized that it was common to open a collection with this ḥadīṯ (kamā annahū siḥāba l-ibtiḍāʾ bi-ḥadīṯ innamā l-aʾmāl bi-n-niyāṭ). However, by contrast, as-Saḥāwī begins his collection neither with the city Mecca nor with this ḥadīṯ. Instead he started with a narration that confirms the importance of the isnād in the post-canonical period, i.e. the musalsalāt bi-l-awwaliyya. This ḥadīṯ belongs to a sort of ḥadīths that are transmitted always in a certain context (musalsalāt). Its chains are characterized by either a deed, a state or a word and saying of the narrator or the Prophet that has nothing to do with the ḥadīṯ itself and that was passed down during the act of narrating the ḥadīṯ.

In the case of the buldāniyya of as-Saḥāwī, it is the ḥadīṯ al-musalsal bi-l-awwaliyya that opens his collection. It is a ḥadīṯ that has always been transmitted first, so that it is the first ḥadīṯ that every transmitter heard from his šayḥ. This ḥadīṯ has gained certain popularity among the Cairene scholars (and probably elsewhere too), so that as-Saḥāwī decided to open his collection with it. In addition, he must have felt that the need to start with this ḥadīṯ is more important than the criterion of the buldāniyya text group to begin with Mecca. As a matter of fact it is not easy to receive this ḥadīṯ during a ḥadīṯ session in general and even more difficult to influence where to here this ḥadīṯ. Since as-Saḥāwī heard this ḥadīṯ in Jeddah his collection doesn’t begin with Mecca but with Jeddah.

His decision to deviate from the criterion of starting with Mecca that the previous collections have in common, can be explained through several reasons. First, since the characteristic of the ḥadīṯ al-musalsal bi-l-awwaliyya is to be narrated first, it fits to be the opening ḥadīṯ of a collection. Second, this way when the collection is read in later sessions, the musalsal bi-l-awwaliyya is still the first ḥadīṯ and the students hearing the collection can narrate the ḥadīṯ also as the first.

However the third explanation is to prove that the practice to begin with this ḥadīṯ was part of the shared ideas of the reference group of as-Saḥāwī. For this, the reference group is represented by two dimensions: intellectual alliances represented by vertical ties of a student-teacher relationship and intellectual rivalries represented by horizontal ties to acquaintances – or to scholars of the ‘same level’.

With regard to the intellectual alliances, the present paper will focus on the main teacher of as-Saḥāwī Ibn Ḥaḍar al-ʿAsqalānī and his teacher’s teacher Zayn ad-Dīn al-ʿIrāqī (d. 806). The argument is that the feeling of group membership and solidarity that determines the identity of a person rises through the reference to shared ideas and common cultural capital.

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62 Ibn ʿAsākir, al-Buldāniyya, 48-49.
63 As-Saḥāwī, al-Buldāniyya, 50.
64 See for this too Brown, Ḥadīṯh, 46.
65 As-Saḥāwī, Ṣaḥḥ at-taqrīb, 432.
66 As-Saḥāwī, al-Buldāniyya, 46-47.
67 As-Saḥāwī, al-Buldāniyya, 43-50.
68 See Savelsberg, Collins, 28 who explains the concept of „interaction rituals“ that has been developed by Goffman and has been used by Collins. See also Kemper, Status, 34, who argues there in reference to Pascal that members of a group share the same ideas not because of the content or logical adequacy of these ideas but because of who in one’s social circle supports these ideas.
Even though it was not possible for Ibn Ḥaḡar to hear the ḥadīṯ al-musalsal bi-l-awwaliyya he let his wife to hear this ḥadīṯ from his principal teacher az-Zayn al-ʿIrāqī. 69 Az-Zayn al-ʿIrāqī himself began his study with his principle teacher al-Mīdūmī with this ḥadīṯ. 70 In Addition, al-ʿIrāqī decided to open his collection of ʿušāriyyāt – ḥadīths with chains that contains only ten narrators to the Prophet – with the ḥadīṯ al-musalsal bi-l-awwaliyya that actually did not meet the conditions of the collection. 71

With regard to the intellectual rivalries, the paper will focus on the intellectual production of other scholars of the same level as as-Saḥāwī. The argument is that since contemporaries find themselves in a struggle over recognition, status and the access to cultural capital, 72 references to the same ideas and its development to show the own superiority over the others is very likely. In the case of as-Saḥāwī and his buldāniyya, his Cairene contemporary al-Ǧalāl as-Suyūṭī (d. 911) attached even more importance to the musalsalāt gathering a whole collection that contains all sorts of musalsalāt available, 73 opening his collection with the musalsal bi-l-awwaliyya. 74

That the collection of as-Suyūṭī might be an example of another knowledge specialization process and that it reveals something about the intellectual dynamics of the intellectual scene in Cairo is indeed a study of its own. However, more importantly both intellectual direction, vertical and horizontal, show clearly that the ḥadīṯ al-musalsal bi-l-awwaliyya was part of the shared ideas and cultural capital of the reference group, that beginning with it was a common practice and that referring to it was necessary for a successful new and innovative work in an attempt of gaining status and recognition. Therefore, it can be stated that as-Saḥāwī was influenced or even determined is his decision to open his collection with this ḥadīṯ by his reference group.

5. Conclusion

To classify ḥadīṯ collections under a general term such as the buldāniyya or even as the forty ḥadīṯ collection harbors the risk of neglecting the details which make every collection a unique one. Even if the authors themselves refer to text group or a genre does not mean that the follow the conventions of the text group without any attempt of innovation. In this paper, the concept of recombinant knowledge growth with its two variations, knowledge specialization and knowledge brokerage, has been proved to be a promising concept to study developments of text groups and genres in general as well as the analysis of one particular work. In addition, it could be shown that independently of the strategy, either specialization or a brokerage, the author’s concrete design of his work depends heavily on the shared ideas of his reference group.

For the case study, the comparison and analysis revealed that as-Saḥāwī chose a combination of knowledge specialization and knowledge brokerage for his collection. By increasing the number of the cities and narrations that the collection contains and by including poems and anecdotes in addition to Prophetic ḥadīṯ, he was able to specialize in the field of the

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69 As-Saḥāwī, al-Ǧawāhir, 3:1208.
70 Al-ʿIrāqī, al-Arbaʿūn al-ʿušāriyya, 124.
71 Al-ʿIrāqī, al-Arbaʿūn al-ʿušāriyya, 124-125.
72 See Savelsberg, Collins, 28-29.
73 As-Syūṭī, Gīyūḏ al-musalsalāt.
74 As-Syūṭī, Gīyūḏ al-musalsalāt, 73-77.
buldâniyyât where nearly all kinds of possible (re)combinations of homogeneous knowledge have already been done. In addition, it could be shown, that his decision not to start with Mecca and instead opening his collection with the ḥadîth al-musalsal bi-l-awwaliyya was a reaction of the shared idea within his reference group of how to open a collection. An analysis of both, his vertical and horizontal social and intellectual ties, supported this finding. In the end, as-Saḥāwî succeeded in creating an innovative collection and in working with the cultural capital of his reference group. The result of it was more of a geographical (ḥadîth) isnâd collection than a sub group of the forty ḥadîth collection.
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