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## BEYOND THE CONCORDANCE: REASSESSING A.J. WENSINCK'S LEGACY IN WESTERN HADITH STUDIES

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**Abstract:** *Western scholarship on hadith has been shaped by philological, historical-critical, and transmission-based approaches that view hadith both as a normative Islamic source and as historical evidence of early Muslim intellectual, legal, and theological development. Within this tradition, Arent Jan Wensinck holds an important yet ambivalent position. His bibliographical works, especially *A Handbook of Early Muhammadan Tradition and Concordance et indices de la Tradition Musulmane*, later known as *Miftāḥ Kunūz al-Sunnah* and *al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras li Alfāz al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī*, greatly advanced hadith retrieval, textual comparison, and thematic indexing. Yet his interpretation of hadith, Sunnah, and Islamic creed was shaped by orientalist assumptions, Semitic philology, comparative religion, and historical criticism, leading him to regard parts of the hadith corpus as products of early Muslim communal development influenced by Jewish, Christian, Hellenistic, and Near Eastern traditions. This article reassesses Wensinck's contribution by distinguishing his technical-bibliographical achievements from his theoretical-historical assumptions. Using qualitative library research with historical-critical and intellectual-biographical approaches, it examines his major works, methodology, and scholarly reception. The study argues that Wensinck's legacy cannot be reduced to orientalist skepticism or bibliographical utility. While valuable for *tahrīj* and indexing, his conclusions require critique through classical and contemporary hadith epistemology in Western hadith studies today*

**Keywords:** *A.J. Wensinck; hadith studies; Orientalism; hadith indexing; Western Islamic scholarship*



**Abstrak:** Kesarjanaan Barat tentang hadis telah dibentuk oleh pendekatan filologis, historis-kritis, dan berbasis transmisi yang memandang hadis baik sebagai sumber normatif Islam maupun sebagai bukti historis perkembangan intelektual, hukum, dan teologis Muslim awal. Dalam tradisi ini, Arent Jan Wensinck memegang posisi penting namun ambivalen. Karya-karya bibliografinya, terutama *A Handbook of Early Muhammadan Tradition and Concordance et indices de la Tradition Musulmane*, yang kemudian dikenal sebagai *Miftāḥ Kunūz al-Sunnah* dan *al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras li Alfāz al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī*, sangat memajukan penelusuran hadis, perbandingan teks, dan indeksasi tematik. Namun interpretasinya tentang hadis, Sunnah, dan akidah Islam dibentuk oleh asumsi-asumsi orientalis, filologi Semit, perbandingan agama, dan kritik historis, yang mengarahkannya untuk menganggap sebagian korpus hadis sebagai produk perkembangan komunal Muslim awal yang dipengaruhi oleh tradisi Yahudi, Kristen, Helenistik, dan Timur Dekat. Artikel ini menilai kembali kontribusi Wensinck dengan membedakan pencapaian teknis-bibliografinya dari asumsi teoretis-historisnya. Dengan menggunakan penelitian kepustakaan kualitatif dengan pendekatan historis-kritis dan intelektual-biografis, artikel ini mengkaji karya-karya utamanya, metodologi, dan penerimaan akademisnya. Studi ini berargumen bahwa warisan Wensinck tidak dapat direduksi menjadi skeptisisme orientalis atau utilitas bibliografis. Meskipun bernilai untuk takhrīj dan indeksasi, kesimpulannya memerlukan kritik melalui epistemologi hadis klasik dan kontemporer dalam studi hadis Barat saat ini.

**Kata Kunci:** A.J. Wensinck; studi hadis; Orientalisme; indeksasi hadis; kesarjanaan Islam Barat

## INTRODUCTION

The study of hadith in Western scholarship has undergone a long development, ranging from a philological, historical-critical approach, to a more complex analysis of transmission in contemporary hadith studies.<sup>1</sup> Since the late 19th and early 20th centuries, hadith has been studied not only as a normative source in Islam, but also as a historical document that is considered to record the social, legal, theological, and identity development of the early Muslim community.<sup>2</sup> In this context, Western scholars such as Ignaz Goldziher, Joseph Schacht, A.J. Wensinck, Nabia Abbott, Harald Motzki, and Gregor Schoeler have made varying contributions in shaping academic discourses on the authenticity, transmission, and function of hadith in Islamic history.<sup>3</sup>

Among these figures, A.J. Wensinck occupies an important and problematic position. He was known as a Dutch semitologist, orientalist, and Islamologist who paid great attention to hadith literature.<sup>4</sup> His most prominent contributions are seen in the compilation of hadith index works, notably *A Handbook of Early Muhammadan*

<sup>1</sup> Jonathan A.C. Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> Harald Motzki, "Dating Muslim Traditions: A Survey," *Arabica*, *Arabica* 52, no. 2 (2005): 204–53.

<sup>3</sup> Harald Motzki, *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence: Meccan Fiqh before the Classical Schools* (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

<sup>4</sup> Fatma Kızıl, *Wensinck, Arent Jan* (Istanbul: Turkiye Diyanet Foundation, 2013).



*Tradition and Concordance et indices de la Tradition Musulmane*, which came to be known in the Islamic world as *Miftāḥ Kunūz al-Sunnah* and *al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras li Alfāz al-Ḥ adīth al-Nabawī*.<sup>5</sup> These two works are important instruments in the search for hadith, both based on themes and pronunciations, and are still often mentioned in the discussion of modern hadith takhrij.<sup>6</sup>

However, Wensinck's position cannot be understood through his bibliographic contributions alone. In works such as *The Muslim Creed: Its Genesis and Historical Development* and the article "The Importance of Tradition for the Study of Islam", Wensinck also puts forward a critical view of the hadith, sunnah, Islamic creed, and early Islamic relationship with the Judeo-Christian tradition.<sup>7</sup> He reads hadith through Semitic philological approaches, the history of religions, and historical criticism.<sup>8</sup> Through this framework, Wensinck tends to view some of the hadith as the result of the development of early Muslim communities influenced by the Jewish, Christian, Hellenistic, and religious traditions of the Near East.<sup>9</sup> This view caused controversy because it was considered not entirely in line with the epistemology of hadith science in the Islamic tradition.<sup>10</sup>

The main problem in Wensinck's thought lies in the tension between his technical contributions and his theoretical assumptions. On the one hand, his index work provides real benefits for hadith research because it makes it easier to track texts, compare redactions, and search for hadith sources in various master books.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, his historical conclusions are often considered reductionist because they explain the hadith mainly through the theory of external influences, not through the system of transmission, sanad criticism, matan criticism, and narration authority as developed by classical hadith scholars.<sup>12</sup> It is this tension that makes Wensinck's thought important to be studied in a more in-depth and balanced manner.

A number of previous studies have discussed Wensinck from various angles. Some studies highlight his contributions to the science of takhrij and hadith indexation, while others emphasize criticism of his orientalist methodology in

<sup>5</sup> A.J. Wensinck, *A Handbook of Early Muhammadan Tradition: Alphabetically Arranged* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1927).

<sup>6</sup> Yudi Setiadi, "Arent Jan Wensinck's Contribution in the Science of Takhrij Hadith," *Journal of Qur'an and Hadith Studies* 8, no. 2 (2019): 147–65.

<sup>7</sup> A.J. Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed: Its Genesis and Historical Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932).

<sup>8</sup> and D.P. Dahnil A.Y.M. Noor, A.M. Mokhtar, "Methodology of Arent Jan Wensinck towards Prophetic Tradition: An Analysis," *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change* 17, no. 2 (2023): 312–26.

<sup>9</sup> A.J. Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed: Its Genesis and Historical Development*.

<sup>10</sup> M.M. al-A'zami, *Studies in Early Hadith Literature* (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1978); M.M. al-A'zami, *Studies in Hadith Methodology and Literature* (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1977).

<sup>11</sup> Setiadi, "Arent Jan Wensinck's Contribution to the Science of Takhrij Hadith."

<sup>12</sup> M.M. al-Azami, *Studies in Early Ḥ adīth Literature: With a Critical Edition of Some Early Texts* (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1978).



reading hadith and Islamic beliefs.<sup>13</sup> However, these studies are often still moving in two main trends. First, appreciative studies tend to highlight the benefits of Wensinck's index work without sufficiently criticizing the historical and orientalist assumptions behind it. Second, critical studies tend to reject his thinking because it is considered to reduce the authority of hadith, but it does not give room for his technical and bibliographic contributions to the development of modern hadith studies.

This gap shows the need for a more proportionate study of A.J. Wensinck's thought. This study is important because Wensinck cannot be simply placed as a fully meritorious or completely problematic figure. He is an ambivalent figure in the history of Western hadith studies: his contribution to the indexation of hadith is appreciable, but his reading of the authenticity of hadith, Islamic faith, and the relationship of Islam with previous religious traditions needs to be criticized methodologically.<sup>14</sup> Thus, this study seeks to read Wensinck through a more balanced approach, namely by distinguishing between his technical-bibliographic contributions and his theoretical-historical assumptions.

This study is also relevant in the context of the development of contemporary hadith studies. Today, the study of hadith is no longer dominated by classical orientalist skepticism that tends to place hadith as a product of later generations. Modern approaches such as *isnād-cum-matn analysis* show an attempt to combine sanad and matan analysis more systematically. This development opens up space for a reassessment of Wensinck's position in the history of hadith studies: the extent to which his methods are still relevant, which parts need to be criticized, and how his works can be used in modern hadith research without accepting all of his orientalist assumptions.

Based on this background, this article aims to analyze A.J. Wensinck's thoughts on the hadith of the Prophet and Islam, focusing on three main aspects. First, Wensinck's thoughts on hadith, matan, sunnah, and the development of the Islamic faith. Second, his contribution to the compilation of the hadith index through *Miftāḥ Kunūz al-Sunnah* and *al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras li Alfāz al-Ḥ adīth al-Nabawī*. Third, the response and criticism of Muslim scholars and Western scholars to Wensinck's approach. With this focus, this article is expected to provide a more critical, proportional, and methodological reading of Wensinck's position in the history of Western hadith studies and his contribution to contemporary hadith studies.

Academically, this research is important because it offers a reading that is not stuck at two extremes: a total rejection of orientalism or a full acceptance of Western academic authority. This article places Wensinck as an object of historical and methodological study that needs to be critically analyzed. Thus, this study is

<sup>13</sup> A.Y.M. Noor, A.M. Mokhtar, "Methodology of Arent Jan Wensinck towards Prophetic Tradition: An Analysis."

<sup>14</sup> and A. Nurita; A.A.N. Arifah, M. Muhid, "The Contribution of the Book of Al-Mu'jam Al-Mufahras by Arent Jan Wensinck to the Science of Takhrijul Hadith," *Scholars: Journal of Islamic Studies* 9, no. 1 (2023): 56-76.



expected to enrich the discourse of hadith studies, especially in understanding the relationship between orientalism, methodology of hadith criticism, hadith indexation, and the development of modern Islamic studies.

## METODE

This study employs a qualitative research design rooted in intellectual history and historical-critical analysis to examine the dual legacy of A.J. Wensinck in Western hadith studies. Rather than a conventional descriptive literature review, the research utilizes a critical-discursive and biographical approach to dissect the inherent tension between Wensinck's technical-bibliographical contributions and his theoretical-historical assumptions. This methodological framework is essential to avoid the binary trap of either uncritically celebrating his indexing tools or entirely dismissing his work as mere Orientalist skepticism.

**Data Sources** The data for this study are drawn from two primary categories of sources:

1. **Primary Sources:** These consist of Wensinck's seminal works that directly address hadith, Islamic creed, and Semitic traditions. The core texts include *The Muslim Creed: Its Genesis and Historical Development* (1932), *A Handbook of Early Muhammadan Tradition* (1927), his foundational article "The Importance of Tradition for the Study of Islam" (1921), and the monumental *Concordance et indices de la Tradition Musulmane* (1936–1969). Additionally, his contributions to the first edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (particularly entries related to hadith, creed, and early Islamic history) are critically examined.
2. **Secondary Sources:** These encompass a comprehensive range of academic literature, including classical and contemporary critiques of Orientalist hadith studies (e.g., works by M.M. al-A'zami, Jonathan A.C. Brown), modern historical-critical approaches to hadith (e.g., Harald Motzki, Gregor Schoeler, and Nabia Abbott), and historical studies on Western Orientalism (e.g., Umar Ryad, Fatma Kızıl, and Edward Said).

**Data Collection and Analysis** Data collection is conducted through critical library research and close textual reading of the primary sources. The researchers engage in bibliographical tracing to map the evolution of Wensinck's thought from his early philological dissertations to his later concordance projects.

The data analysis is performed using a thematic and comparative analytical framework. The analysis operates on two parallel tracks: First, it evaluates Wensinck's epistemological assumptions regarding the *matan* (text) of hadith, tracing how his background in Semitic philology and comparative religion led him to interpret Islamic traditions through the lens of Judeo-Christian and Hellenistic influences. Second, it assesses his technical contributions to hadith indexing, analyzing the structural methodology of *Miftāḥ Kunūz al-Sunnah* and *al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras*.

By juxtaposing Wensinck's historical-critical conclusions with classical Islamic hadith epistemology (such as *sanad* and *matan* criticism) and contemporary Western methodologies (such as *isnād-cum-matn* analysis), this study aims to



provide a nuanced, proportionate reassessment of his legacy. This approach allows the research to separate the enduring utility of his bibliographical instruments from the problematic Orientalist paradigms that underpin his historical interpretations.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A.J. Wensinck's Biography and Hadith Thought: between Technical Contributions and Orientalist Assumptions

A.J. Wensinck is one of the most important Western scholars in the history of modern Islamic studies, especially in the fields of Semitic philology, the history of religions, and the study of hadith. He was born on August 7, 1882 in Aarlanderveen<sup>15</sup>, the Netherlands, to a religious Protestant family. His father, Johan Herman Wensinck, was a pastor of the Dutch Reformed Church, which influenced his early intellectual orientation towards theology and religious languages. Wensinck died in Leiden on September 19, 1939<sup>16</sup>.

His education was initially taken in Nijkerk, then continued at the gymnasiums of Amersfoort and Leiden. In 1901, he enrolled as a theology student at Utrecht University, but his interest soon shifted to the study of Semitic languages. He continued his doctoral studies at Leiden University and deepened his studies in Berlin and Heidelberg. On 18 March 1908, he obtained his doctorate with the dissertation *Mohammed en de Joden te Medina (Muhammad and the Jews of Medina)* under the guidance of Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje. This dissertation shows his early interest in the history of the Prophet Muhammad and Islamic-Jewish relations<sup>17</sup>.

After completing his studies, Wensinck became a lecturer in Hebrew at the gymnasiums of Utrecht and Amersfoort, as well as a *privatdocent* for Syriac and Aramaic at Utrecht University. In 1912, he was appointed professor of Hebrew at Leiden University, and in 1927 succeeded Snouck Hurgronje as professor of Arabic and Islam. In 1917, he was accepted as a member of the Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen. He also served as Rector Magnificus of Leiden University (1927-1928).<sup>18</sup>

Wensinck's most notable contribution was the compilation of the hadith index. The project *Concordance et indices de la Tradition Musulmane (al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras li Alfāz al-Ḥ adīth al-Nabawī)* was designed in 1916, supported by the Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie, and the first volume was published in 1936. This work indexes hadiths from nine major books: *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, *Sunan al-Nasā'ī*, *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, *Sunan al-Dārimī*, *al-Muwatta' Mālik*, and *Musnad Aḥmad ibn Hanbal*<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> Johan Huizinga, *Levensbericht van aren't Jan Wensinck: A.J. Wensinck, Mohammed En de Jews Te Medina* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1908).

<sup>16</sup> Johan Huizinga.

<sup>17</sup> ; A.A.N. Arifah, M. Muhid.

<sup>18</sup> Johan Huizinga.

<sup>19</sup> Arifah, Muhid, and Nurita, "The Contribution of the Book of Al-Mu'jam Al-Mufahras.



Previously, in 1927, Wensinck wrote *A Handbook of Early Muhammadan Tradition* which in the Arabic tradition is known as *Miftāḥ Kunūz al-Sunnah*<sup>20</sup>. In contrast to *al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras* which is based on pronunciation, *Miftāḥ Kunūz al-Sunnah* is thematic. These two works are important tools in *the takhrij* of hadith, both for orientalists and Muslim scholars.

Another important work is *The Muslim Creed: Its Genesis and Historical Development*, in which Wensinck reads the development of the Islamic creed through a historical-comparative approach, linking it to the Jewish, Christian, and Hellenistic traditions<sup>21</sup>. This approach drew controversy, including the rejection of his membership in *Majma' al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah al-Malaki* in Cairo in the early 1930s because his article on "Ibrāhīm" was considered too critical of Islamic traditions<sup>22</sup>

Wensinck menempati posisi penting sekaligus problematis dalam studi orientalism hadis. Ia penting karena kontribusi bibliografisnya, tetapi problematis karena asumsi historis-filologisnya yang cenderung menelusuri ajaran Islam kepada pengaruh eksternal. Sebagai sarjana Semit, Wensinck menggunakan pendekatan filologi, kritik historis, dan perbandingan agama mirip dengan *higher criticism* dalam studi teks Barat<sup>23</sup>. Perhatiannya tidak hanya pada sanad tetapi juga matan sebagai teks yang dapat dibandingkan dengan tradisi Yahudi, Kristen, dan Suryani.

For Wensinck, hadith is not only a normative source but also a historical document that records the social, theological, and legal dynamics of early Muslim societies. In the article "The Importance of Tradition for the Study of Islam" (1921), he distinguished *hadith* (form) and *sunna* (matter), stating "hadith is the form, sunna the matter".<sup>24</sup> His controversial view is the statement "Tradition as to its form is Jewish", which shows the assumption that the early Islamic tradition developed through interaction with the Judeo-Christian environment<sup>25</sup>.

In the study of the eye, Wensinck paid much attention to theological, eschatological and cosmological themes. He found parallels between the hadith about heaven, hell, resurrection, and signs of the end times with the ancient Semitic tradition. This view is in line with those of Ignaz Goldziher and Joseph Schacht, but

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<sup>20</sup> M.S. Hasyim and Muhid, "A Study of the Book of Miftāḥ Kunūz al-Sunnah and Its Contribution to the Science of Takhrij al-Hadith," *Universum: Journal of Islam and Culture* 18, no. 1 (2024).

<sup>21</sup> Umar Ryad, *The Dismissal of A.J. Wensinck from the Royal Academy of the Arabic Language in Cairo. Dalam W. B. Drees & P. S. van Koningsveld, The Study of Religion and the Training of Muslim Clergy in Europe* (Amsterdam: University Press, 2007).

<sup>22</sup> Fatma Kizil, *Wensinck, Arent Jan*.

<sup>23</sup> S. Wasman, W., Mesraini, M., & Suwendi, "A Critical Approach to Prophetic Traditions: Contextual Criticism in Understanding Hadith," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 61, no. 1 (2023): 1-17.

<sup>24</sup> A.J. Wensinck, ). *The Importance of Tradition for the Study of Islam* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1921).

<sup>25</sup> A.Y.M. Noor, A.M. Mokhtar, "Methodology of Arent Jan Wensinck towards Prophetic Tradition: An Analysis."



Wensinck emphasizes the philology, cosmology, and theological aspects rather than the legal dimension<sup>26</sup>.

Wensinck's approach contains epistemological weaknesses<sup>27</sup>. *First*, he tends to use the similarity of themes as evidence of influence, even though similarities can occur due to the same cultural environment or universal symbolic structure. *Second*, he paid less attention to the internal methodology of hadith scholars such as the criticism of sanad, the criticism of the narrator, 'illah, and *syādh*. *Third*, the reading emphasizes the external origins rather than the internal function of the hadith in the construction of Islamic faith, law, and ethics.

M.M. al-A'zami (1977) sharply criticized Wensinck's view of the creed and the five pillars of Islam. Wensinck argues that this formula was a later development when Muslims confronted Christians. Al-A'zami rejected this as speculative, since the shahada has been an integral part of the azan, iqamah, and tasyahud since the time of the Prophet. The practice of congregational prayer has also been taught by the Prophet to the companions<sup>28</sup>.

From the perspective of hadith science, matan cannot be judged by cross-religious comparisons alone. Hadith must be examined through a combination of sanad and matan criticism, including conformity with the Qur'an, stronger hadith, sharia principles, historical facts, Arabic rules, and common sense. Wensinck departs from Western historical criticism that seeks external origins, while hadith scholars depart from systems of transmission and narration authority.

Wensinck views that some of the hadith material has a connection with older religious traditions, especially Judaism and Christianity. He considers early Islam to have developed in an environment that has been filled with Jewish, Christian, Arab, Syrian, and Near Eastern traditions<sup>29</sup>. Figures such as Ka'b al-Aḥbār are seen as the channel through which Jewish narratives (*isrā'īliyyāt*) entered Islam, especially in the themes of cosmology, eschatology, and the stories of the prophets.

However, the term "contamination" is too polemic. A more academic term is "interaction" or "re-articulation" within the same Semitic environment. Wensinck reads the hadith about the shrouding of the body as a mirror of the evolution of three traditions (ancient Semites, Jews, Syrian Christians). He stated that hadith is basically a mirror of the history of Muslim thought in the first century of the Hijri and called hadith the main source of *the history of dogma and law*<sup>30</sup>.

### **The Idea of Compiling the Hadith Index in the Work of A.J. Wensinck**

One of A.J. Wensinck's most important contributions to the study of hadith lies not solely in his critical view of the authenticity of hadith, but in his efforts to compile a set of hadith indexes that were later widely used by Western scholars and

<sup>26</sup> A.Y.M. Noor, A.M. Mokhtar, "Methodology of Arent Jan Wensinck towards Prophetic Tradition: An Analysis."

<sup>27</sup> Schoeler.

<sup>28</sup> M.M. al-Azami.

<sup>29</sup> A.J. Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed: Its Genesis and Historical Development*.

<sup>30</sup> A.J. Wensinck.



Muslim scholars.<sup>31</sup> In the context of hadith literature, an index does not only mean a simple list of words, but also a scientific tool for finding hadith based on the pronunciation, theme, subject, or specific part of the hadith text.<sup>32</sup> Thus, the hadith index functions as an initial instrument in takhrij activities, namely tracking the location of hadith in primary sources.

In general, the index of hadith can be understood in two forms. First, the pronunciation index, which is an index that is compiled based on key words in the hadith matan. Through this method, researchers can find hadith by tracing certain utterances contained in the hadith text. Second, the thematic index, which is an index that is compiled based on the topic or theme of the hadith, such as faith, salat, zakat, jihad, adab, science, marriage, muamalah, and so on. These two forms of indexes have different functions, but they are equally important in facilitating access to a very wide corpus of hadith.

In this field, Wensinck produced two important works that need to be clearly distinguished, namely *A Handbook of Early Muhammadan Tradition* and *Concordance et indices de la Tradition Musulmane*.<sup>33</sup> The first work came to be known in Arabic as *Miftāḥ Kunūz al-Sunnah*, while the second work is widely known in the Islamic world as *al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras li Alfāz al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī*. These two works are not hadith books in the sense of containing hadith in its entirety to be used as direct legal sources, but index works that aim to help researchers find hadith in source books.<sup>34</sup>

*Miftāḥ Kunūz al-Sunnah* is an index of theme-based hadith. This work was originally written by Wensinck in English under the title *A Handbook of Early Muhammadan Tradition: Alphabetically Arranged*, later translated into Arabic by Muḥammad Fu'ād 'Abd al-Bāqī. Its Arabic edition was published in Egypt in 1934.<sup>35</sup> This work presents clues to find hadith based on certain themes so that it is very useful for researchers who do not know the initial pronunciation of the hadith, but know the topic of discussion.

In terms of method, *Miftāḥ Kunūz al-Sunnah* can be categorized as a thematic index or a takhrij bi al-mawḍū' tool. In this book, the hadiths are not arranged based on the name of the narrator or the order of the hadith, but based on the topic of discussion.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, this book makes it easier for researchers to find hadiths related to certain themes from various hadith master books. The advantage of this method lies in its ability to help researchers who do not know the exact redaction of hadith, but already know the subject matter of the problem to be researched.

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<sup>31</sup> ; A.A.N. Arifah, M. Muhid, "The Contribution of the Book of Al-Mu'jam Al-Mufahras by Arent Jan Wensinck to the Science of Takhrijul Hadith."

<sup>32</sup> Setiadi, "Arent Jan Wensinck's Contribution to the Science of Takhrij Hadith."

<sup>33</sup> ; A.A.N. Arifah, M. Muhid, "The Contribution of the Book of Al-Mu'jam Al-Mufahras by Arent Jan Wensinck to the Science of Takhrijul Hadith."

<sup>34</sup> ; A.A.N. Arifah, M. Muhid.

<sup>35</sup> Hasyim, M. S., "A Study of the Book of Miftah Kunuz al-Sunnah and Its Contribution to the Science of Takhrij Al-Hadith."

<sup>36</sup> Hasyim, M. S.



The sources referenced in *Miftāḥ Kunūz al-Sunnah* include fourteen books of hadith and early Islamic historical literature.<sup>3738</sup> Among these sources are *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, *Sunan al-Nasā'ī*, *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, *Sunan al-Dārimī*, *al-Muwatta' Mālik*, *Musnad Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*, *Musnad Zayd ibn 'Alī*, *Musnad Abī Dāwūd al-Ṭ ayālisī*, *al-Ṭ abaqāt al-Kubrā* by Ibn Sa'd, *Sīrah Ibn Hishām*, and *al-Maghāzī* by al-Wāqidi. The mention of these books shows that Wensinck's attention was not only focused on the legal hadith, but also on the historical history, sirah, and development of the early Islamic tradition.

Different from *Miftāḥ Kunūz al-Sunnah*, *al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras li Alfāz al-Ḥ adīth al-Nabawī* is a hadith index based on pronunciation. This work is compiled to trace the hadith through certain words found in the matan. If a researcher knows an important word in the hadith, he can search for that word in the index, then find clues to the location of the hadith in the source book. Therefore, *al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras* is closer to the *concordance model*, which is a list of words arranged alphabetically and accompanied by references to the location of their occurrence in the text.

The *al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras project* is a large and collective scientific project. Wensinck was a central figure in its planning, but its drafting involved a number of other scholars and gained the support of international academic institutions.<sup>39</sup> This work indexes hadith recitations from six books of Sunni canonical hadith, namely *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, *Sunan al-Nasā'ī*, and *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, and is complemented by *al-Muwatta' Mālik*, *Musnad Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*, and *Sunan al-Dārimī*. Through this scope, this work has become one of the most influential tools in modern hadith research.

The idea of compiling the hadith index by Wensinck can be understood from two sides. First, from the Western academic side, the hadith index is needed to make it easier for orientalist scholars to access Islamic traditions systematically.<sup>40</sup> The corpus of hadith is very extensive, so without an index tool, searching for a particular theme or utterance would take a very long time. Second, in terms of hadith science, this work serves as a *takhrij* tool that makes it easier for researchers to find hadith sources, compare histories, and check redaction variations in various books.

Nevertheless, Wensinck's index work cannot be separated from the context of orientalism. The initial purpose of compiling this index is not entirely the same as the purpose of classical hadith scholars. In the Islamic tradition, *takhrij* is carried out to trace the source of hadith, assess the quality of the sanad, compare the matan, and determine the position of the hadith as the basis of teaching. Meanwhile, in the orientalist tradition, the index of hadith is often used for the purposes of historical,

<sup>37</sup> Hasyim, M. S.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., Hasyim M.S

<sup>39</sup> M. Muzakky, A. H., & Mundzir, "Various Methods of Takhrij Hadith: From the Traditional to Digital Era," *Journal of Nusantara Hadith Studies* 4, no. 1 (2022).

<sup>40</sup> Muzakky, A. H., & Mundzir.



philological, and comparative religious studies. In other words, the same device can be used for different epistemological purposes.

Wensinck's contribution remains important because his work opens up a more systematic access to hadith literature. *Miftāḥ Kunūz al-Sunnah* helps in searching for hadith based on theme, while *al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras* helps search for hadith based on pronunciation.<sup>41</sup> Both became very useful tools, especially before the advent of digital tools such as al-Maktabah al-Shāmilah, Jawāmi' al-Kalim, the Encyclopedia of Hadith, and other online hadith databases.<sup>42</sup> Even in the digital age, Wensinck's works still have historical and methodological value because they show how hadith indexation is done manually, systematically, and cross-source.

However, these works also have limitations. First, the index only shows the location of the hadith, but does not provide a final assessment of the quality of the sanad or the validity of the matan. Second, users still have to return to the source book to read the full context of the hadith. Third, in some cases, the reference system of a page, book, chapter, or hadith number may differ between one printed edition and another. Fourth, since the work was born out of the tradition of orientalism, Muslim users need to use it as a technical tool, not as a final authority in the assessment of the hadith.

Thus, the idea of compiling a hadith index by A.J. Wensinck can be considered as a major contribution to the history of modern hadith studies. Although Wensinck's theoretical thinking on the authenticity of hadith was often criticized by Muslim scholars, his bibliographic work was nonetheless recognized for its usefulness. The proper academic attitude is to distinguish between Wensinck as an orientalist thinker who had critical assumptions about hadith and Wensinck as the compiler of index instruments that helped track hadith. In the first aspect, his thinking needs to be read critically; In the second aspect, his contribution can be appreciated as part of the development of hadith research methodology.

### **Indexing System, Reference Codes, and Examples of the Use of A.J. Wensinck's Hadith Works**

In the preparation of *Miftāḥ Kunūz al-Sunnah*, A.J. Wensinck used a thematic index system. This book is not arranged according to the order of the sanad, the name of the narrator's companion, or the order of a particular hadith book, but based on the meaning, theme, scientific question, and important figures in the history of Islam.<sup>43</sup> Each main theme is described into more detailed subthemes, then arranged alphabetically based on hijaiyah letters. With this model, a researcher can search for hadith or history based on a specific topic, even if he does not know the complete redaction of the hadith he is looking for.

The method of drafting *Miftāḥ Kunūz al-Sunnah* shows that Wensinck sought to present a practical takhrij aid. He collected various histories relating to one issue

<sup>41</sup> ; A.A.N. Arifah, M. Muhid, "The Contribution of the Book of Al-Mu'jam Al-Mufahras by Arent Jan Wensinck to the Science of Takhrijul Hadith."

<sup>42</sup> Hasyim, M. S., "A Study of the Book of Miftah Kunuz al-Sunnah and Its Contribution to the Science of Takhrij Al-Hadith."

<sup>43</sup> Hasyim, M. S.



from a number of hadith books and early Islamic historical literature.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, this book not only helps the search for legal hadith or worship, but also histories related to the biography of figures, social history, adab, zuhud, wars, and the development of the early Muslim community. In this context, *Miftāḥ Kunūz al-Sunnah* can be referred to as a cross-source thematic index.

To facilitate the classification of references, Wensinck uses a number of short codes with Arabic letters. The code serves as a marker for the source book, a section of the book, a chapter, a juz, or a page. For example, the code خ is used for *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, م for *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, د for *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, ت for *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, ن for *Sunan al-Nasā'ī*, ج for *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, م for *Sunan al-Dārimī*, ط or ما for *al-Muwatta' Mālik*, ح for *Musnad Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*, ز for *Musnad Zayd ibn 'Alī*, ع for *Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd*, ط for *Musnad Abī Dāwūd al-Ṭayālīsī*, ه for *Sīrah Ibn Hishām*, and ق for *Maghāzī al-Wāqidi*. In addition, there are also technical codes such as ك for *kitāb*, ب for *bāb*, ج for *juz*, ف for sections, and ص for pages.<sup>45</sup>

An example of the use of such a system can be seen in the entry on Abū al-Dardā'. In this entry, Wensinck groups information about the life, scholarship, and zuhudan of Abū al-Dardā' into several subthemes.<sup>46</sup> For example, the description of his life is referred to *Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd*, juz 2, part 2, pages 112–114.<sup>47</sup> The information about his knowledge is also referred to *Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd*, juz 2, part 2, page 111,<sup>48</sup> as well as other sources such as *Musnad Aḥmad*. Meanwhile, the information about his zuhud is referred to *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, book 34, chapter 64,<sup>49</sup> and *Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd*, juz 2, part 1, page 61.<sup>50</sup> This example shows that *Miftāḥ Kunūz al-Sunnah* serves not only to trace the hadith textually, but also to find thematic information about a particular figure in various classical sources.

Another example is found in the entry of al-Ajir or worker/laborer. In this entry, Wensinck collects histories relating to the obligation to pay workers' wages and the prohibition of mistreating the employed. His references point to *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, book 34, chapter 10; *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, book 16, chapter 4; *Musnad Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*, vol. 2 page 358 and vol. 3 pages 59, 68, and 71. In different editorials, the theme is also referred to *Sunan al-Nasā'ī*, book 35, chapter 4, and *Musnad Zayd ibn 'Alī*. This example shows how a socio-economic issue can be traced through several hadith books at once.

The code system in *Miftāḥ Kunūz al-Sunnah* does seem difficult to the unfamiliar reader. However, these difficulties are mainly technical. After the user understands the list of abbreviations and reference patterns used, this book actually becomes an efficient tool. Its advantage lies in the ability to connect a single theme

<sup>44</sup> Hasyim, M. S.

<sup>45</sup> A.J. Wensinck, *Miftāḥ Kunūz Al-Sunnah. Terj. Muḥammad Fu'ād 'Abd Al-Bāqī* (Kairo: Mathba' al-Misr, 1985).

<sup>46</sup> A.J. Wensinck.

<sup>47</sup> Muḥammad ibn Sa'd ibn Manī' al-Baṣrī al-Baghdādī, *Al-Ṭabaqāt Al-Kubrā* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1990).

<sup>48</sup> Muḥammad ibn Sa'd ibn Manī' al-Baṣrī al-Baghdādī.

<sup>49</sup> Muḥammad bin Isa at-Tirmidhi, *Sunan Tirmidhi* (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, 1985).

<sup>50</sup> Muḥammad ibn Sa'd ibn Manī' al-Baṣrī al-Baghdādī, *Al-Ṭabaqāt Al-Kubrā*.



with multiple sources in a concise manner. However, users still have to return to the source book to read the hadith in full, check the sanad, compare the variations of matan, and assess the quality of the history.

Different from *Miftāḥ Kunūz al-Sunnah*, Wensinck's work entitled *al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras li Alfāz al-Ḥ adīth al-Nabawī* uses the pronunciation index method.<sup>51</sup> The idea of compiling this work first appeared in 1916, when Wensinck realized that there was great difficulty in tracing the hadith scattered in various source books.<sup>52</sup> Hadith scholars, especially in Western academic settings, need tools that allow them to find hadith based on specific words in the mata. On the basis of this need, Wensinck designed a *hadith concordance*, which is a word index that shows the location of the appearance of certain words in the main hadith books.<sup>53</sup>

*Al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras* can be seen as one of the great achievements in the history of modern hadith scholarship. This work indexes hadith from nine main sources, namely *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, *Sunan al-Nasā'ī*, *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, *Sunan al-Dārimī*, *al-Muwatta' Mālik*, and *Musnad Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*. This coverage makes it an important tool for researchers who want to find the location of hadith based on specific utterances, especially before the development of digital hadith databases.

In *al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras*, Wensinck also uses a short code to indicate the source book. For example, خ refers to *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, م to *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, د to *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, ت to *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, ن to *Sunan al-Nasā'ī*, ج to *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, ي to *Sunan al-Dārimī*, ط to *al-Muwatta'*, and ح to *Musnad Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*. After the book code, the name of the book or chapter, chapter number, volume, or page is usually displayed according to the reference system of each source.<sup>54</sup>

An example of an entry under the **أدب pronunciation** shows how *al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras* works. When a hadith contains a word or a derivative of the word **from أدب the root**, this index shows the location of the narration in several books. For example, the redacted narration "لو أن رجلا أدب بعض رعيته" is referred to *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, the book of diyāt, chapter 15, and *Musnad Aḥmad*, juz 1, page 41. Other narrations such as "من عال ثلاث بنات فأدبهن وزوجهن" are referred to *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, the book of adab, chapter 131, and are also found in other sources such as *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, *Sunan al-Nasā'ī*, and *Musnad Aḥmad*.<sup>55</sup> Thus, a single keyword can open access to various variants of history spread across many books.

The fundamental difference between *Miftāḥ Kunūz al-Sunnah* and *al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras* lies in the entrance of his search. *Miftāḥ Kunūz al-Sunnah* is used when researchers know the theme of the hadith, but do not yet know the pronunciation.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Setiadi, "Arent Jan Wensinck's Contribution to the Science of Takhrij Hadith."

<sup>52</sup> ; A.A.N. Arifah, M. Muhid, "The Contribution of the Book of Al-Mu'jam Al-Mufahras by Arent Jan Wensinck to the Science of Takhrijul Hadith."

<sup>53</sup> ; A.A.N. Arifah, M. Muhid.

<sup>54</sup> A.J. Wensinck, *Al-Mu'jam Al-Mufahras Li Alfazh Al-Hadits an-Nabawi* (Leiden: J. Brill, 1976).

<sup>55</sup> A.J. Wensinck.

<sup>56</sup> Hasyim, M. S., "A Study of the Book of Miftah Kunuz al-Sunnah and Its Contribution to the Science of Takhrij Al-Hadith."



On the other hand, *al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras* is used when the researcher knows one of the utterances in the hadith, but does not know the location of the hadith in the source book. Therefore, these two works complement each other. The first is thematic, while the second is lexical.

Methodologically, Wensinck's two works make important contributions to the development of hadith takhrij. Both make it easier to search for hadith across books, speed up the search for references, and help researchers compare histories that have similar themes or pronunciations.<sup>57</sup> However, both cannot replace the work of hadith criticism in its entirety. The index only shows the place where the hadith was found, while the assessment of the quality of the sanad, the validity of the matan, the context of the narration, and the legal position of the hadith must still be carried out through the method of hadith science.

Thus, Wensinck's indexation system needs to be understood as a very important technical-bibliographic contribution, even though it cannot be separated from the background of orientalism that gave birth to it. In the Western academic tradition, this index aids historical and philological research into early Islam. In the Muslim tradition, this index can be used as a tool for takhrij. Such differences in interests do not reduce its practical value, but require users to be critical. Wensinck's work can be appreciated as an instrument of hadith tracking, while his theoretical conclusions about hadith must still be tested through an established methodology of hadith science.

### Critical Analysis of A.J. Wensinck's Thought

A.J. Wensinck's thoughts on hadith need to be analyzed proportionately. He cannot be placed solely as an orientalist who rejects hadith, but also cannot be fully accepted as a neutral authority in Islamic studies.<sup>58</sup> Wensinck's position is more accurately understood as an early 20th-century Western scholar working in the traditions of Semitic philology, the history of religions, and historical criticism. This framework makes him read the hadith not only as a normative source for Muslims, but as a historical document that records the development of Islamic ideas, laws, and dogmas in the early days.<sup>59</sup>

Methodologically, the main problem in Wensinck's thought lies in the basic assumptions he used. He tends to view hadith as the result of the development of the early generation of Muslim communities, rather than as a transmission that is firmly rooted in the Prophet Muhammad (saw). In some of his writings, hadith is understood as a historical mirror of Muslim thought in the first century of the Hijri.<sup>60</sup> This view shows the skeptical tendencies typical of classical orientalism. Hadith is not first read through the internal mechanisms of hadith science, such as sanad criticism, narrator criticism, 'illah studies, syādh, and comparison of narration paths, but is read through historical criticism and comparative religion.

<sup>57</sup> Hasyim, M. S.

<sup>58</sup> A.Y.M. Noor, A.M. Mokhtar, "Methodology of Arent Jan Wensinck towards Prophetic Tradition: An Analysis."

<sup>59</sup> A.Y.M. Noor, A.M. Mokhtar.

<sup>60</sup> E. W Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).



Criticism of Wensinck can also be directed at the use of his sources and reading models. Some studies suggest that Wensinck often worked through translated sources and through Western academic categories. If this is true, then his reading of Islam undergoes a double mediation: the mediation of language and the mediation of the conceptual framework.<sup>61</sup> In text studies, the use of translated sources is not automatically incorrect. However, if the texts under study are hadiths, the Qur'an, and Islamic theological literature, then reliance on translation can cause serious problems. The semantic nuances of Arabic, the context of narration, the technical terms of hadith, and the argumentation structure of classical scholars can change when they are moved into Western languages and categories.<sup>62</sup>

At the substantive level, Wensinck's view that some hadith is derived from Jewish, Christian, Hellenistic, and Roman teachings also needs to be critically examined. In the study of religion, the similarities between Islam and previous traditions can indeed be studied. However, resemblance does not necessarily mean loan, adoption, or counterfeiting. Similarities in themes can occur due to several factors, such as the same Semitic environment, the continuity of prophetic traditions, the symbolic structure of the revelation religions, or the social interaction between the Muslim community and the Ahl al-Kitab. Therefore, Wensinck's argument becomes problematic when the resemblance is directly understood as proof that the matan hadith does not come from the Prophet.

From the perspective of hadith science, matan hadith cannot be judged only through comparison with other religious traditions. Hadith must be examined through a combination of sanad criticism and matan criticism. Sanad serves to assess the continuity of transmission, the credibility of the narrator, and the possibility of hidden defects. Matan is examined through its conformity with the Qur'an, stronger hadith, definite historical facts, Arabic rules, sharia principles, and common sense. Thus, Wensinck's criticism has value as a historical-comparative reading, but it is not enough to determine the authenticity of the hadith in a final way.

M.M. al-A'zami is among the modern Muslim scholars who have been unequivocally critical of the orientalist approach to hadith. According to al-A'zami, many orientalists are too quick to conclude that hadith is a product of recent generations because they ignore the tradition of transmission, memorization, writing, and collective practice of Muslims from the earliest times.<sup>63</sup> This criticism is particularly relevant to reading Wensinck. For example, when Wensinck doubts the hadith on the creed and the five pillars of Islam, al-A'zami considers the conclusion weak because it does not consider the evidence of early religious practices, such as the azan, tasyahud, congregational prayers, and the teaching of faith to the companions.

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<sup>61</sup> Said.

<sup>62</sup> A.Y.M. Noor, A.M. Mokhtar, "Methodology of Arent Jan Wensinck towards Prophetic Tradition: An Analysis."

<sup>63</sup> M.M. al-Azami, *Studies in Early Ḥadīth Literature: With a Critical Edition of Some Early Texts*.



Similar criticism can also be extended through the approach of Nabia Abbott and Harald Motzki. Abbott points out that the tradition of writing in early Islam cannot be reduced to a completely backward activity.<sup>64</sup> Motzki then developed a more cautious approach through isnād-cum-matn analysis.<sup>65</sup> Unlike the early skeptical orientalists, Motzki did not reject hadith in general, but examined the relationship between transmission pathways and variation in the eyes in order to estimate the historical layers of a history.<sup>66</sup> This approach provided an important correction to Wensinck. If Wensinck is more concerned with the comparison of the content of the hadith with the traditions outside of Islam, then Motzki shows that the study of modern hadith needs to examine the network of narration and the development of the editorial at the same time.

Edward Said's analysis of orientalism can help explain the political side. Said points out that Western knowledge of the East is often related to colonial power, representation, and interests.<sup>67</sup> This framework can be used to read how Western Islamic studies, including hadith studies, develop in certain political and academic environments. However, Said's approach should also not be used in its entirety to reject all Western scholarly results. In Wensinck's case, a fairer approach would have been to distinguish between his problematic theoretical assumptions and his useful technical contributions to the study of hadith.

However, among Muslim scholars, Wensinck is often seen as controversial. The controversy was not primarily caused by his index work, but by his theoretical conclusions about the origins of hadith, Islamic beliefs, creed, and the relationship between Islam and Judeo-Christianity. Some Muslim scholars consider that Wensinck overly reduces the hadith as a product of the history of the Muslim community and does not give place to the prophetic authority, revelation, and transmission methods developed by hadith scholars. This criticism can be found in the works of M.M. al-A'zami, Mustafa al-Siba'i, and contemporary Muslim studies that reject orientalist generalizations of hadith.

Sokhi Huda also criticized Wensinck's thinking about the source and development of the Muslim faith. According to Huda, Wensinck read the Islamic creed through Christian historical terms and experiences, especially the concept of creed and the development of dogma. As a result, Wensinck tends to judge the Qur'an and hadith by the standards of Christian theology development. This criticism is important because it shows that Wensinck's problem is not only in his conclusions, but also in the categories of analysis he uses. When Islam is read

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<sup>64</sup> Nubia Abbot, *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri II: Qur'anic Commentary and Tradition* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1967).

<sup>65</sup> Umi Sumbulah and Zarwaki, "Isnad cum matan Analysis as a Method of Authentication of the Hadith of the Prophet: Analysis of Harald Motzki's Hadith Thought."

<sup>66</sup> Said, *Orientalism*.

<sup>67</sup> Said.



through the model of Christian dogma, the uniqueness of the structure of the Islamic faith can be reduced.<sup>68</sup>

From the entire analysis, Wensinck's thought can be formulated in four main conclusions. First, Wensinck is an important figure in the history of Western hadith studies because he succeeded in compiling an index device that is very helpful in tracking hadith. Second, his method of historical-comparative criticism expands the space for the study of hadith, but it also carries a bias because it overemphasizes the influence of Judaism, Christianity, and the Semitic tradition on Islam. Third, its main weakness lies in the lack of attention to the internal epistemology of hadith, especially the criticism of sanad and the mechanism of transmission. Fourth, the response to Wensinck should not be purely apologetic or total rejection, but in the form of a critical reading capable of distinguishing between his scientific contributions, orientalist biases, and methodological limitations.

Thus, A.J. Wensinck's position in the study of hadith is ambivalent. He was an orientalist whose conclusions were often problematic for Muslim scholars, but he was also the compiler of scientific instruments that were of great benefit to the study of hadith. The right academic attitude is to use his index work as an aid, but not to make his historical assumptions the final measure in assessing the authenticity of the Prophet's hadith. In the context of contemporary hadith studies, Wensinck's thought needs to be placed as part of the history of hadith orientalism which is important to be studied, criticized, and transcended through a more balanced approach, namely an approach that combines philology, history, sanad criticism, matan criticism, and awareness of the Islamic epistemological context.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows that A.J. Wensinck occupies an important and ambivalent position in the history of Western hadith studies. Through Semitic philological approaches, the history of religions, and historical criticism, Wensinck reads the hadith as a historical document that records the development of early Islamic thought, law, and beliefs. However, his views are often criticized for overemphasizing the influence of Judaism, Christianity, Hellenistic, and Semitic traditions on Islam, and for paying little attention to the internal epistemology of hadith, especially sanad criticism, matan criticism, and narration authority.

On the other hand, Wensinck's contribution to the compilation of the hadith index cannot be ignored. Works such as *A Handbook of Early Muhammadan Tradition*, *Miftāḥ Kunūz al-Sunnah*, and *al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras li Alfāz al-Ḥ adīth al-Nabawī* have made great contributions to the development of takhrij and the tracking of hadith based on themes and pronunciations.

Thus, Wensinck needs to be read proportionately: his bibliographic contributions can be utilized in hadith research, while his historical and orientalist assumptions need to be critiqued methodologically. This article concludes that

<sup>68</sup> S Huda, “). Studi Kritis Atas Pemikiran Wensinck Tentang Sumber Dan Perkembangan Akidah Muslim,” *Akademika* 17, no. 2 (2006): 249–68.



Wensinck's intellectual legacy is twofold: productive in the aspect of hadith indexation, but problematic in the epistemological aspect. Therefore, the study of Wensinck is important to strengthen a critical, selective, and balanced academic attitude in reading orientalist works on hadith and Islam.

### Author's Contributions and Responsibilities

All authors made significant contributions to the design, drafting, analysis, and completion of this study. All authors are responsible for data analysis, interpretation of findings, and discussion of research results. All authors have read, reviewed, and approved the final version of this manuscript for publication.

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The authors acknowledge the use of ChatGPT (OpenAI) to help with language refinement, sentence structure improvement, and grammar correction during the scriptwriting process. All intellectual content, analysis, interpretation, arguments, and conclusions in this article are fully developed, reviewed, and approved by the authors. AI assistance is used under human supervision and does not replace scientific reasoning, academic responsibility, or authorship. No confidential data, personal data, or copyrighted material that does not have permission is shared with AI tools.

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