

Darekutni
040066



01 Temmuz 2021

MADDE YAYIMLANDIKTAN
SONRA GELEN DOKÜMAN

Al-Dāraqūṭnī's (d. 385 AH) *Faḍā'il al-Ṣaḥāba*: Mild anger and the history of emotions in religious merits literature

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Abstract

This essay analyses the sole extant chapter of a fourth/tenth-century *Faḍā'il al-Ṣaḥāba* work by the *ḥadīth* critic and scholar Al-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn 'Umar ibn Aḥmad Ibn Mahdī ibn Mas'ūd al-Dāraqūṭnī (d. 385/995). As scholars have noted, *faḍā'il* literature beyond the chapters on religious merits of the Companions in the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* is among a number of sub-genres of tradition-based literature (alongside, for example, *targhīb wa tarhīb*), which tends largely to be comprised of weak, non-canonical *ḥadīth*. This has generally been interpreted as evidence of the acceptability of “lower standards” for the inclusion of *ḥadīth* in exhortatory or edifying literature (lower when compared to standards for the authentication of *ḥadīth* in relation to law). This conceptualization both centres law as the dominant lens through which to view the reception of *ḥadīth* in general, and contributes to the marginalization of *faḍā'il* literature as merely folkloric. Using a history of emotions perspective to elucidate the nature and mechanisms of edification and pious instruction in *faḍā'il* texts, this essay argues that far from being marginal, *faḍā'il* works were central to the formation of emotional communities and to the construction of pious subjects in the Būyid period. Al-Dāraqūṭnī's fragmentary text reflects how a well-known and highly respected fourth-century *ḥadīth* scholar capitalized on the emotional resonances and sectarian ambiguities made available by the abundance of non-legal and non-prophetic *ḥadīth* generated during the second and third centuries AH.

Keywords: Emotion, Religious merits/*Faḍā'il*, *Ḥadīth*, Genre, Sectarianism

This article examines a brief fragmentary text entitled *Faḍā'il al-ṣaḥāba wa-manāqibuhum wa-qawl ba'dihim fī ba'd* (The Merits of the Companions and their Virtuous Deeds, and the Sayings of Some of them about One Another) compiled by the famous Sunni *ḥadīth* critic al-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn 'Umar ibn Aḥmad ibn Mahdī ibn Mas'ūd al-Dāraqūṭnī (d. 385/995).¹ A Būyid-era scholar, al-Dāraqūṭnī was best known for his scholarship on the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim. This brief portion of his *Faḍā'il* – an otherwise lost

¹ Al-Dāraqūṭnī, *Faḍā'il al-ṣaḥāba wa-manāqibuhum wa-qawl ba'dihim fī ba'd*, ed. Muḥammad ibn Khalīfa al-Rabbāh (Medina: Maktabat al-Ghurabā' al-Athariyya, 1998), hereafter referred to as the *Faḍā'il*.