An Interdisciplinary Approach to Explaining Plant-Related Gharīb Expressions in Hadith: An Analysis of Al-Wars Based on Classical Turāth and Contemporary Sources

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ABSTRACT

The interpretation of *gharīb* (archaic words) in Hadith is an important aspect of understanding the meanings and contexts of Prophetic traditions. However, explaining *gharīb* terms related to plants presents several challenges, particularly in accurately identifying plant species, addressing variations in lexical meanings, and reconciling information from classical Islamic sources (*turāth*) with contemporary research. This study aims to analyse an interdisciplinary approach to explaining *gharīb* terms related to plants in Hadith, focusing specifically on the term *al-wars*. This qualitative study employs content analysis of Hadith texts, classical *gharīb al-hadith* literature, Hadith commentaries, and Arabic lexicons. Hadith data were collected through *al-Maktabah al-Shamilah* version 4.0 by examining the term *al-wars* and its linguistic variations across the *Kutub al-Tis'ah*. Subsequently, information from classical sources was compared with contemporary studies on plants to evaluate the accuracy of explanations concerning the term. The findings indicate that *al-wars* appears in various contexts in Hadith, including its use as a dye, a cosmetic substance, and an ingredient in traditional medicinal practices. An examination of classical sources also highlights the importance of linguistic, historical, and ethnobotanical perspectives in explaining the meaning of this term. This study demonstrates that an interdisciplinary approach integrating classical Islamic scholarship with contemporary knowledge can strengthen the accuracy of interpreting *gharīb* terms related to plants and provide a more comprehensive understanding of Hadith texts.

Keywords: *Gharīb* al-Hadith, *al-Wars*, classical Islamic sources, interdisciplinary approach, *al-Kutub al-Tis'ah*.

INTRODUCTION

Prophetic Hadith constitutes the primary source of Islamic teachings after the Qur'an. Its content encompasses various aspects of human life and contains a wide range of vocabulary that may be difficult for readers to understand, particularly expressions that became uncommon in Arabic usage after the time of the Prophet Muhammad and his Companions (Ibn Ṣalāḥ, 1986; Ibn al-Athīr, n.d.). This field of study is known as *gharīb al-ḥadīth*, which concerns the understanding and interpretation of Hadith expressions rather than the structure or technical aspects of their chains of transmission (Abū Zahrah, 1984). From as early as the second century AH, Muslim scholars devoted considerable attention to examining the language of Hadith and explaining expressions whose meanings were unclear through works on *gharīb al-ḥadīth*, hadith commentaries and Arabic dictionaries. This scholarly endeavour arose from the difficulties encountered by Muslims in understanding the vocabulary used in Prophetic Hadith.

The term *gharīb* does not merely refer to linguistically unfamiliar words. It may also encompass expressions that are rarely used, carry specific meanings in particular contexts, or require further clarification based on their usage in Arabic language and literature (Ibn al-Athīr, n.d.). Hadith scholars have identified several factors contributing to the occurrence of *gharīb* expressions, particularly the literary characteristics of classical Arabic (*fuṣḥā*), linguistic assimilation between Arabs and non-Arab communities, and variations in Hadith transmission. Classical Arabic expressions in Hadith often possess sophisticated literary qualities and profound meanings, to the extent that certain words may not have been readily understood even by the Arabs themselves. This is particularly true of expressions that were rarely used or unfamiliar to certain Arab tribes before they were articulated by the Prophet (al-Munāwī, 1356 AH).

The Arabic language continued to evolve over time, resulting in differences between the vocabulary commonly used during the Prophet's lifetime and that employed during the period when Hadith literature began to be compiled, particularly around the second century AH. This development coincided with the expansion of the Islamic state and the conquest of territories beyond the Arabian Peninsula, which led to the conversion of numerous non-Arab communities to Islam (Ibn al-Athīr, n.d.). Consequently, subsequent generations no longer spoke precisely the same form of Arabic used during the Prophet's time, as the language had undergone considerable influence from foreign languages. Their everyday communication increasingly relied on commonly used expressions (Muḥammad Abū Layth, 2003). Communities such as the Persians, Romans and Abyssinians embraced Islam and learned Arabic. Communication among these diverse communities contributed to linguistic assimilation, introducing foreign linguistic elements into the Arabic language (Ibn al-Athīr, n.d.).

By the generation of the Tābiʿīn, Arabic speech and usage had undergone further changes as a result of linguistic and cultural interactions. Consequently, the number of expressions that were difficult for Arabic-speaking communities to understand continued to increase. Both Arab and non-Arab Muslims encountered difficulties in comprehending certain Prophetic Hadith, particularly expressions that were known only to a limited number of Arab communities (Abū Zahrah, 1984). This situation raised concerns about the ability of Muslims to understand the meanings of Hadith accurately. In response, Muslim scholars, particularly specialists in Hadith and Arabic linguistics, began producing scholarly works to explain unfamiliar expressions found in Hadith texts (Ibn Qutaybah, 1977 &ʿAjjāj al-Khaṭīb, 2001).

With divine guidance, Muslim scholars from the generations following the Tābiʿūn, particularly in the early second century AH, including Mālik ibn Anas, Sufyān al-Thawrī and Shuʿbah ibn al-Ḥajjāj, began discussing the occurrence of unfamiliar expressions in Hadith. However, their discussions had not yet been systematically compiled into dedicated works (al-Ḥākim, 1990). An examination of the development of Hadith commentary reveals that scholars did not rely on a single category of reference material. Instead, they consulted various classical Arabic sources, including Arabic lexicons, linguistic authorities, works on *gharīb al-ḥadīth*, and classical Arabic medical and botanical literature (Ibn Ḥajar, 1379 AH). In this context, contemporary sources may serve as supplementary references for clarifying particular aspects of Hadith expressions, especially plant-related terminology associated with scientific plant names, medicinal substances and historical knowledge that requires interdisciplinary investigation (Khalid, 2022).

Interdisciplinary Approaches to Hadith Commentary among Hadith Scholars

Contemporary sources represent an important supplementary approach to explaining plant-related *gharīb* expressions in Hadith, particularly the term *al-wars*. Classical and contemporary Western sources have also been consulted by Muslim scholars, including Hadith specialists, when explaining the characteristics and background of plants mentioned in Prophetic Hadith. For instance, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah and Muslim medical scholars such as al-Rāzī consulted Greek medical literature to explain the background, traditional and contemporary uses, medicinal properties and other characteristics of medicinal plants mentioned in Prophetic Hadith (Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, 1994; al-Rāzī, 2002; Ibn Sīnā, 1999).

Ibn Qayyim, a prominent Muslim scholar who made significant contributions to Prophetic medicine, addressed this subject in his work *Zād al-Maʿād fī Hady Khayr al-ʿIbād*. This work documents the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH) across various aspects of his life, including medical practices. Its methodology is based on examining medical knowledge through textual evidence while incorporating several disciplines, including Hadith studies, linguistics and Greek medicine (Nurazmallail, 2014). The work constitutes an important scholarly discussion of Ibn Qayyim's epistemological understanding of Prophetic medicine and its relationship with earlier medical traditions, particularly Greek medicine (Nurazmallail, 2012). This interdisciplinary approach can be observed in his reference to the opinion of Galen, a Greek physician from Rome, when explaining the medicinal properties of *qusṭ*, a type of medicinal herb mentioned in Hadith and traditionally used to treat tonsillitis and pleurisy. He also acknowledged medical information provided by Christian physicians and non-Muslim communities, recognising that such knowledge could be beneficial and worthy of consideration when medicinal plants were capable of treating diseases (Ibn Qayyim, n.d.).

This approach was not exclusive to Ibn Qayyim. Other Hadith scholars, including al-Nawawī, Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, al-Munāwī, al-ʿIrāqī, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Mubārakfūrī and ʿUbayd Allāh al-Raḥmānī al-Mubārakfūrī, also referred to the works of Greek medical specialists when explaining the functions and medicinal properties of plants mentioned in Hadith. Western medical sources were also consulted to explain the treatment of fever using water, as discussed in Prophetic Hadith (al-Nawawī, 1392 AH; al-ʿIrāqī, n.d.; Ibn Ḥajar, 1379 AH; al-Qārī, 2002; al-Mubārakfūrī, n.d.).

Among contemporary Muslim scholars, Dr Zaghlūl al-Najjār has made significant contributions to scientific studies of the Qur'an and Hadith by examining their content through scientific perspectives. His approach incorporates scientific evidence to facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of Prophetic Hadith. His works, *al-Iʿjāz al-ʿIlmī fī al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah* and *Treasures in the Sunnah: A Scientific Approach*, draw upon various sources to explain Hadith expressions concerning plants, fruits, human organs, human genetics, food and other subjects. These discussions aim to enhance Muslim understanding of the teachings contained in Prophetic Hadith. Among the contemporary sources consulted are studies conducted by Muslim and Western physicians, classical Greek scholars, medical specialists from Eastern countries such as Japan, and various other contemporary scientific references (Zaghlūl al-Najjār, 2001).

Accordingly, non-Islamic sources that contribute to explaining and identifying the scientific aspects of a particular subject, particularly those related to Prophetic Hadith, may be used as references provided that the information presented is accurate and supported by reliable evidence. This approach is reflected in the international recognition received by al-Najjār as a Muslim scholar in scientific studies, as well as the use of his works as references among contemporary scientists from both Muslim and Western communities (Sri H. Lestari, 2020).

In this regard, al-Khaṭṭābī, a prominent Hadith scholar of the fourth century AH, explained that Prophetic medicine could be divided into two categories: medicine derived from Prophetic guidance and medical practices originating from Arab and Indian traditions. This indicates that not all medical practices adopted by the Prophet (PBUH) necessarily originated from divine revelation; some were practices appropriate to the medical knowledge and circumstances of his time (Ibn Ḥajar, 1397 AH). This is not surprising, as the Prophet (PBUH) also acknowledged and continued certain forms of knowledge inherited from pre-Islamic Arab traditions when they were beneficial. This argument can be illustrated through a Hadith narrated by ʿĀʾishah (RA), in which the Prophet (PBUH) said:

"O ʿĀʾishah, do you know that Mujazziz al-Mudlijī entered my presence and saw Usāmah ibn Zayd and Zayd while their heads were covered with a piece of cloth and their feet were visible? He then remarked, 'These feet belong to one another.'" (al-Bukhārī, 2008).

According to this narration, the Prophet (PBUH) expressed great happiness following the encounter with Mujazziz, a renowned expert in identifying physical resemblance and lineage among the Banū Asad and the wider Arab community. Mujazziz met the Prophet (PBUH) and observed Zayd ibn Ḥārithah (RA) and his son, Usāmah (RA). During the pre-Islamic period, Usāmah's lineage had been questioned because he had dark skin, whereas his father had fair skin. However, after Mujazziz observed that the two individuals had similar feet despite their different skin colours, he confirmed their physical resemblance. The Prophet (PBUH) was greatly pleased because this observation was sufficient to refute the accusations made against them (Ibn Ḥajar, 1397 AH).

Muslim scholars have expressed different opinions regarding *al-qiyāfah*, the traditional Arab practice of identifying physical resemblance and lineage. According to al-Shāfiʿī, this Hadith clearly demonstrates that the Prophet (PBUH) accepted Mujazziz's observation, as evidenced by his reported happiness. Consequently, scholars maintained that such expertise could be accepted on the basis of a single reliable observation, provided that the individual possessed integrity and that the identification was accurate (al-Nawawī, 1392 AH). This demonstrates that knowledge originating from pre-Islamic Arab traditions and human expertise could be accepted by the Prophet (PBUH), provided that it did not contradict Islamic teachings and the principles of the Sharīʿah.

Therefore, it can be understood that Hadith scholars have adopted interdisciplinary approaches when explaining information about medicinal plants, particularly their properties and benefits, by referring to Western and other non-Islamic sources. Such information may be considered relevant when it contributes to explaining plant-related expressions in Hadith, particularly those concerning herbs used in Arab society, provided that the information does not contradict Islamic principles.

Research Problem Statement

Prophetic Hadith contains numerous terms relating to diseases, plants, food, animals, medicinal substances, therapeutic methods and human physical conditions. Explaining these expressions requires more than merely referring to their linguistic meanings. It also requires further examination through relevant sources, as references that provide only the basic meanings of Hadith expressions may not adequately explain their intended meanings and contexts (Ahmad Akram, 2022). With regard to plant names in particular, various interpretations of plant-related *gharīb* expressions in Hadith have resulted in considerable inconsistencies. For example, a single *gharīb* expression may be interpreted using several different plant names or merely transliterated without further identification. In other instances, two distinct *gharīb* expressions appearing in different narrations may be interpreted as referring to the same plant species. These inconsistencies are further compounded by the fact that many Muslims today are unfamiliar with the importance of *gharīb al-ḥadīth* and do not consult authoritative classical references when attempting to understand Hadith. Some individuals even interpret Hadith arbitrarily without referring to reliable scholarly sources, potentially resulting in misunderstandings of the actual meanings and contexts of Prophetic Hadith (Siti Aisyah Yusof, 2011).

Nahed Mourad Waly, a contemporary researcher in biology, demonstrated that the medicinal plant referred to as *qust* in Hadith has been associated with two different binomial nomenclatures, resulting in substantial inconsistencies concerning its background and scientific classification. According to the findings of her analysis, the misidentification of this medicinal plant occurred because Arab communities used the same name, *qust*, to refer to several different types of herbs. Consequently, the plant was associated with various local names and inaccurately matched with binomial nomenclature. This resulted in scientific information that was inconsistent with the actual functions and uses of the plant among Arab communities, as reflected in the content of the Hadith (Nahed, 2009).

Therefore, contemporary Hadith researchers, in particular, need to adopt interdisciplinary approaches by integrating classical Arabic *turāth* sources with other relevant disciplines that can provide more detailed explanations of the background and characteristics of particular subjects, especially plants mentioned in Hadith. Such an approach is not entirely new in Hadith studies, as numerous classical scholars have incorporated interdisciplinary explanations into their Hadith commentaries, as previously demonstrated. This approach aims to ensure that plant species and other elements mentioned in Hadith are accurately explained to the public, thereby facilitating a more comprehensive understanding of Prophetic traditions.

Research Objectives

This study aims to identify Hadith narrations containing the expression *al-wars* and explain the contexts in which it is used. Second, Analyse the meaning and characteristics of *al-wars* based on lexicographical sources, works on *gharīb al-ḥadīth*, Hadith commentaries, and classical Arabic botanical and medical literature. Third, Examine classical *turāth* information in comparison with contemporary botanical, biogeographical and ethnobotanical data to identify the plant in question.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data collection was conducted using *al-Maktabah al-Shāmilah*, Version 4.0, by searching for the Arabic terms (ورس) ,(الورس) and (ورسا). The search covered Hadith collections included in *al-Kutub al-Tisʿah*, namely *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, *Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, *Sunan al-Nasāʾī*, *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, *Musnad Aḥmad*, *Sunan al-Dārimī* and *al-Muwaṭṭaʾ* of Mālik. Data analysis was conducted by consulting selected Hadith commentaries that explain the relevant narrations, Arabic lexicons and works on *gharīb al-ḥadīth*. Information obtained from these sources was compiled and analysed. In this article, such materials are categorised as classical

turāth sources. Meanwhile, information obtained from more recent publications is categorised as contemporary sources, which serve to supplement and strengthen the findings derived from classical literature. The contemporary sources selected for this study were identified through an examination of scholarly research, including theses and dissertations, particularly studies concerning plants mentioned in Hadith.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The first study is entitled *Gharīb al-Alfāẓ fī al-Tarjamah al-Injilīziyyah fī Kitāb al-Libās fī Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī: Muḥammad Khān Unmūdhajan* (Thuraya, 2018). This study discusses the concept of *gharīb al-ḥadīth*, the early development of its written literature, and the importance of establishing specific standards for translating Hadith texts, particularly those containing *gharīb* expressions. It employs a comparative analysis of the original Arabic meanings and their English translations, focusing on clothing and textile-related expressions such as *al-burnus*, *al-qassī*, *al-istabraq* and *al-dībāj*. However, the study does not provide a detailed examination of classical *turāth* methodologies employed by Hadith scholars to explain plant-related *gharīb* expressions. Similarly, it does not investigate contemporary approaches based on current scientific research.

The second study is entitled *Hubungan Barus di Indonesia dan Timur Tengah Sebelum Islam: Kajian Mengenai Perkataan Kafur dalam Surah al-Insan* (Nurfaizal, 2014). This study analyses the meaning and background of the term *al-kāfūr* by consulting various classical Arabic literary sources, including Arab maritime and trade records, Arabic pharmaceutical and medical works, field research conducted in Barus, and historical evidence from classical foreign-language texts. These sources are used to establish Barus as the place of origin of camphor and to demonstrate its historical trade relations with Middle Eastern countries before the advent of Islam. Nevertheless, the study does not examine the methodology of explaining *gharīb* expressions or comprehensively investigate Hadith texts containing such expressions. This constitutes a significant distinction between the previous study and the present research.

The third study is entitled *Tumbuhan Terpilih Menurut Perspektif Islam dan Sains Kesihatan* (Sumaiyah, 2015). It integrates textual analysis with scientific information from the field of health sciences. The terms examined include *al-kāfūr*, *ʿadas*, *ṭalḥ* and several others. The study identifies the meanings of these *gharīb* expressions by referring to Arabic dictionaries, explanations provided by Qur'anic exegetes and contemporary scientific information obtained from botanical literature. The identification of the binomial nomenclature of each plant is based on morphological characteristics and information from authoritative websites. The study subsequently compares contemporary information with classical *turāth* sources to determine the corresponding scientific nomenclature. However, most of the *gharīb* expressions examined are not specifically related to the plant-based substances investigated in the present study.

Another relevant study is entitled *al-Dalālah al-Siyāqiyyah li Gharīb al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī al-Sharīf fī Shiʿr al-ʿArab* (Zayn al-Dīn ibn Mūsā, 2015). This study discusses unfamiliar expressions found in various Arabic texts, particularly Hadith literature. Its main focus includes the factors contributing to the occurrence of *gharīb* expressions and several approaches to explaining their meanings. Based on the researcher's examination, the article analyses twelve selected *gharīb* expressions, none of which relates to plant-based substances. Furthermore, it does not discuss the methodologies employed by Hadith scholars or contemporary approaches to explaining such expressions, which constitute the main focus of the present study.

Another study, entitled *Alfāẓ Gharīb al-Ḥadīth: Dirāsah Dalāliyyah* (Riḍā Jāsim, 2012), examines the background of *gharīb al-ḥadīth* and analyses several selected expressions, including *al-ḥawārī*, *al-tatyīʿ* and other descriptive terms. These expressions are not related to plant-based substances mentioned in Hadith. The study identifies several methods employed by Hadith scholars in explaining *gharīb* expressions, including the compilation of different narrations, reference to Arabic poetry, consultation of classical Arabic dictionaries and examination of Hadith scholars' explanations. Nevertheless, other approaches, including contemporary scientific methodologies, are not incorporated, despite their relevance to the present research.

Another relevant study is Nahed Mourad Waly's (2009) *Verifying the Scientific Name of Costus [Saussurea lappa ((Decne.) C.B. Clarke)] – Asteraceae*. This study investigates a plant known among Arab communities as *qust*, which is mentioned in Prophetic Hadith as a medicinal herb traditionally used to treat various diseases. It adopts

contemporary scientific methods, including morphological identification and anatomical examination, commonly employed in biological research to identify plant species accurately based on their external characteristics and internal properties. However, the discussion focuses primarily on biological identification methods without incorporating classical Arabic *turāth* sources as the foundation for explaining the meanings of *gharīb* expressions from the perspective of Hadith scholarship. This represents a significant distinction between that study and the present research.

Meanwhile, Shabnam Ansari (2019), in her study entitled *Ethnobotany and Pharmacognosy of Qust/Kut (Saussurea lappa, C.B. Clarke) with Special Reference to Unani Medicine*, focuses on a medicinal herb known as *qust* among Arab communities. The identification of its background is based on Unani medical knowledge, which has a close relationship with traditional Arabic medicine. Consequently, the study presents only one contemporary approach to identifying the background of a particular medicinal herb, whereas the present research incorporates several additional approaches to achieve a more accurate identification of the plant.

Finally, the study entitled *Importance of Some Medicinal Plants in Light of Hadith: A Review* (Uzma Viquar, 2019) examines plant-based substances and introduces them through their applications in Unani and Ayurvedic medical systems. Based on the researcher's examination, the study provides translations of Hadith concerning each medicinal plant without further explanation, as its primary focus is on the functions and uses of these plants within the two medical systems. Therefore, the study concentrates on these approaches without incorporating methodologies based on classical Arabic *turāth* sources or other contemporary references. Furthermore, most of the plants examined, including *al-ḥabbah al-sawdā'*, *al-mann* and *al-miswāk*, have already been widely investigated in contemporary research and are not considered unfamiliar plant names among Muslim communities.

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

The findings indicate that five Hadith narrations contain the expression *al-wars*, each occurring in a different context. The relevant narrations are as follows:

Hadith	Teks Hadith	Sumber
The First Hadith: The Prohibition of Wearing Clothing Dyed with *al-Wars*	Ibn ʿUmar (RA) narrated that a man asked the Prophet (PBUH) about the clothing that a person in the state of *iḥrām* was permitted to wear. The Prophet (PBUH) replied that a person in *iḥrām* should not wear a shirt, turban, trousers, head-covering garment, or clothing dyed with *al-wars* and *al-zaʿfarān*. If sandals were unavailable, leather footwear could be worn after cutting them below the ankles.	al-Bukhārī, [*Kitāb: al-'Ilm, Bāb: Man Ajāba al-Sa'il bi Akthar mimma Sa'alahu*, no. hadith 134]; Muslim, [*Kitāb:al-Ḥajj, Bab: Yubāḥ li muḥrim bi Ḥajj 'aw 'Umrah wa mā lā yubāḥ wa bayān taḥrīm al-Ṭīb 'alayh*, no. hadith 1177]; Abū Dawūd, [*Kitāb: al-Manāsik, Bāb mā yalba al-Muḥrim*, no. hadith 1827]; al-Tirmidhī, [*Abwāb al-Ḥajj, Bāb: mā jā'a fīmā lā yajūz li Muḥrim Labsuh*, no. hadith no. hadith 833; al-Nasā'ī, [*Kitāb: al-Manāsik al-Ḥajj, Bāb: al-Nahy 'an al-Thiyāb al-Maṣbūghah bi al-Wars wa al-Za'farān fī al-Iḥrām*, no. hadith 2667, 2668, Ibn Mājah, [*Kitāb: al-Manāsik, Bāb mā yalb al-Muḥrim min al-Thiyāb*, no. hadith 2929; Mālik, [*Kitāb: al-Ḥaj, Bāb: mā yahnā 'an min Lubs al-Thiyāb fī al-Iḥrām*, no. hadith 1160, Aḥmad, [*Musnad al-Mukhattirīn min al-Ṣaḥābah*, *Musnad 'Abd Allah ibn 'Umar R.A*, no. hadith 4482,

The Second Hadith: The Use of *al-Wars* by Arab Women after Postpartum Bleeding	Umm Salamah (RA) narrated that during the time of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), women experiencing postpartum bleeding observed a waiting period of forty days or forty nights. During this period, they applied *al-wars* to their faces to address dark spots.	Abū Dāwūd, [*Kitāb: al-ṭaharah, Bab: Mā jā'a fī Waqt al-Nufasā'*, no. hadith 311]; al-Tirmidhī, [*Kitāb: al-Ṭahārah, Bab: Mā jā'a fī Kam Tamkuth al-Nufasā'*, no. hadith 139].
The Third Hadith : The Medicinal Properties of *al-Wars* in Treating Pleurisy	Zayd ibn Arqam (RA) narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) mentioned the medicinal benefits of wild olive oil and *al-wars* in treating pleurisy (*dhāt al-janb*).	al-Tirmidhī, [*Kitāb: al-Ṭīb, Bāb: mā jā'a fī Dawā' Dhāt al-Janb*, no. hadith 2079 dan 2080]; Ibn Mājah, [*Kitāb: al-Ṭib, Bāb Dawā' Dhāt al-Janb*, no.hadith 3467]; Aḥmad, [no. hadith 19289].
The Fourth Hadith: The Use of *al-Wars* as a Cleaning Agent for Women's Clothing	ʿĀ'ishah (RA) stated that when a woman washed a bloodstain that remained on her clothing, she should clean it using *al-wars* and *al-zaʿfarān*.	al-Dārimī, [*Kitāb: al-Ṭahārah, Bāb: al-Mar'ah al-Ḥa'iḍ Tuṣalli fī Thawbihā 'indā Ṭahurat*, no. hadith 1051].
The Fifth Hadith: The Prophet's Use of *al-Wars* to Dye His Beard	Ibn ʿUmar (RA) narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) wore *al-sibtiyyah* sandals and dyed his beard yellow using *al-wars* and *al-zaʿfarān*.	Abū Dawūd, [*Kitāb: al-Tarajjul, Bāb: Mā jā'a fī Khiḍāb al-Ṣafrah*, no. hadith 4210; al-Nasā'ī, [*Kitāb al-Zīnah, Bāb Taṣfīr al-Liḥyah bi al-Wars wa al-Zaʿfarān*, no. hadith 5246].

Al-Wars According to Hadith Scholars and Arabic Lexicographers

An examination of classical Arabic literature reveals that the majority of Arabic linguists regarded *al-wars* as a plant that grows in Yemen and is harvested at the beginning of winter. It was traditionally used as a colouring agent and as an ingredient in cosmetic preparations for women's facial care (al-Farāhīdī, n.d.; al-Azharī, 2001; al-Jawharī, 1987; Ibn Fāris, 1979; Ibn Manẓūr, 1994). It was also described as a yellow, fragrant herb widely used by Arab communities as a dye (Ibn al-Athīr, n.d.). Its value as a colouring agent derived from its attractive pigment. During the pre-Islamic period, Arab communities reportedly mixed material obtained from the outer part of its fruit into alcoholic beverages to enhance their taste and produce a pleasant aroma (Ibn Sīdah, 2002).

According to the narration of Umm Salamah (RA), *al-wars* was also used as a facial treatment by women after the completion of postpartum bleeding. Following this period, Arab women commonly applied cosmetic preparations made from the fine hairs found on the outer surface of the fruit of *al-wars*. The preparation was applied to the face to reduce dark spots, while its pleasant fragrance also served as a means of perfuming the body (al-ʿAynī, n.d.). The preparation process involved collecting and separating the fine hairs from the outer surface of mature *al-wars* fruit after they had fallen. The orange-coloured material was then collected and ground into a fine substance before being applied to the facial skin (al-Mughlaṭāy, 1999).

Interestingly, the benefits of *al-wars* extended beyond facial treatment. It was also used to treat skin conditions such as tinea versicolor, itching and other dermatological problems (al-Ḥumayrī). According to the Hadith narrated by Zayd ibn Arqam (RA), *al-wars* was also used as an ingredient in medicinal preparations combined with warm wild olive oil and *al-qusṭ al-baḥrī* to treat pleurisy (Ibn Ḥajar, 1379 AH). Furthermore, its attractive colour and pleasant fragrance made it suitable as a cleaning agent for removing stains and the smell of blood from women's clothing (al-ʿAẓīm Ābādī, 1415 AH). In addition to its use in textile dyeing, *al-wars* was also used to colour beards. The Prophet (PBUH) himself reportedly used it to dye his beard, producing an orange or bright yellow colour from the fine hairs of its fruit (al-Munāwī, 2018).

Al-Wars According to Arab Botanists and Medical Scholars

According to the Muslim botanist Abū Ḥanīfah (1974), *al-wars* is a plant that grows abundantly in Yemen. Its cultivation period lasts approximately one year, and the plant is capable of producing flowers for ten to twenty years. Meanwhile, al-Rāzī observed that this plant was more widely recognised among Arab communities than many other plants because of its particular applications among women and its use as an ingredient in traditional medicinal preparations (al-Rāzī, 2002).

Ibn al-Bayṭār (1992) identified two varieties of *al-wars* used by Arab communities. The first, known as *al-wars al-Ḥabashī*, produces black or dark red pigments. According to him, this variety was considered inferior in quality and was not commonly preferred by Arab communities. The second variety, known as *al-wars al-Hindī*, originated from India, China and Yemen. It produces high-quality orange pigments and was widely used by Arab communities because it contains less resin, has a softer texture and produces less residue from the fine hairs surrounding its fruit. Meanwhile, Ibn al-Turkumānī (2000) explained that orange-coloured *al-wars* was used by Arab communities not merely as a colouring agent but also as a medicinal remedy. Its traditional applications included promoting urination and treating tinea versicolor, itching, boils, acne, dry skin and blistering. Accordingly, a comparison of the different varieties of *al-wars* documented in Arab literature was conducted to identify the variety most likely to have been used during the Prophet's time, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparison of the Varieties of *al-Wars* According to Arab Botanists, Medical Scholars and Pharmacologists

	***Al-Wars* during the Prophet's time**	***al-Wars al-Habashī***	***al-Wars al-Hindī***
Pigment Characteristics	Produces bright yellow or orange pigments	Produces black and dark red pigments; considered inferior and generally not preferred by Arabs	Produces orange to reddish pigments; widely used among Arab communities
Geographical origin	Yemen	Yemen	India, China and Yemen
Quality	High quality and preferred by Arab communities	Low quality	Preferred by Arab communities for its colour and medicinal properties
Plant part used	Fine hairs surrounding the fruit	Fine hairs surrounding the fruit	Fine hairs surrounding the fruit
Uses	Dye, facial cosmetics and herbal treatment for tinea versicolor and skin irritation	Not specified	Dye, women's facial treatment, and remedies for tinea versicolor and dry skin

Source: Abū Ḥanīfah al-Dīnawārī (1974), Ibn al-Bayṭār (1992), al-Turkumānī (2001) and al-Rāzī (2002).

Biogeographical and Morphological Information on *Al-Wars*

Table 1 indicates that the characteristics of *al-wars al-Hindī* correspond to those attributed to the *al-wars* used during the Prophet's time. These characteristics also show similarities with a plant identified by the binomial name *Flemingia grahamiana*. Burkill, a Western economic botanist of the twentieth century, introduced this plant under the scientific name to distinguish it from other species within the genus *Flemingia* (Burkill, 1995). This species belongs to the Fabaceae family, which comprises 42 genera. Its fruit buds are relatively uniform in size, measuring approximately 8 mm, and are covered with an orange-coloured substance known as *warrus*.

The plant is an upright woody shrub with stems that are initially grey and covered with fine hairs. Its fruits leave an orange-coloured stain when touched (Aditya, 2014) and biogeographical data indicate that *Flemingia grahamiana* occurs naturally in Africa, southern and central China, India, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam and Yemen (*Royal Botanic Gardens Kew*, 2026).

As shown in Table 2, the biogeographical and morphological characteristics of *Flemingia grahamiana* correspond to those attributed to *al-wars al-Hindī*, a fragrant substance used for various purposes during the Prophet's time, particularly as a colouring agent and a remedy for different skin conditions. Classical Arabic sources identify Yemen, India and China as regions associated with this plant. Nevertheless, the Indian variety was particularly preferred by Arab communities because of its distinctive advantages compared with other varieties originating from Yemen and China. This corresponds with the biogeographical information indicating that India and its surrounding regions, together with several areas of the Malay Archipelago, particularly Thailand and Vietnam, are among the geographical regions where this herb occurs naturally.

Table 2: Comparison of Classical *Turāth* Information on *Al-Wars al-Hindī* with the Biogeographical and Morphological Characteristics of *Flemingia grahamiana*

	al-Wars al-Hindī	***Flemingia grahamiana***
Geographical distribution	Yemen, India and China	Yemen, Africa, southern and central China, India, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam
Plant part used	Produces fruit; the fine hairs surrounding the fruit yield an orange pigment	Produces fruit; the fine hairs surrounding the fruit yield an orange pigment
Uses	Textile dye; facial cosmetic preparation used by Arab women to reduce dark spots; and a remedy for skin conditions	Used in textile dyeing in India and Arab regions, cosmetic colouring preparations and the treatment of skin conditions

Source: Author's analysis.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that explaining plant-related *gharīb* expressions in Hadith requires an interdisciplinary approach that integrates classical Arabic *turāth* sources with contemporary information. The analysis of the expression *al-wars* reveals that explanations provided by Hadith scholars and Arabic linguists extend beyond linguistic definitions to include plant characteristics, the parts used, geographical distribution, and the functions and applications of plants in Arab society during the Prophet's time. The narrations concerning *al-wars* indicate that the plant possessed various functions and medicinal properties. Indeed, it was already known among Arab communities during the pre-Islamic period.

The diversity of its applications in the Hadith narrations examined, including its use as a colouring agent, cosmetic preparation, cleaning substance and medicinal ingredient, demonstrates the importance of understanding an expression according to its Hadith context and historical background. An examination of Arabic botanical and medical literature, particularly the discussions of Abū Ḥanīfah al-Dīnawārī, al-Rāzī, Ibn al-Bayṭār and Ibn al-Turkumānī, reveals that information concerning *al-wars* also encompasses differences in varieties, pigment quality and applications. This information provides a basis for comparing descriptions in classical *turāth* sources with contemporary botanical, biogeographical and ethnobotanical data.In this regard, *Flemingia grahamiana* is proposed as a potential candidate for identifying *al-wars* based on the similarities observed in the information analysed. Nevertheless, similarities in colour, morphology, geographical distribution and traditional uses alone are insufficient to conclusively establish the identity of the species without further specific taxonomic evidence.

Overall, this study emphasises that contemporary sources have the potential to broaden our understanding of *gharīb* expressions in Hadith, particularly when their interpretation involves plant-related terminology

associated with botanical and medical knowledge. However, such sources must be employed critically, with Hadith texts, the contexts of transmission, lexicographical references and classical *turāth* literature serving as the primary foundations of analysis. Contemporary data should function as supplementary and comparative evidence, subject to the reliability and validity of the available findings.

This approach not only contributes to clarifying the meaning of *al-wars* but also provides a methodological framework for examining other plant-related *gharīb* expressions in Hadith. Therefore, integrating Hadith studies, Arabic linguistics, botany, biogeography and ethnobotany can contribute to a more comprehensive, systematic and academically rigorous approach to Hadith commentary.

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