Narratives on the
Seven Great Readers

Saleem Gaibie
أجمل الأخبار على القراء السبعة الكبَّار

بقلِم:
محمد سلمى غَيْبِيّ
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Foreword

If one intends to be successful in any field, science or area of expertise, he/she needs to study the lives of those people who excelled in their respective fields; to scrutinise the habits of those earlier personalities and assess what exactly were their practices which made them excel and successful at what they did.

Those who intend to read the Seven and the Ten Qirāʾāt should make it a point to study the lives of these great luminaries of the Qurʾān. They should analyse the practices and character of these greats; their efforts in acquiring knowledge, their humility, their piety, their dedication to fulfill the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ, their sacrifices for the Qurʾān, and so forth. We should do a thorough survey of these personalities and more importantly, attempt to inculcate their character into our lives.

In addition to this, it is an honour for those who are able to complete the Seven and Ten Qirāʾāt to be linked through scholarly lineage (sanad) from present day to these illustrious personalities who have dedicated their lives to serve the Qurʾān.

Therefore, I've added my link to Imams al-Shāṭibī and Abū ʿAmr al-Dānî at the start of the book. The links from Imams al-Shāṭibī and al-Dānî, and ultimately these great Readers to the Prophet ﷺ are given after their biographies in the form of diagrams.

M. Saleem Gaibie
## System of Transliteration

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**N.B.** Arabic words are italicised except in 3 instances:

1. When possessing a current English usage.
2. When part of a heading or diagram.
3. When the proper names of humans.

The “al” of the Arabic lām al-ta’rîf is occasionally omitted to maintain flow of the English.
Brief History of Qirāʿāt

The Qurʾān was revealed verbally. It was taught in the same manner preserving both the text and every minutiæ of its pronunciation. During the Prophetic period we find that multiple readings of the Qurʾān existed. The Companions learnt these readings directly from the Prophet and passed them on to their successors.


It was during the time of the Successors and the period immediately thereafter that there were illustrious individuals who became renowned as teachers of the Qurʾān in the Islamic lands. In Mecca we find Ibn Kathīr. In Medina were Abū Jaʿfar and Nāfiʿ. Ibn ʿĀmir was from Shām whilst ʿĀṣim, Ḥamzah, Kisāʾī and Khalaf were from Kufa. Basra was the home of Abū ʿAmr and Yaʿqūb.
The Readers (Qurrāʾ)

Each of the above mentioned ten teachers is known as a qāriʾ. So acclaimed were they that readings (qirāʾāt) were even ascribed to them. It was said that a person was reciting the Qurʿān according to the Reading of Nāfiʿ or Yaʿqūb, etc. This did not, in any way, mean that these readings were made up or invented by them. But rather that they were noted as people who dedicated all their efforts, abilities, and in fact, their lives to the learning and the teaching of the Qurʾān, to the extent that their names became eponymous with these Qurʾānic readings. In reality all these readings were taught and passed on to them by the Prophet ﷺ as is clearly illustrated by the diagrams in this booklet. It should also be noted that they weren’t the only people teaching or practising these readings, but that there were many others. Invariably, it was these 10 teachers who outshone the others. They ultimately became the eponymous Readers and their readings became better known as the Qirāʾāt al-ʿAshr or the Ten Readings.

The Transmitters (Ruwāt)

Similarly, those who narrated these readings from these teachers, whether directly or indirectly, became known as the transmitters, simply because they transmitted the readings of these qurrāʾ. From each one of these qurrāʾ we have two transmitters. It does not mean that only these transmitters existed, but of the many, these were the most outstanding. For the sake of brevity only the two narrators of Ḥamzah and ʿĀṣim will be shown:

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1 *Qurrāʾ* is the plural of *qāriʾ*. Literally, it means a reciter of the Qurʾān. Customarily, it has two connotations: any person who is a melodious reciter of the Qurʾān – whether schooled or not; or an expert in the sciences of *Tajwīd* and *Qirāʾāt*. Technically, it refers to any one of the Ten or 14 leading reciters mentioned in the field of *Qirāʾāt*. 
In the first example, the two transmitters of Ḥamzah narrate from him indirectly, via Sulaym, and in the second example, Ḥafṣ and Shuʿbah narrate directly from ʿĀṣim. Regardless whether they are narrating directly or indirectly, they are considered as the transmitters.

The Ways/Paths (Ṭuruq)

Those who narrated from the transmitters were known as ṭuruq (ways/paths), whether they narrated directly or indirectly from the transmitters.

The ṭuruq may be divided into the ṭuruq raʿisiyyah/aṣliyyah (primary ṭuruq) and the ṭuruq farʿiyyah (secondary ṭuruq).² From each transmitter of every qāriʾ there are four primary ṭuruq chosen by Ibn al-Jazarī. The following diagram indicates the primary ṭuruq in the narration of Ḥafṣ:

All those who narrate from these primary ṭuruq are known as a tarīq farī or a secondary tarīq. The most well-known reading is the reading of ʿĀṣim according to the narration of Ḥafṣ via the tarīq of the Shāṭibiyyah. Imām Shāṭibī

² Murshid al-Ikhwān ilā Ṭuruq Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān by Samannūdī.
would thus be a secondary ṭariq as he narrates the transmission of Ḥafṣ through al-Hāshimī. Ibn al-Jazarī mentions a total of 52 different ṭuruq for Ḥafṣ.

All the differences mentioned in a particular ṭariq have been documented in books containing these multiple readings. For example, any difference in the ṭariq of the Shāṭibiyyah for the narration of Ḥafṣ would be mentioned in his book Ḥirz al-Amānī wa Wajhu al-Tahānī, better known as al-Shāṭibiyyah.
Sanad to Imam al-Shāṭibī

Imam al-Qāsim ibn Firruh al-Shāṭibī
   Al-Kamāl ‘Ali ibn Shuja’
   Al-Taqiyy al-Sā’igh
   ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Baghdādī
Abū al-Khayr Muḥammad Ibn al-Jazarī
   Ahmad ibn Asad al-Umyūṭi
   ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq al-Sumbarī
   Ali ibn Ghānim al-Maqdisī
   ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Yamanī
   Muḥammad al-Baqārī
   Aḥmad al-Baqārī
   ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Uḫūrī
   Ibrāhīm al-‘Ubaydī
   Aḥmad Salamūnah
   Aḥmad al-Durri al-Tihāmī
Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Mutawallī
   Ḥasan al-Juraysī al-Kabīr
   Ibrāhīm Sa’d al-Miṣrī
   ‘Abd Allah al-Makkī
   ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Makkī

M. Ṣiddiq Mayman Singī
   ‘Abd al-Ḥadī Sikandar al-Makkī

Ḥifṭh al-Raḥmān al-Deobandī
   Muḥibb al-Din ibn Diyah’ al-Dīn
Muḥammad Salim ibn Ismā’il Gaibie

Diyā’ al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Malik Jiwan

M. Ṣābiq al-Lucknawī

Ayyūb ibn Ibrāhīm Iṣhāq
Anīs Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf Khān
Sanad to Abū ‘Amr al-Dānī

Abū ‘Amr al-Dānī
Abū Dāwūd Sulaymān ibn Najāh
‘Ali ibn Hudhayl al-Balansi
Imam al-Qāsim ibn Firruh al-Shāṭibī
Al-Kamāl ‘Ali ibn Shuja’
Al-Taqiyy al-Sa‘īgh
Shams al-Dīn Ibn al-Sa‘īgh
Abū al-Khayr Muḥammad ibn al-Jazarī
Riḍwān al-Uqbī
Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī
Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭablāwī
Shihādah al-Yamanī
‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Yamanī
Muḥammad al-Baqārī
Ahmad al-Baqārī
‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ujhūrī
Ibrāhīm al-Ubaydī

Ahmad al-Marzūqī
Ahmad al-Ḥulwānī al-Kabīr
M. Salīm al-Ḥulwānī
Bakrī al-Ṭarābishi

‘Ali al-Ḥaddādī al-Azharī
‘Abd al-‘Aṭḥīm al-Dusūqī
Al-Fāḍlī Abū Laylah
Miṣbah Ibrāhīm Widn

‘Abd Allah ibn Ṣāliḥ al-‘Ubayd
Muḥammad Salīm ibn Ismā’īl Gaibie
Nāfiʿ

He is Nāfiʿ ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Nuʿaym. There is difference of opinion regarding his patronym, the most well known being Abū Ruwaym. Others include Abū al-Ḥasan, Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, Abū ‘Abd Allah, Abū Nuʿaym, Abū Muḥammad, and Abū Bakr. Born in 70 A.H./690 C.E., he was a client of Jaʿwanah ibn Shaʿūb al-Laythī, the ally of Ḥamzah ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib. There is difference of opinion as to whether he is from the second or third generation. Those who say that he met some of the Companions include him in the second generation while others regard him to be from the third generation. Most are of the second opinion, in spite of Abū ‘Amr al-Dānī mentioning that certain Companions stood behind Nāfiʿ in ṣalāḥ. However, most of Nāfiʿ’s reports are from the Successors and none are from the Companions, thus including him in the third generation. Allah knows best.

He is the first of the seven qurrāʾ, originally from Asbahan. Nāfiʿ had a dark complexion with handsome features, jovial, and had an outstanding character and personality. It was once said to Nāfiʿ: “What a handsome face you have, and what excellent character.” He replied: “How can it be otherwise when I have shaken hands with the Prophet ﷺ and have read the Qurʾān to him?” (in a dream). From amongst people, he had the purest disposition, was the most beautiful in recitation, and was an ascetic who prayed for 60 years in the Mosque of the Prophet ﷺ.

Imam Mālik is reported to have said: “The reading of the people of Medina follows the Sunnah.” He then conveyed that this was the reading of Nāfiʿ. Mālik also stated that Nāfiʿ was the Imam of all people regarding recitation.

Aḥmad ibn Ḥambal was asked by his son: which reading is most beloved to you? He replied: “The reading of the people of Medina, and if not, then the reading of ‘Āṣim.”

Whenever he spoke, a sweet scent of musk emanated from his mouth. He was questioned: “Do you put on sweet scents every time you sit to teach?” He replied that he saw the Prophet ﷺ in a dream and he recited into the very mouth of Nāfi‘. From that incident, every time Nāfi‘ spoke, the sweet fragrance of musk radiated from his mouth.

It is reported that Nāfi‘ stated: “I have read to 70 of the Successors” (Tābi‘īn). He further stated that he studied all the qirā‘āt of the Successors that he had read to, and kept whatever is supported by another, while leaving those qirā‘āt which were isolated, until he had gathered his vast knowledge of qirā‘āt. This Imam was a renowned master in the field of qirā‘āt and an ardent follower of the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ.

A student once travelled to read to Nāfi‘. He was amazed to find him teaching all the different qirā‘āt. He asked Nāfi‘: “O Abū Ruwaym, do you teach the people all the qirā‘āt?” Nāfi‘ replied: “Why should I deprive myself of the reward of the Qur’an? I teach all the various qirā‘āt, except if one wishes to recite my readings.” Therefore, it is mentioned that he was not strict upon his students, allowing all to read to him, except if they requested to learn his particular synthesis of readings. For if one wanted to learn his readings then he would show some measure of concern and particular strictness. He taught the people of Medina for approximately 70 years.

He was extremely polite with his students, and with anyone who sat to learn from him. None was given preference over another, regardless of stature, family ties, or influence amongst the people. All were allowed to read to him as long as they waited their chance.
On his deathbed, his sons asked him for advice. He replied:

اث قُوا اللهَ وَأَصْلِحُوا ذَاتَ بَيْنِكُُ وَأَطِيعُوا اللهَ وَرَسُولََُ اِنْ لُنْتُُْ مُّؤْمِنِيَ

“Be wary of Allah, correct all matters of difference among you, and obey Allah and his Messenger 🕔 if you are believers.”

Teachers:

- Abū Jaʿfar Yazīd ibn al-Qaʾqāʾ - Nāfiʿ mentions that I recited to Abū Jaʿfar from the age of 9.
- Shaybah ibn Niṣāḥ.
- ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Hurmuz.
- Muslim ibn Jundub.
- Yazīd ibn Rūmān.

Students:

- Imam Mālik ibn Anas.
- Ismāʿīl ibn Jaʿfar.
- ʿĪsā ibn Wardān.
- Sulaymān ibn Muslim ibn Jammāz.
- Qālūn.
- Warsh.

He died in 169 A.H./786 C.E.
Qālūn

He is ʿĪsā ibn Mīnā ibn Wardān ibn ʿĪsā ibn ʿAbd al-Ṣamad ibn ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd Allah al-Zuraqī. He was nicknamed Qālūn by his teacher, Nāfiʿ, which meant good or excellent in the Roman tongue. He was named thus due to his excellent recitation. His forefathers hailed from Rome and came to Medina as Roman captives during the caliphate of ʿUmar. He was born in 120 A.H./738 C.E. It is said that he was raised in the very household of Nāfiʿ, who was married to the mother of Qālūn.

He continued reciting to Nāfiʿ until he became an expert of the Qurʾān, eventually emerging into a skilled teacher of Qurʾān and a master of the Arabic language. Qālūn read numerous khatms to Nāfiʿ and also documented the readings in a book of his. Later, Nāfiʿ seated him by a column and sent students to recite to him. When he was asked how many times he had rendered the Qurʾān to Nāfiʿ, he replied that he had read countless khatms to Nāfiʿ, and thereafter spent 20 years studying under him. Qālūn was deaf, and would look at the lips of the reciter to correct their errors. Others relate that he could not hear if worldly things were discussed, but if someone recited the Qurʾān he could hear it and corrected the person’s errors.

Teachers:

- Nāfiʿ.
- ʿĪsā ibn Wardān.

Students:

- Abū Nashīṭ Muḥammad ibn Hārūn.

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Al-Dhahabī states that he died in 220 A.H./835 C.E. Al-Ahwāzī and others say he died in 205 A.H./821 C.E. The former opinion is the most accepted. Allah knows best.
Warsh

He is Abū Sa‘īd ‘Uthmān ibn Sa‘īd ibn ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Amr ibn Sulaymān ibn Ibrāhīm. His patronym is also given as Abū ‘Amr and Abū al-Qāsim, though the first is the most common. Others mention his name as ‘Uthmān ibn Sa‘īd ibn ‘Adī ibn Ghazwān ibn Dāwūd ibn Sābiq al-Qībṭī. He was born in Qafat, upper Egypt in 110 A.H./729 C.E. His origin was from Qayrawān.

He was fair of complexion with blue eyes, short, and had a solid build. He would also wear short clothes so that his calves were visible at times. It is said that his teacher, Nāfi‘, nicknamed him Warsh due to his fair complexion. The word “warsh” itself indicates to something made from milk. Others proffer that Nāfi‘ nicknamed him Warshān, a name of a well known bird, and later shortened it to just Warsh. Warsh himself liked the nickname and was proud of it, stating at times: “My ustādh, Nāfi‘, named me with this!” Some also suggest that he was nicknamed Warsh due to his excellent recitation.

In 155 A.H./772 C.E. he left Egypt and travelled to Medina for the sole purpose of reciting to Nāfi‘. Upon reaching Medina he immediately went to the mosque, intending to recite to Nāfi‘. However, due to the many students desiring to recite to Nāfi‘, he was not able to recite to him and sat at the back of the halqah (learning circle). Because of the many students, Nāfi‘ allowed each one to recite only 30 verses at a time so that all could have a chance to recite to him. Initially Warsh got no opportunity to read to him. He therefore asked one who was close to Nāfi‘ to intercede on his behalf so that he may start reciting to Nāfi‘. He told Nāfi‘ that he had come all the way from Egypt to Medina for no other reason but to recite to him. Nāfi‘ then told him to sleep in the mosque and the next day he may start reciting. After the Fajr Prayer, Nāfi‘ immediately asked for Warsh because he had slept in the mosque and was therefore entitled to read first. Warsh’s recitation was so meticulous and so beautiful that all were captivated by his excellent recitation. It is mentioned that whoever listened to him reciting

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would never tire of his recitation, nor want him to stop. After he had rendered his 30 verses, someone from the halqah stood up and said: “He (Warsh) may recite 10 of my verses and I will only recite 20 verses.” So Warsh read another 10 verses, after which someone else from the halqah stood up and offered Warsh 10 of his verses too. In this manner it continued until everyone in the halqah had stood up and gave Warsh 10 of their verses to recite. It is said that it continued in this manner until Warsh completed the Qurʾān by Nāfiʿ in 50 days. Eventually, Warsh completed a khatm to Nāfiʿ every seven days, thus reciting four khatms in a month to him.

Warsh was an expert regarding the Qurʾān and the Arabic language. Once he had mastered the intricate details of Arabic, he held a circle of learning (halqah) for it, and named it the maqraʾ (place of learning) of Warsh (مَقْرَأِ وَرْش).

He later returned to Egypt where he became renowned for his skill and knowledge of the Qurʾān, becoming the Sheikh al-Qurrāʾ there. He died in Egypt in 197 A.H./813 C.E. at the age of 87. Ibn al-Jazarī mentions that when he visited Egypt, he was informed regarding the whereabouts of Warsh’s grave and had the opportunity to visit it.

**Teachers:**

- Nāfiʿ.

**Students:**

- Abū Yaʿqūb al-Azraq.
ʿAbd Allah ibn Kathīr al-Makkī

He is Abū Maʿbad al-Makkī al-Dārī, ʿAbd Allah ibn Kathīr ibn ʿAmr ibn ʿAbd Allah ibn Zādān ibn Fīrūzān ibn Hurmuz. There are 6 different opinions concerning his patronym: Abū Maʿbad, Abū Bakr, Abū ʿAbbād, Abū Muḥammad, Abū al-Muṭṭalib and Abū Saʿīd. The first is the most well-known.

He was named al-Dārī since he was a perfume trader who imported his merchandise from Dārayn, a place in Bahrayn. Others say he is linked to the Companion of the Prophet ﷺ, Tamīm al-Dārī. He is commonly known as Ibn Kathīr al-Makkī, the second imam from the seven Qurrāʾ.

Though he was born in Mecca in 45 A.H./665 C.E., his origins lay in Persia. During his time, he was the imam of Mecca in qiraʿāt as well as one of its judges. Imam al-Shāfiʿī mentions that during his time he found the peoples of Mecca reciting the Qiraʿah of Ibn Kathīr. He met some of the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ, ʿAbd Allah ibn Zubayr, Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī and Anas ibn Mālik. Therefore he is counted as a Successor. He travelled to Iraq and settled there for awhile. Later he returned to Mecca and stayed there until his demise.

He was extremely eloquent, articulate, and had an excellent command of Arabic expression. Ibn Kathīr was tall, well-built, and brown-skinned with bluish-black eyes. He also had a white beard and would dye his hair with henna. Ibn Kathīr was well-composed, possessed an aura of piety, and a personality which commanded respect from all who met him.

He was extremely pious and humble, often crying profusely while supplicating Allah. He held a great deal of respect for the poor, and shunned those who sought material and worldly gains.

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It is said that Ibn Kathīr was the first who started the practice of allowing the first to come to the lesson, to recite first. This practice was later adopted by many qurrāʾ, including Imam al-Shāṭibī. He was asked one day concerning his Qirāʾah and the fact that it was not strong grammatically. To this he replied that “I do not teach according to what is rationally correct, but according to what I have been taught by my predecesors.” Before he commenced his lesson for the day, he would always start by giving his students advice. He would also end his lesson with an advice.

Teachers:

- ‘Abd Allah ibn al-Sāʾib al-Makhzūmī – Abū al-‘Alā’ al-Hamadhānī (d. 569 A.H./1173 C.E.) is of the opinion that Ibn Kathīr did not read to ‘Abd Allah ibn al-Sāʾib. Abū ʿUmar al-Andarābī (d. after 500 A.H./1106 C.E.) does not include ‘Abd Allah ibn al-Sāʾib as a teacher of Ibn Kathīr. Al-Dhahabī does include him in Maʿrifat al-Qurrāʾ al-Kibār, and Ibn al-Jazarī mentions that it was quite possible considering that Ibn Kathīr had met some of the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ. Ibn Mujāhid (d. 324 A.H./939 C.E.) also forwards a text, transmitting via Imam al-Shāfiʿī, that Ibn Kathīr did in fact read to ‘Abd Allah ibn al-Sāʾib. Abū ‘Amr al-Dānī (d. 444 A.H./1052 C.E.) lists him as a teacher of Ibn Kathīr in al-Taysīr. The author of Aḥāsin al-Akhbār, ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Mizzāli-Ḥanāfī (d. 768 A.H./1366 C.E.), also lists him as a teacher of Ibn Kathīr mentioning that when ‘Abd Allah ibn al-Sāʾib died, Ibn Kathīr was 30 years old. Therefore the possibility that Ibn Kathīr read to him is strong. Allah knows best.

- Mujāhid ibn Jabr.

- Dirbās al-Makkī.

Students:

- Ismāʿīl ibn ʿAbd Allah al-Qusṭantīn.

- Shībl ibn ʿAbbād.
- Maʿrūf ibn Mushkān.
- Abū ʿAmr al-Baṣrī, the third imam from the seven qurrāʾ.

He died in 120 A.H./738 C.E.
Al-Bazzī

He is Abū al-Ḥasan al-Bazzī. His full name is Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allah ibn al-Qāsim ibn Nāfi‘ ibn Abī Bazzah, originally from Hamadhān, Persia. Al-Bukhārī gives his name as Bashshār, the client of ‘Abd Allah ibn al-Sā’īb al-Makhzūmī, by whom he also embraced the fold of Islam. He is more commonly known as Aḥmad al-Bazzī or just al-Bazzī, the narrator of Ibn Kathīr al-Makkī.

He was born in 170 A.H./787 C.E., and became the teacher of the Qur’ān in Mecca as well as the muʾadhdhin (caller to prayer) of the Ḥaram for 40 years. Bazzī was known as a proficient and precise teacher and reciter of the Qur’ān.

The ḥadīth regarding the takbīr from Sūrat al-Ḍuḥā is transmitted via al-Bazzī.

Teachers:

- ‘Abd Allah ibn Ziyād.
- Ḥikrimah ibn Sulaymān.
- Wahb ibn Wāḍiḥ.

Students:

- Qumbul — narrates qirāʾāt from him.
- Abū Rabīʿah al-Rabaʿī.

He died in 250 A.H./864 C.E. at the age of 80.

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Qunbul

He is Abū ʿUmar al-Makhzūmī, Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Khālid ibn Muḥammad ibn Saʿīd ibn Jurjah, better known as Qunbul, the narrator of Ibn Kathīr. Some have given his patronym as Abū ‘Amr.

He was born in 195 A.H./811 C.E. The reason for calling him Qunbul was because he was famous for using a certain medication on animals named Qunaybil. It was later shortened to Qunbul, by which he was known. Others say he was named Qunbul since he came from the tribe al-Qanābilah.

Qunbul was selected as an integral part of the police force in Mecca by its people due to his justness and superior character. During his leadership of the police force, the people of Mecca lived in harmony, peace and security.

In the last seven years of his life he was forced to give up the teaching of the Qur’ān due to old age.

Teachers:

• Ahmad al-Bazzī – transmits qirāʾāt from him.
• Abū al-Ḥasan Aḥmad ibn ʿAlqamah al-Qawwās.

Students:

• Abū Bakr ibn Mujāhid.
• Abū al-Ḥasan ibn Shanabūdh.

He died in 291 A.H./904 C.E. at the age of 96.

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9 Al-Wāḍiḥat al-Khaḍrāʾ has it as Jarḥah instead of Jurjah.
Abū ‘Amr al-Basrī

Zabbān ibn al-ʿAlāʾ ibn ‘Ammār ibn al-ʿUryān ibn ‘Abd Allah ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Ḥārith ibn Jalhamah ibn Ḥajar ibn Khuzāʾī ibn Māzin ibn Mālik ibn ‘Amr ibn Tamīm ibn Murr ibn Ād ibn Ṭābikhah ibn ʿIlyās ibn Muṣṭar ibn Maʿd ibn ‘Adnān. He is more commonly known as Abū ‘Amr al-Basrī, the third imam from the seven qurrāʾ. Some have said that his name and patronym are the same, Abū ‘Amr. Ibn al-Jazarī relates that there are more than 20 opinions regarding his name: al-ʿUryān, Yaḥyā, Maḥbūb, Junayd, ʿUyaynah, ʿUthmān, ʿAyyāḍ, amongst others. Al-Dhahabī also mentions Abū ‘Amr ibn al-ʿAlāʾ ibn ‘Ammār ibn al-ʿUryān as his name.

There is also difference of opinion regarding his lineage: some link him to Banī al-ʿAmbar, or Banī Abū Ḥanīfah or in Persia, from a place named Kāzarūn.

He was born in 68 A.H./688 C.E. or 70 A.H./690 C.E. Others say he was born in 55 A.H./675 C.E. or 65 A.H./685 C.E. It is said that he was born in Mecca, raised in Basra and died in Kufa. Abū ‘Amr was brown skinned and tall. Besides being of the nobility of the Arabs, Abū ‘Amr was also the most learned regarding qirāʾāt, Arabic, Fiqh, poetry, and history. In spite of his vast knowledge, whenever he spoke to laymen, he spoke in a plain and simple manner. His home was filled with his notebooks to the extent that they reached the roof of his house. He later devoted himself to the worship of Allah and strictly adhered to the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ. It is said that if the knowledge of Abū ‘Amr was split and given to 100 people, all of them would be considered an ʿālim (a person with great knowledge). Abū ‘Amr said: “If I were to give (the knowledge) in my chest to you, I would do so. However, I have studied and memorised such details about the Qurʾān, that if it were written, none would be able to bear it.”

Many scholars said that they have not met anyone with more knowledge than Abū ʿAmr. Asmaʿī said: “My eyes have not seen the likes of Abū ʿAmr. If I sat with him, it seemed as if I sat before a huge ocean with no shore-line in sight.”  
A great poet, Dhū al-ʾRummah, said: “I never sat with Abū ʿAmr except that when I left, my book was filled with knowledge.” Once they asked Abū ʿAmr 8000 questions about the Qurʾān, poetry and Arabic. He answered them all with ease. He surpassed many of his teachers, to the extant that after Abu ʿAmr had read to some of his teachers, they later came to study the Qurʾān by him. The people and scholars of Basra would boast about Abu ʿAmr to others. In spite of his knowledge and supremacy above others, he disliked to lead the people in ṣalāh.

ʿAbd al-Wārith mentions that he performed hajj with Abū ʿAmr al-Basrī. They reached a certain point and it was time for ṣalāh. It was such a barren place that no water was nearby. Abū ʿAmr told him to wait there and he left. He waited for a long time and eventually went to look for Abū ʿAmr. When he found him, he was in shock to find Abū ʿAmr taking ablution (wuḍūʾ) from water which was gushing from the ground in this barren place. He further relates that Abū ʿAmr made him promise not to tell anyone what he had witnessed. ʿAbd al-Wārith says: “I have not told anyone this story until after the demise of Abū ʿAmr.”

Sufyān ibn ʿUyaynah relates that he saw the Prophet in a dream and said to him: “I find so many (different) qirāʾāt, which one do you instruct me to read?” The Prophet replied: “Recite the Qirāʾah of Abū ʿAmr ibn al-ʿAlāʾ.”

Shuʿbah said: “Hold onto the Qirāʾah of Abū ʿAmr, for it will become a pillar and link for the people.” Ibn al-Jazarī later adds that how true is this statement of Shuʿbah, that today I have found the peoples of Shām, Hijāz, Yemen and Egypt are reciting the Qirāʾah of Abū ʿAmr. This is surely due to the miraculous foresight of Shuʿbah.
Abū ‘Amr al-Basrī said: “If it were not for the fact that I can only recite what I read (to my teachers), then I would recite in such and such a manner.”

He fled with his father from the subjugation of Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf. Therefore he was able to read to teachers from Mecca, Medina, Kufa and Basra. When Abū ‘Amr travelled to Medina and to Kufa, the people flocked around him to learn from him, leaving the scholars in their own town. There is no one else from amongst the seven *qurrāʾ* who had as many teachers as Abū ‘Amr al-Basrī.

Ibn Shanabūdh relates that some traditionists said they dreamt about the day of judgement. On that day two individuals were raised above all others. They asked who the two were? It was said that they are Abū ‘Amr al-Basrī and Ḥamzah ibn Ḥabīb al-Zayyāt.

Teachers:

- Yaḥyā ibn Yaʿmar.
- Abū al-ʿĀliyah al-Riyāḥī – Al-Dhahabī mentions that Abū ‘Amr did not read to him. However, others like Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Ḥamadhāni and Ibn al-Jazarī have authenticated this link, since they were both in the same city for a period of twenty years. It therefore seems most likely that he did read to him. With this *sanad* there are only two links between Abū ‘Amr and the Prophet ﷺ; Abū ‘Amr to (1) Abū al-ʿĀliyah al-Riyāḥī, to (2) ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, to the Prophet ﷺ. His other *sanads* will have 3 links between him and the Prophet ﷺ.
- Ḥasan al-Basrī.
- Shaybah ibn Niṣāḥ.
- ʿĀṣim.
- ʿAbd Allah ibn Kathīr al-Makkī.
- ʿAṭāʾ ibn Abī Rabāḥ.
- Mujāhid ibn Jabr.
• Ibn Muḥaysin.
• Naṣr ibn ‘Āṣim.
• Abū Jaʿfar Yazīd ibn al-Qaʿqāʿ.

Students:
• Yaḥyā al-Yazīdī.
• Abū al-Mundhir Sallām ibn Sulaymān al-Ṭawīl.
• ‘Abd Allah ibn al-Mubarak.
• Sībway – he transmits some qirāʾāt from him.
• Khalīl ibn Aḥmad – he transmits some qirāʾāt from him.

He would complete a khatm of the Qurʾān every three days. Abū ‘Amr died in 154 A.H./771 C.E. or 155 A.H./772 C.E. in Kufa.
Al-Dūrī

He is Ḥafṣ ibn ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn Ṣahbān ibn ʿAdī ibn Ṣahbān, better known as al-Dūrī, the narrator of Abū ʿAmr al-Basrī and Kisāʾī. His patronym is Abū ʿUmar. Al-Dūrī links him to the place al-Dūr in eastern Baghdad.

He was born in 150 A.H./767 C.E. and traveled in the pursuit of studying qirāʾāt. Al-Dūrī is regarded as one of the first to collect qirāʾāt from various lands in a book. Al-Ahwāzī mentions that in his travels to gain knowledge, al-Dūrī collected many qirāʾāt, including those that were authentic and others that were anomalous (shādhdh). People flocked to study under him due to his knowledge in qirāʾāt and his high sanads. The traditionist, Ibn Mājah, also transmits ḥadīth from him. He was heard saying: “I lived in the time of Nāfiʿ, and if I possessed 10 dirhams, I would have traveled to him.” Some state that he did eventually read to Nāfiʿ.

Teachers:

- Ismāʿīl ibn Jaʿfar, the student of Nāfiʿ.
- Al-Kisāʾī.
- Yaḥyā al-Yazīdī.
- Sulaym, the student of Ḥamzah.
- Yaʿqūb ibn Jaʿfar, the student of Ibn Jammāz.
- Yaʿqūb al-Ḥadramī, the ninth imam found in the Ten Qirāʾāt.

Students:

- Aḥmad ibn Ḥambal – he was a contemporary to al-Dūrī, and was seen in the company of him and writing down what he learnt.
- Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad.

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• Abū al-Za‘rāʾ ibn ‘Abdūs.

Towards the end of his life he lost his eyesight. He died in 246 A.H./860 C.E. at the age of 96.
Al-Sūsī

He is Ṣāliḥ ibn Ziyād ibn ʿAbd Allah ibn Ismāʿīl ibn Ibrāhīm ibn al-Jārūd ibn Maṣrah al-Rustubī al-Raqī, more commonly known as al-Sūsī, the narrator of Abū ‘Amr al-Basrī. Al-Sūs is a town in al-Ahwāz and al-Raqī links him to al-Riqqah, a village on the Euphrates. His patronym is Abū Shuʿayb.

He was born in al-Riqqah in approximately 171 A.H./788 C.E. and was known for his trustworthiness, reliability and precision. His reading was commonly found in Egypt, Hijāz, Maghrib and Iraq. It is presumed that his narration was widespread since because its reading was so easy.

Teachers:

- Yaḥyā al-Yazīdī.

Students:

- Al-Nasāʾī, the traditionist.
- Abū ʿImrān ibn Jarīr al-Naḥwī.

He died at the beginning of 261 A.H./875 C.E., his age being almost 70 years.

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ʿAbd Allah Ibn Āmir al-Shāmī

He is ʿAbd Allah ibn Āmir ibn Yazīd ibn Tamīm ibn Rabīʿah ibn Āmir ibn ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿImrān al-Shāmī, better known as ʿAbd Allah ibn Āmir al-Shāmī. Al-Yaḥṣubī links him to Yaḥṣub ibn Dahmān ibn Āmir ibn Ḥimyar ibn Sabaʿ ibn Yashjab ibn Yaʿrab ibn Qaḥṭān ibn Āmir. The Āmir mentioned at the end here according to some historians is Hūd. There are many views concerning his patronym, the most famous being Abū ʿImrān. Others include Abū Āmir, Abū Nuʿaym, Abū ʿUlaym, Abū ʿUbayd, Abū Muḥammad, Abū Mūsā, Abū Maʿbad, and Abū ʿUthmān. He is the fourth imam of the seven qurrāʾ.

Ibn Āmir was born in 21 A.H./642 C.E. He was heard saying: “On the demise of the Prophet, I was two years old, and I went to Damascus when I was nine years of age.” He was tall, with a sparse beard, and walked with a limp in one leg.

Abū al-Dardāʾ was sent to teach the people in Shām the Qurʾān by ʿUmar. After his demise, his student, Ibn Āmir, took his position due to his exceptional prowess and brilliance in his knowledge of the Qurʾān.

In this manner he became the Sheikh al-Qurrāʾ in Damascus during his time, as well as one of its judges. The people of Shām continued the Qirāʾah of Ibn Āmir up till the fifth century hijrī. He heard the Qurʾān being recited as well as ḥadīth of the Prophet from a few of the Companions, and therefore is counted by many as being one of the illustrious Successors.

He died in 118 A.H./736 C.E.

Teachers:

- Abū al-Dardā’ – some scholars deem his reading to Abū al-Dardā’ as implausible. Ibn al-Jazarī mentions that many qurrā’ confirm his reading to Abū al-Dardā’, in spite of Ibn Jarīr’s criticism.

- Al-Mughīrah ibn Abū Shihāb al-Makhzūmī – his recitation to Mughīrah is established, in spite of Ibn Jarīr’s criticism.

- ‘Uthmān – some say he read the entire Qur’ān to him while others say he only read half of the Qur’ān to him. Ibn al-Jazarī deems the former improbable and the latter as probable. However, both can not be established with certainty. Others say he heard ‘Uthmān reading in ṣalāh, which is also probable.\(^{14}\)

- Muʿāwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān – Ibn al-Jazarī says that Ibn ʿĀmir’s link to him is incorrect. However, he relates ḥadīth from him and therefore it is not impossible for him to have read parts of the Qur’ān to him, especially since other scholars like Abū ʿUmar al-Andarābī (d. after 500 A.H./1106 C.E.) have established this link. Allah knows best.

- Muʿādh ibn Jabal – Ibn al-Jazarī deems this view as weak. Abū al-Qāsim al-Hudhalī affirms that Ibn ʿĀmir did read to Muʿādh ibn Jabal.\(^{15}\)

- Wāthilah ibn al-Asqa‘ – Ibn al-Jazarī says that there is no reason to deem this as unlikely.\(^{16}\)

- Faḍālah ibn ʿUbayd – Ibn ʿĀmir himself mentions that he would sit with a mushaf before Faḍālah while he recited for him the qirā’ah which he gained from the Prophet ﷺ.

Abū Shāmmah (d. 665 A.H./1268 C.E.) has established Ibn ʿĀmir’s recitation to four of the Companions; Muʿāwiyah, Faḍālah, Wāthilah and Abū al-Dardā’.

\(^{14}\) See also al-Kāmil of al-Hudhalī pg 55.
\(^{15}\) See also al-Kāmil of al-Hudhalī pg 55-56.
\(^{16}\) See also al-Kāmil of al-Hudhalī pg 55.
Students:

- Yaḥyā ibn al-Ḥārith al-Dhimārī.

Discussion

Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī has scriticised Mughīrah’s recitation to ʿUthmān based on the following:

1. No one had claimed that ʿUthmān  prophesied taught them the Qurʾān. Those who have read the Qurʾān to him only read a few sections or a few qirāʾāt. If ʿUthmān  was known as a teacher of the Qurʾān then surely others would also have read to him besides Mughīrah, especially those close to him, or his relatives.

2. The person who relates this is ʿIrāq ibn Khālid who is unknown. Hishām ibn ʿAmmār is the only one who relates this from him.

The student of Imam Shāṭibī (d. 590 A.H./1194 C.E.), Abū al-Ḥasan al-Sakhāwī (d. 643 A.H./1245 C.E.), argues:

1. To say that none had claimed to have learnt the Qurʾān from ʿUthmān  is incorrect, since Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī learnt the Qurʾān as well as certain qirāʾāt from ʿUthmān  prophesied. Others who have read to ʿUthmān  include Zirr ibn  Ḥubaysh and Abū al-Aswad al-Duʿālī. Even if Mughīrah was the only student of ʿUthmān, it would not be uncommon, as many a time it is found that a teacher has only one outstanding student who continues his legacy. As for giving preference to teaching of his relatives, how many qurrāʾ have exceptional students from far and distant places, yet their close relatives do not learn from them?

2. Concerning ʿIrāq ibn Khālid, though he is not known by al-Ṭabarī, it is sufficient that Hishām relates from him since Hishām is trustworthy and reliable. Moreso, Hishām would not be negligent and mention an incorrect sanad to something as great as the Qurʾān – the Book and Speech of Allah.
He is Abū al-Walīd al-Sulamī, Hishām ibn ʿAmmār ibn Nuṣayr ibn Maysarah al-Dimashqī. He was better known as Hishām, the transmitter of Ibn ʿĀmir al-Shāmī.

He was one of the most prominent scholars of Damascus during his time, the mufti of its people, their khaṭīb (orator), their teacher of the Qurʾān and their traditionist. Many traditionists transmit ḥadīth from him, including al-Bukhārī, Abū Dāwūd al-Nasāʿī, and Ibn Mājah. Al-Tirmidhī transmits from him via one link. He was born in 153 A.H./770 C.E. He was an avid seeker of knowledge, eventually becoming a master of numerous sciences. Many scholars have stated that the world had not seen another scholar the likes of Hishām.

Hishām met Imam Mālik. Mālik requested that he recite the Qurʾān while Hishām requested that Mālik relate some ḥadīth of the Prophet ﷺ. Due to Hishām’s persistence, Mālik ordered that they eventually beat Hishām, like a teacher would beat his student. They beat him 15 times. Hishām then said to Mālik: “You have oppressed me and I will not forgive this.” Mālik then asked: “What is the atonement for this beating?” Hishām replied: “Relate to me 15 ḥadīths of the Prophet ﷺ.” After Mālik had finished relating 15 ḥadīth, Hishām remarked: “Why do you not increase my beating so that you may relate more ḥadīth to me.” Mālik laughed at this and Hishām left.

Hishām was well known for the knowledge he transmitted and his clarity of expression. People flocked from all over to learn from him, especially qirāʾāt and ḥadīth.

Hishām relates that he asked Allah to fulfill seven of his needs, of which six was fulfilled and one remains pending. The one pending was that Allah forgives him and his parents. The remaining six which Allah granted was that he performs

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hajj, that Allah allows him to live for more than 100 years, that Allah grants him
truthfulness in what he relates concerning the Prophet ﷺ, that he be allowed to
conduct the *khutbah* (sermon) from the *minbar* (pulpit) of Damascus, and that
Allah grants him 1000 dinars and that people flock to him to study knowledge.

**Teachers:**

- ʿIrāk ibn Khālid, a student of Yaḥyā al-Dhimārī.
- Ayyūb ibn Tamīm, a student of Yaḥyā al-Dhimārī.

**Students:**

- Aḥmad ibn Yazīd al-Ḥulwānī.
- Abū ʿAbd Allah Hārūn ibn Mūsā al-Akhfash.
- Abū ʿUbayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām – he transmits some *qirāʾāt* from Hishām.

He died in 245 A.H./860 C.E. Others say 244 A.H./859 C.E.
Ibn Dhakwän

He is ‘Abd Allah ibn Aḥmad ibn Bishr. It is also said that his name is Bashīr ibn Dhakwān ibn ‘Amr ibn Ḥassān ibn Dāwūd ibn Ḥasanūn ibn Sa’d ibn Ghālib ibn Fīhr ibn Mālik ibn al-Naḍr. His patronyms are given as Abū ‘Amr and Abū Muḥammad al-Qurashi al-Dimashqī. He is more commonly known as Ibn Dhakwān, the narrator of Ibn ʿĀmir al-Shāmī.

He was born in 173 A.H./790 C.E. Abū Zurʿah states that during his time there was none in Iraq, Hijāz, Shām, Egypt, or Khurāsān, as learned concerning qirāʾāt than Ibn Dhakwān. Abū Dāwūd and Ibn Mājah also relate ḥadith from him. It is said that while Hishām would deliver the Friday sermons, Ibn Dhakwān would lead the people in prayer.

Books:

- *Aqsām al-Qurʾān wa Jawābuhā* — The Divisions of the Qurʾān and its answers.
- *Ma Yajib ʿalā Qāriʾ al-Qurʾān ʿinda Ḥarkah Lisāniḥī* — That which is incumbent upon the reciter of the Qurʾān when he is reciting.

Teachers:

- Ayyūb ibn Tamīm al-Tamīmī.
- Al-Kisāʾī — it is also said that he read to al-Kisāʾī when he came to Damascus. Al-Naqqāsh relates that Ibn Dhakwān said: “I stayed with al-Kisāʾī for 7 months (and according to other reports 4 months) and completed numerous *khatms* by him.” Al-Dhahabī has criticised this report of al-Naqqāsh. Upon this, Ibn al-Jazari mentions that if Ibn Dhakwān traveled to Iraq then it could be possible since there are no references of al-Kisāʾī travelling to Shām. He (Ibn al-Jazari) later mentions that it is quite possible based on what he (Ibn al-Jazari) heard from some

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of his teachers, the fact that al-Kisāʾī did travel to various lands and that it is also mentioned by scholars the like of Ṭāhir ibn Ghalbūn. Allah knows best.

Students:

- Abū ‘Abd Allah Hārūn ibn Mūsā al-Akhfash.
- Muḥammad ibn Mūsā al-Sūrī.

He died in 242 A.H./857 C.E.
ʿĀṣim

He is ʿĀṣim ibn Bahdalah Abū al-Najūd. Bahdalah is the name of his mother and Abū al-Najūd is the patronym of his father. The name of his father is said to be ʿAbd Allah. His patronym is Abū Bakr. His date of birth is not known, though it is mentioned that he grew up in Kufa. He is the fifth imam from the seven qurrāʾ:

He was an outstanding Successor, and considered as the most learned regarding qirāʾāt as well as possessing the most beautiful of voices when he recited. The people in Kufa loved to listen to his recitation. ʿĀṣim became the Sheikh al-Qurrāʾ in Kufa after the demise of Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī. He was well versed in the Arabic language, a grammarian, and also extremely eloquent, to the extent that when he spoke, it was as if the listener was entranced. Some mention that ʿĀṣim was also a tailor.

Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal was asked by his son: “Which reading is most beloved to you?” He replied: “The reading of the people of Medina, and if not, then the reading of ʿĀṣim.”

ʿĀṣim became ill for a period of two years, after which he recovered. He mentions that upon his recovery he recited the entire Qurʾān without any errors.

As he was blind, he was one day being guided by another, when his guide caused him to fall. Yet, because of his humility, he did not reprimand the guide. He was also an ascetic and an ardent adherent to the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ. When he performed Prayer, he stood upright and completely still, almost like a stick. On the day of Jumuʿah, he would remain in the mosque after prayer until the ʿAsr Prayer. In fact, whenever ʿĀṣim passed by a mosque, he would enter and pray in it, and then continue on his way.

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Hafṣ asked him why his reading differed to what he taught Shu‘bah. ‘Āṣim replied: “That which I teach you is what I read to Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī according to what he read to ‘Ali ﷺ, and that which I teach Shu‘bah is what I read to Zirr ibn Ḥubaysh according to what he read to ‘Abd Allah ibn Mas‘ūd ﷺ.” Hafṣ also mentions that if one recited to ‘Āṣim, he would extend his hand and count the verses. ‘Āṣim would allow the tradesmen to recite to him first, so that they may leave and see to their livelihood.

‘Āṣim would not teach from one point only, but would travel around so that he many could benefit from his expertise. However, he disliked teaching those who did not understand, appreciate, or endeavour to learn the Qur’ān.

He said: “Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān said to me: O my son, busy yourself with teaching and learning.” ‘Āṣim would give the same advice to his students.

**Teachers:**

- Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī.
- Zirr ibn Ḥubaysh.
- Abū ‘Amr Sa‘d ibn Iyyās al-Shaybānī.

**Students:**

- Sulaymān ibn Mihrān al-A‘mash.
- Abū Bakr ibn ‘Ayyāsh, better known as Shu‘bah.
- Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān.
- Abū ‘Amr al-Basrī.
- Ḥamzah.
- Khalīl ibn Aḥmad al-Farāhīdī.
- Sufyān al-Thourī.
- Sufyān ibn ʿUyaynah.
• Sallām ibn Sulaymān Abū al-Mundhir.

• Imam Abū Ḥanīfah – he read qirāʾ āt to ʿĀṣim, as well as al-Aʾmash and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Laylā, the teacher of Ḥamzah and al-Kisāʾī. 20 Abū al-Faḍl al-Khuzāʾi has written a book on the Qirāʾ āt of Abū Ḥanīfah, which is also mentioned by Abū al-Qāsim al-Hudhalī in his book, al-Kāmil. However, most scholars are of the view that this book is a fabrication. Sheikh ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ṭarābulusī mentions that if Abū al-Faḍl’s sanad to this book were void of criticism and doubt, then surely this would be of the most authentic qirāʾ āt. 21 Allah knows best. He also transmits ḥadith from ʿĀṣim, amongst others.

He died in 127 A.H./745 C.E. Others say 128 A.H./746 C.E., amongst other opinions.

Shu'bah

He is Shu'bah ibn 'Ayyāsh ibn Sālim al-Ḥannāṭ al-Asadī. His patronym is Abū Bakr. There are about 17 different opinions as to his name. The most correct is Shu'bah. Others include Aḥmad, ‘Abd Allah, Sālim, Qāsim, Muḥammad, amongst others. He was born in 95 A.H./714 C.E.

He read the Qurʾān three times to ‘Āṣim. He also read to ‘Aṭāʾ ibn al-Sāʾib and Aslam al-Minqarī. Even so, his student Yahyā ibn Ādam relates that Shu'bah said: “I learnt the Qurʾān from ‘Āṣim, like a child would learn from his master.” He also said that he learnt five verses at a time from ‘Āṣim. Shu'bah was extremely punctual in his lessons with ‘Āṣim, going to him in extreme heat or cold, and even when it rained heavily. He stated: “I completed three khatms to ‘Āṣim.” Subsequently, Shu'bah stated that by the time he left ‘Āṣim, he knew precisely how every letter should be read according to his Qirā’ah.

Shu'bah was an extremely learned scholar, as well as an ardent follower of the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ. Some scholars stated that they have not seen someone more eager to practice upon the Sunnah than Shu'bah. Other scholars were fortunate to be able to perform hajj with him. They remarked that they have not seen one more pious that Shu'bah. It was well known that for forty years he did not sleep during the night, spending it instead in the worship of Allah. Some say it was fifty years.

Many studied under him, and not only in the field of the Qurʾān. However, about seven years before his demise, he stopped teaching Qurʾān. Sufyān ibn ‘Uyaynah was once in a gathering with Shu'bah. Some came and asked him a question regarding ḥadith. He replied: “You cannot ask me about ḥadith as long as this sheikh (Shu'bah) is amongst us.” This clearly indicates that he was not only an expert in Qurʾān, but an expert in ḥadith as well.

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It is said that for forty years he would make a *khatm* of the Qurʾān every day. He once advised his son: “O my son, never transgress the laws of Allah in this room, for in it I read 12 thousand *khatms.*” On his deathbed, his sister could not stop crying. Shuʿbah asked her: “For what reason are you crying? Take a look at that corner, in it I have made 18 thousand *khatms* of the Qurʾān.”

**Teachers:**
- ‘Āṣim.

**Students:**
- Yaḥyā ibn Ādam.

He died in *jamād al-Ūlā,* 193 A.H./809 C.E.
He is Ḥafṣ ibn Sulaymān ibn al-Mughīrah ibn Abī Dāwūd al-Asadī al-Kūfī al-Bazzāz. He was also known as Ḥufayṣ. His patronyms are Abū ʿUmar and Abū Dāwūd. He was born in 90 A.H./709 C.E.

He was the stepson of ʿĀṣim, after ʿĀṣim married Ḥafṣ’s mother. This outstanding teacher of the Qurʾān was raised and trained by ʿĀṣim, the Sheikh al-Qurrāʾ of Kufa during his time. He read the Qurʾān countless times to his mentor, ʿĀṣim. Many scholars state that Ḥafṣ is the most accurate transmitter of ʿĀṣim’s Qirāʾah. Ḥafṣ settled in both Baghdad, and later in Mecca, until his demise. During his stay in both these places, many learnt from him what he transmitted from ʿĀṣim. He was trustworthy in what he transmitted regarding the Qurʾān, but is considered a weak transmitter in ḥadith.

Ḥafṣ asked ʿĀṣim why his reading differed to what he taught Shuʿbah. ʿĀṣim replied: “That which I teach you is what I read to Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī according to what he read to ʿAli ﷺ, and that which I teach Shuʿbah is what I read to Zirr ibn Ḥubaysh according to what he read to ʿAbd Allah ibn Masʿūd ﷺ.”

Ḥafṣ also mentions that if one recited to ʿĀṣim, he would extend his hand and count the verses. He also relates that he never differed in anything that he gained from ʿĀṣim except in the word ضَعْف of Sūrat al-Rūm, verse 54, that he read with a ḍammah while ʿĀṣim taught him with a fāṭah.

Teacher:

• ʿĀṣim.

Students:

- ʿAmr ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ.
- ʿUbayd ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ.
- Hubayrah.
- Abū Shuʿayb al-Qawwās.

He died in 180 A.H./796 C.E.
Hamzah

He is Hamzah ibn Habib ibn ‘Umarah ibn Ismail al-Zayyaṭ, the sixth imam from the seven qurrā’. His patronym is Abū ‘Umārah. He was the Sheikh al-Qurra’ in Kufa during his time; after ‘Āṣim and al-A‘mash. This great imam was born on 80 A.H./699 C.E. in Ḥulwān, Iraq, during the caliphate of ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān. He is considered a Successor to the Successors (Tābi‘ al-Tābi‘īn), though it is possible that he saw some Companions during their old age. After ‘Āṣim’s demise, most of the people of Kufa started reading the Qirā’ah of Ḥamzah because Shu’bah became frail and stopped teaching before his demise, and Ḥafṣ settled in Baghdad. Thus only a handful of students of ‘Āṣim remained in Kufa teaching his Qirā’ah.

His student, Sulaym, relates that when Ḥamzah initially went to al-A‘mash’s circle to learn, everyone looked at him wearily. When it was his turn, he had to recite Sūrah Yūsuf 50:190. Usually, al-A‘mash would stop and rectify those who recited in his circle, but he did not stop Ḥamzah anywhere. All listened attentively and with awe to his recitation. By the time he had completed the juz, those present had become welcoming and affable to him.

He was an ascetic, a person of great piety and extremely learned concerning the Qur’ān. In the year 100 A.H., he started leading the people of Kufa in prayer. Those who stood behind him in prayer mention that when he read, every letter and vowel was clearly audible. He would teach all who came to his circle to learn. And after all had dispersed, he would perform 4 rak‘ahs of prayer. Thereafter, he would pass his time in prayer between Ṭhuhr and ‘Aṣr, as well as between Mahgrib and Ishā’. Hamzah would constantly be reciting the Qur’ān, and anyone who gazed upon him would find him busy with its recitation. It is said that he would complete 20 or 29 khatms every month. His neighbours related that he never slept at night since they would hear his recitation.

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throughout the night. His student, Sulaym, once found Ḥamzah weeping uncontrollably while he was reciting the Qurʾān. When Sulaym asked him about his weeping, he replied that how could he not weep when in his dream he read the Qurʾān to Allah himself, after which Allah rewarded him with the most beautiful of jewellery and a crown of splendour. It is also related that he cried because he dreamt of the Prophet . In the dream he requested to recite the Qurʾān to him . He then recited the entire Qurʾān to him and the Prophet said to Ḥamzah: “In this manner the Qurʾān was revealed to him.” Some said that the only reason Allah kept calamities away from Kufa was due to Ḥamzah.

The first person who came to the Ḥamzah’s circle of learning would be allowed to read first, followed by the second person, and so forth. Once a person of authority sent their children to recite to Ḥamzah, but because they came late they never got a turn to recite. Afterwards they told Hamzah that they boy was the son of a notable man. Ḥamzah replied that his wealth and money could not buy him a place in his circle of learning.

Ḥamzah would never accept any gifts from his students. On one occasion, an influential man completed a  khatm  by Ḥamzah and sent him one thousand dirhams. To this Ḥamzah replied: “I thought that he was a man of intellect? How can I accept remuneration for the teaching of the Qurʾān? I hope instead for a high place in paradise  (al-fīrđous).” Once Ḥamzah passed by Jarīr ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd and asked for some water to drink. When he brought the water, Ḥamzah never drank because he realised that this person was one of his students. It is related that once Ḥamzah fell in a ditch in Kufa. All the people of Kufa came to help him out. Ḥamzah asked every person that came: “Have you read to me?” If they had, he would refuse their assistance, until none in Kufa remained who could help him out. Eventually Allah sent a lioness to help Ḥamzah out of the ditch.
None could compare with Ḥamzah’s knowledge regarding the Qurʾān. When his teacher, al-Aʿmash would meet him, he would say: “هذا خبر القرآن” (This is an authority on the Qurʾān). Al-Aʿmash also said: “If you want to meet one more learned than me regarding the Qurʾān then look at this youth,” and he pointed at Ḥamzah. Imam Abū Ḥanīfah said to Ḥamzah: “In two things you will overpower us, and we will not attempt to challenge you: your knowledge of the Qurʾān and the laws of inheritance.” Once when reading to his teacher, Ibn Abī Laylā, he made an error. He then inquired why his teacher had not corrected him? Ibn Abī Laylā replied: “خِفتُ اللهُ أَنْ تَكُونَ أَهْتَ امُمصِيبَ وَأَنََ امُمخْطِئَ” (I fear Allah that perhaps you are correct and I am the one mistaken). No qirāʾah was read by Ḥamzah except that he knew its chain of transmission (sanad) from the Prophet ﷺ.

Ḥamzah once mentioned that he was alone in his house, half asleep, when he opened his eyes to find two people sitting by him. They told him: “Do not be afraid, we are your brothers from amongst the jinn.” They informed Ḥamzah that they had a dispute concerning who was more learned regarding the Qurʾān and they came to him for judgement.

Another time, he was reciting the Qurʾān when he heard one calling to him to keep silent. This person then requested to recite to him. He recited Sūrat al-Najm. While he was reciting, Ḥamzah though that this person was reciting according to my Qirāʾah. On completion Ḥamzah asked him: “Who are you?” He replied: “I am from the jinn. I used to come to Kufa and sit on your right side to learn from you.”

Ḥamzah mentions that he was once on travel to perform hajj. On route his camel had gone astray. While searching for it he stumbled on some high land with a sheikh sitting on top of it. The sheikh asked him: “Who are you?” He replied: “Ḥamzah ibn Ḥabīb.” The sheikh asked, “The reciter?” “Yes,” replied Ḥamzah. The sheikh asked: “Recite for me a portion of the Qurʾān.” Ḥamzah then recited from Sūrat al-Aḥqāf until he reached:
And remember when we sent to you (Muḥammad) a group of jinn listening to the Qur’ān.

The sheikh then stopped Ḥamzah and said, “Do you know how many of us there were? There were six of us. We were messengers of the Prophet sent to the jinn. Five had died and I am the only one remaining.” The sheikh then asked him what he was doing there. He explained that he had lost his camel and while searching for it he landed up by the sheikh. The sheikh then said: “Here’s your camel.” And Ḥamzah suddenly found his camel. He then told Ḥamzah to get on the camel and in moments he was amongst the people performing hajj.

Ibn Shanabūdh relates that some traditionists said they dreamt about the day of judgement. On that day two individuals were raised above all others. They asked that who are those two raised above the rest of us? It was said that they were Abū ‘Amr al-Basrī and Ḥamzah ibn Ḥabīb al-Zayyāt.

**Teachers:**

- Sulaymān ibn Mihrān al-Aʿmash – some say that he did not recite the entire Qur’ān to al-Aʿmash, but learnt certain qirāʾāt from him. Ḥamzah also relates that during Ramaḍān he would go to al-Aʿmash with a mushaf and al-Aʿmash would read to him while he marked the qirāʾāt in his mushaf. However Sulaym, as well as Kisāʾī relate that they saw Ḥamzah reading to al-Aʿmash on more than one occasion. The latter opinion is more correct.
- Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-.RemoveAll al-Ṣādiq.
- Ḥumrān ibn Aʿyan.

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26 *Aḥāsin al-Akhbār*, pg. 352.
• Abū Isḥāq al-Sabīʿī.
• Manṣūr ibn al-Muʿtamir.

Students:
• Al-Kisāʾī.
• Sulaym ibn ʿĪsā.
• Sufyān al-Thourī – he revised the Qurʾān with Ḥamzah four times.
• Yaḥyā ibn Ādam.
• Yaḥyā ibn Ziyād al-Farrāʿ.

He died in a place named Bāʿ in Kufa on 156 A.H./773 C.E.
Khalaf

He is Khalaf ibn Hishām ibn Thaʿlab ibn Hashīm ibn Thaʿlab ibn Dāwūd ibn Miqsam ibn Ghālib. His name is also given as Khalaf ibn Hishām ibn Ṭālib ibn Ghurāb. He was better known as Khalaf al-Bazzār. He disliked that people called him al-Bazzār and would tell them to call him “al-Muqriʾ” — teacher of the Qurʾān. His patronym is Abū Muḥammad. He was born in 150 A.H./767 C.E.

At the age of ten he had memorised the Qurʾān. He started seeking further knowledge at the age of thirteen. Khalaf said: “I memorised the Qurʾān by the age of ten, and starting teaching it when I was thirteen.” He became an exemplary scholar, as well as a staunch upholder of the Sunnah. He was a man of utmost piety. Khalaf was well known for the fact that he always fasted. He once said that he found a chapter in Arabic grammar difficult, and spent 80 thousand dirhams until he mastered that particular chapter. Some scholars state that they have not seen one more honoured than Khalaf. When he taught, he let the people of the Qurʾān read first, then the traditionists. He was also a transmitter of ḥadith, appearing in the Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim, the Sunan of Abū Dāwūd, in al-Nasāʾī, and many other works of ḥadith.

Some scholars would say to him: “You are the most learned in Kufa, O Khalaf.” Khalaf mentions that I came to Kufa and went to Sulaym who asked me what I wanted by him. I informed him that I wanted to recite to Shuʿbah. Sulaym then wrote a note and sent me with it to Shuʿbah. He initially looked down upon me, but after reading the note he asked: “Are you Khalaf? Are you the one who has left none in Baghdad more learned than you?” I remained silent. He then said: “Sit, come closer, and recite.” I asked: “Recite to you?” He replied: “Yes.” I then remarked: “I take an oath in Allah’s name that I will not recite to one who belittles another ordained with the Qurʾān in his chest.” He later said that he regretted not reading to Shuʿbah. Instead he transmitted the Qirāʾah of ʿĀṣim via Yaḥyā ibn Ādam, the student of Shuʿbah.

Khalaf transmits the *Qirā‘at* of all seven *qurrā‘*: the *Qirā‘ah* of Nafi‘ via al-Musayyibī, the *Qirā‘ah* of Ibn ‘Āmir via Hishām, the *Qirā‘ah* of Ibn Kathīr via Ibn ‘Aqīl, the *Qirā‘ah* of Abū ʿAmr via Abū Zayd, the *Qirā‘ah* of al-Kisā‘ī directly from him, the *Qirā‘ah* of ‘Āṣim via Yahyā ibn Ādam, and the *Qirā‘ah* of Ḥamzah via Sulaym.²⁸

**Teachers:**

- Sulaym — he read the Qurʾān many times to Sulaym.
- Ḥishāq al-Musayyibī.
- Hishām.
- ʿUbayd ibn ʿAqīl.
- Abū Zayd.
- Al-Kisā‘ī — Al-Kisā‘ī read the entire Qurʾān to Khalaf while he noted all the changes and the *qirā‘āt*.
- Yahyā ibn Ādam.

**Students:**

- Idrīs ibn ʿAbd al-Karīm.

Khalaf died in Jamād al-Ākhirah, 229 A.H. in Baghdad./844 C.E.

²⁸ *Aḥāsin al-Akhbār*, pg. 363.
Khallād

He is Khallād ibn Khālid al-Shaybānī al-Ṣayrafī al-Kūfī. His patronym is Abū ʿĪsā or Abū ‘Abd Allah. He was born in 119 A.H./737 C.E. He is considered one of the most outstanding and honoured students of Sulaym. Al-Dāni regards him as one of the most precise students of Sulaym in what he transmitted from him. He dedicated his life in serving the Qurʾān and was known for his piety.

Ḥamzah read the Qurʾān to him in his Qirāʾah. However, he did not read directly to Ḥamzah.

Teachers:

- Sulaym.
- Al-Kisāʾī.

Students:

- Abū Bakr ibn Shādhān al-Jouhari.

He died in 220 A.H./835 C.E. in Kufa.

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30 Aḥāsin al-Akhbār, pg. 364.
Al-Kisāʾī

ʿAli ibn Ḥamzah ibn ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿUthmān was the seventh imam from the seven qurrāʾ. His patronym was Abū al-Ḥasan. He was better known as al-Kisāʾī which means cloak or shawl because when on hajj, he wore it as his ihram. Therefore Imam al-Shāṭibī says about him:

ٍِحْرَامِ فِـيهِ ثَـسسَـربَـلَََ َوَأَم ا عَـليٌّ فَامْـكِـسَـائِػػيُّ هَـعْـتُـهُ   *    مِـمَا كانَ في الْْ

“As for ʿAlī, he was referred to as al-Kisāʾī because he donned it (shawl) when in Iḥrām.”

Others say that he wore a shawl (kisāʾī) to class, and Ḥamzah would tell some of the other students to read to the one wearing a kisāʾī – the one wearing a shawl. Another opinion states that he was called al-Kisāʾī because he used to sell shawls in his youth. It is also mentioned that he came from a village in the rural areas of Iraq name Bākusāyā. His nickname, al-Kisāʾī, therefore indicates towards this village. It is also related that when al-Kisāʾī travelled to read to Ḥamzah, he wore a nice shawl. It was the practice of Ḥamzah that he would not allow anyone to read more than thirty verses at a time. Upon reading to Ḥamzah, when al-Kisāʾī reached the thirtieth verse, Ḥamzah told him to continue. Al-Kisāʾī then read until he completed 60 verses and Ḥamzah again told him to continue further. In this manner al-Kisāʾī read to Ḥamzah a hundred verses in one sitting. In the following days, al-Kisāʾī could not immediately return to Ḥamzah to continue his recitation, and Ḥamzah, looking for al-Kisāʾī, asked his other students: “Where is the one who wore the nice shawl?” Thereafter, everyone referred to him as al-Kisāʾī – the one who wore the shawl. The first opinion, which is also hinted at by Imam al-Shāṭibī, is the most well-known opinion.

He was from the Tābiʿī al-Tābiʿīn, and born in Kufa in approximately 180 A.H./796 C.E. This great imam of qirāʾāt was originally from Kufa, and later settled in Iraq. Al-Kisāʾī became the imam of qirāʾāt in Kufa after the demise of Ḥamzah. He later traveled to Basra to study Arabic under the expert Khalīl ibn


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Aḥmad al-Farāḥīdī. One day, he asked Khalil how he acquired so much knowledge of Arabic. He replied that he learnt it from the bedouins of Hijāz. Al-Kisāʾī then traveled to them to learn from them. After some time with them, he returned to Khalil, only to find that he had died and his student Yūnus ibn Ḥabīb had taken his place in teaching Arabic. They then had a debate to see who had more knowledge of the Arabic tongue, after which Yūnus declared that al-Kisāʾī was clearly more knowledgeable than him. He then handed his position as Arabic instructor to al-Kisāʾī. Having an unquenchable thirst for knowledge, he often traveled and stayed amongst the bedouins to study and understand their usage of the Arabic tongue. While with them, he would document many of their expressions and word usages. This resulted in him disappearing for many days on end, until eventually people would see him again. He also had the most knowledge regarding odd word usages and expressions of Arabic. Some of his students professed that they have not found anyone more eloquent than al-Kisāʾī. Others went as far as stating that when he spoke, it was as if an angel was speaking through al-Kisāʾī, due to his brilliance in expression. Imam al-Shāfiʿī said that if anyone wanted to become a specialist in Arabic, he should devote himself to al-Kisāʾī. His student, the famous grammarian, al-Farrāʾ mentions that he discussed something concerning Arabic with al-Kisāʾī one day and he found himself like a small bird drinking from the huge ocean. Al-Farrāʾ also relates: “We thought that if we asked al-Kisāʾī about Tafsīr, he would not be able to give a satisfying answer. So we asked him, and he clarified our question in such a manner which astounded us regarding his brilliance.”

When people came to his circle to learn the Qurʾān, he would sit on an elevated chair while they sat on the floor with their maṣāḥif. He would then recite the Qurʾān from the beginning till the end while they marked his Qirāʾah, the places of stopping and starting, the verse-ends, and so forth. His student, Abū ʿUbayd Qāsim ibn Sallām says that he did not meet anyone more knowledgable than al-Kisāʾī regarding the Qurʾān. The Khalīfah, Hārūn al-Rashīd would only choose the best in every field, and in the field of the Qurʾān, he chose al-Kisāʾī to
accompany him. He also stated: “I have not seen one more virtuous, more pious and with more insight in the Qurʾān and Arabic as al-Kisāʾī.”

The two sons of Hārūn al-Rashīd, Amīn and Maʾmūn, would vie to straighten the shoes of al-Kisāʾī. Upon this, Hārūn one day asked: “Who is the most honoured these days?” They replied: “The Amīr (Hārūn) and his family.” He then replied: “Nay, but al-Kisāʾī is the most honoured, for even my sons compete in serving him.”

On one occasion, he lead the prayer while the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd followed. He states that he then made a mistake that not even a child would make. Instead of reading يَرْجِعُون he read يَرْجِعِي. On another occasion al-Kisāʾī and Yaḥyā al-Yazīdī met with the caliph, Hārūn al-Rashīd. When the time for prayer came, al-Kisāʾī was pushed forward as the imam and he faltered in Sūrat al-Kāfirūn. At this Yaḥyā al-Yazīdī sneered that the Qārī of Kufa made an error in such a simple sūrah. Al-Yazīdī was made imam in the following prayer, and he erred in Sūrat al-ʾFātiḥah. At this al-Kisāʾī remarked that one should not be too swift to reproach another’s errors, for he will then be tried by the same thing for which he reproached another.

During the month of Shaʿbān, a mimbar (pulpit) would be prepared for him. He would then sit on the mimbar and recite two khatms for the people during this month.

Al-Kisāʾī relates that while teaching the people in the miḥrab of Damascus, he dozed off. He then dreamt that he saw a man approach the Prophet ﷺ in a dream and asked him: “Whom should we follow in recitation?” The Prophet ﷺ then pointed to me (al-Kisāʾī). It is related after his demise, al-Kisāʾī was seen in a dream. It was said to him: “What has Allah done with you?” He replied: “Allah has forgiven me due to the Qurʾān.”
Teachers:

- Ḥamzah – it is said that he read the Qurʾān to Ḥamzah four times.
- Muḥammad ibn Abī Laylā.
- Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq – he heard the Qurʾān from him.
- Al-Aʿmash – he heard the Qurʾān from him.
- Shuʿbah – he transmits qirāʾāt from him.

Students:

- Abū al-Ḥārith al-Layth.
- Ḥafṣ ibn ʿUmar al-Dūrī.
- Abū ʿUbayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām – he heard the Qurʾān from him.
- Yahyā ibn Ādam.
- Khalaf.
- Khallād.
- Yaḥyā ibn Ziyād al-Farrāʾ.
- Yaʿqūb – he transmits certain qirāʾāt from him.
- Ibn Dhakwān, the narrator of Ibn ʿĀmir al-Shāmī – this has been criticised by some. However, Abū ʿAmr al-Dānī (d. 444 A.H./1052 C.E.) also mentions that Ibn Dhakwān himself said that he read to al-Kisāʾī when he came to Damascus. Ṭāhir Ibn Ghalbūn (d. 399 A.H./1008 C.E.) also relates that he did read to al-Kisāʾī when he came to Damascus. This is also supported by Ibn al-Jazarī, in spite of it being criticised by al-Dhahabī (d. 748 A.H./1347 C.E.) and not being mentioned by Ibn ʿAsākir (d. 571 A.H./1176 C.E.).

He also authored many works regarding qirāʾāt of the Qurʾān and Arabic. Al-Kisāʾī died while on route to Khurasan with Hārūn al-Rashīd in 189 A.H./805 C.E. He was the last of the seven qurrāʾ to pass on.
Abū al-Ḥārith

He is Al-Layth ibn Khālid al-Baghdādī, better known by his patronym, Abū al-Ḥārith. He devoted many years in studying from al-Kisāʾī, becoming one of his most noted students. He not only studied qirāʾāt by him, but became a master of the Arabic language and an expert in analyzing various qirāʾāt and its origins. Al-Kisāʾī would place him before his other students, and he was known amongst other scholars for his reliability in transmission and his extreme piety.

Teachers:

- Al-Kisāʾī.
- Yaḥyā al-Yazīdī — he transmits certain qirāʾāt from him.

Students:

- Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā, also known as al-Kisāʾī al-Ṣaghīr.
- Al-废水 ibn Shādhān.

He died in 240 A.H./855 C.E.

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