

THE TRANSMISSION OF SEVEN QUR'ANIC READINGS IN MALANG: Networks, Scholarship, and Pedagogical Dynamics

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Article history: Received: April 10, 2025 | Revised: May 24, 2025 | Available Online: June 20, 2025.

How to cite this article: Badriyah, Lilik & Miski. "The Transmission of Seven Qur'anic Readings in Malang: Networks, Scholarship, and Pedagogical Dynamics". *Mutawatir: Jurnal Keilmuan Tafsir Hadith* 15, no. 1 (2025): 46-69. DOI: 10.15642/mutawatir.2025.15.1.46-69

Abstract: This study examines the transmission of seven Qur'anic readings (*qirā'ah sab'ah*) in Qur'anic boarding schools (*pesantren*) in Malang, East Java, a subject rarely addressed in Indonesian Qur'anic studies. It investigates how this tradition affirms the Qur'an's authenticity while shaping networks of authority and pedagogy. Using a qualitative socio-historical approach that combines archival research and fieldwork, the study traces how knowledge of Qur'anic readings (*qirā'āt*) was transmitted, adapted, and legitimized. The findings reveal that continuity was secured through the agency of Kiai Mustain, whose transmission remained anchored in Kiai Arwani's *Fayd al-Barakāt*. Although later generations adjusted teaching methods to contemporary contexts, their authority was sustained by genealogical fidelity, interpersonal bonds, and institutional ties. The study argues that the network of Qur'anic readings in Malang developed into an elite form of scholarship, simultaneously reinforcing conventional authority structures and adapting to changing educational and social dynamics. These findings contribute to broader discussions on Qur'anic transmission, religious authority, and pedagogical adaptation in Southeast Asian Islam.

Keywords: Seven Qur'anic readings; Qur'anic Institutions; Networks; Religious authority.

Introduction

The *sanad* document of the seven Qur'anic readings (*qirā'āt*), specifically those transmitted by Nāfi' (d. 169 AH), Ibn Kathīr (d. 120

AH), Abū ‘Amr (d. 154 AH), Ibn ‘Āmir (d. 118 AH), ‘Āṣim (d. 128 AH), Ḥamzah (d. 156 AH), and al-Kisā’ī (d. 189 AH), possessed by Muhammad Shofiyullah ibn Muhammad Akhyar (Ustadh Shofi, b. 1978), and signed by KH. Abdul Mannan Syarwani (Kiai Mannan, b. 1968), the head of the Tarbiyatul Qur’an Islamic Boarding School in Lawang, Malang, and instructor of the seven *qirā’at* at the Ilmu al-Qur’an Islamic Boarding School (PIQ), Singosari, Malang, demonstrates the existence of a transmission network. The document states that Ustadh Shofi received instruction in the seven *qirā’at* from Kiai Mannan; from KH. Abu al-‘Aliyah Silahul Hawa (Kiai Hawa) in Buring, Malang; and from KH. Mustain Syamsuri (Kiai Mustain) in Singosari, Malang. Through Kiai Mustain, Ustadh Shofi’s *sanad* of the seven *qirā’at* is connected to KH. Hisyam (Kiai Hisyam) from Kudus, Central Java, and subsequently to KH. Arwani Amin (also known as Kiai Arwani) is from Kudus, Central Java. This document underscores the continuity of the transmission and network of the chain (*sanad*) of the seven *qirā’at* in Indonesia.

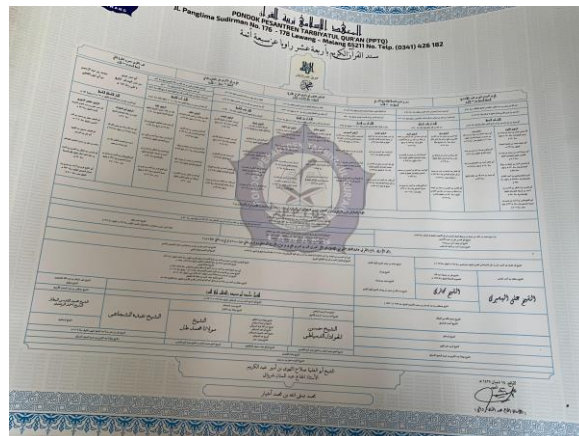


Figure 1. The *Sanad* of the Seven *Qirā’at* belonging to Ustadh Shofi.

In the abovementioned document, Kiai Mustain is the central figure in transmitting the seven *qirā’at* in Malang. According to Bizawie, Kiai Mustain’s authority was not restricted to the field of the seven *qirā’at* but extended more broadly to the field of the Qur’an as a whole.¹ This declaration reinforces how the *sanad* system in the seven

¹ Zainul Milal Bizawie, *Sanad Qur’an Dan Tafsir Di Nusantara: Jalur, Lajur Dan Titik Temunya* (Tangerang: Pustaka Kompas, 2022), 147.

qirā'at was realized and became indispensable. In this context, the seven *qirā'at*, both as a scholarly discipline and a practice of Qur'anic recitation, have been continuously preserved and cannot be separated from the presence of teachers who transmit them to their students, thereby forming a chain of transmission (*sanad* network).² Within the broader discourse of *qirā'at* in Islamic tradition, the *sanad* network is one of the most crucial concepts for authenticating a Qur'anic recitation (*qirā'ah*), or even the Qur'an itself. It is a system that links one generation to the next, even though they are separated by centuries; it has also bridged one region with another. In this regard, the names cited by Bizawie clearly affirm the vital role of the *sanad* system of Qur'anic *qirā'at*, including in the context of the Indonesian archipelago.

The scholarly attention given to the seven *qirā'at* networks and their transmission in Malang has been disproportionately low. Malang, with its Qur'anic *pesantren*, further strengthened by the existence of the aforementioned *sanad* documents of the seven *qirā'at*, generates an important assumption that the Qur'anic transmission network has been well preserved, particularly through the presence of its notable figures. In addition, when preserving and developing the seven *qirā'at*, these figures not only depended on memorization but also employed supporting media. Inevitably, conditions and circumstances continue to change; the needs and cognitive orientations of Malang's society are not identical across generations, and a particular medium may be relevant for one generation but not necessarily for another.³ Taking these aspects into account, research on the Qur'anic networks in Malang gains momentum, as it is closely related to the most fundamental system within the discourse of Qur'anic studies, while

² Muhammad Ulinnuha, "Peran Syekh Mahfuzh At-Tarmasi (1868-1920 M) Di Bidang Ilmu Qira'at Al-Qur'an," *Istiqro'* 15, no. 1(2017): 137-168, <http://repository.iitq.ac.id/handle/123456789/1732>; Rola Nurzahrta, "Implementasi Metode Pembelajaran Qira'at Sab'ah Di Sekolah Pendidikan Dan Pengembangan Al-Qur'an Di Kota Banda Aceh," *Skripsi* (UIN Ar-Raniry Darussalam, Banda Aceh, 2019); Nurhidayani, "Pembelajaran Qira'at Sab'ah Bagi Para Qori Qori'Ah Pada Halaqah Qira'at Al-Qur'an Pondok Tilawah Yossi Okta Di Kota Pekanbaru," *Skripsi* (UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau, 2023), 9-20; Maulia Khafidhoh, "Sanad Qira'at Sab'ah Di Pekalongan (Studi Kasus Majelis Ta'lim Darul Furqon)," *Skripsi* (UIN KH. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan, 2024), 55-70.

³ Muhamad Amin Nur et al., "The Influence of Kiai Leadership, Pesantren Culture, and Information Technology on Santri Loyalty," *Al-Hayat: Journal of Islamic Education* 8, no. 4 (2024): 1347-65, <https://doi.org/10.35723/ajie.v8i4.65>

simultaneously serving as a concrete historical document of Qur'anic transmission in Malang, particularly in the context of the seven *qirā'āt*.

Accordingly, the primary focus of this study concerns the role of Malang's Qur'anic scholars in safeguarding the existence of the seven *qirā'āt*, the dynamics of teaching them in Malang's *pesantren* as part of their transmission process, and the representation of scholarly authority among these figures. By focusing on these aspects, the present research is situated within the field of Qur'anic studies from a regional perspective in Malang, East Java. Theoretically, this study makes a concrete contribution to the development of Qur'anic scholarship, which has thus far not received proportionate attention. This study, then, serves as a socio-historical document of the seven *qirā'āt* networks in Indonesia. Practically, this document is crucial for maintenance, continuity, and as a foundation for future research. This importance is further highlighted given the scarcity of documentation concerning *qirā'āt*, which makes this study important in addressing such limitations. With its distinctive culture and traditions, Malang further allows for the possibility of particular tendencies in the patterns of *qirā'āt* found within it.⁴

This study uses a qualitative field research methodology⁵ with a socio-historical approach.⁶ The research focuses on five *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) in Malang that offer programs in the seven *qirā'āt*: Pondok Pesantren (PP) Tarbiyatul Qur'an in Lawang; Pondok Pesantren al-Furqon in Buring; Pondok Pesantren Syafa'atul Qur'an in Langlang Singosari; Pondok Pesantren Darul Qur'an Sabilul

⁴ Muhim Nailul Ulya, KH. *Muhammad Arwani Genealogi Sanad Keilmuan Qiraat Sab'ah Di Indonesia* (Tangerang Selatan: Lembaga Kajian Dialektika, 2023), 149.

⁵ Zuchri Abdussamad, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*, ed. Patta Rapanna (Makassar: Syakir Media Press, 2021), 87-88; Muhammad Hasan et al., *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif* (Mak: Tahta Media Group, 2022), 81-84; Abdul Fattah Nasution, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*, ed. Meyniar Albina (Bandung: Harfa Creative, 2019), 66-68.

⁶ Ulfah Zakiyah and Muhammad Ghifari, "Metode Pemahaman Hadis Dengan Pendekatan Sosio-Historis (Studi Atas Pemikiran Said Agil Husin Al-Munawar)," *Al-Isnad: Journal of Indonesian Hadist Studies* 2, no. 1 (2021): 16–25. <https://doi.org/10.51875/alisanad.v2i1.114>; Nurul Djazimah, "Pendekatan Sosio-Historis: Alternatif Dalam Memahami Perkembangan Ilmu Kalam," *Ilmu Ushuluddin* 11, no. 1 (2012): 43–60, <https://doi.org/10.18592/jiu.v11i1.732>; Anisatul Fikriyah Aprilianti and Ansharuddin M, "Pendekatan Historis Sosiologis Dalam Studi Al-Qur'an: Telaah Pemikiran Fazlur Rahman," *Cendekia: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 8, no. 1 (2022): 13–25, <https://doi.org/10.37348/cendekia.v8i1>; Amelia Husna, Lukmanul Hakim, and Khairunnas Jamal, "Implementasi Pendekatan Sosio-Historis Terhadap Tafsir Kisah Pasukan Bergajah," *Madinatul Iman* 2, no. 1 (2023): 39–57.

Muttaqin in Singosari; and Pesantren Ilmu Al-Qur'an in Singosari, all of which offer programs in the study of the seven Qur'anic readings (*qir'āh sab'ah*). These five *pesantren* have persisted as institutions that maintain the tradition of the seven *qirā'āt*, despite the rise of *pesantren* in Malang that primarily focus on Qur'anic memorization. The qualitative design with a socio-historical approach necessitates a comprehensive inquiry.⁷

Data for this study were collected using three main techniques: in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. The collected data were categorized into two types, namely primary and secondary data. The primary data consisted of interviews with the leaders and the instructors of the *pesantren* above, who were responsible for teaching the seven *qirā'āt*, as well as relevant documents in their possession. These include materials concerning their respective roles in the process of *qirā'āt* transmission, teacher–student networks, the literature employed in the learning process, and related aspects. The secondary data comprised various supporting components for analyzing the *sanad* network, transmitting the seven *qirā'āt*, and constructing scholarly authority.⁸ These components include existing scholarly works on the seven *qirā'āt*, particularly those within the Indonesian context. All data were subsequently examined through interpretive analysis.

The Seven Qirā'āt as a Discourse

The seven *qirā'āt* constitute a concept concerning the modes of Qur'anic reading and their variations based on the transmitters.⁹ The

⁷ Abdussamad, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*, 146; Hasan et al., *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*, 81; Nasution, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*, 64.

⁸ Riqza Ahmad, “Kitab Faidh Al-Barakat Fi Sab’ Al-Qira’at Kyai Arwani Kudus: Analisa Metodologi Dan Thariqah Jama’,” *Tesis* (Institut Ilmu Al-Quran (IIQ) Jakarta, 2015); Ulya, KH. Muhammad Arwani, 245-262; Bizawie, *Sanad Qur'an Dan Tafsir Di Nusantara*; Ahsin Sakho Muhammad, *Membumikan Ulumul Qur'an: Tanya Jawab Memudahkan Tentang Ilmu Qiraat, Ilmu Rasm Usmani, Ilmu Tafsir, Dan Relevansinya Dengan Muslim Indonesia* (Jakarta Selatan: Qaf, 2018).

⁹ Ahmad Zaeni, “Melacak Sejarah Kodifikasi Al-Qur'an,” *Al-Mufasssir* 3, no. 2 (2021): 106–18, <https://doi.org/10.32534/amf.v3i2.2474>; Aida Aida, Aisya Nur Faradila, and Annisa Kartika Dewi, “Variasi Qira’at Dan Latar Belakang Perbedaan Qira’at,” *Mushaf Journal: Jurnal Ilmu Al Quran Dan Hadis* 2, no. 1 (2022): 101–11, <https://doi.org/10.54443/mushaf.v2i1.23>; Ahmad Zubairin, “Qira’at Sab’ah Dalam Membaca Al-Qur'an,” *Jurnal Asy-Syukriyyah* 16, no. 1 (2022): 88–107, <https://doi.org/10.36769/asy.v16i1.222>; Ade Nailul Huda and Akhyar Amnar,

existence of the seven *qirā'at* cannot be separated from the contribution of Ibn Mujāhid through his seminal work *Al-Sab'ah fī al-Qirā'at*.¹⁰ Beyond this, the conception of the ten *qirā'at* or *al-qirā'at al-'ashrah*, a designation for the seven reciters already mentioned, along with three others: Abū Ja'far al-Madanī (d. 128 H), Ya'qūb al-Baṣrī (d. 205 H), and Khalaf (d. 229 H), popularized by post-Ibn Mujāhid scholars, especially al-Jazarī, also came to be recognized as authoritative. Similarly, the conception of the fourteen readings of the Qur'an (*qirā'at arba'at 'ashr*), a designation for the ten reciters together with four additional figures: al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110 H), Ibn Muḥayyis (d. 123 H), Yaḥyā al-Yazīdī (d. 202 H), and Muḥammad al-Sanbūzī (d. 388 H), was essentially a development of Ibn Mujāhid's conception of the seven *qirā'at*.¹¹ From this perspective, it becomes evident how Ibn Mujāhid received recognition from subsequent scholars and became the most pivotal figure in the history of the transmission of the seven *qirā'at* throughout the Islamic world, including in Indonesia.¹²

In the Indonesian context, the figure of Kiai Arwani is closely linked to the emergence and development of the seven *qirā'at*, particularly in Java.¹³ According to Ahsin Sakho, the book of *Fayḍ al-*

"Silsilah Sanad Qirā'at Syaikh 'Abd Al-Ra'ūf Al-Sinkilī Dalam Tafsir Turjumān Al-Mustafid," *Al-Dzikra: Jurnal Studi Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Al-Hadits* 16, no. 2 (2022): 317–40, <https://doi.org/10.24042/al-dzikra.v16i2.13857>.

¹⁰ Ahmad Yusam Thobroni, "Ibn Mujāhid Dan Kontribusinya Dalam Qirā'at Al-Qur'ān," *Al-Fikra: Jurnal Ilmiah Keislaman* 7, no. 1 (2017): 63, <https://doi.org/10.24014/af.v7i1.3783>.

¹¹ Lilik Nurhidayah and Andi Muhammad Sultan Maulana Majid, "Abu Bakr Ibn Mujahid dan Qirā'ah Sab'ah," *Izzatuna, Jurnal Ilmu Al-Quran Dan Tafsir* 3, no. 1 (2022): 31–37, <https://doi.org/10.62109/ijiat.v2i1.19>; Afrida Arinal Muna, "Politik Kuasa Kanonisasi Qiraat Sab'ah Ibnu Mujahid Dalam Kitab Al-Sab'ah," *Tesis* (UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2021); Shady Hekmat Nasser, *The Second Canonization of the Qur'an (324/936): Ibn Mujahid and the Founding of the Seven Readings* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.3366/jqs.2022.0494n>.

¹² Raihan Putry, "Kepemimpinan Perempuan Dalam Perspektif Islam," *Jurnal Mudarrisuna* 4, no. 2 (2015): 626–5. <https://doi.org/10.18860/jmpi.v2i2.5483>.

¹³ Najib Syaifullah, "Rekonstruksi Sanad Qirā'at Indonesia (Studi Analisis Sanad KH. Muhammad Munawwir Dan KH. Muhammad Arwani)," *Tesis*, 2018, 1–234; Ade Chariri Fashichul Lisan, "Hermeneutika Gramatikal: Telaah Epistemologi Kitab Faidhul Barākat Fī Sab'īl Qirā'at Karya K.H. Muḥamad Arwani Bin Muḥamad Amin Al-Qudsi," *Dialogia* 17, no. 1 (2019): 61, <https://doi.org/10.21154/dialogia.v17i1.1655>; Faridatus Sa'adah, "Perkembangan Qirā'at Di Indonesia: Tradisi Penghafalan Qirā'at Sab'ah Dari Ahlinya Yang

Barakāt authored by Kiai Arwani has become the most widely consulted reference among *qirā'āt* specialists, especially in Java.¹⁴ Ulya explains that the emergence of *Fayḍ al-Barakāt* originated from Kiai Arwani's difficulty in mastering the seven *qirā'āt* from his teacher, KH. Munawwir. At that time, the primary reference was *Nazm al-Shaṭibīyah*. Ulya further notes that Kiai Arwani completed his studies of all thirty chapters of the Qur'an under Kiai Munawwir, covering the entire thirty chapters over approximately nine years. During this period, he compiled personal notes that were later collected into a manuscript entitled *Fayḍ al-Barakāt fī Sab' al-Qirā'āt*. The work is arranged according to *tartīb muṣḥafī* (the order of the *muṣḥaf*), presenting verses along with their *qirā'āt* variants, accompanied by explanations of the governing rules.¹⁵ In the end, Kiai Arwani's primary aim in composing *Fayḍ al-Barakāt* was to provide an accessible and practical method for learning the seven *qirā'āt*.¹⁶ The significance of this work explains why the discourse of the seven *qirā'āt* in Indonesia is more closely connected with the figure of Kiai Arwani than with his teacher, Kiai Munawwir.¹⁷

Talaqqī-mushāfahah has become the method most closely associated with the study of the seven *qirā'āt*. In simple terms, *talaqqī* refers to reciting verses of the Qur'an before a teacher, while *mushāfahah* refers to demonstrating Qur'anic recitation likewise in the teacher's presence. Within this framework, it is unsurprising that the two are often considered synonymous. According to Ulya, in practice, both methods are consistently correlated with the "Gabrielic Method" (*Tariqat Jibrīl*), in which the teacher delivers and exemplifies a recitation that the student then imitates, and the *sorogan* method, in which students recite individually before the teacher, who then provides corrections if necessary. Ulya further notes that Kiai Arwani himself employed the *mushāfahah* and *kitābah* method (demonstrating

Bersanad," *Subuf* 12, no. 2 (2019): 201–25, <https://doi.org/10.22548/shf.v12i2.418>; Siti Muflichah, "The Charisma Leadership Style of Kyai Haji Arwani Amin The Founder of Yanbuul Quran Pesantren, Kudus," *Jicsa* 03, no. 01 (2014): 61–81; <https://doi.org/10.24252/jicsa.v3i1.774>; Muhammad Amin, Winarno, and Karyono, "Eksistensi Sanad Al- Qur'an Di Bangka Belitung," *El Afkar* 13, no. 1 (2024): 181–210, <http://dx.doi.org/10.29300/jpkth.v13i1.4045>.

¹⁴ Sakho, *Membumikan Ulumul Qur'an*.

¹⁵ Ulya, KH. *Muhammad Arwani*, 103.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 101.

¹⁷ Sa'adah, "Perkembangan Qirā'āt Di Indonesia," 201–225.

the recitation while also submitting written notes concerning the seven *qirā'āt*), and this was conducted through memorization (*bi al-ghayb*) rather than by direct reference to the written *muṣḥaf* (*bi al-naẓar*). However, Ulya recognizes both *talaqqī* and *mushāfabah* as the methods most commonly practiced in Indonesia, as long as they adhere to the foundational principle that no error is allowed in either theory or practice.¹⁸

Moreover, Ulya explains that the pedagogical method of the seven *qirā'āt* practiced by Kiai Arwani eventually underwent creative modification, particularly in the hands of his students and disciples. In this regard, Ulya highlights six methods: (1) *mushāfabah* (students present their recitation to the teacher); (2) *talqīn-taqlīd* (the teacher provides an example to be imitated by the student); (3) *bandongan* (emphasizing the fundamentals of knowledge and the theoretical aspects of the seven *qirā'āt*); (4) *mushāfabah-kitābah* (as applied by Kiai Arwani); (5) *mudārasah* (a small group method where students recite and revise one another); and (6) collaborative methods (a synthesis of several approaches). This process of creative modification represents the response of Kiai Arwani's network of students to the changing demands of the times, which increasingly require pedagogical innovation, particularly in light of the diverse capacities of contemporary learners.¹⁹

Key Figures of the Seven *Qirā'āt* Network at Qur'anic Pesantren in Malang

As evidenced in the *sanad* document preserved by Ustadh Shofi, Kiai Mustain (1944–2012) emerges as a central figure in the seven *qirā'āt* network in Malang. He was the founding leader of Pesantren Hūffāẓ Darul Qur'an in Singosari, Malang. The *pesantren* was established in response to the community's enthusiasm for studying the Qur'an under Kiai Mustain, attracting not only residents of Singosari but also students from outside the region, some of whom eventually settled there as his *pesantren* students. Kiai Mustain's expertise in Qur'anic studies was shaped by Kiai Mufid Mas'ud, the leader of Pesantren Sunan Pandanaran, Yogyakarta. He acquired his mastery of the seven *qirā'āt* under the guidance of Kiai Hisyam in the 1960s. This intellectual trajectory explains why the *pesantren* under Kiai

¹⁸ Ulya, KH. *Muhammad Arwani*, 152.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 142.

Mustain emphasized Qur'anic memorization and designated the seven *qirā'at* as a flagship program. In other words, within the framework of agency in the field of the seven *qirā'at*, Kiai Mustain's authority is closely linked to his position as a student of Kiai Hisyam, who himself had been a student of Kiai Arwani.

Beyond Kiai Hawa, mentioned in the *sanad* document above, several of Kiai Mustain's students continued teaching the seven *qirā'at* after his passing. For example, Nahrul Ulum (Kiai Nahru, b. 1973) was his student and son-in-law and now leads Pesantren Syafa'atul Qur'an in Langlang Singosari. He studied the seven *qirā'at* directly under Kiai Mustain from 1987 to 1991. Likewise, Nashihuddin (Kiai Nashih, b. 1976) was also a student of Kiai Mustain and is now the head of Pesantren Darul Qur'an Sabilul Muttaqin in Singosari. He studied the seven *qirā'at* from 1994 to 2001. Both figures automatically became part of the same agency network as Kiai Mustain. Similarly, Kiai Hawa studied the *qirā'at* from 1986 to 1992 and began teaching in 1994. From his efforts emerged new cadres of the seven *qirā'at*, such as Kiai Abdul Mannan, who studied intensively from 2000 to 2002. From Kiai Mannan emerged Ustadh Shofi, thereby continuing the chain of transmission.



Figure 2. The *sanad* of Kiai Mannan through the lineage of Kiai Hawa.

The previously mentioned document emphasizes that, following the passing of Kiai Mustain, the influence of the seven *qirā'at* in Malang, particularly in Singosari, was no longer concentrated in a single key figure. The participation of Kiai Mustain's students

indicates the distribution of authority and the development of a non-monolithic agency system. Although the names mentioned above were all students of Kiai Mustain, over time, each consolidated his own authority, particularly through the institutions they led. The presence of new learners, specifically those studying the seven *qirā'at* within each institution established by his students, further highlights how they actively became agents who not only reinforced the authority of Kiai Mustain as their teacher but also solidified their own credibility within social and cultural contexts, which is distinct from those encountered by their teacher. The consequence of this dynamic is, on the one hand, the broader dissemination of the seven *qirā'at*, and on the other hand, the emergence of contested authority within a complex system of agency.

The Seven *Qirā'at* in Qur'anic Pesantren of Malang: Between Preservation and Modification

The standard of seven *qirā'at* instruction under Kiai Mustain fully adhered to the model of Kiai Hisyam, which was also in accordance with the standards of Kiai Arwani. Kiai Mustain required that any student wishing to study the seven *qirā'at* with him must first have completed the memorization of all thirty chapters of the Qur'an (*bi al-ghayb*). Instruction in the seven *qirā'at* was conducted through the *mushāfahah-ḵitābah* system, whereby students were required to bring their own copy of *Fayḍ al-Barakāt* and perform their recitation individually, by memorization (*bi al-ghayb*), before Kiai Mustain. Among those educated under this standard, albeit at different periods, were Kiai Nahru, Kiai Nashih, and Kiai Hawa. However, this standard began to shift in the hands of Kiai Mustain's students, for example, at Pesantren Syafa'atul Qur'an in Langlang, Singosari, Kiai Nahru employed the *ḵitābah* system only for the first ten chapters of the Qur'an as contained in *Fayḍ al-Barakāt*. At the same time, other aspects of the training were preserved by Kiai Mustain's standards.²⁰ Beyond this, Kiai Nahru also introduced *Al-Budūr al-Zāhirah fī al-Qirā'ah al-'Ashrah al-Mutawātirah* as a complementary text alongside *Fayḍ al-Barakāt*.²¹

²⁰ Kiai Nahru, Personal Interview, April 25, 2025.

²¹ Kiai Nahru, Personal Interview, April 25, 2025.

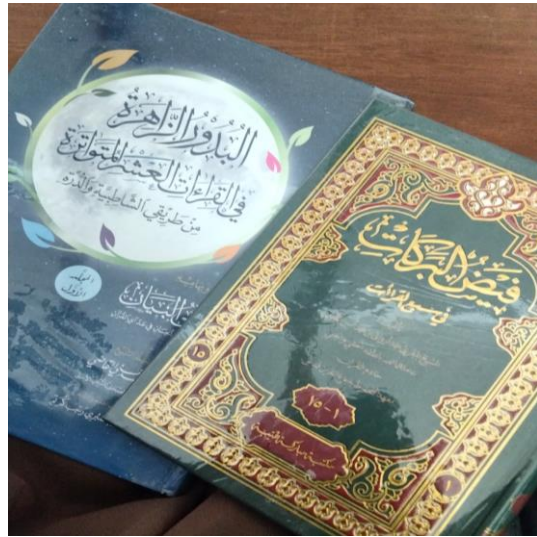


Figure 3. Primary and supplementary texts.

A modification of instructional standards was also observed in teaching the seven *qirā'āt* as implemented by Kiai Nashih. In this case, Kiai Nashih no longer required students to transcribe the variant Qur'anic readings according to the different *imāms* of the *qirā'āt*, as was the practice of Kiai Nahru, Kiai Mustain, and earlier generations. Instead, he allowed students to take notes or not at all. While *Fayḍ al-Barakāt* continued to serve as the primary reference, students increasingly relied on the Qur'anic *muṣḥaf* that already contained annotations of variant readings; this appears to be the most fundamental reason why dedicated note-taking on *qirā'āt* was no longer deemed necessary. In this pedagogical framework, Kiai Nashih introduced *Al-Muḥṣar fī al-Qirā'āt al-Sab'*. Beyond this adjustment, however, he continued to adhere to Kiai Mustain's standards, which mandated that students must have completed the memorization of all thirty chapters of the Qur'an, and then submit their memorization (*bi al-ghayb*) seven *qirā'āt* recitations individually. In other words, this shift in standards was relatively limited, as the core elements of instruction remained intact.²²

“Previously, students were required to have memorized all thirty *juḥ'* (chapters) and to copy the *Fayḍ al-Barakāt*, which they had to bring to every recitation session. The pattern of submission began

²² Kiai Nashih, Personal Interview, April 25, 2025.

with the first *juṣ'*, repeated up to fourteen times for each *riwāyah*, then continued by *imām*, and concluded with the *jama' kubrā*.²³

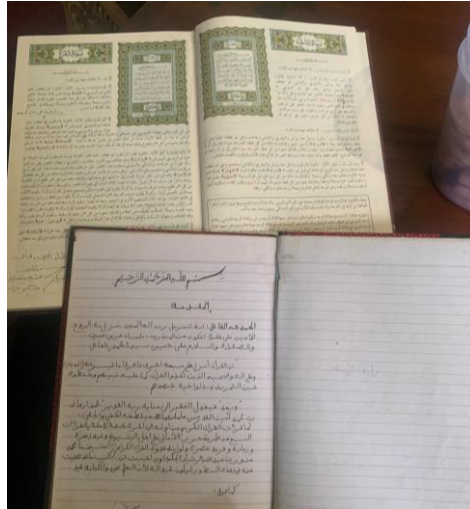


Figure 4. A manuscript copy of *Fayḍ al-Barakāt* by Kiai Nashih

Kiai Hawa introduced further modifications. He did not require students to have memorized the Qur'an entirely; instead, he emphasized the precision of recitation (*faṣāḥah* and *tajwīd*), without obligating the copying of *Fayḍ al-Barakāt*. He also did not demand that students complete the memorization of thirty chapters (*bi al-ghayb*). In this respect, although the learning scheme remained individualized, Kiai Hawa began to employ the *bandongan* system alongside *musyāfahah*, and it was no longer practiced by memorization (*bi al-ghayb*). Furthermore, while the genealogy of Kiai Hawa's knowledge of *qirā'at* was rooted in *Fayḍ al-Barakāt*, he enriched the repertoire with other works, including *Al-Budūr al-Zāhirah* and several additional texts. This pattern was subsequently followed by Kiai Mannan, a student of Kiai Hawa. However, Kiai Mannan continued to rely on *Fayḍ al-Barakāt* and adopted a collaborative method that combined multiple approaches. Such modifications became even more apparent in the teaching system implemented by Ustadh Shofi, who taught the seven

²³ Kiai Nashih, Personal Interview, April 25, 2025.

qirā'at within a formal institution, the *Madrasah Diniyah*, accordingly modifying both methods and media to the institution's curriculum.²⁴

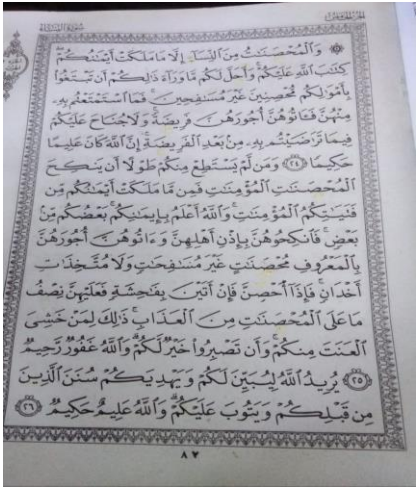


Figure 5. Modified Mushaf

The Network System as the Authorization of the Seven Qur’anic Readings

The network system (*sanad*) represents the most crucial mechanism for preserving the authority of the seven *qirā’at*.²⁵ As previously mentioned, the authority of Kiai Mustain is closely connected to figures like Kiai Hisyam, KH. Mufid Mas’ud and Kiai Arwani were notable authorities in the field and were in the same network. They were situated within the broader lineage of earlier authorities, recognized as part of an authoritative tradition. This network system goes beyond a simple teacher–student relationship; it

²⁴ Kiai Hawa, Personal Interview, April 26, 2025; Kiai Manan, Personal Interview, April 27, 2025.

²⁵ Muhim Nailul Ulya and Syed Abdul Rahman Alkaff, “An Analysis of the Sanad Transmission by K.H. Muhammad Arwani (1905 – 1994) and His Role in the Dissemination of Qiraat Sab’ah Knowledge in Indonesia,” *Qof* 7, no. 2 (2023): 245–62, <https://doi.org/10.30762/qof.v7i2.1400>; Muhamad Zul Ikhwan Zahari and Nor Hafizi Yusof, “Pengajian Al-Quran Bersanad Di Tanah Melayu: Analisis Terhadap Manuskrip Sanad Al-Quran (1894M),” *Nadwah Ulama Nusantara (NUN) X: Keintelektualan Ulama Dalam Perabadian Melayu-Islam*, 2023, 4–5; Andayani, Andayani and Ziyadul Haq, “Jejaring Sanad Al-Quran (Studi Kasus Rumah Tahfiz Al-Quran Di Jakarta),” *Innovative: Journal of Social Science Research* 4, no. 1 (2024): 7549–62, <https://doi.org/10.31004/innovative.v4i1.8313>.

is embedded in a framework of rigorous standards, surpassing the mere ability to recite the Qur'an or memorize its thirty chapters. Such stringent standards explain why not everyone who memorizes the Qur'an can automatically master the seven *qirā'āt*. Consequently, those within the *sanad* of the seven *qirā'āt* are inherently recognized as authoritative figures.²⁶

The existence of a *sanad* document serves as formal evidence of authority in the field of the seven *qirā'āt*, granted through a validation process by a recognized master.²⁷ For instance, Ustadh Shofi's *sanad* document affirms his recognition by his teacher, Kiai Mannan; Kiai Mannan's *sanad* document similarly affirms his validation by his teacher, Kiai Hawa, and so forth. It must be acknowledged, however, that not every teacher provides formal or written *sanad* documentation. In fact, not all students are permitted to study the seven *qirā'āt*, whether due to their inability to meet the teacher's standards or because they lack a genuine interest in pursuing advanced study of *qirā'āt*. In this context, students who complete the seven *qirā'āt* under the supervision of a recognized master are automatically integrated into the teacher's network, especially when granted explicit authorization to further transmit the knowledge. This context contrasts with Ustadh Shofi's students, who merely engage with the seven *qirā'āt* primarily at the theoretical or scholarly study level, without necessarily attaining the same degree of formal recognition.

Within this network system, authorization extends beyond the teacher's recognition of a student's competence in *qirā'āt* and the subsequent permission to transmit that knowledge to others; it also encompasses the trust of the wider community. In this regard, while

²⁶ Saifuddin Zuhri Qudsy et al., "The Social History of Ashab Al-Jawiiyyin and the Hadith Transmission in the 17th Century Nusantara," *Islamiyyat* 43, no. 2 (2021): 105–15, <https://doi.org/10.17576/islamiyyat-2021-4302-09>; Azzami Mustofa, "Pembakuan Qira'at 'Asim Riwayat Hafis Dalam Sejarah Dan Jejaknya Di Indonesia," *Subuf Jurnal Pengkajian Al-Qur'an Dan Budaya* 4, no. 2 (2011): 221–45. <https://doi.org/10.22548/shf.v4i2.55>; Sa'adah, "Perkembangan Qirā'āt Di Indonesia"; Andayani and Haq, "Jejaring Sanad Al-Quran."

²⁷ Nabila El Chirri, "Methodology of Islamic Studies in The East and in The West: A Comparative Review on The Study of Hadith," *AJIS: Academic Journal of Islamic Studies* 2, no. 2 (2017): 167, <https://doi.org/10.29240/ajis.v2i2.313>; Zahari and Yusof, "Pengkajian Al-Quran Bersnad Di Tanah Melayu"; Qudsy et al., "The Social History of Ashab Al-Jawiiyyin and the Hadith Transmission in the 17th Century Nusantara."

possessing a *sanad* document or explicit authorization from a teacher serves as evidence of a student's fulfillment of the learning process, the presence of students at these *pesantren* testifies to the community's confidence in their authority. For example, Pesantren Huffaz Darul Qur'an, under the guidance of Kiai Mustain, attracted students from various regions across Indonesia. Similarly, Pesantren Tarbiyatul Qur'an in Lawang, led by Kiai Mannan, along with several other *pesantren* that form the objects of this study, have drawn broad participation. In other words, this network system functions as a form of legitimacy, affirming one's rightful authority to teach *qirā'at*, preserve the tradition of *sanad*, and sustain its transmission.²⁸

The Shadow of *Fayḍ al-Barakāt* and the Consolidation of Conventional Authority

The prominence of Kiai Mustain in the field of the seven *qirā'at* is inseparable from the successful process of cadre formation under the guidance of Kiai Hisyam.²⁹ According to Ulya, the original name of Kiai Hisyam was Muhammad Hisyam, the son of Hayat and Marfuah. He was a native of Bantul, Yogyakarta, who later moved to Kudus, Central Java, where he established Pesantren Ar-Roudlotul Mardliyyah Kudus. During his time in Yogyakarta, Kiai Hisyam completed the memorization of the Qur'an in its entirety under the guidance of Kiai Munawwir of Krapyak, albeit as a *ngalong* (a non-residential) student. Although Kiai Munawwir was widely recognized as an expert in the seven *qirā'at*,³⁰ Kiai Hisyam completed his

²⁸ Mustofa, "Pembakuan Qira'at 'Asim Riwayat Hafis Dalam Sejarah Dan Jejaknya Di Indonesia"; Sa'adah, "Perkembangan Qirā'āt Di Indonesia"; Qudsy et al., "The Social History of Ashab Al-Jawiiyin and the Hadith Transmission in the 17th Century Nusantara"; Andayani and Haq, "Jejaring Sanad Al-Quran."

²⁹ Bizawie, *Sanad Qur'an Dan Tafsir Di Nusantara*, 146.

³⁰ Faisal Ahmad Ferdian Syah, Fatimah Azzahra, and Khairol Nurakhmet, "The Role of KH Munawwir on the Development of Qirā'āt Science in Indonesia," *ZAD Al-Mufasssir* 6, no. 1 (2024): 40–57, <https://doi.org/10.55759/zam.v6i1.148>; Mohammad Nizar and Ahmad Muttaqin, "Agen-Agen Penyebar Islam Wasathiyah: Pembacaan Ulang Terhadap Kiprah 'Tiga Serangkai' Sepeninggal KH. M. Munawwir Krapyak Dalam Kacamata Bourdieu," *Gudang Jurnal Multidisiplin Ilmu* 2, no. 7 (2024): 260–64, <https://doi.org/10.59435/gjmi.v2i7.721>; Choeroni Choeroni, "KH. M. Arwani Amin Sebagai Role Model Pendidikan Tahfidz Al Qur'an," *Al-Fikri: Jurnal Studi Dan Penelitian Pendidikan Islam* 2, no. 1 (2019): 37–44, <https://doi.org/10.30659/jspi.v2i1.4014>; Taufikurrahman Fuji Nur Iman, "Tradisi Hafalan Al-Qur'an Di Yogyakarta Perspektif Sosiologi Pengetahuan (Kajian Living

advanced training in this field under Kiai Arwani. Indeed, he became one of Kiai Arwani's trusted students and was authorized to continue teaching them, which placed his expertise on par with Kiai Arwani's. In this genealogical framework, if Kiai Mustain was a student of Kiai Hisyam, then Kiai Hisyam was a student of Kiai Arwani, and Kiai Arwani, in turn, a student of Kiai Munawwir.³¹

Sa'adah explains that the students of Kiai Munawwir can be categorized into four generations.³² Kiai Arwani belonged to the first generation, followed by sixteen of his students as the second generation, including Kiai Hisyam, the third generation comprised the students of Kiai Hisyam and his contemporaries, among them KH. Munir Kudus and the fourth generation included the disciples of the preceding generation. Sa'adah notes that several of these generations hail from Malang, though the name Kiai Mustain is not explicitly mentioned. Nevertheless, Ulya affirms that Kiai Mustain was a student of Kiai Hisyam in the seven *qirā'at*, alongside Kiai Marzuki Khoiruddin, also from Malang, who later founded Pesantren Riyadlul Qur'an in 1982 and likewise taught the seven *qirā'at*.³³ This narrative underscores the intersection of the Kudus Qur'anic network in Malang and serves as concrete evidence of Kiai Hisyam's success in cadre formation.³⁴

The network pattern outlined above emphasizes that the very existence of the seven *qirā'at* is inherently tied to transmission processes.³⁵ In the case of Kiai Mustain, the seven *qirā'at* were transmitted through figures such as Kiai Nashih, Kiai Nahru, and Kiai Hawa, and subsequently to their own students. These individuals

Qur'an)," *Jurnal Ilmiah Al-Mu'ashirah* 17, no. 1 (2020): 107–25, <https://doi.org/10.22373/jim.v17i1.7909>; Muflichah, "The Charisma Leadership Style of Kyai Haji Arwani Amin".

³¹ Syaifullah, "Rekonstruksi Sanad Qira'at Indonesia"; Syah, Azzahra, and Nurakhmet, "The Role of KH Munawwir"; Nizar and Muttaqin, "Agen-Agen Penyebar Islam Wasathiyah".

³² Sa'adah, "Perkembangan Qirā'āt Di Indonesia," 201–225.

³³ Bizawie, *Sanad Qur'an dan Tafsir di Nusantara*, 278.

³⁴ Ulya, KH. *Muhammad Arwani*, 120.

³⁵ A. Turmudi, "Sejarah Transmisi Pembaruan Fikih Dari Timur Tengah Ke Nusantara Abad XIX – XX (Studi Pengaruh Al-Manar Di Indonesia Dan Respons Ulama Tradisional)," *Disertasi* (UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2019); Abdul Munip, "Transmisi Pengetahuan Timur Tengah Ke Indonesia: Studi Tentang Penerjemahan Buku Berbahasa Arab Di Indonesia, 1950–2004," 2007, 500; Syaifullah, "Rekonstruksi Sanad Qira'at Indonesia."

continued the transmission of the seven *qirā'āt* within the *pesantren* institutions under their leadership. Beyond these names, there were also Kiai Mustain students who later pursued formal academic careers, particularly at universities. For instance, Nurul Murtadho, a disciple and son-in-law of Kiai Mustain, became a lecturer at Universitas Negeri Malang; similarly, Syamsul Ulum, another student of Kiai Mustain, serves as a lecturer at Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Both received direct instruction in the seven *qirā'āt* from Kiai Mustain but did not retransmit them through *pesantren* education nor integrate them into their teaching within higher education institutions. This fact suggests that the transmission of the seven *qirā'āt* remains identified mainly with the *pesantren* milieu.³⁶

The dynamics of the transmission network can be observed not only through the diverse careers of its alumni but also in how they retransmit knowledge to the next generation.³⁷ Kiai Mustain employed strict standards to ensure his students were qualified to receive instruction in teaching the seven Qur'anic readings. However, his students, in turn, established their own standards, although not necessarily identical to those of their teacher. In other words, although Kiai Mustain was trained within a relatively rigid framework and trained others to do the same, these standards could not be applied to later generations operating in different socio-cultural and institutional contexts. This reality necessitated significant negotiation by those possessing legitimate authority, as they confronted a generation distinct from their predecessors. Such negotiations were ultimately articulated through the modification of teaching methods and the diversification of reference materials employed in the pedagogy of the seven *qirā'āt*.

In the case of Ustadh Shofi, the form of negotiation he employed was relatively significant. This is understandable given that his position at the Pesantren Ilmu al-Qur'an (PIQ) was limited to a teaching staff member bound to the institution's formal curriculum. Sa'adah explains that the pedagogy of the seven *qirā'āt* can be mapped into two categories: theoretical, with the primary aim of providing knowledge and intellectual exposure; and practical, which from the

³⁶ Bizawie, *Sanad Qur'an dan Tafsir di Nusantara*, 147.

³⁷ Huda and Amnar, "Silsilah Sanad Qirā'āt"; Syaifullah, "Sanad Qira'at Indonesia"; Andayani and Haq, "Jejaring Sanad Al-Quran."

outset is intended to cultivate mastery in recitation.³⁸ According to Bizawie, this practical category constitutes the true form of *qirā'at* preservation, since students are not confined to theoretical acquaintance but proceed to actual performance. Bizawie further emphasizes that in the Indonesian context, universities preserve *qirā'at* sciences by making them more widely known. In contrast, *pesantren* and the residences of *sanad*-holding scholars contribute to their practical transmission. Within this framework, it becomes clear that the role of Ustadh Shofi is predominantly one of introducing the study of the seven *qirā'at* to his students.

Another general tendency found particularly in the teaching of the seven *qirā'at* within the *pesantren* examined in this study is that all such instruction exists under the “shadow” of *Fayḍ al-Barakāt*. Socio-historically, this appears as a logical consequence of the genealogy of knowledge and practice of the seven *qirā'at* in these *pesantren*, all of which can be traced back to Kiai Arwani, the author of *Fayḍ al-Barakāt*.³⁹ This finding reinforces the statements of Ahsin Sakho, Ulya, and Bizawie regarding the central role of *Fayḍ al-Barakāt*. More explicitly, Bizawie asserts that to this day, *Fayḍ al-Barakāt* remains the principal reference for students of the seven *qirā'at* whose transmission is sustained through the lineage of Kiai Arwani.⁴⁰ Referring to Ulya's classification of Kiai Arwani's students into three generational tiers—placing Kiai Hisyam as part of the first generation, Kiai Mustain as the second, and his students, such as Kiai Nahru, Kiai Nashih, and Kiai Hawa as the third—the following levels would include Kiai Mannan in the fourth generation and Ustadh Shofi in the fifth. This mapping underscores that the network of the seven *qirā'at* operates not only in a formal sense through teacher-disciple relations, or the *sanad* system, but also in a material sense, as it is bound to its authoritative textual reference.

Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that *Fayḍ al-Barakāt* is not the sole reference employed when teachers transmit the seven *qirā'at* to their students. The use of *Al-Budūr al-Zāhirah* by 'Abd al-Fattah al-Qadi, adopted by Kiai Nahru, demonstrates this point. Within the *qirā'at* network of Kiai Arwani-thus, including the

³⁸ Sa'adah, “Perkembangan Qirā'at Di Indonesia,” 201-225.

³⁹ Lisan, “Hermeneutika Gramatikal, 61–80; Ulya and Alkaff, “An Analysis of the Sanad Transmission”; Ahmad, “Kitab Faidh Al-Barakat Fi Sab' Al-Qira'at.”

⁴⁰ Bizawie, *Sanad Qur'an dan Tafsir di Nusantara*, 152.

networks of Kiai Mustain's students, it was not only Kiai Nahru who drew upon this text, but also figures such as Maftuh Bastul Birri of Kediri, a student of Kiai Nawawi of Bantul, and Sheila Hasina of Kediri, a student of Maftuh. For both, *Al-Budūr al-Zābirah* served to broaden readings and expand pedagogical resources in the teaching of the seven *qirā'at*. According to Ulya, other works, such as *Fayḍ al-Asānī*, were also utilized by certain students of Kiai Arwani. Based on these findings, Ulya concludes that the pedagogical materials within the *qirā'at* network of Kiai Arwani were indeed varied: some relied exclusively on *Fayḍ al-Barakāt*, others supplemented it with additional works, and yet others developed their own scholarly writings.⁴¹

Beyond this, the findings highlight another crucial point that the seven *qirā'at* network is inherently exclusive. Out of the many students of Kiai Munawwir, only Kiai Arwani inherited the seven *qirā'at* from him with a full *sanad*. Similarly, among the numerous students of Kiai Arwani spread across Indonesia, only sixteen, according to Sa'adah,⁴² or fifteen, according to Ulya,⁴³ were able to obtain a complete *sanad* in the seven *qirā'at*. Ulya notes that merely nine transmitted the discipline within their own scholarly circles.⁴⁴ In the case of Kiai Hisyam, although no exact figure is provided, Ulya identifies only twelve students who completed the seven *qirā'at*, most of whom subsequently taught it in their respective institutions. Regarding Kiai Mustain, Kiai Nahru, Kiai Nashih, Kiai Hawa, and later Kiai Mannan, while precise numbers remain unavailable, it is acknowledged that only a relatively small portion of their students managed to complete the rigorous training. These facts justify the characterization of the *qirā'at* network as an "elite" network.

Conclusion

This study highlights the importance of the agency system as a crucial framework applied by Qur'anic scholars in Malang to ensure the continuity of the seven Qur'anic readings (*qira'ah sab'ah*). In this case, Kiai Mustain emerges not only as a central figure in the transmission of the seven *qirā'at*, particularly through his foundational role at Pesantren Huffaz Dar al-Qur'ān, Singosari, but also as the

⁴¹ Ulya, KH. *Muhammad Arwani*, 156.

⁴² Sa'adah, "Perkembangan Qirā'at Di Indonesia," 201-225.

⁴³ Ulya, KH. *Muhammad Arwani*, 82.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

earliest agent in Singosari, Malang. The agency system was further consolidated through his students, who continued teaching the seven *qirā'at* in their respective *pesantren*. This phenomenon reveals not only a multilayered and complex agency system but also a shift in the distribution of authority, which is no longer centralized; they have even adapted and modified the standards and pedagogical methods. Therefore, the transmission of the seven *qirā'at* in Malang not only demonstrates persistence through the preservation of its lineage but also shows a significant adaptability to socio-cultural change, all while maintaining the authority of leading figures in the transmission of the seven *qirā'at*.

The findings of this study further confirm that the discourse on the seven Qur'anic readings in Malang is interwoven with various derivative variables, including agency framework, processes of modification, and shifting teaching practices. These dynamics highlight a crucial point: the seven *qirā'at* have never existed in a static form but have continually responded to their socio-cultural milieu. Much like the codification of the Qur'ān, though the Qur'ān itself is regarded as sacred, the derivative discourses surrounding it are likewise shaped by change. In the present context, Kiai Mustain represents only one strand of the seven *qirā'at* network, which can be traced to figures such as Kiai Hisyam, Kiai Arwani, and Kiai Munawwir. Furthermore, the study has not yet accounted for the existence of the ten *qirā'at*, which are also acknowledged as valid within the broader discourse of *qirā'at*. Therefore, it must be recognized that this article remains limited in its scope and breadth of its material coverage.

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