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Home > The Shi'ah and Islamic Disciplines > Chapter 10: The Pioneering Role Of The Shi'ah In Lexicology > Section Four: The Pioneering Position of the Shi'ah as Scribes of the Islamic State

Chapter 10: The Pioneering Role Of The Shi'ah In Lexicology

Section One: The Correct View as to the Pioneer of Arabic Lexicology

The correct view vis—à—vis the pioneer of Arabic lexicology is that the erudite master of literature (who expounded the Arabic language) Abu al—Safa al—Khalil ibn Ahmad al—Azadi al—Farahidi was the one and men of letters agree on this. Al—Azhari says in the beginning of his *Tahdhib*: "I have not come across any disagreement between the knowledgeable people and masters of this field as regards the fact that *Kitab al—Ayn* was initially compiled by Abu Abdurrahman al—Khalil ibn Ahmad, and that Ibn al—Muzaffar only completed it after he collected its material from al—Khalil. And there is no doubt that the latter has not been anticipated in this work by anybody."

As to the fact that al–Khalil ibn Ahmad took the lead in working on Arabic lexicology, there is no difference of opinion; the bone of contention is the authorship of this book that is in circulation, namely, *Kitab al–Ayn* which is attributed to al–Khalil ibn Ahmad. People are divided on the matter; some believing that the book was his and others denying that. The first group is also divided on whether the whole book was al–Khalil's work or only part of it was his compilation. In the original version of my work, I have cited diverse views on the matter along with the evidences adduced in their support. After weighing those evidences, I presented what I consider to be the truth. I have with me a complete copy of *Kitab al–Ayn*.

There is no disagreement about the fact that al–Khalil was a Shi'ah. The chief of the Shi'ah, Jamal al–Din ibn al–Matahhar states, in *Al–Khulasah*: "Al–Khalil ibn Ahmad was the best lexicologist and his work in this field is an authority. He was the originator of prosody. His position in learning is so well–known that there is no need to expatiate. He was a follower of the Imamiyyah school."

Mawla Abdullah Effendi, observes in Riyad al-Ulama, that "al-Khalil was a very eminent personality, the

most learned person in literature and a follower of the Imamiyyah school. He was the founder of the science of prosody. He lived during the time of Imam al–Sadiq and even that of Imam al–Baqir ('a)."I have mentioned al–Khalil's biography in the original version of this book.

Section Two: Other Renowned Shi'ah Lexicologists

Other renowned Shi'ah lexicologists who are known to surpass others, include:

Ibn al–Sikkit: Abu al–Abbas Tha'lab says: "Our companions unanimously declare that, after Ibn al–A'rabi, Ibn al–Sikkit was the most learned in lexicology." He was killed by al–Mutawakkil because of being a Shi'ah, a fact that was known to all. Ibn al–Sikkit lived to the age of fifty–eight. His martyrdom occurred in the year 244. Other reports put the year of his death at 246 or 243. His books include *Islah al–Mantiq* (Reformation of Speech), about which al–Mubarrad said "Of all the books of language that have been carried over the bridge of Baghdad, none equals *Islah al–Mantiq*."

His other works are *Kitab al–Alfaz* (Book of Expressions), *Kitab al–Zibrij* (Book of Embellishment), *Kitab al–Amthal* (Book of Proverbs), *Kitab al–Maqsur wa al–Mamdud* (Book of nouns ending in the shortened form of the letter *alif* which is written on the letter *'ya'* (*maqsur*) and nouns ending in the letter *'hamzah'* preceded by *alif* (*mamdud*), *Kitab al–Ajnas* (Book of Genera–which is a large book), *Kitab al–Firaq* (Book of Sects), *Kitab al–Suruj wa al–Lijam* (Book of Saddles and Harnesses), *Kitab al–Wuhush* (Book of Wild Animals), *Kitab al–Ibil* (Book of Camels), *Kitab al–Nawadir* (Book of Rarities), *Kitab Ma'ani al–Shi'r* (Book of the Meanings of Poetry (two versions: small and big), *Kitab Sariqat al–Shi'r* (Book of Plagiarism in Poetry), *Kitab Fa'al wa Af'al* (Book of the Verb Forms *Fa'a'la* and *Af'a'la*), *Kitab al–Hasharat* (Book of Insects), *Kitab al–Aswat* (Book of Sounds), *Kitab al–Addad* (Book of Opposites) and *Kitab al–Shajr wa al–Ghabat* (Book of Trees and Forests)

It is noteworthy that he wrote all these books besides what he narrated from al–Ridha', al–Jawad and al–Hadi ('a).

Another was Abu al–Abbas al–Mubarrad al–Azdi, the famous Basran lexicologist. It is stated in *Riyad al–Ulama* in the chapter on surnames "Al–Mubarrad is Muhammad ibn Yazid ibn Abd al–Akbar, the venerable master grammarian and philologist, the prominent Shi'ah whose word holds authority for both sects. He was the author of *Al–Kamil* and other works also. We have seen *Al–Kamil* in Constantinople in the library of endowments. This book treats many important topics. Al–Mubarrad died in 285 or 286 in Baghdad. The author of *Al–Raudat* gives a similar account about al–Mubarrad.

Some of al–Mubarrad's narrations from the Imams of the Ahl al–Bayt which I mentioned in the original version of this book are a testimony to the fact that al–Mubarrad was a Shi'ah. He was born in 220 and died in 285 A.H. Among his books are: *Kitab Ma'ani al–Qur'an* (Book of the Meanings of the Qur'an), *Kitab Nasab 'Adnan wa Qahtan* (Book of the Genealogies of Adnan and Qahtan), *Kitab al–Radd 'ala Sibawayh* (Book of Refutation of Sibawayh), *Kitab Shawrh Shawahid al–Kitab* (Commentary on the

Citations from *Al–Kitab*—Sibawayh's book on grammar); *Kitab Darurat al–Shi'r*, a book on what permits the violation of grammatical rules in order to conform to poetic metre (*darurat al–shi'r*); *Kitab al–'Arud* (Book of Prosody) *KitabMan ittafaqa lafzuh wa ikhtalaf ma'nah*, a book of words with the same pronunciation but carrying different meanings) and *Kitab Tabaqat al–Basriyyin* (Book of the Classes of the Basrans), e.t.c.

Among them was Abu Bakr ibn Durayd al–Azdi, a master of lexicology. He held a leading position in learning for sixty years. He was born in Basra in 223 A.H. and he grew up there but when the Blacks (al–Zinj) overtook it he fled to Amman. After twelve years he returned to his country and later left for Persia where he resided with the Banu Mikal, who soon noticed Ibn Duraid's eminence. He worked as head of the diwan, the treasury department. When the Banu Mikal were deposed, he returned to Baghdad in the year 308 where he eatablished contact with Ibn al–Furat, al–Wazir of Al–Muqtadir bi Allah. The latter received Ibn Duraid warmly and appointed him a post that earned him about fifty dinars (gold coins) monthly. He spent the rest of his life honoured and venerated till he died in the month of Sha'ban in 321 A.H., having lived for ninety–eight years.

The works of Ibn Durayd include: *Kitab al–Suruj wa al–Lijam* (Book of Saddles and Harnesses), *Kitab al–Muqtabas* (Book of Adaptations), *Kitab Zuwwar al–'Arab* (Book of Visitors of the Arabs), *Kitab al–Silah* (Book of Arms), *Kitab Gharib al–Qur'an* (Book of Unusual Qur'anic Terms), *Kitab al–Wishah* (Book of Sashes) and *Kitab al–Jamharah fi al–Lughah* (The Lexicon) in six parts, each of which makes up a whole volume. I remember seeing copies of the third and forth parts which have been written during the days of the author. He also has a collection of well–constructed pieces in verse form such as the poem on the *maqsur* and the *mamdud*. He has another poem ending in the *maqsur* consisting of words of wisdom and etiquette to the commentary of which the scholars eagerly devoted themselves.

Sheikh Rashid al–Din ibn Shahrashub al–Mazadarani counts this scholar among the poets of the Ahl al–Bayt, who strove for their cause, as recorded in *Ma'alim al–Ulama*. The following verses are a sample of his poetry on allegiance to the Ahl al–Bayt ('a):

"My devotion is to Prophet Muhammad, His trustee and pure Batul, and her two sons; those who deserve loyalty.

On fidelity to this blessed Household, rests my hope for salvation and felicity.

Love for their partisans is, indeed, a protection against deviating ways.

By allegiance to them do I expect, the Lord's pleasure when all shall stand before Him."

The authors of *Riyad al–Ulama*, *Ma'alim al–Ulama* and *Amal al–Amil* have all declared that Ibn Duraid was a Shi'ah, and so did al–Qadi al–Mar'ashi in his *Tabaqat al–Shi'ah*. I have recorded their words in the original version. Another scholar is Abu Amr al–Zahid. Al–Tannukhi says: "I have never seen a person who memorises knowledge like him. He has dictated thirty thousand sheets of paper from memory." He

His works include *Kitab Manaqib Ahl al–Bayt* (Book of the merits of the Ahl al–Bayt), which was summarised by Ibn Tawus who cited in *Sa'd al–Sa'ud*, a number of hadiths on the merits of the Ahl al–Bayt on the authority of Abu Amr al–Zahidi. Likewise, the author of *Tuhfat al–Abrar*, Sayyid al–Sharif al–Husayn ibn Musa'id al–Husayni, has related about the merits of the Ahl al–Bayt from the book of al–Zahid, the lexicologist and grammarian. Al–Husayni also attests to the fact that al–Zahid was a Shi'ah. Al–Zahid also wrote *Kitab al–Shura* (Book of counsel), as recorded in *Kashf al–Zunun*, *Kitab al–Yawaqit* (Book of 'Rubies'), *Sharh al–Fasih*, *Fa'it al–Fasih*, *Ghrib Musnad Ahmad*, *Marjan al–Muwashshah* (Book of adorned pearls), (Explaining the the names of poets) *Tafsir Asma' al–Shu'ara'*, *Fa'it al–Jamharah*; *Fa'it al–Ayn*, *Ma ankara al–A'rab 'ala Abu 'Ubaydah* (The Bedouins' criticism of Abu Ubaydah) and *Al–Madkhal* (The Introduction).

It is stated in *Riyad al–Ulama* that Abu Amr was among the Imamiyyah scholars and that he wrote *Kitab al–Lubab*. Ibn Tawus quotes a great deal of reports from this book and from *Kitab al–Manaqib* (Book of merits) as well. Some later scholars quote from him narrations on the merits of the Ahl al–Bayt. As regards his religious persuasion, there is no doubt that Abu Amr was a Shi'ah. He was a Tabari and they addressed him as the companion of (the tribe) of Taghlib or the retainer of Taghlib, but I have not ascertained this claim. There is a detailed biography of this man in *Bughyat al–Wu'at*.

Another scholar of language is Ahmad ibn Faris ibn Zakariya ibn Muhammad ibn Habib Abu al–Husayn, the renowned lexicologist of the Kufa school. He was the author of *Al–Mujmal fi al–Lughah* and *Fiqh al–Lughah*, a work known as *Al–Sahibi* because it was dedicated to al–Sahib ibn 'Abbad. His biography occurs in *Al–Wafayat* and *Bughyat al–Wu'at*. Al–Suyuti was mistaken when he said that "He was a Shafi'ite and later he became a Malikite." In fact, he was of the Imamiyyah Shi'ah school, as declared by Sheikh Abu Ja'far al–Tusi in his *Fihrist* of Imamiyyah writers. The works of Abu al–Husayn have been mentioned by al–Tusi, Mirza al–Astrabadi (in his large work *Manhaj al–Maqal*), Allamah al–Bahrani and Sayyid Hashim al–Tubali, in *Raudat al–'Arifin bi Wilayat Amir al–Muminin (a.s.)*. The author of *Thaqib al–Manaqib* has also mentioned Abu al–Husayn and it is on his authority that the story of Sheikh al–Hamadani's meeting our master the Awaited Mahdi, the son of al–Hasan al–Askari is related. In any case, there is no doubt that Abu al–Husayn was a Shi'ah. Perhaps he was only disguising as a Shafi'ite or a Malikite. He passed away in 395 A.H.

Another prominent lexicologist was al–Sahib ibn 'Abbad the vizier of Fakhr al–Daulah. He was a most competent scholar. He is the author of *Al–Muhit bi al–Lughah*, a ten volume work of lexicology arranged in alphabetical order. It mostly deals with terminologies, presenting few citations. Another lexicon by Al–Sahib is *Jawharat al–Jamharah*. Both are in our possession. His books on literature include *Al A'yad* (Book of holidays), *Al–Wuzara'* (Book of ministers), *Al–Kashf 'an Masawi' al–Mutanabbi'* (Book of revealing the misdeeds of al–Mutanabbi) and some treatises on the art of writing which contain fifteen chapters. Also to his credit is a collection of poems. On theology, he wrote *Kitab Asma' Allah wa Sifatih*

(Names and attributes of Allah the Exalted), *Al–Anwar fi al–Imamah* (Book of lights on the Imamate) and *Kitab al Ibanah 'an al–Imam*, a book giving a vivid picture of the Imam.

Ibn 'Abbad was the first prime minister to be given the title of al–Sahib.A hundred thousand Arabic and Persian poems (*qasidahs*) were composed to eulogize him. The poets of *al–Yatimah* are among those who praised him. Al–Hasan ibn Ali al–Tabarsi relates that Sahib ibn 'Abbad composed ten thousand verses in praise of the Ahl al–Bayt ('a). This scholar was born in the month of Zu al–Qa'dah in the year 324 A.H. He learnt literature from Ibn Faris and Ibn al–'Amid. He held the post of prime minister for eighteen years and one month in the service of Mu'ayyid al–Dawlah and his brother Fakhr al–Dawlah ibn Ruknuddin ibn Buwayh. Ibn 'Abbad died on Thursday night, the 24th of Safar 385 A.H. Al–Sharif al–Radi elegized him.

Another renowned master of the Arabic language was Ibn Khalawayh al–Hamadani, a peerless scholar who was adept in all fields of literature and learning and the focus of students from all countries. He was the author of *Kitab Laisa* throughout which he recorded what is not found in the Arabic language, saying 'such and such is not found in Arabic'. He went to Baghdad in the year 314 A.H in search of knowledge. He studied grammar and literature from Ibn Duraid and Abu Amr al–Zahid, among others.

Ibn Khalawayh wrote a number of books such as *Kitab al–Jumal fi al–Nahw*, *Kitab al–Ishtiqaq* on etymology, *Kitab Atraghashsh fi al–Lughah* (Book of 'rain' on language [rain signifies succour and help]), *Kitab al–Qira'at* (Book on Recitations), a commentary on the *Al–Maqsurah* of Ibn Duraid, *Kitab al–Maqsur wa al–Mamdud*, *Kitab al–Alghaz* (Book of Mysteries), *Kitab al–Muzakkar wa al–Mu'annath* (Book of Masculine and Feminine) and *Kitab al–Al* (Book about the Household of the Prophet) in which he mentioned the leadership (*Imamah*) of the Commander of the Faithful ('a) and the eleven Imams from his descendants, as reported by al–Najashi. In *Mir'at al–Jinan*, al–Yafi'i says: Also to his credit is a fine book which carries the title *Kitab al–Al* (Book of the Household). In the beginning of it, he elaborates on the meanings of the word *al–al* (household) and then he introduces an account of the twelve Imams from the family of Muhammad ('a), including their dates of birth and death and their fathers and mothers."

Ibn Khillikan writes: "The reason why he mentioned them is that he counted the Banu Hashim among the group of *al-al*, i.e. *Al* (family) of Muhammad." Ibn Khillikan did not recognise Ibn Khalawayh as a Shi'ah, perhaps because he confused him with another person because the agnomen 'Ibn Khalawayh' was born by a number of people.

In this regard, the author of *Riyad al–Ulama* observes: "The name Ibn Khalawayh is shared by a number of people among whom was Sheikh Abu Abdullah al–Hasan, a Shafi'ite Sunni who narrates from al–Shafi'i by two intermediaries and was the author of *Kitab al–Tariqah*. Another was Abu Abdillah al–Hasan ibn Ahmad ibn Khalawayh al–Hamadani, the Imamiyyah Shi'ah grammarian who lived in Aleppo and was contemporary with al–Sahib ibn 'Abbad and his peers. Sometimes this surname refers to Sheikh Abu al–Hasan, Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Yusuf ibn Mahjur al–Farisi who was an Imamiyyah Shi'ah."

Scholars like Abu al–Abbas al–Najashi, Sheikh al–Tusi and Allamah ibn al–Mutahhar al–Hilli (in *Al–Khulasah*) have declared that the Ibn Khalawayh under discussion was an Imamiyyah Shi'ah.

Section Three: The Precedence of the Shi'ah in the Art of Writing and Composition

The first person to compose the *maqamat*, a genre of Arabic rhythmic prose, and develop it into a special field of literature was Abu al–Husayn Ahmad ibn Faris, the lexicologist mentioned previously. He composed some treatises, the style of which was adopted by other scholars like his student Badi' al–Zaman al–Hamadani who is mentioned in section four.

Taking after his master, al-Hamadani prepared the first set of *maqamah*s in Arabic literature. He was also a Shi'ah. Also among the masters of this field who were Shi'ah are Ibn al-Amid, al-Sahib ibn 'Abbad and Abu Bakr al-Khwarizmi and others whom we will mention in the next section.

Section Four: The Pioneering Position of the Shi'ah as Scribes of the Islamic State

The first scribes of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, were Shi'ah. Khalil ibn Sa'id ibn al—As was his first scribe whom Sayyid Ali ibn Sadr al—Din al—Madani counts, in *Al—Darajat al—Rafi'ah fi Tabaqat al Shi'ah*, among the first category of Shi'ah. Sayyid al—A'raji mentioned him in *Iddat al—Rijal fi al—Shi'ah min al—Sahabah* (The number of Shi'ah among the Companions), so did al—Qadi Nurullah al—Mar'ashi in *Tabaqat al—Shi'ah*. Allamah al—Nuri recorded in his *Al—Mustadrak*: "A noble man of the Banu Umayyah who was among the earlier devoted partisans of the Commander of the Faithful ('a).

The Messenger of Allah (S) commissioned him to gather the alms (*sadaqat*) of the people of Yemen. He continued in this post till the time he learnt that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and his Household, had died, when he resigned this appointment and returned to Medina to join Imam Ali ('a). Initially, Khalid refused to pay allegiance to AbuBakr but when Ali ('a) commanded otherwise, he unwillingly took the oath of fealty. This man was among the twelve people who criticised Abu Bakr and out—witted him one Friday while he was giving a sermon from the pulpit, an episode which is related in a noble hadith narrated in *Al—Khisal* and *Al—Intijaj*." This report is also given by Sheikh Abu Ali in his *Muntaha al—Maqal fi Ahwal al—Rijal*.

The first person to serve as scribe to the Commander of the Faithful Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a) was Ubaydullah ibn Abi Rafi', a retainer of the Messenger of Allah. In *Al–Ma'arif*, Ibn Qataybah writes: "He continued to work as secretary to Ali ibn Abi Talib throughout his rule." Ibn Hajar observes in *Al–Taqrib* that "He was Ali's scribe, reliable and of the third category of scholars". While discussing the biography of Abu Rafi', al–Najashi declares: "And his two sons Ubaydullah and Ali were scribes of the Commander of the Faithful ('a)". As the reader is aware, we have already talked about these two in detail.

State officials designated as *katibs* (scribes) during the era preceding the Abbasid dynasty were entitled to be called *wazirs* (viziers or prime ministers) in Abbasid governments. In fact, a number of Shi'ite scribes became viziers because they earlier held the post of *katib*.

The first vizier of the first Abbasid caliph was Abu Salmah al–Khilal Hafs ibn Salman al–Hamadani al–Kufi. He was eloquent and fully conversant with reports, poetic compositions, biographies, dialectics and exegesis. He was also quick–witted and a well–to–do plain man with chivalrous disposition. When al–Saffah assumed leadership he appointed Abu Salmah his prime minister and gave the latter wide powers in dealing with state affairs. The bureaux (dawawin) were put under his control and the title of Premier of Muhammad's Family was conferred on him albeit with ulterior motives. So when the real conditions of the Abbasids dawned on al–Wazir he decided to abandon them and go over to the Alids, for which purpose he entered into correspondence with three of their chiefs. Consequently, al–Saffah murdered him because of his Shi'ah beliefs.

Another vizier was Abu Abdullah Yaqub ibn Dawud, al-Wazir of al-Mahdi the Abbasid caliph. Al-Suli says, "His father, Dawud, and his brothers were secretaries to Nasr ibn Sayyar, the governor of Khurasan. Yaqub was of Shi'ah persuasion and he showed a leaning toward the sons of Abdullah ibn al-Hasan on account of which he faced many calamities to the extent that al-Mahdi jailed him in a dungeon because of his loyalty to Shi'ism. He remained there until the time of al-Rashid who ordered his release. Yaqub then left for Mecca and took up residence there but after a short time he died there in the year 186 A.H.

Among the viziers of al–Ma'mun were the sons of Sahl, the first being al–Fadl ibn Sahl who held the two offices (military and civil) for he was both militarily able and skilful with the pen. When al–Ma'mun relinquished the caliphate in favour of the Alids, al–Fadl was holding that dual post and handling it well.

The opposition of the Abbasids to al–Ma'mun's decision was so serious that they deposed the latter and took the oath of fealty to his uncle Ibrahim. Having seen the gravity of the situation al–Ma'mun was very agitated so he conspired against al–Fadl and had him murdered in the baths, and thereafter, poisoned Imam al–Ridha' ('a) to death. He then wrote to his kinsmen in Baghdad saying: "What you reproached me for regarding Ali ibn Musa, no longer exists." This affair took place in 204 A.H.

Subsequently, al-Ma'mun appointed al-Hasan ibn Sahl but he was stricken by melancholy due to his anguish over the death of his brother al-Fadl. So he confined himself to his house for treatment while one of his scribes: Ahmad ibn Abi Khalid or Ahmad ibn Yusuf deputised for him. Al-Hasan passed away in the year 236 during the rule of al-Mutawakkil.

Ibn Abi al–Azhar Muhammad ibn Mazid ibn Mahmud al–Nawshaji was among such scholars. He was one of the scribes of al–Muntasir and the author of *Kitab al–Haraj wa al–Maraj*, a book discussing the reports concerning al–Musta'in and al–Mu'tazz and the stories of 'Sane Lunatics'. Our masters mention him among the companions of al–Ridha', al–Jawad and al–Hadi ('a). Ibn Abi al–Azhar died in 230 A.H.

having lived ninety odd years.

Another was Abu al-Fadl Ja'far ibn Mahmud al-Iskafi, a vizier of al-Mutazz and al-Muhtadi.

Among them also is Abu al–Hasan Ali ibn al–Furat. He held the post of premier three times under al–Muqtadir. Al–Suli writes: "And the sons of al–Furat were the most eminent men as regards learning, generosity, nobility, fidelity and chivalry. His time was a period of great festivity. Abu al–Hasan served as vizier repeatedly and in his third tenure he was arrested and killed in the year 312 A.H."

Another vizier of al–Muqtadir from the sons of al–Furat was Abu al–Fadl Ja'far who was prime minister when the former was assassinated. Next came Ja'far's son, Abu al–Fadl ibn Ja'far ibn al–Furat who was vizier to Caliph al–Radi Billah. Another of their kin is Abu Shuja' Zahiruddin Muhammad ibn al–Husayn al–Hamadani who was a vizier to al–Muqtadir and, because of his Shi'ism, dismissed on the request of Jalal al–Dawlah Malikshah. Abu al–Fath then turned to asceticism and settled in Medina and died there in 513 A.H.

Abu al–Ma'ali Hibatullah ibn Muhammad ibn al–Muttalib the vizier of al–Mustazhir, was one of the excellent scholar–viziers. The author of *Jami' al–Tawarikh* attestes to his Shi'ism, adding, "It is on that account that Muhammad ibn Malikshah would not accept his premiership. So he wrote to the caliph: 'How could the vizier of the caliph of the time be a dissenter (*rafidi*) i.e. a Shi'ite? He wrote repeatedly and al–Mustazhir dismissed Abu al–Ma'ali. So the latter visited Sultan Muhammad ibn Malikshah through the intercession of Sa'ad al–Malik al–Awji, his vizier, in order to appease him. The Sultan obliged him on the condition that Abu al–Ma'ali should stick to the way of the Sunnis in official matters. He then wrote to al–Mustazhir requesting that Abu al–Ma'ali be restored to his post and it was granted. Later, the caliph changed his attitude towards him, so he went to Isfahan where he worked in the bureau (*diwan*), of Sultan Muhammad Malikshah until he died."

Among such viziers was Anushirwan ibn Khalid ibn Muhammad al–Qasani, the vizier of al–Mustarshid. Ibn al–Taqtaqi writes: "He was among the most eminent and distinguished people. He served as premier for the kings and caliphs. Ibn Kathir states in his *Tarikh* that Anushirwan was a Shi'ah and observed, "Ibn al–Hariri composed *Al–Maqamat al–Haririyyah* for him and wrote many *qasidas* in his praise." In *Tarikh al–Wuzara'* Ibn Kathir writes, "He was a unique authority on different branches of learning and well–versed in Arabic dialects. He devoted his time to studying both the intellectual and transmitted sciences. He died in 532 A.H."

Mu'ayyid al-Din Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Abdulkarim al-Qummi, an Imamiyyah Shi'ah from the descendants of al-Miqdad ibn al-Aswad is another. He was vizier to al-Nasir, al-Zahir and al-Mustansir, and he held this post until he died in 629 A.H.

Another is Mu'ayyid al–Din Abu Talib Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn al–'Alqami al–Asadi who was the vizier of al–Mu'tasim. Al–Saghani, the philologist composed for him *Al–Ubab* which is an excellent work on lexicology, while Izzuddin ibn Abi al–Hadid wrote a commentary on *Nahj al–Balaghah* in his name. The

vizier rewarded both of them with handsome awards. He was also praised by the poets and the learned enjoyed his company.

Some non–Shi'ah unjustly accused Ibn al–'Alqami of treachery. Regarding the charges of omission and dereliction of duty in respect to al–Mu'tasim's security, Ibn al–Taqtaqi had this to say: "His vizier Mu'ayyid al–Din ibn al–Alqami knew the real situation and used to write to al–Mu'tasim calling his attention, warning and counselling him to be vigilant and to take the necessary precautions but to no avail. Al–Mu'tasim was completely heedless while his closest companions were giving him the impression that there was no serious danger and therefore, no cause for alarm; the vizier was only exaggerating reports in order to enhance his position and that more money might be disbursed for preparing the soldiers, thereby enabling him to misappropriate some funds for himself." This was Ibn al–Taqtaq's reading of those events in his position as contemporary with the actors and as a notable personality of those times.

Among them was Muhammad ibn Ahmad al–Wazir the son of Muhammad al–Wazir, Abu Sa'ad al–'Amidi. He headed the bureau of letters in Egypt twice and is considered one of the leading lexicologist and grammarians. Yaqut says: "(He was) a grammarian, a lexicologist and well–versed in many fields. He resided in Egypt and was in charge of the bureau (*diwan*) for some time then he was dismissed and later reinstated. He wrote *Tanqih al–Balaghah* (on rhetoric), *Al–Urud* (on prosody) and *Al–Qawafi* (on poetic metre), and other works. He died on Friday the 5th of Jumada al–Akhirah, 433 A.H."

Ibn Muntajab al–Din ibn Babawayh has mentioned this man in his *Fihrist* about Shi'ah authors. It is recorded in *Kashf al–Zunun*, in the section where *Tanqih al–Balaghah* was mentioned, that he passed away in 423.

Another Shi'ah who held this post is Abu al–Qasim al–Husayn ibn Ali ibn al–Husayn ibn Muhammad ibn Yusuf, the Morrocan vizier, a descendant of Bilas ibn Bahramkur. His mother was Fatima, the daughter of Abu Abdillah Muhammad ibn Ibrahim ibn Ja'far al–Numani, the author of *Kitab al–Ghaibah* (Book of occultation) as stated by al–Najashi and Ibn Khillikan in *Kitab Asma al–Musannifin min al–Shi'ah* and *Al–Wafayat*, respectively. The two also mention a number of works to his credit. Abu al–Qasim was born in 307 A.H. He served as vizier under Mu'tamid al–Dawlah in Mosul, then under Sharaf al–Dawlah, the Buwayhid caliph, in Baghdad. Then he served Ahmad ibn Marwah the sultan of Diyar Bakr in a similar position and stayed with the latter until his death in 418 A.H. His bier was carried to the holy city of Najaf according to his will, as recorded in *Wafayat al–A'yan*, which contains a good biographical account of him.

Another is the vizier Ibn al-'Amid Muhammad ibn al-Husayn Abu al-Fadl, the famous scribe. He served as prime minister under Rukn al-Dawlah, the Buwayhid. He died in 360 (or 359). His detailed biography is found in the books of our companions as well as those of others.

Another one of them is the son of Ibn al-'Amid Dhu al-Kifayatayn (the one with the two qualifications), Abu al-Fath Ali. He was vizier to Rukn al-Dawlah ibn Hasan ibn Buwayh after his father. *Al-Yatimah* carries a good biographical account of Abu al-Fath.

Al-Sahib Abu al-Qasim Isma'il ibn 'Abbad, the most competent of the competent, whom we previously mentioned, is another.

"From great forefathers he inherited viziership, which passed on uninterrupted from one dignitary to another.

The viziership fell to the lot of 'Abbad from al-Abbas, and from 'Abbad to Ismail."

Among them is Abu al-'Ala' ibn Battah. Abduljalil al—Razi says: "Abu al-'Ala' ibn Battah the vizier of 'Adud al-Dawlah was a devout Shi'ite. He composed a *qasidah* in praise of the Ahl al-Bayt which opens thus:

Abu Turab (Imam Ali) will intercede for Ibn Battah,

On the day the earth devours him.

Al-Hasan ibn Mufaddal ibn Sahlan Abu Muhammad al-Ramarzi, the vizier of Sultan al-Dawlah al Daylami. He was the one who erected the wall around the mausoleum of Imam al-Husayn ('a) as reported by Ibn Kathir in his *Tarikh*. He was killed in 412 A.H.

'Amid al-Mulk Abu Nasr al-Kindi was the vizier of Tughrul Beg. He was among the Imamiyyah Shi'ah, as Ibn Kathir informs us in *Tarikh*.

Another is Sa'ad al-Mulk, the premier of the Seljuk Sultan Muhammad.

Taj al-Mulk Abu al-Ghana'im al-Qummi, an Imamiyyah Shi'ah, was the vizier of Malikshah and so was Sharaf al-Din Abu Tahir ibn Sa'ad al-Qummi.

Another Shi'ah premier is Abu al–Hasan Ja'far ibn Muhammad ibn Fatir al–Katib, the famous vizier. Ibn Kathir states that he was one of vizier–scribes in Iraq who were Shi'ah, adding: "And when it became known that he was a Shi'ah a man came to him and said 'I have seen the Commander of the Faithful, Ali ibn Abu Talib ('a) in a dream and he told me to come to you and request ten *dinars* (gold coins)'. Ibn Fatir enquired, 'When did you see the dream?' The man answered 'In the first half of the night.' On hearing this, Ibn Fatir believed him and observed, 'You have told the truth, because I myself saw him in a dream in the second part of the night and he commanded me to oblige when a needy person of such and such description comes to me asking for help." Ibn Kathir recounted the whole story. I have quoted it from him indirectly on the basis of al–Qadi al–Mar'ashi's *Kitab Tabaqat* which is written in Persian.

Also among them were Mu'inuddin Abu Nasr Ahmad al-Katib al-Kashi, one of the viziers of Sultan

Mahmud ibn Muhammad ibn Malikshah, his son Fakhruddin who became the vizier of Sultan Alp Arslan ibn Tughrul ibn Muhammad ibn Malikshah and then Mu'inuddin the son of Fakhruddin, who occupied that position after his father.

The family of Juwayn produced a number of premiers. Al–Sahib al–A'zam (the great vizier) Shamsuddin Muhammad al–Juwaini who was designated 'the Master of the Bureau' for Sultan Muhammad Khwarizmshah and Sultan Jalal al–Din, his brother Ala'uddin Ata' al–Malik al–Juwayni and Al–Sahib al–Mu'zam Bahauddin Muhammad the son of Sahib al–Diwan served in that capacity. It was to him that the great scholar Sheikh Maytham al–Bahrani dedicated his commentary on *Nahj al–Balaghah*. Sheikh al–Hasan ibn Ali al–Tabarsi also compiled *Al–Kamil fi al–Tarikh* in Baha'uddin's name, giving it the title *Al–Kamil al–Baha'i*. Next is Sahib Sharaffuddin Harun Sahib al–Diwan al–Juwayni, Baha'uddin's brother and successor who was an erudite scholar and master of all fields of knowledge including music, as recorded in al–Mar'ashi's *Majalis al–Muminin*.

Another category of eminent Shi'ah scribes:

Ahmad ibn Yusuf ibn Ibrahim al–Katib whom Ibn Shahrashub has mentioned in *Shu'ara Ahl al–Bait* and about whomYaqut has written a detailed biographical account in *Mu'jam al–Udaba'*. Ahmad's father, Abu Yaqub, Yusuf ibn Ibrahim was also a respected scribe who worked for Ibrahim ibn al–Mahdi, the Abbasaid caliph. Abu Yaqub studied under Ismail ibn Abi Sahl ibn Nubakht the chief of the Imamiyyah, and author of the theological work *Al–Yaqut fi al–Kalam*.

Abu al–Abbas Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Thawbah ibn Khalid al–Katib lived in the time of al–Mahdi. In *Mu'jam al–Udaba*, Yaqut attests to his Shi'ism. Abu al–Abbas died in 277(or in 273 according to other authorities). The *Mu'jam* contains a long biography of him.

Abu Ahmad Ubaydullah ibn Abdillah ibn Tahir ibn al–Husayn ibn Mus'ab ibn Zariq ibn Maha al–Khuza'i, the Baghdadi prince who was an Imamiyyah Shi'ite is another. He served as governor of Baghdad and Khurasan. He was a very learned man, a proficient poet and a skilled scribe, and this is no wonder because he took after his father and his grandfather, Tahir. Writing about his father Ahmad, the above—mentioned, al–Khatib said: 'He was a learned literary figure and an eloquent poet. His father, Abdullah was a good poet and a very generous man. As for his grandfather, Tahir, there is no need to describe his excellence for he was one of the three to whom al–Ma'mun referred when he said: "The greatest temporal and religious kings who have ever governed are Alexander the great, Abu Muslim al–Khurasani and Tahir." Al–Katib adds that he was a Shi'ah like the aforementioned grandson of his and states that Abu Ahmad died on the night of Sunday the 18th of Shawal, 300 A.H. Diya'uddin relates this report in *Nasmah al–Sahr* from al–Khatib.

Another is Abu al–Abbas Ahmad ibn Ibrahim al–Dabiy. In *Ma'alim al–Ulama*, Rashid al–Din al–Mazandarani observed that he was one of the eminent scribes.

Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Ziyad al-Saymari, a son-in-law of Jafar ibn Mahmud al-Wazir, that is, the

husband of the latter's daughter Umm Ahmad. He was a reliable and distinguished Shi'ah who occupied a prominent position as a scribe and a man of literature and knowledge. Al–Mas'udi has counted him in *Ithbat al–Wasiyyah* as one of the writers of the era of al–Musta'in, the Abbasid Caliph.

Among them is Ahmad ibn Alawiyah, known as Abu al–Aswad al–Kitab al–Karani al–Isfahani. Yaqut states: "He was a lexicologist who pursued literature as well and composed excellent poetry. He was among the companions of Lufzah but later joined the associates of Ahmad Abu Dalaf...He wrote precious books including one on the greyness of the hair and applying henna, and a thousand–verses (qasidahs) on Shi'ism. This qasidah was shown to Abu Hatim al–Sijistani who marvelled at it and remarked: "Oh people of Basra! The Isfahanis have done better than you." Abu al–Aswad lived for more than a hundred years and died in 320 A.H.

Ibrahim ibn Abi Ja'far, Abu Ishaq al–Katib. Al–Najashi writes in *Asma al–Musannifin min al–Shi'ah* where he lists Shi'ah authors, that he was a prominent companion of Abu Muhammad al–Hasan al–Askari. Therefore, he must be among the scribes of the third century because al–Askari passed away in 260 A.H.

Another is Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Sayyar Abu Abdillah al–Katib al–Basri one of the scribes of the Tahirs, and known as al–Sayyari. We have already mentioned him in the section on the precedence of the Shi'ah in Qur'anic sciences, where we stated that he was among the companions of Imam Ali al–Hadi and his son Imam al–Hasan al–Askari, ('a). Ishaq ibn Nawbakht al–Katib who saw the awaited Imam. He was the son of Isma'il, the author of *Al–Yaqut* who was the son of Ishaq ibn Nawbakht. Ishaq, the one under discussion, was among the companions of Imam al–Hadi ('a) during the time of al–Mutawakkil and after that period and kept accompanying him until the beginning of the fourth Hegiri century.

Muhammad ibn Ibrahim ibn Ja'far Abu Abdillah al-Katib al-Numani, whom we previously mentioned in the section on Qur'anic exegetes is among them.

Abu Abdillah Muhammad ibn Abdillah (some say) Muhammad ibn Ahmad al–Katib al–Basri, poet and grammarian who was known as al–Mufajji' (the grieving one) He was given this epithet as a result of the large amount of poetry about the Ahl al–Bayt that he composed expressing his deep sorrow over their assassinations. The fact that he was a Shi'ah is confirmed by Ibn al–Nadim in *Al–Fihrist*, Yaqut in *Mu'jam al–Udaba*, al–Suyuti in *Al–Tabaqat* and al–Najashi in *Asma al–Musannifin*. Among the works of al–Mufajji' are *Kitab al–Marjan fi Ma'ani al–Shi'r*; *Kitab al–Munqid fi al–Iman* which is similar to *Al–Malahin* of Ibn Durayd, one of his contemporaries; Qasidat al–Ashbah in which he praises the Commander of the Faithful ('a) and mentions the similarities between him and the prophets; *Kitab Suqat al–Arab*; *Kitab Ghara'ib al–Majalis* (a book of unusual stories in gatherings); *Kitab al–Turjuman* (a book of the interpreter); *Kitab Sa'd al–Madih* (a book of the good fortune in eulogy); *Kitab Had al–Bukhl* (a book on the limits of miserliness); *Kitab al–Hija*' (a book of satire); *Kitab al–Mataya* (a book of riding animals); *Kitab al–Shajar wa al–Nabat* (a book of trees and plants); *Kitab al–A'rab* (a book of the

Bedouins); *Kitab al–Lughah* (a book of language); *Kitab al–Ash'ar al–Harb* (a book of war songs); *Kitab 'Ara'is al–Majalis* (a book of 'the brides' of assemblies); *Kitab Gharib Shi'r Zayd al–Khayl* (a book of oddities in the poetry of Zayd al–Khail); *Kitab Sharh Qasidat Naftawayh fi Gharib al–Lughah* (a commentary on Naftawayh's *qasidah* about odd terms) and *Kitab Ash 'ar al–Hawari wa Shi'r Zayd al–Khayl al–Ta'i* (a book of al–Hawari's poems and the poetry of Zayd al–Khayl al–Ta'i). Al–Mufajji' died in the year 320 A.H.

Another scribe is Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr Hamman ibn Sahl known as al–Katib al–Iskafi, one of the Shi'ah sheikhs. He was a pioneer in all branches of knowledge, and wrote about all fields. Our companions' work on *rijal* carry a detailed biography of this scholar. He was born on Monday, the 7th of Zu al–Qi'dah, 258 A.H., and died on Thursday the 11th of Jumada al–Akhirah, 336 A.H.

Among them is Al–Khazin, Abu Muhammad Abdullah ibn Muhammad al–Katib al–Isfahani, the well–known poet. He was al–Sahib ibn 'Abbad's treasurer and scribe. *Nasamat al–Sahr* contains a nice biographical account of al–Khazin in the section on the Shi'ite poets.

Among them is Abu Bakr al–Suli al–Katib who was a famous chess player. In *Riyad al–Ulama*, it is stated that he was a Shi'ah. Ibn Khillikan's *Tarikh* carries a nicely written biography of al–Suli. Ibn Khillikan says: "Al–Suli died in 335 (some say 336)in Basra where he lived in disguise because he had related a narration in favour of Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a) and, as a result, he was wanted and pursued by all. They wanted to kill him but could not capture him." This corroborates Rashid al–Din ibn Shahrashub al–Mazandarani's statement in *Ma'alim Ulama al–Shi'ah* that al–Suli practiced dissimulation (*taqiyyah*) in his poetry about the Ahl al–Bayt.

Among them is Ibrahim ibn al–Abbas ibn Muhammad ibn Sultakin al–Suli, an uncle of to Abu Bakr al–Suli's father, Muhammad Yahya ibn Abdillah ibn al–Abbas. He was the best of those who described epochs and people, and was biased towards no one. He surpassed his fellow scribes in composing poetry. Ibn Shahrashub has named him in *Ma'alim al Ulama* in the list of poets who are reluctant in praising the Ahl al–Bayt. Ibn Khillikan relates from *Kitab al–Waraqah* that he (Ibrahim ibn al–Abbas) met al–Fadl ibn Sahl 'the possessor of two offices'. He held different posts (and bureau) for the Sultan and before he died he was in charge of the bureau of estates and state provisions. He passed away in Samarra in mid–Sha'ban in 243 A.H. Di'bil ibn Ali al–Khuza'i said, "Had Ibrahim ibn al–Abbas sought wealth through his poetry, he would have deprived us of everything.'

Among them is Abu al–Abbas Ahmad ibn Ubaydullah ibn Muhammad ibn Ammar al–Thaqafi al–Katib. He served for al–Qasim ibn Ubaydullah and for his son. He also accompanied Abu Abdillah Muhammad ibn al–Jarrah and narrated on his authority. He was a narrator and he held a number of deputations. Al–Khatib states in *Tarikh Baghdad* that Abu al–Abbas was a Shi'ah and was known as 'Ezra's donkey'. Yaqut, on his part, presented a lengthy biographical account of Abu al–Abbas including reports about his personal life and his disputations. In *Al–Fihrist*, Ibn al–Nadim states that he died in 319 A.H. while Yaqut maintains that he died in 314 A.H.

Al-Abbas's works include *Al-Mubayyadah fi Akhbar Maqatil Al Abi Talib*, a book about reports on the assassinations of the members of the family of Abu Talib; *Kitab al-Anwa*' (a book of tempests) *Kitab Mathalib Abi Kharash* (a book on the short comings of Abu Kharash); *Akhbar Sulayman ibn Abi Shaykh* (a book on the reports on Sulaiman ibn Abi Sheikh); *Kitab* (a book of excesses in the stories of viziers); *Kitab Akhbar Hujr ibn Adiy*' (a book of the stories of Hujr ibn Adiy'); *Kitab Risalat Hujr fi Bani Umayyah* (Hujr's treatise about the Umayyads); *Akhbar Abu Nuwas* (Stories of Abu Nuwas); *Akhbar Ibn al-Rumi wa al-Ikhtiyarat min Shi'rih* (Stories of Ibn al-Rumi and some selections of his poetry); *Risalat Ibn al-Rumi fi Tafdil Bani Hashim wa Awliyaahum wa Dham Bani Umayyah wa Atba'ahum* (Ibn al-Rumi's book on preferring the Hashimites and their supporters and criticism of the Umayyads and their allies); *Risalat Ibn al-Rumi fi Amr Ibn al-Muhriz al-Muhaddith* (Ibn al-Rumi's book about Amr ibn al-Muhriz, the traditionist); *Akhbar Abi al-Utahiyah* (Stories of Abu al-Utahiyah); *Kitab al-Munaqadat* (a book about contradictions); *Akhbar Abdullah ibn Mu'awiyah ibn Ja'far* (a book of the reports about Abdullah ibn Mu'awiyah ibn Ja'far (a book of the reports about Abdullah ibn Mu'awiyah ibn Ja'far).

Another scribe is Abu al–Qasim Ja'far ibn Qudamah ibn Ziyad al–Katib, the master of scholars and scribes. He was well versed in literature and knowledge. He died in 319 A.H. In the section on the science of literary style (*badi*') we shall present an account of his son Qudamah ibn Ja'far al–Katib.

Sheikh Abu Bakr al–Khwarizmi Muhammad ibn al–Abbas, the master of literature and most learned person in different branches of Arabic in his time: In *Al–Yatimah*, al–Tha'alabi states that he was the most outstanding genius of his time and master of literature, prose and poetry whose work was characterised by elegance, refinement, fluency and eloquence. He gave speeches on past events in the history of the Arabs and their works of poetry. He taught books of literature, grammar and poetry. His speeches were adorned with rare expressions and fine terms and he used all sorts of styles. Abu Bakr died in the month of Ramadan in 383 A.H. The following are some verses of his poetry in *Mujam al–Buldan* under the entry '*Amil*' we present this sample:

From Amil I hail, Banu Jarir are my maternal kin,

A man can imitate his mother's side as well.

I am a Shi'ah by inheritance,

While others acquire Shi'ism after much exertion.

Among them is Abu al–Fadl Badi' al–Zaman Ahmad ibn al–Husayn ibn Yahya ibn Sa'id al–Hamadani, one of the most prominent figures of all times. He is so famous that there is no need to quote what scholars have written about him. Sheikh Abu Ali states in *Muntaha al–Maqal*, that Badi' al–Zaman was a Shi'ah of the Imamiyyah school and he was the first to introduce the *maqamat* genre of Arabic literature. He died in 378 A.H.

Al-Qanani, Abu al-Hasan al-Katib, an authority on lexicology, grammar and literature is another. He

wrote *Nawadir al–Akhbar* a book of rare reports and a book on the chains of transmission of the hadith of *wilayah* (leadership of Imam Ali) which he related through four hundred and thirteen ways. In the *Fihrist* of Sheikh Abu Ja'far al–Tusi and al–Najashi's *Fihrist* there is a good biographical account of him. I have mentioned it in the original version of this book.

Another is Fakhr al–Kuttab Abu Ismail al–Husayn ibn Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Abd al–Salam al–Isfahani al–Katib who is known as Tughra'i for he used to write the *Tughrah* (signature of Turkish sultans) in the preamble of royal decrees while he was vizier of Sultan Mas'ud ibn Muhammad, the Seljuk in Mosul. A brother to this sultan murdered Abu Ismail in the year 515 A.H.

The books of our scholars such as *Riyad al–Ulama*, al–Mar'ashi's *Tabaqat al–Shi'ah* and Sheikh al–'Amili's *Amal al–Amil* contain lengthy biographies of this man. He wrote *Lamiyat al–'Ajam*, which he composed in Baghdad in 505 A.H while he was fifty–seven. Ibn Khillikan has cited this poem in his biography of Abu Isma'il while its commentaries are included in our unabridged version of this work.

Sa'ad ibn Ahmad ibn Makki al–Nili, a renowned man of principles, who was a great poet and master of literature, grammar and philology is among them. Referring to him, al–Imad al–Katib states: "And he had extreme Shi'ah views and was very fanatical. He was well–known for his piety, an authority on literature and a teacher in Qur'anic schools. He lived to a great age until he lost his eyesight and became senile. The last time I saw him was at Darb Salih in Baghdad in 592 A.H. when he was over ninety years old." Al–Imad has quoted some of his poetry.

Another is Abu Talib Yahya ibn Abi al–Faraj Sa'id ibn Hibatullah ibn Ali ibn Qaz Ali Ziyadah al–Shaibani al–Katib al–Baghdadi. Ibn Khillikan says: "He was among the ideal and prominent personalities, who was very skilled in the art of writing and arithmetic and had contributions in jurisprudence, principles of jurisprudence, and other disciplines." He is referred to as a Shi'ite poet and commended profusely in *Nasamah al–Sahr*. He died in 574 A.H. and was buried near the tomb of Imam Musa al–Kazim, as recorded by Ibn Khillikan. Ibn Ziyadah was born in the month of Safar, 522 A.H.

Ali ibn Isa Baha'uddin al—Arbali, a proficient secretary and writer: In *Fawat al—Wafayat*, Ibn Shakir describes him and says: "He composed some poetry, engaged in correspondences and was a pioneering figure. He served as scribe for Ibn Salabah, the governor of Arbal and later went to Baghdad and took charge of the bureau of letters during the days of Ala'uddin, the head of the registry. He died in 692." Ali al—Arbali is the author of *Kashf al—Ghummah fi Imamat al—A'immah* which was printed in Iran. His grave is in the western side of Baghdad and attracts visitors.

Among them is Ali ibn al–Muzaffar 'Ala'uddin al–Kindi, the author of *Al–Tadhkirah*, a fifty–volume work. He is mentioned in *Nasamat al–Sahr* as a Shi'ite and as a poet in *Fawat al–Wafayat*, Ibn Shakir describes him as a proficient literary figure, reciter of the Qur'an, a traditionist and scribe, adding that he was Ibn Wida'ah's scribe and was known as al–Wida'i. He was born in 640 and died in 716 A.H. Ibn Shakir also stated that al–Kindi was a Shi'ah and so did al–Safadi.

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