

Baitul Hikmah as an Intellectual Pillar: Social Studies of Islamic Education In Baghdad on Sustaining The Glory Of The Abbasid

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of Baitul Hikmah as an intellectual pillar in the social history of Islamic education in Baghdad during the heyday of the Abbasid Dynasty. Baitul Hikmah functions as a translation center, academy, and library, serving as the epicenter of scientific development. The full support of the Abbasid caliphs, especially Al-Ma'mun, enabled an inclusive and multicultural scientific tradition that included Muslim and non-Muslim scientists. The research method used is a literature study with a historical-qualitative approach. With primary and secondary sources from historical works on Islamic civilization and scientific articles. The study's results show that Baitul Hikmah not only advanced science but also fostered a critical, open, and transformative scientific culture, thereby sustaining the political, social, and intellectual glory of the Abbasid Dynasty. This study makes an important contribution to understanding how Islamic education in the past laid the foundation for the emergence of advanced civilization and offers inspiration for the development of contemporary Islamic education.

Keywords: Baghdad, Baitul Hikmah, Intellectual Pillars.

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INTRODUCTION

The Abbasid Empire, which ruled from 750 to 1258, marked a pivotal era in the history of Islamic civilization. Centered in the majestic city of Baghdad, the state has not only been an epicenter of political power but also an intellectual and cultural beacon that has illuminated the world for centuries. The rise of the Abbasid Empire itself was the result of an ingenious opposition movement, led by the descendants of Abbas bin Abdul Muttalib, the uncle of the Prophet Muhammad. The movement forged strong alliances with the Shi'a and, most crucially, with the Persians, who felt they were stepchildren of the previous Umayyad Empire.

The Persians, with their advanced civilization and administrative prowess, saw an opportunity in this alliance to establish a more inclusive Leadership of the Banu Hashim. Syamruddin Nasution, *History of Islamic Civilization*, (Depok: Rajawali Pers, 2022), pp. 151–152. The propaganda disseminated by pro-Abbasid groups, centered on the themes of "al-Musawah" (equality of position) and "al-Ishlah" (improvement in accordance with the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith), resonates strongly among non-Arab Muslims and Sunni clerics. The

theme of equality of position appeals to non-Arab Muslims who have been subjected to political, social, and economic discrimination under the Umayyad. Meanwhile, the call to return to the Qur'an and Sunnah attracted the sympathy of Sunni scholars who saw irregularities in Umayyad rule. This strategic alliance, strengthened by the entry of capable generals such as Abu Muslim al-Khurasani, overthrew the Umayyad Empire and gave rise to the Abbasid Empire, with Abu al-Abbas al-Saffah as the first caliph.

However, the initial milestones of the Abbasid Empire remained precarious. Proper political stability was only created under the second Caliph, Abu Ja'far Al-Mansur (754-775 AD). He was a mighty, intelligent, and disciplined figure, known as the "true builder of the Abbasid Empire." Al-Mansur firmly removed the rebels and those who could potentially threaten his power, including his uncle Abdullah bin Ali, the general Abu Muslim al-Khurasany, and the Shi'ites who felt betrayed after failing to gain political power. These crackdowns, although bloody, were considered essential to securing and stabilizing the government. His victories in various wars against the Byzantines also added to his legitimacy.

Once political stability was achieved, Al-Mansur shifted his focus to development. The most important step was the establishment of Baghdad on the banks of the Tigris River. The choice of this location was not arbitrary; it was based on thorough research into climate, soil, and environmental conditions, as well as its significant economic potential as a strategic trading center linking Baghdad to China. Baghdad was designed as a magnificent circular city, with high walls, defensive moats, four main gates, and a caliph's palace named al-Qasru al-Zahabi (golden palace). The city's design reflects the vision to create a solid, beautiful, and functional center of civilization.

The founding of Baghdad was not merely an infrastructure project; it laid the foundation for an intellectual revival. Al-Mansur himself had established the "Department of Scientific Studies and Translation," marking the beginning of a massive movement of translations from the various foreign languages of India, Ancient Greek, Byzantium, Persian, and Syriac into Arabic. This is a crucial first step in acquiring knowledge from other civilizations. The support of the Barmaki family, the Persian nobles who were appointed viziers, was also very significant, as they were known as lovers of science and excellent administrators. Muh. Misdar, *History of Education in Islam*, (Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 2017), pp. 101–102.

The era of Harun al-Rashid (786-809 AD) and Al-Ma'mun (813-833 AD), the grandson of Al-Mansur, was the height of the Abbasid Empire's glory and, more importantly, the peak of scientific development. Harun al-Rashid beautified Baghdad, making it "the most beautiful city in the world," a designation Philip K. Hitti called an "intellectual city" and a "professor of Islamic society." It was during this period that the magnificent palaces became the meeting place for scientists from around the world. Significant funds are allocated for the development of science,

education, religion, and the arts. The beauty and luxury of the city are an inspiration, stimulating creativity in dance, sound art, and rhyme.

The culmination of all this was the establishment of the "Balai Ilmu" or Baitul Hikmah by the Caliph Al-Makmun. The institution serves as an academy, library, and translation hall, becoming the epicenter of cross-disciplinary and religious scholarly discussion, a repository of unparalleled book collections, and the primary driver of the massive translation of books into Arabic. Figures such as Hunain ibn Isaac, a Nestorian Christian, were paid very high salaries, even receiving gold as heavy as a translated book, demonstrating the high value placed on science regardless of religious background. Thus, the social history of Islamic education in Baghdad is a narrative of how political vision, economic stability, and respect for intellectuals came together to shape an unparalleled civilization.

From the perspective of Islamic education, Baitul Hikmah has strategic significance as a means of intellectual development for the people. This institution not only contributes to the development of theoretical science but also fosters a scientific culture that prioritizes critical study, discussion, and research. This makes Baitul Hikmah a concrete example of how Islamic education can foster an advanced civilization by upholding scientific values and openness.

However, the glory of Baitul Hikmah cannot be separated from the supportive socio-political context. The full support of the Abbasid caliphs, such as al-Ma'mun, provided ample space for the growth of Islamic intellectualism. Baghdad's multicultural social conditions also enriched the exchange of ideas. Thus, the study of Baitul Hikmah is not only related to Islamic education, but also to the social, political, and cultural dynamics that accompany it.

This research is related to several previous studies that examined the role of Baitul Hikmah in the history of Islamic civilization. One relevant study is Khaeruddin's article, "Baitul Hikmah as the Center of Intellectual Civilization During the Abbasid Dynasty". Similarities: Both examined the role of Baitul Hikmah as an intellectual center. Methods: Both used a literature study. Results: Both found the driving factors (rivaling the Nestorian institution) and the important role of Baitul Hikmah in the revival of knowledge. Differences: Focus of Analysis: The author's research is more specific, focusing on the social aspects of education and how they underpinned the glory of the Abbasid Dynasty. Other studies may only review its history in general. Unique Contributions: You are not only repeating old findings, but also adding new analyses of the social impact and contribution of Baitul Hikmah to the stability of a dynasty. (Khaeruddin, 2024).

The research titled "Baitul Hikmah as an Intellectual Pillar" and the previous literature review by Haidir and Muhammad Hezbollah on the Baitul Hikmah Islamic Education Institution both discuss the important role of Baitul Hikmah in Islamic education during the Abbasid heyday. Both use written sources to present the institution's history and activities. The difference lies in the focus. This research emphasizes how Baitul Hikmah became an intellectual center that

supported the social and political glory of the Abbasid people. Meanwhile, the literature review outlines the institution's history and activities in general, without examining the impact in depth. A weakness of previous literature is the lack of a critical analysis of Baitul Hikmah's influence on social and political development. The conclusions remain simple and not in-depth. (Muhammad Hezbollah Haidir, 2021).

The author's research on Baitul Hikmah as an Intellectual Pillar and A. Riswan Pratama, Eka Wahyuni, et al.'s research on the Decline of Islamic Education due to the Collapse of Baghdad 1258 AD both discuss the importance of Baghdad in Islamic education. The first research focuses on the heyday of Jerusalem, while the second discusses the impact of the destruction of Baghdad on Islamic education. The difference is that the first study examines a period of progress, whereas the second discusses a period of setbacks and attempts to recover. Both employ the literature review method, but the focus differs. (Mahfud Ifendi, A. Riswan Pratama, Eka Wahyuni, Fatimah Az Zahra, 2025).

The author's journal article, "Baitul Hikmah as an Intellectual Pillar," and previous research by Sabda Maulana and Tenny Sujatnika on Islam and Persian Civilization: Cultural and Scientific Integration during the Abbasid Dynasty both discuss the importance of Baitul Hikmah as a center of science and education. Both demonstrate how Baitul Hikmah contributed to the advancement of Islamic science and civilization. The difference is that the author's journal focuses on the social and educational role of Baitul Hikmah in supporting the Abbasid dynasty. In contrast, previous research on Persian culture emphasizes the influence of Persian culture and its scientists on the development of science, administration, and art among the Abbasids. (Tenny Sujatnika Sabda Maulana, 2025).

The author's journal entitled "Baitul Hikmah as an Intellectual Pillar: Social Studies of Islamic Education in Baghdad in Sustaining the Glory of the Abbasids" and previous research conducted by Komaruddin Sassi entitled "Islamic Education in the Era of Decline After the Fall of Baghdad and Cordova" both discuss Islamic education and Baghdad's role as an important educational center. Both acknowledged that Baghdad was once an intellectual center, with Baitul Hikmah, which supported the advancement of Islamic science and education. The study's focus and time frame differ. The author's journal highlights the heyday of the Abbasid era, with Baitul Hikmah serving as an intellectual pillar supporting social and educational progress. Previous research has focused more on the decline after the fall of Baghdad and Cordova, when Islamic education was severely challenged by conflict and the destruction of educational centers. (Komaruddin Sassi, 2019).

The research conducted by the author and the previous research conducted by Moh. Khusnul Abid also discussed Baitul Hikmah as an important center in Islamic education during the Abbasid Dynasty. Both highlighted the role of Baitul Hikmah in the development of science and education in Baghdad. However, the author's research emphasizes Baitul Hikmah as an

intellectual pillar that plays a role in the social dimension of Islamic education and that helped support the glory of the Abbasid Dynasty as a whole. Meanwhile, previous research has focused more generally on the role of Baitul Hikmah in the development of Islamic education, without examining its social impact and its contribution to the political and cultural glory of the Abbasids. Thus, the difference lies in the research perspective and scope, to which the author adds the social dimension and its influence on the greatness of the Abbasid Dynasty. (Moh. Khusnul Abid (2022).

In the analysis, the author's journal focuses primarily on the social role of Baitul Hikmah in advancing Islamic education. The second study highlights the negative impact of the collapse of educational centers on the continuity of education and Islamic civilization. Both studies employed a qualitative approach and a literature review, with different foci: one on the peak of glory, and the other on the period of decline and the challenges facing Islamic education.

This research and several previous studies both discuss the important role of Baitul Hikmah as a center of Islamic science and education during the Abbasid heyday. The study conducted a literature review that found that Baitul Hikmah contributed significantly to the advancement of science. The difference lies in the focus and depth of the analysis. This research emphasizes the social and educational role of Baitul Hikmah in supporting social and political glory. Other studies are more descriptive, discussing the general history, the influence of Persian culture, or the period of educational decline following the fall of Baghdad and Cordova. This study offers a critical analysis of Baitul Hikmah's contributions to the stability and progress of the Abbasid Dynasty. It highlights social and educational aspects that have not been previously discussed. Overall, this study complements prior studies by providing a more comprehensive picture of the strategic role of Baitul Hikmah in the glory of Islamic civilization.

Based on this background, this research focuses on "Baitul Hikmah as an Intellectual Pillar: A Social Study of Islamic Education in Baghdad in Sustaining the Glory of the Abbasids." This study is important for understanding how Islamic education in the past supported the emergence of an advanced civilization and for informing the development of contemporary Islamic education.

METHOD

This paper is the result of library *research*, which involves collecting information and data through the literature. (Mirzaqon T and Budi Purwoko, 2020). Mestika Zed defines literature research as a series of activities that uses literature sources to obtain data and processes these materials until research results are obtained. (Mestika Zed, 2008). Literature research is synonymous with an event, whether in the form of deeds or writings, that is examined to obtain accurate facts by identifying the origin and the actual cause. (Hamzah, 2020).

In this study, the researcher conducted a literature review with the primary objective of building a theoretical foundation by collecting references across several stages and then

synthesizing them to inform decision-making. (Hartono, 2020). Bungin said that the qualitative approach, in addition to being grounded in phenomenological and humanistic philosophies, also underlies his approach to empirical philosophy, idealism, criticism, vitalism, and rationalism. In positivist thinking, the qualitative approach is seen as a critique of postpositivism. Bungin, 'Qualitative Research Methodology for Methodological Actualization Towards a Variety of Contemporary Variants' (Jakarta: Rajawali Press, 2022), p. 245. The qualitative approach is a research method that produces descriptive data in the form of people's words and observable behaviors. (Moleong, 2017). Furthermore, Saryono explained that qualitative research is used to investigate, discover, describe, and explain the qualities or characteristics of social influences that cannot be measured or described through quantitative methods. (Saryono, 2013).

Data collection in literature research is initially conducted through documentation, using sources such as records, transcripts, books, newspapers, magazines, inscriptions, agendas, and so on. This documentation is essential in qualitative research because the data is recorded in the document. Second, through observation, which is used to observe and record anything contained in the source used. (Bungin, 2003). The primary sources in this study are drawn from books on the History of Islamic civilization, published by experts. Meanwhile, secondary sources comprise articles published in accredited national and international journals.

Historical approaches are employed to understand the social, political, and scientific contexts of Baghdad. Data was collected from a variety of primary and secondary sources, including history books and scientific journals. Data analysis was conducted in three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion, using triangulation techniques to enhance the validity of the research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. History of the Abbasid Crossing

a. Background of the founders of the Abbasid Dynasty

The Abbasid dynasty was founded in 132 AH/750 AD by Abul Abbas Ash-Shafah, who was also the first caliph. The rule of the Abbasid Dynasty lasted for five centuries, from 132-656 AH (750 AD-1258 AD). The establishment of this government is considered a victory of thought, as once echoed by the Banu Hashim (Alawiyun) after the Prophet's departure: those who have the right to rule are the descendants of the Prophet and his children. Samsul Munir Amin, 'The History of Islamic Civilization' (Jakarta: Amzah, 2018), p. 138.

The Abbasid dynasty, like other dynasties in Islamic history, reached its political and intellectual heyday soon after its founding. The Baghdad Caliphate, founded by Al-Saffah and Al-Manshur, reached a golden age during the reigns of the third and fourth caliphs, specifically under Harun al-Rashid and his son, al-Ma'mun. It was mainly due to

these two great caliphs that the Abbasid Dynasty made a strong impression on public memory and became the most famous dynasty in Islamic history. Philip K. Hitti, 'History Of The Arabs' (Jakarta, 2018), h. 369.

The history of the transition of power from the Umayyad Dynasty to the Abbasid Dynasty began when the descendants of Hashem, according to Islamic Leadership, were in the hands of the descendants of Abbas, who were the closest family of the Prophet Muhammad, PBUH. The prominent supporters of the Abbasid movement in its overthrow of Umayyad rule were the mawali of Persian descent who lived in Khurasan. The Abbasid leaders recognized that ideological awareness alone was insufficient; decisive factors were the strength of the army and the weapons, which overthrew the Umayyad Empire, which still had strong armies. Therefore, Abu Abbas deliberately recruited the Khurasani, who were known to be very powerful. Brave and expert, he is the backbone of his military power. (H. Mohammad Mansyur, 2022).

As a dynasty, the Abbasid caliphate, which ruled for more than five centuries, has made many positive contributions to the development of Islamic science and civilization. Among the approximately 37 caliphs who have ruled, several were particularly concerned with advancing Islamic science and civilization, as well as other domains, including social and cultural spheres. Among the advances in the field of socio-cultural studies is the study of the processes of acculturation and assimilation within communities. Among the advances in socio-cultural science during the Abbasid Caliphate were advances in architecture, including palace and mosque construction, as well as urban buildings. Architectural art is used in the construction of palaces and cities, such as the palaces of Qashrul Dzahabi and Qashrul Khuldi, and in the construction of urban buildings, such as the cities of Baghdad and Samarra. Anwar Sewang, 'The History of Islamic Civilization' (Malang: Wineka Media, 2017), pp. 221–222.

The establishment of the Abbasid Dynasty as the successor to the great Umayyad Empire was a revolution in Islamic history. This did not result from palace intrigue or power struggles, but from widespread and revolutionary propaganda and organization that reflected and expressed the majority of the population's dissatisfaction with the previous regime and had accumulated over a long period. Abdul Syukur Al-Azizi, 'The Most Complete History Book of Islamic Civilization' (Jakarta: Serambi Semesta Distribusi, 2014).

Baitul Hikmah was established during the Abbasid era under the Leadership of the first Daula and served as a library and translation center. The Abbasid Empire is widely regarded as the Golden Age and the peak of Islamic intellectual civilization and science. The library is located in Baghdad, which was founded during the caliphate of al-Mansur, later expanded by Caliph Harun al-Rashid, and further developed by Caliph al-Ma'mun. At

that time, Daulah Islamiyah was recognized as the most potent and undeniable state. (Haidir Putra Daulay, Zaini Dahlan, Yumita Anisa Putri, 2021).

b. Khalifah Al-Makmun

Al-Makmun was the seventh caliph of the Abbasid Dynasty. This caliph established the Baitul Hikmah library. His full name is Abdullah Abu Abbas bin al-Rashid al Makmun (Abdullah al Makmun). Al-Makmun was born in the middle of Rabi' al-Awwal on Friday night, 170 H/785 AD.

Baitul Hikmah was built and developed as part of the same role and initiative undertaken by the caliphs Harun and Al Ma'mun to translate and disseminate foreign sciences into Arabic. Another view holds that the primary motive for the establishment of Baitul Hikmah was to promote and coordinate the translation and dissemination of classical works from the intellectual heritage of Greece, Persia, Egypt, and others into Arabic, particularly for Muslims. One of the most influential figures in this was Hunayn ibn Ishaq, who was sent to Alexandria and also stopped in Syria and Palestine to search for ancient manuscripts.

At this institution, al-Makmun employed Muhammad ibn Musa al-Khawarizmi, an expert in al-jabr and astronomy, who was also a professor at Baitul Hikmah. Other Persians who were experts in various fields of knowledge were also employed in Baitul Hikmah. At that time, the director of Baitul Hikmah was Sahl Ibn Harun. Under al-Makmun's rule, Baitul Hikmah not only functioned as a library but also as a center for astronomy, mathematical studies, and research. In 832 AD, al-Mamun established Bait al-Hikmah in Baghdad as the first academy, complete with binoculars, a library, and a translation agency. The first head of this academy was Yahya ibn Musawaih (777-857), a disciple of Gibril ibn Bakhtisyu; the second was Hunain ibn Ishaq, a disciple of Yahya. (Aris Nurohman, 2020).

This study identifies several key phases and factors in the social history of Islamic education in Baghdad, based on the material provided:

Phase I: Foundations and Beginnings (Al-Mansur Period, 754-775 AD)

This phase is characterized by the establishment of political stability and by the development of basic infrastructure essential to intellectual development. After consolidating power by suppressing internal rebellions, Caliph Abu Ja'far Al-Mansur took the strategic step of establishing the City of Baghdad. The careful selection of a location on the banks of the Tigris River is based not only on defensive and political considerations, but also on healthy economic and environmental potential. Baghdad was designed as a planned urban center, equipped with fortresses, gates, and magnificent palaces, creating an attractive environment for residents, including intellectuals.

Significantly, Al-Mansur established the "Department of Scientific Studies and Translation." This was an important milestone because institutionally, the government initiated and supported a massive translation movement of Greek, Persian, Indian, and Syriac works into Arabic. This step socially opened access to knowledge from other civilizations, providing a textual foundation for the future development of science. The support of the Barmaki family, who were appointed as viziers, was also an important factor, as they were known as lovers of knowledge and capable administrators who helped lay the foundations for scientific development.

Phase II: Peak of Success and Institutionalization (Time of Harun Al-Rashid & Al-Makmun, 786-833 AD)

This was a golden age in which Islamic social education reached its peak. Harun al-Rashid beautified Baghdad, making it "the most beautiful city in the world" and "an intellectual city." The splendor and luxury of the city and the caliph's palace attracted scientists, poets, and artists from around the world. The caliph's palace served as a center for scientific development, where scientists gathered, discussed, and received substantial funding for research and development. The Barmaki family also played an active role in presenting lavish gifts to poets and artists.

The peak of institutionalization occurred during Al-Makmun's reign, with the establishment of the "Balai Ilmu" (Baitul Hikmah). The institution has three main functions: (Muhammad Hezbollah, Haidir, 2021).

- 1. Academy:** As a place for scientific meetings and discussions attended by various circles, including Greek philosophers, Indian philosophical schools, Shi'a, Khawarij, Sunnis, and even non-Muslims. This open environment facilitated the cross-border exchange of ideas between sects and religions, which even led some non-Muslim figures to embrace Islam after discussions voluntarily. It shows the inclusive and transformative social dimension of education in Baghdad.
- 2. Library:** Became a storage center for a wide variety of books that had been translated into Arabic, making it one of the largest collections of knowledge in the world at the time. Access to these textual resources is vital for researchers.
- 3. Translation Center:** Caliph Al-Makmun paid many experts from various branches of science to translate books, even giving gifts in the form of gold weighing the translated book. Hunain ibn Isaac, a Nestorian Christian, became a central figure in this translation movement, was paid 500 dinars per month, and later served as the caliph's personal physician. This shows that the appreciation of intellectual competence transcends religious and ethnic boundaries.

In this phase, various sciences developed rapidly:

- **Medicine:** Influenced by Judhisafur (Persia) and Alexandria (Greece), with figures such as Ali bin Rabba al-Thabari, Al-Razi (a pioneer in the study of smallpox and measles), and Ibn Sina (*al-Qanun fi al-Thibbi*).
- **Mathematics:** It developed rapidly since the time of Al-Mansur (for the construction of Baghdad) and reached its peak with Muhammad bin Musa al-Khawarizmi, who was credited with introducing zeros (sifirs) and systematic algebra.
- **Astronomy:** Required for religious purposes (prayer time, Qibla direction) and based on Greek, Chadean, Persian, and Indian works. Figures such as Tsabit bin Qurra, Al-Farghani, and Yahya bin Mansur.
- **Physics:** Ibn Sina (speed of sound and light), Ibn al-Haitsham (optics), Al-Biruni (mechanics, hydrostatics, gravity), and Al-Khazin (weight of air and gravity).
- **Chemistry:** Jabir bin Hayyan, "The Father of Muslim Chemistry," who developed the idea of balance in chemistry and the alteration of metals.
- **Pharmacy:** As a complement to medicine, Ibn Sina and Al-Biruni wrote about medicinal and botanical ingredients.
- **Geography:** Emerged as a science as a result of the development of trade in Baghdad, with scholars such as Ibn Khurdadhbeh writing *al-Masalik wa al-Mamalik*.
- **Philosophy:** After coming into contact with Greek, Persian, and Indian thought, it gave birth to great Muslim philosophers such as Al-Kindi, Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Al-Ghazali.

Phase III: Maintenance and Adaptation in the Midst of Disintegration (Period of Turkish and Banu Buwai Pressure, 847-1075 AD)

Although the Abbasid government politically entered a period of disintegration, the educational and intellectual traditions did not necessarily die. Under pressure from the Turks (since Al-Mutawakkil) and then the Banu Buwaihi (944-1075 AD), the caliphate's power weakened and shifted to the regions. However, there are still efforts to maintain and develop education. The Banu Buwaihi, although Shi'a and suppressors of the caliphate, had merits in the socioeconomic and scientific spheres. They built aqueducts and bridges, constructed a hospital (*Al-Bimarishshah al-Adli*) in Baghdad, and established a medical school. Great thinkers such as Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Al-Biruni continue to influence contemporary scholarship. This indicates that, despite political setbacks, the intellectual ethos established in the previous phase survived and received patronage from the regional rulers.

Phase IV: Institutional Revival Under the Seljuks (Seljuk Turkish Period, 1075-1258 AD)

This phase was marked by the entry of the Seljuk (Sunni) Turks, whom Caliph Al-Qaim invited to overcome the dominance of the Banu Buwaihi (Shi'ah). Although this period was still part of the political disintegration of the Abbasid Empire as a whole, the Leadership of the Seljuk Turks, particularly under the vizier Nizam al-Mulk, provided significant impetus to education.

Nizamul Muluk's great work was the construction of the Nizamiyah University in Baghdad (1065-1067 AD). The university is organized around a structured curriculum and syllabus, supported by well-paid faculty, and provides free dormitories and meals for students. The Nizamiyah played an important role in educating students in Islamic religious sciences (primarily the Sunni schools of Ash'ari and Shafi'i) and served as a center of ideological resistance to Shi'ism. This is evidence that the tradition of structured formal education continues to evolve and can serve as a means of maintaining the sect's identity amid political and religious conflicts.

Glory Phase and Supporting Factors:

In Phase I (Foundations and Beginnings), Caliph Al-Mansur was not just a politician; he was an architect of civilization. His decision to establish Baghdad in a strategic location after consolidating power demonstrates a deep understanding of how geography and economics can sustain intellectual activity. The grandiose and planned design of the city creates an urban environment that appeals to scholars. His move to establish the "Department of Scientific Studies and Translation" was a fundamental social innovation. It is no longer merely an individual activity but a systematic state project, transforming Baghdad into a *hub* for the transmission of knowledge. The support of the Barmaki family, as nobles who were also intellectuals, demonstrated that patronage of knowledge came not only from the top of power but also from the social elite, creating a broader network of support.

Phase II (Peak of Glory and Institutionalization)

Under Harun al-Rashid and Al-Ma'mun, this educational social ecosystem reached its pinnacles. The beautified city of Baghdad became an intellectual magnet, as it was described as an "intellectual city" and a "professor of Islamic society." This means that the city's identity has shifted: from being a political center, Baghdad has become a center of civilization defined by its scientific activities.

The establishment of Baitul Hikmah by Al-Makmun is the most concrete manifestation of this vision. The dual function of Baitul Hikmah as an academy, library, and translation center shows a holistic approach to education. As an academy, Baitul Hikmah is an arena for inclusive scientific discussions that involve figures from various

sects and non-Muslims. This is not merely an exchange of information but an intense and often transformative exchange of ideas, even one that encourages voluntary conversion. It reflects a society open to intellectual dialectics, in which truth is sought through dialogue and argument rather than coercion. This is clear evidence of the intellectual pluralism and religious tolerance that characterized Baghdad in its time.

2. Baitul Hikmah as an intellectual pillar in Baghdad

In much Islamic historical literature, it is widely recognized that the Abbasid dynasty reached its peak during the caliphates of Harun al-Rashid (786-809 AD) and his son al-Ma'mun (813-833 AD). The Leadership of these two caliphs has, historically, succeeded in changing many conditions. Not only are politics, government, and economics prioritized for development, but also in the field of science. However, this does not mean that other caliphs did not make important contributions to the realization of the intellectual revolution. One fundamental change during the Abbasid Dynasty was that the center of Islamic activity, which had previously centered on the mosque (as a center of education), shifted, and the field of education expanded. For example, Nizhamul Muluk's pioneering efforts to acquire madrassas are evidence of the dynasty's intellectual progress. These madrassas are located in Baghdad, the Balkans, Nishapur, Herat, Isfahan, Basra, Mosul, and other cities. (Ahmad Wahyudi and Moh. Irmawan Jauhari, 2022).

The first Islamic library established in Baghdad was the Baitul Hikmah. The library served as a translation center during the Abbasid Dynasty. Baghdad is regarded as an intellectual and scientific center during the golden age of Islam, having served as a hub of civilization and scientific development since its founding. During the Abbasid period, the expansion of Baitul Hikmah was undertaken and was initially named Khizanah al-Hikmah (Treasure of Wisdom), serving as a repository for libraries and research centers. This is where Muslims and non-Muslims work to translate ancient texts and compile their explanations. (Khobir Abdul Kusumastuti Diah Andini, 2025).

Through Baitul Hikmah as a translation center, various disciplines, including science, medicine, literature, philosophy, and religious sciences, developed. The primary purpose of establishing Baitul Hikmah was to collect and transcribe foreign knowledge into Arabic. This marked the beginning of significant progress in Islamic civilization, with the development of diverse disciplines and institutions, exemplified by the establishment of Baitul Hikmah as the largest center of scientific studies of its time. Nabilah Rahma Ambar, 'Baitul Hikmah, Witness to the Glory of Islam in the Abbasid Era', 2023.

Baitul Hikmah was established primarily to encourage and coordinate the translation of classical works from various civilizations, such as Greek, Persian, and Egyptian, into Arabic, particularly for the benefit of Muslims. One of the key figures in this effort traveled to

Alexandria, Syria, and Palestine to collect ancient works. Factors that encourage Muslims to carry out translation and transfer of knowledge include the competition for prestige between Arabs and other groups, the desire to master knowledge that is not yet possessed, the encouragement of the Qur'anic teachings on the importance of seeking knowledge, and the advancement of science, which is the result of prosperity and economic development. Rodin Rhoni and Julita Zara, 'The Development of Classical Islamic Librarianship and Its Contribution to Contemporary Libraries', *Jupiter XVII* (1), (2020).

The rapid development of Baitul Hikmah allowed for the expansion of its role, not only as a translation center, but also to include the following functions:

- a. Kuttab is a basic educational institution, a place to learn to write and read, especially for children.
- b. Low education in the palace is a preparation for students to carry out their duties after adulthood.
- c. Book shops that provide various books or books from various branches of science support the learning activities of the youth.
- d. The houses of scholars who play an important role in transmitting religious knowledge and general knowledge.
- e. A literary assembly or saloon, a special place held by the caliph to discuss various sciences.
- f. Badiyah is a hamlet where Arabs live who maintain the Authenticity and purity of the Arabic language and learn Arabic literature from sources.
- g. The hospital, in addition to treating the sick, is also a place for medical personnel education as well as a medical and pharmaceutical research center.
- h. Libraries and observatories established to support the development of the Madrasah, as formal educational institutions for the continuation of teaching in mosques, were established to meet the need for teachers, complete facilities, and an orderly administration amid the increasing interest in learning in the community.
- i. Science, a place for scientific research and study, as well as a space for the development of the ability of science students. (Kusumastuti Diyah Andini, 2025).

3. Collection of Baitul Hikmah Books

The book collection at Baitul Hikmah was among the largest and most diverse libraries in Baghdad during the heyday of the Abbasid Caliphate. This library not only stores local books but also serves as a center for translating literature from various cultures and languages; consequently, the collection is broad and diverse. This library holds hundreds of thousands of volumes across disciplines such as mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, medicine, philosophy,

logic, agriculture, music, and other humanities. It is estimated that the collection reaches around 400,000 to 600,000 volumes of books.

The books collected by Baitul Hikmah come from many sources, including translations from Greek, Persian, Indian, Sanskrit, Syrian, Kaldan, and Qibthi. This shows that the library is the intellectual center of the world, bridging diverse cultures and knowledge domains. Among these special collections are thousands of Qur'ans, beautifully decorated in gold and silver ink, which underscore the religious and historical value of this library. Some of the important manuscripts translated and preserved in Jerusalem include scientific and philosophical works from Greece, such as those of Aristotle and Plato, as well as medical works that served as references for later Islamic and Western medicine. Yanto, 'The History of the Library of Bait al-Hikmah in the Golden Age of the Abbasid Dynasty', Volume XV, No. 1 (2015), 244–245.

CONCLUSION

Baitul Hikmah during the Abbasid Dynasty was not only a library or translation center, but also an intellectual pillar that sustained the political, social, and cultural success of Islam. This institution has successfully integrated sciences from civilizations such as Greece, Persia, India, and Egypt into the Islamic scientific tradition. The full support of the caliph, particularly Al-Ma'mun, enabled the emergence of an inclusive, multicultural, and transformative scientific culture. From the perspective of Islamic education, Baitul Hikmah plays a key role in fostering a critical, open, and dialogical learning culture that involves Muslim and non-Muslim scholars. As an academy, library, and translation center, Baitul Hikmah has made significant progress in philosophy, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, pharmacy, and literature. This shows that education grounded in openness and collaboration can foster an advanced civilization. In addition, the success of Baitul Hikmah is inseparable from the political stability, economic support, and cosmopolitan social conditions of Baghdad. Baitul Hikmah's intellectual heritage continues to inspire the development of contemporary Islamic education, particularly by prioritizing science, tolerance, and cultural integration.

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