

THE ROLE OF THE SCHOLARLY ENVIRONMENT OF MAWARANNAHR IN THE FORMATION OF SPIRITUAL VALUES

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Following the decline of the Sasanian Empire, many scholars of the Academy of Gundishapur, along with its valuable library, were transferred to the “Bayt al-Hikma” (“House of Wisdom”) in Baghdad, established in the eighth century.¹ Prominent thinkers, including Abdullah ibn al-Muqaffa’ and distinguished scholars from the Barmakid dynasty, which is regarded as one of the most enlightened dynasties of viziers in Islamic history, played an important role in this great process. The scholarly legacy, experience, and traditions of Gundishapur subsequently exerted a strong influence on the newly established centres of learning in Western Iran and in Marv, Khorezm, and Baghdad of Movarounnahr.

In the development of the culture and sciences of the medieval Muslim East, a number of scholarly institutions that exerted a significant influence on the advancement of world civilisation operated in such prominent cities as Bukhara, Samarkand, Ferghana, Chach, and Kesh. These centres of learning not only developed as major intellectual centres of their respective periods, but also played an important role in enriching the scholarly potential of the time. Among these institutions, the “Bayt al-Hikma” in Baghdad, the “Majlis al-Ulama” in Khorezm (the Ma’mun Academy, eleventh century), the Academy of Tabriz (thirteenth century), and the Ulugh Beg school-observatory in Samarkand (fifteenth century) hold a particularly prominent place.² Such scholarly centres brought together leading scholars and thinkers of their respective periods, demonstrated

¹ Ataev M. *Ustrushana’s History during the Ancient and First Renaissance Periods (Source Studies and Historiographical Analysis): Dissertation for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in History*. – Tashkent, 2021. – p. 24.

² Munavvarov Z. *From an Islamic University to an International Academy. Islom ziyosi*, No. 1. – Tashkent: Publishing House of the International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan, 2019. – p. 9.

achievements in various fields of science, and became centres for the production of books, translation, the study of sources, and the development of educational processes.

One of the earliest major scholarly centres established in the Muslim East was the “Bayt al-Hikma” in Baghdad. It was initially established as a library intended for readers and, within a short period, developed into a scholarly centre. Within this institution, the translation of scientific and intellectual heritage based on Greek, Indian, and Persian sources into Arabic, as well as its introduction into broader scholarly circulation, was carried out intensively. The principal factors that determined the place of the “Bayt al-Hikma” in the history of world science are as follows:

- The first is the collection of scholarly heritage: rare works derived from Greek, Indian, and Persian sources were collected and systematically preserved;
- The second is translation activity: the collected works were translated into Arabic by highly qualified specialists, commented upon, and disseminated;
- The third is the creative environment: prominent scholars and thinkers of their time, such as Muhammad al-Khwarizmi (167/783–236/850), Hunayn ibn Ishaq (193/809–259/873), and Thabit ibn Qurra (211/826–288/901), worked at the centre and produced new scholarly works.³

As a result, in the eighth and ninth centuries, the “Bayt al-Hikma” became one of the major centres not only of scientific and scholarly development in the Islamic world but also of the advancement of science throughout the world.

Throughout its history, this centre also became known as the “Baghdad School of Science” or the “Baghdad Academy.”

In 131/749, Marwan II was overthrown by Abu al-Abbas al-Saffah (132/749–137/754), bringing an end to the Umayyad dynasty (41/661–133/750), and the administration of the Islamic Caliphate passed into the hands of the Abbasid

³ Ataev M. *Ustrushana's History during the Ancient and First Renaissance Periods (Source Studies and Historiographical Analysis): Dissertation for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in History*. – Tashkent, 2021. – p. 29.

dynasty (133/750–656/1258).⁴ This marked the beginning of a new era in the Caliphate. From the very beginning of their rule, the Abbasids paid particular attention to strengthening the state structure and promoting culture and science. They moved the centre of government from Syria (Damascus) to Iraq and declared Baghdad, founded by Caliph al-Mansur in 145/762, the capital.

Due to its geographical location, natural resources, and proximity to major trade routes, Baghdad soon became not only a political and economic centre, but also a centre of science, culture, and civilisation. In particular, the caliphs al-Mansur (136/754–158/775), Harun al-Rashid (170/786–193/809), and al-Ma'mun (198/813–218/833) attached great importance to the development of science, philosophy, medicine, and translation activities. In particular, the “Bayt al-Hikma,” established in Baghdad on the initiative of al-Ma'mun, became a major centre of learning. Ancient works in Greek, Syriac, Persian, and Indian were translated into Arabic there. The works of Greek thinkers such as Plato, Aristotle, Galen, Euclid, and Ptolemy became known to Muslim scholars, and their scientific heritage was further developed. Within this intellectual environment, numerous great scholars emerged, including Muhammad ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi (167/783–236/850) (mathematics and astronomy), Abu Bakr al-Razi (251/865–313/925) (medicine and chemistry), Ahmad al-Farghani (182/798–247/861) (astronomy), Ya'qub ibn Ishaq al-Kindi (185/801–259/873) (philosophy, mathematics, and chemistry), Abu Nasr al-Farabi (258/872–339/950) (philosophy, logic, and music), and many others. During this period, Baghdad came to possess some of the largest libraries, observatories, and scholarly institutions in the world.

The scholarly environment of Baghdad exerted an influence not only on the Muslim world but also on human civilisation as a whole during that period. This historic city became a centre that provided representatives of different religions and ethnic groups, as well as prominent scholars and thinkers, with opportunities for the free exchange of ideas, creative work, and scholarly research. During the period of

⁴ Abduhalimov B. “*Bayt al-Hikma*” and the Scholarly Activities of Central Asian Scholars in Baghdad. – Tashkent: “Uzbekistan,” 2010. – p. 35.

the Abbasid Caliphate (133/750–656/1258), particular attention was devoted to the fields of science, literary studies, philosophy, and culture. In particular, translation activities, the establishment of centres of learning, and the encouragement of scholars' scholarly activities laid the foundation for the dissemination of knowledge and learning throughout the Islamic world.

This process gave rise to a historical period known as the “Golden Age” in the history of Islamic civilisation. During this period, the Muslim world achieved remarkable and unprecedented advances in all major fields of knowledge, including mathematics, astronomy, medicine, chemistry, geography, philosophy, and literature. Under the Abbasid dynasty, Baghdad became not only the political centre of the Islamic Caliphate but also a centre of cultural and scholarly renaissance on a global scale. The flourishing of this city subsequently exerted a significant influence on the development of science and the Renaissance in Europe.

During the Abbasid Caliphate, rapid changes took place in the development of science, particularly in the preservation and dissemination of manuscript works. Although the practice of collecting manuscripts had already existed during the Umayyad period (41/661–133/750), beginning with the reign of the Abbasid caliph al-Mansur, this process acquired a centralised, systematic, and continuous character.⁵ Both the quality and quantity of sources increased considerably. Al-Mansur not only sought to collect rare sources but also began inviting thinkers and scholars from various lands to Baghdad, the capital and central cities of the Caliphate. Physicians, chemists, engineers, and geographers invited from the renowned school of Gundishapur in Iran served at this centre, alongside representatives of different religions and ethnic groups.

In conclusion, the ninth–eleventh centuries constituted a genuine Renaissance in the development of the sciences and culture of the peoples of the East, and the flourishing of scholarship during this period was intrinsically linked to the productive scholarly and creative activities of Central Asian thinkers. During

⁵ Ataev M. *Ustrushana's History during the Ancient and First Renaissance Periods (Source Studies and Historiographical Analysis): Dissertation for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in History*. – Tashkent, 2021. – p. 29.

this period, major theoretical discoveries were made in numerous fundamental and applied fields of knowledge, including mathematics, astronomy, medicine, chemistry, geography, linguistics, Islamic sciences, as well as literature and music.

The activities of major scholarly centres such as the “Bayt al-Hikma” demonstrate that science had acquired a universal character and reveal the unparalleled role played in this process by the great scholars who emerged from the lands of Mawarannahr and Khurasan.

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