



## The Golden Age of the Abbasids: Arabic Language and Literature as Pillars of Progress

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### Abstract

*The golden age of the Abbasid Dynasty (750–1258 CE) was a crucial phase in the history of Islamic civilization, marked by rapid advances in science, education, and culture. The caliphs, particularly Harun al-Rashid and Al-Ma'mun, played a significant role in promoting scientific activity through the establishment of institutions such as the Baitul Hikmah, which served as centers for translation, libraries, and scientific development. Arabic developed into the primary language of science, replacing Greek and Syriac, and became a medium for the transmission and innovation of knowledge from various civilizations, such as Greece, Persia, and India. This study aims to analyze the role of Arabic language and literature as the main pillars of the progress of Islamic civilization during the Abbasid Dynasty. The method used is a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical design through a literature study of relevant primary and secondary sources. The results show that Arabic not only functions as a means of communication, but also as a primary means of developing and producing knowledge, while Arabic literature developed rapidly through cross-cultural interactions and political support from the Caliphate. These findings confirm that intellectual progress during the Abbasid period significantly contributed to the development of global science and laid the foundation for modern civilization..*

**Keywords:** Abbasid Dynasty, Golden Age, Arabic Language, Arabic Literature, House of Wisdom, Islamic Science.

### INTRODUCTION

The Abbasid dynasty, which ruled from the mid-8th to the mid-13th century CE, was one of the most influential dynasties in the history of Islamic civilization. This period is often referred to as the golden age of Islam, marked by rapid advances in science, education, philosophy, art, and literature. Not only did the Abbasid Caliphate serve as a political force, but it also succeeded in establishing an intellectual ecosystem that enabled scientific knowledge to develop systematically and sustainably. Baghdad, the capital of the Caliphate, grew into an international center of learning, bringing together scientists from diverse cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds (Tahir et al., 2012).

The intellectual progress of the Abbasid era is inseparable from the policies of the caliphs, who placed great emphasis on the development of knowledge. Caliphs such as Harun al-Rashid and Al-Ma'mun were known for their strong commitment to scientific pursuits, including establishing educational institutions and large libraries, as well as providing financial and political support to scientists. One of the monumental achievements of this period was the establishment of the House of Wisdom, which served as a center for translation, research, and scientific development. Through this institution, scientific works from Greek, Persian, and Indian civilizations were translated, studied, and further developed (Salsabila et al., 2021).

In this context, Arabic played a highly strategic role. Initially, Arabic served as the language of religion and government administration. However, during the Abbasid period, Arabic underwent a transformation into the language of science and culture. The massive translation of foreign scientific works made Arabic the primary medium for the transmission and production of knowledge. Muslim scholars not only translated these texts literally but also critiqued, elaborated, and synthesized them, giving rise to new and original ideas in various disciplines, such as medicine, mathematics, astronomy, and philosophy (Ridlo, n.d.). Along with the development of Arabic as a language of knowledge, Arabic literature also experienced significant progress. An open intellectual environment, political stability, and intensive interaction with foreign cultures fostered the emergence of various new literary forms and genres. Arabic literature during the Abbasid period served not only as a means of aesthetic expression, but also as a medium for reflection, social criticism, and the dissemination of intellectual values. The influence of Persian, Greek, and Indian cultures is evident in the themes, style, and structure of Arabic literary works, further enriching the treasury of Islamic scholarship (Nisa Meisa Zarawaki, 2022).

Although numerous studies have been conducted on the Abbasid Dynasty and its golden age, some research still tends to view Arabic language and literature as merely supporting elements, rather than as primary pillars of civilizational progress. In fact, Arabic language and literature played a fundamental role in shaping scientific traditions, transmitting knowledge across generations, and connecting Islamic civilization with the outside world. Therefore, a more comprehensive and analytical study is needed to emphasize the strategic position of Arabic language and literature within the context of the Abbasid glory.

Based on this description, this study focuses on answering the following research questions: (1) What role did Arabic play in the transmission, development, and production of knowledge during the Abbasid Dynasty? (2) How did the development of Arabic literature contribute to the intellectual and cultural dynamics of Abbasid society? and (3) why can Arabic language and literature be seen as the main pillars of the progress of Islamic civilization during that period? By answering these questions, this article is expected to provide a deeper and more argumentative understanding of the contribution of Arabic language and literature to the glory of Islamic civilization and its relevance for the development of science to the present day.

## **METHOD**

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical design to examine the role of Arabic language and literature as pillars of the advancement of Islamic civilization during the Abbasid Dynasty. A qualitative approach was chosen because this research aims to understand historical, intellectual, and cultural phenomena in depth through interpretation of written sources, rather than quantitative measurements (Creswell, 2014).

Data collection was conducted through library research, examining various relevant primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include classical works and writings by Muslim scholars discussing Arabic science, language, and literature during the Abbasid period. Meanwhile, secondary sources include history books, scientific journal articles, and academic publications that examine the Abbasid Dynasty, the translation movement, and the development of Arabic language and literature (Zed, 2018).

Data analysis was conducted using a descriptive-analytical technique through several stages. First, the researcher identified and classified data related to the scientific policies of the Abbasid Dynasty, the role of Arabic in the transmission of knowledge, and the development of Arabic literature. Second, the data was analyzed by interpreting the meaning, context, and relationships between concepts to gain a comprehensive understanding. Third, the researchers synthesized these findings to formulate logical and systematic conclusions regarding the contribution of Arabic language and literature to the advancement of Islamic civilization (Miles & Huberman, 2014).

To maintain data validity, this study employed source triangulation techniques by comparing various references from different backgrounds and perspectives. Thus, the research results are expected to have an adequate level of accuracy and credibility and be academically accountable (Sugiyono, 2019).

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The results of this study were obtained through an analysis of various primary and secondary sources discussing the Abbasid Dynasty, the development of the Arabic language, and the advancement of Arabic literature during that period. In accordance with the literature review and descriptive-analytical analysis methods used, the research findings are organized based on groupings of key themes emerging from the reviewed literature, namely the scientific policies of the Abbasid Dynasty, the role of Arabic in the transmission of knowledge, and the contribution of Arabic literature to intellectual and cultural development.

### **Scientific Policies of the Abbasid Dynasty**

Based on the literature review, it can be concluded that the advancement of science during the Abbasid Dynasty was significantly influenced by the political and cultural policies of the caliphs. Harun al-Rashid and Al-Ma'mun consistently supported scientific activities through the establishment of scientific institutions, patronage of scholars, and provision of educational facilities and libraries. The House of Wisdom in Baghdad became a key symbol of this policy, serving as a center for translation, research, and interdisciplinary scientific discussion (Salsabila et al., 2021). The analysis shows that this policy created an intellectual climate conducive to the development of science and culture.

### **The Role of Arabic in the Transmission and Production of Knowledge**

Research findings indicate that Arabic played a fundamental role as the primary medium for the transmission and production of knowledge during the Abbasid period. Through a massive translation movement, scientific works from Greece, Persia, and India were translated into Arabic, either directly or through Syriac. Figures such as Hunayn ibn Ishaq and Qusta ibn Luqa played a crucial role in this process, particularly in the fields of medicine and philosophy. Analysis of the literature shows that the translation process did not stop at translation, but was followed by interpretation, development, and scientific

criticism, which gave rise to new and original theories (Ridlo, n.d.). Thus, Arabic functioned as a creative tool in the development of knowledge, not merely a passive medium.

### **Contributions of Muslim Scientists to World Civilization**

The literature review also reveals that Muslim scientists during the Abbasid period made significant contributions to various scientific disciplines. Figures such as Ibn Sina in medicine, Al-Biruni in astronomy and geography, and Al-Khwarizmi in mathematics produced scientific works that served as important references for centuries. These works were later translated into Latin and had a significant influence on the development of science in Europe during the Renaissance. This finding confirms that the advancement of modern science cannot be separated from the intellectual contributions of the Islamic world during the Abbasid period (Tahir et al., 2012).

### **The Development of Arabic Literature during the Abbasid Period**

Besides science, research shows that Arabic literature experienced rapid development during the Abbasid period. Political stability, economic prosperity, and cross-cultural interaction created ample space for literary creativity. Arabic literature flourished not only in the form of poetry but also in prose, philosophy, and popular scientific works. Literary analysis shows that literature served as a medium for the dissemination of intellectual ideas, social criticism, and cultural reflection. The influence of Persian, Greek, and Indian cultures enriched the themes and styles of Arabic literature, making it more dynamic and diverse (Nisa Meisa Zarawaki, 2022).

### **Synthesis of Research Findings**

Based on the overall results of the literature analysis, it can be concluded that Arabic language and literature were the main pillars of the advancement of Islamic civilization during the Abbasid Dynasty. Arabic enabled the widespread transmission and development of knowledge, while Arabic literature played a role in shaping the intellectual and cultural awareness of the community. This synthesis of findings aligns with the qualitative descriptive-analytical approach used, where understanding is gained through in-depth interpretation of relevant historical and academic sources.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of the literature analysis conducted using a qualitative descriptive-analytical approach, it can be concluded that the golden age of the Abbasid Dynasty was a fundamental period in the history of Islamic civilization, supported by a strong scientific and cultural tradition. This progress was inseparable from the policies of the Abbasid caliphs, particularly Harun al-Rashid and Al-Ma'mun, who systematically supported the development of science through the establishment of scientific institutions such as the Baitul Hikmah and the strengthening of translation and research activities.

Arabic has proven to have a strategic role as a primary medium for the transmission, development, and production of knowledge. Through Arabic, the intellectual heritage of various Greek, Persian, and Indian civilizations was not only preserved but also creatively developed by Muslim scholars, giving rise to new ideas and discoveries with widespread influence. In this context, Arabic served not merely as a means of communication but also as an intellectual foundation that enabled the birth of a well-established scientific tradition.

Beyond language, Arabic literature during the Abbasid Dynasty also contributed significantly to the intellectual and cultural dynamics of Islamic society. Literature

developed as a space for the expression of thought, social reflection, and the dissemination of scientific values, enriched by cross-cultural interactions. This literary development demonstrates the holistic nature of Abbasid civilization, encompassing rational, cultural, and aesthetic aspects.

Overall, this research confirms that Arabic language and literature were key pillars of Islamic civilization's progress during the Abbasid Dynasty. The intellectual contributions made during this period not only impacted the Islamic world but also served as a crucial bridge for the development of global knowledge. These findings demonstrate the continuing relevance of the study of Arabic language and literature in understanding the history of civilization and the development of science today.

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