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# The House of Wisdom (Bayt al-Hikmah) and Its Civilizational Impact on Islamic libraries: A Historical Perspective

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*Abstract*

*The House of Wisdom (Bayt Al-Hikmah) was seen as one of the leading libraries in Islamic history that appeared during the Golden age of Islam. It was initiated by the Abbasid dynasty. The research historically analyses the civilizational role of Bayt Al-Hikmah that has remarkably adapted the intellectual richness to serve scholars, scientists and worldwide thinkers. The study highlights the development that marked the house of wisdom in the time of the Abbasids. The main objective of this paper is to explore the impact of the house of wisdom on the Islamic libraries, moreover it studies the organizational structure of Bayt al-Hikmah along with library divisions and services that it provided for scholars and readers. The paper shall also deal with funding sources. The study found out that, the house of wisdom has had a very organized management system especially in collecting and book cataloguing, the library had a great interest in debating and scientific circles in various topics and subjects. In addition, some new competing libraries have been influenced by the system of the house of wisdom in Egypt and Andalusia. It preserved the knowledge and heritage of the ancient civilizations and it contributed with a remarkable and an unprecedented discoveries that the western civilization have utilized to thrive. The paper shall follow a historical method which comprises some guidelines by which the authors utilize primary sources to conduct a historical account.*

*Keywords: Abbasids, Libraries, House of Wisdom (Bayt al-Hikmah), Administration, Management System, Civilization*

## 1. Introduction

The life of Muslims throughout history was correlated with the establishment of libraries that is when libraries flourish the life of scholars and scientists witness a remarkable progress (Ibn Al-Nafīs, Ibn Al-Haytham, Ibn Sīnā…etc.) thus libraries are not just a tool of activity but rather they represent a depot of intelligence and mental inheritance for all humankind, a researcher who does not grasp the history of libraries and the legacies left by our ancestors would never fully be able to benefit from them. Unlike what some people may believe about the ancient libraries being unable to match the contemporary bookstores, libraries were the meeting place for men of literature, science cultures religions…etc.

The history of libraries is a history of human thought for libraries have been the stronghold of

thoughts preserving them and passing them from generation to generation. We can say that among the first centres of human civilization intellect was the library of the Mesopotamian peninsula a saying that has been proved correct by different Cuneiform script writings. Which means that libraries are not founded only in our modern time, but excavations of archaeologists have backed the idea that libraries as ancient as writing for it was a very crucial invention in human history and a factor in ancient civilizations' development.

After the spread of Islamic faith, peoples were very attentive to gain knowledge and to participate in the life of thoughts, as a result libraries had emerged to reflect the loftiness of the intellectual life during the second, third until the seventh century AH (*after hijrah*) when libraries started to vanish. Libraries represented new reality for Muslims and new passion towards the human knowledge and education (Mohammad Ali, 1980).

The Abbasids attained their most sparkling period of intellectual and political life soon after the caliphate was establishment. The Caliphate reached its prime during the time reigns of Hārūn al-Rashīd (149-193 AH) and his son al-Ma'mūn (170-217 AH). The Abbasid dynasty acquired a halo in popular imagination becoming the most celebrated in the history of Islam due to the unparalleled intellectual awakening that culminated the al- al-Ma'mūn's patronage. The house of wisdom was one of the leading libraries that distinguished the Abbasid times, it opened its doors for researchers, scholars and leaders. Bayt al-Hikmah was the preferable destination for intellectuals because it offered everything they needed including hall for reading, classrooms, divisions of binding, translating, authoring, map making etc.

### 1.1 Objectives and contributions of the present research

There have been many studies on history of Islamic libraries (Houses of Wisdom) that evolved thanks to Baghdad's house of wisdom. However there was no research that could show the impact of the House of Wisdom (Bayt al-Hikmah) in Baghdad on formation of other new Islamic libraries. The current study analyses the organizational structure of Bayt al-Hikmah al-Baghdad and its divisions and services that it provided for scholars and readers. The paper shall also deal with the funding sources and governmental endowments that were commonly known at the time of the Abbasids, It also shows the intellectual as well as managerial impacts that Baghdad's House of Wisdom (Bayt al-Hikmah) had on the spread of new Islamic libraries within the Muslim peninsula. The current conducted research has a very original contribution since previous studies on the House of wisdom have only dealt with historical backgrounds of some libraries. The paper contributes in highlighting the extent of creativity for authors that had flourished due to the House of wisdom in which book authoring took a very progressive trend. It also adds new historical and factual contribution to studies on the administrative and managerial aspects and the way they function in the House of Wisdom (Bayt al-Hikmah) that was later assimilated by several libraries in the Muslim world.

### 1.2 Research Methodology

The current paper shall use a qualitative research based on a historical approach through which the authors analyse and criticize development of the House of Wisdom (Bayt al-Hikmah) and its influence on similar libraries based on credible and primary sources that marked one of the bright ages of Islamic history. The historical approach has determined the research framework of gathering relevant information about the House of Wisdom and its administrative and intellectual impact on emergence of new public and private libraries.

## 2. Historical Origins of the House of Wisdom (Bayt al-Hikmah)

There has been different opinions on the identity of the founder of the Abbasids' House of Wisdom. Some records say that the founder of Bayt al-Hikmah was Abu Ja'far al-Mansūr (95-135 AH) who collected books on medicines, astronomy, engineering and literatures that have been translated in his reign, moreover some other publications on Hadith (prophetic tradition), history, Qura'nic

sciences, al-Mansūr has gathered all collections of books in a big room that was the nucleus of the house of wisdom (al-Diyaji, 1975). He was the first caliph who motivated Muslims to study sciences and develop them, he also advised them to translate books from Persian, Greek, and Indian languages. Among the books that al-Mansūr initiated their translations were the book of *Al-Sind Hind* a book on mathematics and a huge collection of Aristotle, Euclid and of Claudius Ptolemy writings. These collections along with the authored publications on Prophetic tradition (Hadith), literature, and history were gathered in one of palace's big closet that later on was developed becoming the pillar of the house of wisdom (al-Qafti, 1903), we agree upon the abovementioned opinion that Bayt al-Hikmah was founded in the time of the Caliph al-Mansūr.

Scholars of a second opinion saw that the house of wisdom was founded in the time of Hārūn al-Rashīd (149-193 AH) as a result of the civilizational and intellectual progress that characterized his caliphate especially during the era of translation movement whose aim was to enrich the Muslim thought with different knowledge and sciences led by a number of Arabs, Persians and Syriac scholars and scientists (Ma'ruf, 1969). When al- Rashid army opened Ankara he personally took hold of the expedition to preserve the libraries there and to transport every valuable collection of books to the centre of the Abbasid Caliphate Baghdad specifically to the house of wisdom. Ibn al-Nadīm supported this opinion when he mentioned in his book *Al-Fihrist "Abu Sahl al-Fadl Ibn Nubakht was present around the closet (book storing place) of Al-Rashīd"* (Ibn al-Nadīm, 1964, p.255). Also the saying of Yaqūt al-Hamawī who could confirm that the house of wisdom existed in the time of Al-Rashīd *"Al-Warraq used to copy and reproduce in Bayt al-Hikmah during the times of Al-Rashīd and Al-Ma'mūn"*, this would argue for the presence of the house of wisdom at the reign of Al-Rashīd. (Al-Hamawī, 1966, p.66)

The third opinion argue that the Abbasids' house of wisdom was founded in the time of Al-Ma'mūn the caliph (170-217 AH). De Lacy O'Leary (1872-1957 AD) who is a British orientalist has supported the idea that Bayt al-Hikmah was constructed by Al-Ma'mūn when he says *"the caliph Al-Ma'mūn has founded a school he named Bayt al-Hikmah, and he made it an institution that embraces the translation of the Greek books"*( O'Leary: 1973, p.327), the same opinion appears in Max Meyerhof and William James Durant writings. It possible to say that the house of wisdom existed long before Al-Ma'mūn but it sparkled during his reign for he was a man of literature, a scientist and a lover of scholars to whom he had given major interest and support for their research, debates and authoring books.(Amin, 1960).

## 3. The Naming of House of Wisdom (Bayt al-Hikmah)

When the Caliphs have had a huge collection of books and a considerable numbers of translations, maps, manuscripts…etc. they have had to construct an appropriate place for these collections, historians have a consent that the caliphs' most desirable location for the library was the palace itself.

Bayt al-Hikmah of the Abbasids was given some different names, according to some sources it was called closet of wisdom a name that was given by historians like Ibn al-Nadīm who often used the Bayt al-Hikmah to refer to the same store, another scholars like Ibn Sa'id al-Andalūsī and al-Qalaqshandī utilised the term closet of wisdom to refer to the house of wisdom. Haji Khalifa on the other hand gives a different name known as Dar al-Hikmah. The most interesting thing about the naming of house of wisdom is that all labels signify the same meaning that Bayt al-Hikmah was the place of all knowledge and wisdom to be found.

## 4. The location of the House of Wisdom (Bayt al-Hikmah) and its architectural design

There has not been enough information about the place of house of wisdom, references have spoken about Bay al-Hikmah fairly but they have not said much about its location. According to the norms the closet of books should be part of the palace just like the Cordoba Place and the palace of the Fatimid caliph Al-'Aziz Billah (344-386 AH), and palaces of the kings of India and Persia (Ibn Al-Abaar, 1963).

It is believed that the house of wisdom was part of the palace during the time of Al-Rashīd

(149-193 AH), it was a separate house (Dar) within the palace of caliphs, and some historians said that it was an attached large room from the outside. However when the number of translated and authored books has increased in the reign of Al-Ma'mūn (170-218 AD) the house became a large building with a big number of halls and room for translators, authors, scientists, and readers. As a result the library was relocated to Al Rusafa that was the half of Baghdad on the eastern side of the river Tigris and a new Astronomical Observatory has been appended to the new relocated library.(Amin, 1963).

As for the house of wisdom's architecture. Mahmud Ahmad Derwich has found a suitable architectural planning for Bayt al-Hikmah through his studies on the golden castle constructed by Al-Mansur. The house of wisdom composed of a yard surrounded by halls of two floors from its four sides, it was headed by a penthouse on a row of pillars. In the middle of every side among the four sides of the yard there were halls topped by semi-cylindrical dome of 25 cubit. The main hall leads to a square shape room above it there was a big dome with 80 cubit high, the main hall also has a statue of knight holding a spear that spins with the spear. The ground floor contained a number of divisions for book closets and sections for translating, authoring, copying, binding, reading as well as studying in all subjects of knowledge, sciences and literature, as for the upper floor it was devoted to residents from authors, translators, students and employees.(Ghanima, 1953).

## 5. Organizational Chart of the House of Wisdom (Bayt al-Hikmah)

Bayt al-Hikmah had its own system but sources have not stated a precise description that bind the system that the house of wisdom used to function.

Information given help us infer that the library of Bayt al-Hikmah was an institution like other institutions of that time, for there have existed terms given to specific people such as Sāhib bayt al-hikmah. The term sahib refers to the highest ranking officials of the state, for instance, *Sāhib al-Bimartsān* that stands for the director of the hospital, *Sāhib al-Arsād* or director of astronomical observatories, *sāhib al-Diwān* or director of the ministry cabinet…etc. (Al-'ish: 1991). The responsible for the house of wisdom was called *al-Khāzin* who administrated its affairs, the importance of the job requires one of the best scholars or intellectuals who had mastered various sciences and showed a distinguished cleverness. (Khalifa Sha'ban, 1997).

After the library was formed and loaded with a huge number of translated and authored books, manuscripts, maps and other books from the Greek, Persian and Indian civilizations, as a result the Abbasids build a big premise with many rooms and halls that contained all the assembled literature that was divided into sections and groups in which every section or group was dedicated to a specific science collection. Each collection was stored in a partitioned shelf. (Ma'ruf, 1983). Books inside the house of wisdom were indexed accordingly the same way as in the modern libraries when there existed a clear cataloguing method of book titles and manuscripts. Some scholars have made their own index for their writings for instance, Al-Bayrūnī has listed and indexed his own books and books of Mohammad Ibn Zakariyah Al-Rāzī. Bayt al-Hikmah has had a variety of sections that included: depositing books, book lending, Copying and binding, maps and manuscripts, and finally the section of translating and book authoring. We shall explore now the library sections in details within the coming pages:

1.  *The depositing of books:* This process during the times of Bayt al-Hikmah was labelled al-Takhlid, it was accomplished in different ways. Authored books were of great value for the library and for the author who had a great honour if his books are deposited in the house of wisdom, translated books were also of no lesser value and they composed the library's collection, finally, sometimes al-Takhlid is through purchasing books, for example the caliph al-Ma'mūn had assigned a group to purchase books from Roman and Greek libraries and add them to his closet of books. Dr Hasan Ahmad Mahmud has commented on the caliphs efforts in purchase process saying that "the Abbasid state held deals to purchase books and they paid high prices for them especially in the time of al-Ma'mūn who devoted himself to knowledge and fortune to reach out the intellectual treasury in foreign libraries of Constantinople and Cyprus" (Majid, 2010, p.163).

2.  *Book lending:*   As it has been stated earlier that the house contained a considerable

number of rooms and halls. One of the halls was devoted for readers that had some servant who provide help, comfort and other sort of services for those who frequently came to the library. There had been also an external but conditional lending of, in which books were lent for people who value them therefore they have to make a pledge and pay a refundable cost for the lent book in case of damage or loss in order to preserve all book collections within the library.

3. *Copying and binding:* this section was related to the translation movement, once the translator finishes the assigned job, the product will be transferred to a writer who were having a distinguished hand writing style. The caliph al-Ma'mūn himself was the one who nominated the writers and the writing style. When the written product is ready it would be devolved to other people for binding and decorating. The final copy would be distributed also in other libraries outside of Baghdad to the Tunisian House of Wisdom, and Cairo's Dar al-Hikmah. (Al-Mas'ūdī, 1968).

4. *Maps and manuscripts:* the library has preserved a big number of geographical maps manuscripts, and astronomical photographs. Bayt al-Hikmah had kept many resources for geographers and astronomers who could benefit from these collections, for instance al-Mas'udī had viewed a photograph named *al-Sūra al-Ma'mūniyyah* that has been produced by a number of scholars in the time of al-Ma'mūn, it demonstrates the whole world with its stars, planets, land, oceans and urban places of cities and nations. Furthermore there existed another manuscript that pictures the earth with its seas, mountains, valleys…etc. (Ibn al-Nadīm, 2002).

5. *Translation and authoring:* the Abbasid caliphs have had a great concern in translating and transmitting the legacy of the ancient nations to the Arabic language in order to avail from it and to contribute in the new procedure of the ancient knowledge innovation. This had been one of the main leading tasks and activities for the house of wisdom. Translation movement have focused on some main languages that include: Greek, Indian, Syriac, and Persian languages. This section was subdivided into different assembly based on the subjects of translation and each was assigned to one of the eminent scholars at that time, for instance, the assembly of mathematics and engineering was assigned to Abū Ja'far Ibn Mūsa Ibn Shākir (183-258 AH)and his brothers, assembly of stars' movement and philosophy were assigned to Ya'qūb al-Kindī (184-259 AH) and to Ibn Farkhān al-Tabarī (145-200 AH), and the body of Medicine that was designated to Ibn Ishāq al-Harānī (Al-Qiftī, 2005).

The library was not only a place of translating the ancient heritage but it was also the institution when scholars and scientists authored their own books on literature, history, philosophy, linguistics, medicines…etc. Hārūn al-Rashīd (149-193 AH) had appointed Ibn Qarib al-Asma'I (121-216 AH) to author a book on history, the latter had finished his first assigned task in the house of wisdom itself. Abu Zakariyya al-Farra' (144-206 AH) had also authored one of the earliest publications on Arabic Grammar. In addition to that, Bayt al-Hikmah represented the educational institution for the Abbasids who spent their fortune to appoint scholars and lecturers to teach philosophy, astronomy, history, geography, mathematics, medical sciences, and music…etc. the educational environment in the library had given the opportunity to student to pursue their research on higher education thus, the House of wisdom had become the first Islamic university in history of Islam. (Amin, 1963).

## 6. The Funding resources of the House of (Bayt al-Hikmah)

Historical sources have pointed out little knowledge on the extent of financial finding for the house of wisdom, but they almost all agreed that there used to be a limitless support on the funding issue when a large sums of money and gold were spent to fund the library. Consequently it helps us infer that there had been a special budget for the house of wisdom to secure the wages of all its employees including: translators, authors, binders, lecturers, debaters, servants…etc. the budget also compromised other facilities such as habitation, food, book, pens and papers' purchase and others.

Al-Ma'mūn the caliph had allocated a steady resources or endowments (*Awqaf*) to be spent on the library, in so doing the caliph did not want to expose this institution to any financial shakings or crisis for he knew the harm it could occur to education and to scientific progress in such hard times therefore he secured a lasting funding from caliphs and ministers (Muntasir, 1971).

As for the disbursed money on the house of wisdom in the time of al-Ma'mūn it estimated nearly two hundred thousand Dinars (Durant, 1964), some sources have mentioned that the same caliph had offered to Hunayn ibn Ishāq (194-260 AH) -a famous translator- the weight of what he translated of books in gold as a wage for the latter's contribution in enriching the house of wisdom with the ancient knowledge translated into Arabic. Ibn al-Nadīm has also stated in his book *Al-Firist* that some translators like Ibn al-A'sam and Thābit Ibn Qurra (221-288 AH) have a monthly allowance that exceeded five hundred Dinars (Ibn al-Nadīm, 2002).

### 7. Impact of the House of Wisdom (Bayt al-Hikmah) on the Islamic Libraries

The house of wisdom had crucial role to play in linking the Islamic world fronts in east and west and in introducing the heritage in its perfect form to all Muslims in order to preserve it from loss and deterioration. As a result, the library had gained a great fame in the Islamic world for it was the first scientific and educational library that assembled scientists, scholars and translators to study and research. The house of wisdom had become an exemplary model for other Caliphs and princes who tried to simulate and to found new libraries and houses of wisdom that can compete with the one in Baghdad, this contest had attained an intellectual and scientific advancements in every sphere in the Islamic world. Here are some libraries that came to exist because of emulating the example of house of wisdom:

1. The Aghlabids House of Wisdom: found by Amir Ibrahim Ibn Mohammad al-Aghlabī (261-289 AH) in Raqqada. Ibrahim was an admirer of knowledge and scholars for he knew the value of education and knowledge and their role in the progress of societies. He had strived to make his library reach out the fame of Baghdad library, wherefore he brought to Aghlabids library a number of precious manuscripts, books and scientific tools. The prince has two annual expeditions to Baghdad to renew his sovereignty to the Abbasid caliphate in doing so he assigned a group of scholars to borrow and purchase books and literary works from Baghdad that they cannot be found elsewhere (Ismail, 1978).

2. The Andalusian House of Wisdom: it was found by the Umayyad caliph in Andalusia al-Hakam al-Mustansir (302-366 AH) who was often described as the master or scholar (*A'lim*) of the Umayyad due to his vast knowledge in various sciences categories, he collected the greatest number of books that nobody had collected before (Lévi-Provençal: 1994). Therefore he decided to construct a huge building which he called the Dar al-Hikmah (house of wisdom) that followed the example of the Baghdad library in its artistic and organizational features. During the reign of al-Mustansir Cordoba became one of the eminent centres of human civilization characterized by a remarkable progress in sciences, arts, and architecture.

3. Cairo's House of Wisdom: the beginning of its founding is related to the time of the Fatimid al-Aziz billah (365-386 AH) who also was a lover of books and he attentively collected a great number of them saying that he would have a hold of a copy of every book whether authored or translated in the house of wisdom in Baghdad. The true founder of the Cairo's Dar Al-Hikmah was al-Hākim bi-Amr Allah (386-411 AH) who always assembled scholars from all arts and sciences and he prepared for them everything they needed in order to facilitate for them searching and authoring. He also gifted students and readers with different presents and supply them with free ink and papers. (Ibn al-Jawzī, 1924).

A huge number of new libraries had emerged in the Arab peninsula and in other territories, however it was clear that all newfound libraries have been trying to compete with the Abbasids House of Wisdom in Baghdad. They tried to simulate, innovate and challenge the reputation that the House of wisdom had in the Muslim world.

The libraries that have flourished following the example of the house of wisdom's have had

their doors open to scholars from all over the world. Libraries have had almost the same kind of translated books that were culled from scholarships of dozen languages. The house wisdom was a center of knowledge and education, it was a rival of the Constantinople's if it did not exceed it. It was the model for other libraries and similar institutions throughout the soils of Islamic civilization.

The example of the house of wisdom was remarkably followed and its influence appeared when other many public libraries have emerged all the way from Bokhara and Merv, in the heart of Asia, on the route to China through Basra and Damascus, Algiers and Cairo. The famous geographer Yāqut al-Hamawī who had visited Merv in the late 1220s, found more than twelve libraries there opened for public. And the same as the house of wisdom in Baghdad functioned, ten libraries were through endowments (*awqaf*). He interestingly expressed his admiration for about the lending policies of the libraries there, he noted that libraries in Merv were being liberal enough to lend him more than 200 volumes he could use in his room at the same time. (Al-Hamawī, 1993).

Libraries of The Nizamiyyah School were somewhat similar to the House of Wisdom (Bayt al-Hikmah) for the former had had many facilities to offer for students, including student's scholarships and endowment professorship. The Nizamiyyah School libraries and Cairo libraries were reported to have their own binders, administrators, librarians and even guards, they have shared almost all supported by endowments from governments, caliphs and kings.

One of the most remarkable impacts that the House of Wisdom had had on the other libraries is that they have helped scholars and authors creativity to flourish. For instance hundreds of volumes were being written in the time of the Fatimid's time. The high authoring process was one of the characteristics of the Egyptian renaissance before the coming of the Mongols and the crusaders. The influence of the House of Wisdom went beyond the Arab peninsula when it reached European soils particularly Spain. Córdoba, Seville and Toledo had a great number of libraries basically because many agents had been sent across the countries and seas to buy books and bring them to the Royal library in Córdoba in which it is believed to have contained more than 400.000 volumes, and amazingly it gave employment to over five hundred people. Ultimately Córdoba had become one of the greatest book markets in the western world during the 10th century AD. (Harris, 1984).

The House of Wisdom (Bayt al-Hikmah) had influenced not only similar public libraries, but a new form of libraries that were for personal use and for show. They were called private libraries which sometimes reached a considerable size. One writer has estimated that some private libraries were bigger and richer than public or private, libraries in Western Europe. However it was not the norm for the well-to-do people to leave their libraries open to public or to endow them for users.

Employees in the House of Wisdom in Baghdad were people of higher intellectual abilities, the same was emulated in every public library across the Muslim world. They often had a staff list that reach sometimes hundreds of copyists, illuminators, binders, translators, and authors. Those whom we can consider librarians were not randomly chosen but they usually were scholars, poets, multilingual and writers who on the other side were well paid by caliphs, rulers or nobles. (Mackensen, 1932).

Many of the Islamic libraries included also not halls for reading and book storing, but they also they contained rooms for meetings and other rooms for discussions and debating that were help sometimes between different libraries and different scholars which implies the competition among libraries for scientific achievements, reputation and glory of the library itself. The Muslim libraries have played a major role in translating and transmitting works of Greek, Persian, Indian and Assyrian physicians and philosophers, works that later became the basic textbooks in European schools of Bologna, Naples and Paris. It is likely that without the Muslim libraries, modern Europe's scientific and intellectual progress would have been remarkably inhibited.

## 8. The End of the House of Wisdom Library (Bayt al-Hikmah)

After the invasion of Baghdad by the Mongols in (656 AH-1258 AD) they wrecked the library's private and public closets of books, manuscripts, maps, observatories…etc. they burned majority of the collections whilst others were thrown into the Tigris river, some say that the Mongols have built their barns using books instead of clay.

Hulagu has ruined almost all books that have been translated or authored by distinguished scholars and scientists, the works that were used to spread culture and knowledge and wisdom among the Muslims and non-Muslims were gone into dust. As a result the world witnessed the fall of one the preserving libraries of human intellect and human civilization of that time which has had a calamitous impact on the Islamic civilizational heritage.

The legacy of the house of wisdom library was wasted and the west did not find except Arabic sources to obtain the heritage of ancient human civilizations. The invasion of the Mongols and the destruction of the library marked the fall of Baghdad and ultimately the collapse of the Abbasid Caliphate that had left the Muslim world in crisis in the years to come.

## 9. Conclusion

The research paper showed that the Abbasid Dynasty had much to offer for the human civilization of intellectual and scientific progress. Caliphs were giving the translation movement, transmissions, authoring and intellectual achievements a very high level of respect and support that represented key factors to getting hold of the Hellenistic, Indian, and Persian knowledge and wisdom.

The House of Wisdom has played a distinguished role in the history of the Middle Ages for it was a bridge that transmitted the ancient civilizations including the Islamic one to the west, as it was the departure of modern sciences. Historians have a major consent that thanks to the house of wisdom and other similar schools and libraries, the continuity of human civilization was preserved after the fall of Greek and Roman civilizations.

The study has demonstrated that the house of wisdom was the leading library or in other words a leading Islamic university that the Abbasid age required. The paper has explored the impact of the house of wisdom on the Islamic libraries that came to existence as a simulating process of the Baghdad's library, moreover it studied the organizational structure of Bayt al-Hikmah along with library divisions, sections and services that it provided for scholars and readers.

The research has dealt with funding sources and the budget that the state caliphs dedicated to the library. The study found out that, the house of wisdom has had a very organized administration and affair management system. In addition, new competing libraries have been influenced by the system of the house of wisdom in Baghdad which resulted in the emergence of newfound libraries in Egypt, Maghreb and Andalusia. The Abbasid library had preserved the knowledge and heritage of the ancient civilizations and it passed them to the west with a remarkable contributions, the latter has utilized some of the Abbasid period unprecedented discoveries to flourish and modernize.

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