

## HISTORY OF THE EARLY ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ABBASIYAH DYNASTY

Firma Hafmi<sup>1\*</sup>, Fatmawati<sup>2</sup>, Muhammad Hanafi<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1, 2, 3</sup>Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

fimahafmi24@gmail.com<sup>1</sup>, watif3380@gmail.com<sup>2</sup>, mh19031977@gmail.com<sup>3</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi secara mendalam proses terbentuknya Dinasti Abbasiyah dalam sejarah peradaban Islam. Penelitian kualitatif ini menggunakan pendekatan historis untuk memahami dua metode kunci dalam proses tersebut. Teknik pengumpulan data melibatkan studi literatur dan analisis dokumen sejarah, sementara teknik analisis data dilakukan melalui analisis isi. Validasi data dilakukan dengan cross-referencing berbagai sumber historis untuk memastikan akurasi informasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Dinasti Abbasiyah menggunakan propaganda melalui jaringan rahasia untuk memperoleh dukungan publik dan menggagalkan simpati dari berbagai segmen masyarakat, serta mengumpulkan kekuatan militer untuk menantang dan menghancurkan kekuatan Bani Umayyah. Penelitian ini mengungkap peran penting komunikasi politik dan strategi militer dalam pembentukan dan kestabilan pemerintahan, serta dampaknya terhadap dinamika politik dan sosial di masyarakat pada masa tersebut. Dengan demikian, penelitian ini memberikan wawasan komprehensif tentang proses terbentuknya Dinasti Abbasiyah dan dampaknya terhadap peradaban Islam.

**Kata Kunci:** Peradaban Islam; Sejarah Peradaban Islam; Dinasti Abbasiyah

**Abstract:** This research aims to explore in-depth the formation process of the Abbasid Dynasty in the history of Islamic civilization. This qualitative study employs a historical approach to understand two key methods in this process. Data collection techniques involve literature reviews and historical document analysis, while data analysis is conducted through content analysis. Data validation is carried out by cross-referencing various historical sources to ensure the accuracy of the information. The research findings indicate that the Abbasid Dynasty used propaganda through secret networks to gain public support and garner sympathy from various segments of society, as well as to build military strength to challenge and overthrow the Umayyad power. This study reveals the crucial role of political communication and military strategy in the formation and stability of the government, as well as its impact on the political and social dynamics of the society at that time. Thus, this research provides a comprehensive insight into the formation process of the Abbasid Dynasty and its impact on Islamic civilization.

**Keywords:** Islamic Civilization; History of Islamic Civilization; Abbasid Dynasty



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### A. INTRODUCTION

The development of Islamic civilization, from its birth to the establishment of a robust unified model, reflects an indirect progression of Islam itself. Like links in a chain, the history of Islamic civilization is

interrelated. It begins with the leadership of the Prophet Muhammad, continues through the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs as his successors, and then transitions to the Umayyad dynasty and subsequently to the Abbasid dynasty.

A government or dynasty also undergoes a process of growth and development; from birth, through periods of growth, reaching maturity, and eventually decline and destruction. This is evident in the history of the caliphate (*khilāfah Rasyīdah*), which experienced fluctuations until its demise following the emergence of the Abbasid dynasty.

The Abbasid dynasty, the second dynasty in Islamic governance history, traces its lineage to al-‘Abbās, the uncle of Prophet Muhammad. Its establishment reflects support for the view advocated by the Banu Hashim after the death of the Prophet, which was to base the caliphate on the Prophet's family and his relatives. The era of Abbasid Islam is often referred to as "The Golden Age" of Islamic civilization.

During the Abbasid dynasty, Muslims became symbols of scientific advancement worldwide. It cannot be denied that the glory and civilization of the Abbasid era were the result of developments initiated by Muslims since the early days of Islam's rise. Based on the background presented, this research will delve into the formation process of the Abbasid dynasty and the advancements it achieved (Yatim, 2001).

The Abbasid Dynasty is the second dynasty in the history of Islamic governance. The Abbasids are named after al-‘Abbās, the uncle of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The establishment of this dynasty was a form of support for the views advocated by the Banu Hashim after the death of the Prophet, which emphasized placing the caliphate in the hands of the Prophet's family and close relatives. The period of Abbasid rule is often referred to as "The Golden Age" of Islamic civilization.

During the Abbasid era, the Muslim community became a symbol of scientific advancement worldwide. It is undeniable that the achievements and civilization of the Abbasid period were built upon the foundations laid by the early Muslim community from the dawn of Islam. Based on the background provided, the following research questions are posed: How did the Abbasid Dynasty come into existence? What were the advancements achieved by the Abbasid Dynasty?

## **B. METHOD**

This research is a qualitative study. Given the subject of this article, it falls under the category of library research. According to Kaelan, library research often possesses both descriptive and historical characteristics. The data collection method involves analyzing various available literature related to Islamic educational institutions during the Abbasid Dynasty.

Subsequently, the data is examined using the interactive analysis model of Miles and Huberman, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

## **C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **The Formation Process of the Abbasid Dynasty**

The name Abbasid dynasty is derived from the name of one of the uncles of Prophet Muhammad, Al-Abbas bin Abdul Muththalib ibn Hasyim. Genealogically, the founders of this dynasty indeed belonged to the lineage of the Prophet's family through the line of Al-Abbas. The term Abbasiyyun was not known before the year 132 AH; what was renowned was the faction that identified itself as Hasyimiyyin or Bani Hasyim. However, fundamentally, both were factions of the same lineage.

There was a tendency to emphasize the advantage of this familial proximity, stemming from the prominence of familial lineage dominating the Umayyad dynasty's caliphal system. Observing this reality indirectly led to a system not entirely based on Islamic values alone. During the Umayyad era, not all Muslims agreed with the dominance of the caliphal family monopolizing the Islamic caliphate. However, this situation couldn't be easily changed due to the Umayyad's strengthened grip on the hereditary system of succession.

Among those who disagreed with this dynastic system were the Abbasid clan. They observed that while the Umayyads highlighted their family as rulers, genealogically, the Umayyads were not the most noble lineage among those who embraced Islam. Moreover, when assessing familial status, the family of Al-Abbas was closer to the Prophet and more deserving of inheriting the caliphate.

Another factor that drove the Abbasids to seize the caliphate from the Umayyads was the Umayyads' forcible seizure of the caliphate through the Siffin conflict. While the Umayyad takeover was not entirely agreed upon by the Muslim community, this sentiment increased after witnessing the reality of the Umayyad

dynasty leadership. Several caliphs who were supposed to be the protectors of the community seemed to live lavish lives and neglected to uphold Islamic teachings both in worship and behavior.

The Abbasid efforts to attain the caliphate went through various stages. It began with underground movements, then progressed to garnering support, eventually culminating in becoming the second dynasty of the Islamic caliphate.

The initial launching point of the Abbasid movement was in a remote area called Humaimah. This area was inhabited by Ali ibn Abdullah ibn al-Abbas, a cousin of the Prophet who was affiliated with the Umayyad regime, known for his asceticism and devotion to worship, less concerned with personal interests. Ali's demeanor led the Umayyads to overlook the potential

formation of a movement to overthrow their caliphate, as it wasn't deemed significant by the caliphs. The Umayyads anticipated Ali bin Abdullah's impact, but they underestimated his subsequent generations, particularly Muhammad bin Ali. The son of Ali bin Abdullah possessed high intelligence and talent. He was the one who initiated the movement to overthrow the Umayyad caliphate and support the family of Bani Hasyim (Hasan, 1964).

A strategy emerged from Muhammad bin Ali's plan, consisting of three key points. First, spread the call to fight for a leader from the family of Muhammad, allowing supporters of Ali to respond better to the call. Second, avoid rebellion against the Umayyad leadership until preparations are thorough. Initially, focused on creating discontent among the people towards the Umayyad caliphate by exposing their flaws. Third, concentrate the movement in three locations: Humaimah, Kufah, and Khurasan. Humaimah served as the base for planning and developing Abbasid power, Kufah acted as a connecting point and strategic dissemination center, while Khurasan was chosen for its distance from Umayyad central control and internal tribal divisions that could be exploited by propagandists.

Humaimah, a peaceful place, housed both Bani Hasyim families, including supporters of Ali and Abbasid supporters. Kufah, populated by Shia adherents, and supporters of Ali ibn Abi Thalib, was always in turmoil and oppressed by the Umayyads, making it susceptible to influence for rebellion. Khurasan was inhabited by brave people, strong and principled, not easily swayed by desires and cautious of deviating from beliefs, believing in the sacred principle of God's righteousness, known as The Divine Rights by modern researchers. The people of Khurasan were considered untainted by fanaticism towards specific figures; it was not a region dominated by Shia supporters of Ali or Umayyad followers seeking revenge against Usman bin Affan. It was hoped that the Abbasid call would find support there.

Muhammad ibn 'Ali coordinated strategies in Humaimah by sending missionaries and appointing leaders to oversee the mission's dissemination in Kufah and monitor developments in Khurasan. They conducted their missions very covertly, one method being to preach while engaging in trade, and visiting distant places. This role was referred to as the role of secret missions or the period of secret movements that occurred from 100-127 AH. Meanwhile, in Kufah, the site of meetings between Humaimah leaders and Khurasan activities, the dissemination of Bani Hasyim's missions continued.

In Khurasan, the Abbasid branch succeeded in gaining cooperation from Khurasan chiefs known to be inclined towards the Prophet's family and resentful of Umayyad policies. Abbasid agents launched calls to defend Ali, overthrow Umayyad rule, and create a new era of peace and justice. During this time, the leader of the Abbasid agents, Abu Muslim, expanded the secret movement's network and organized supporting military forces in Khurasan.

The most persistent slogans voiced to garner support revolved around equality between Arab and non-Arab peoples, the virtues of the Prophet's

relatives, and their rights to leadership. They also highlighted the mistakes of the Umayyad rulers, portraying them as worldly rulers who neglected Islam, its spirit, and philosophy. Therefore, it was logical for the Bani Hasyim to seek a way out by establishing a secret movement to overthrow the Umayyad dynasty.

Subsequent propaganda was openly conducted starting from the year 127 AH (745 CE) when Abu Muslim al-Khurasani was sent by Humaimah leadership to lead the struggle forces from Khurasan against the Umayyad rule. Abu Muslim's followers joined the Abbasid supporters, a combination of people who accepted the new mission. This movement brought together the descendants of Ali (Alawites), led by Abu Salamah; the descendants of Abbas (Abbasids), led by Ibrahim al-Imam; and the Persian people, led by Abu Muslim al-Khurasani. This combined force acted under the name of Abbasids and armed themselves to fight against the Umayyad forces led by the cunning Abu Muslim al-Khurasani.

Around the year 747 CE, the Abbasids were ready to move. Khurasan served as a political agitation arena and held eschatological hopes. The arrival of al-Mahdi in the end times, and the beginning of a new era full of justice, were their hopes. Abu Muslim displayed the black banner as a symbol of his struggle to rally the oppressed masses who had lost their status and suffered from unfair taxation. Around 3000 combatants united for this purpose. They defeated their rivals in Khurasan and increased their supporters among the Yemeni population residing.

### **Periodization of the Abbasid Caliphate**

The rule of the Abbasid dynasty spanned a considerable period, lasting for five centuries, from 132 AH (750 CE) to 656 AH (1258 CE). During their reign, the governing patterns varied according to political, social, and cultural changes (Lapidus, 1999). The development of the Abbasid dynasty can be divided into five periods:

#### **1. Early Period (750-847 CE)**

##### ***Commencing with the Iron Hand***

As we know, the Abbasid Caliphate was founded by Abu Abbas, who also established the Abbasid Dynasty. However, his rule was short-lived, lasting only four years. Substantial development was initiated by his successor, Abu Ja'far al-Mansur (754-775 CE), who ruled ruthlessly, a factor contributing to the golden age of the Abbasid Caliphate.

Several policies were implemented by the new caliph to pave the way toward the golden era, such as relocating the capital to Baghdad. This new city, intentionally built on the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, became the capital of the Abbasid Caliphate. Additionally, improvements in administrative governance were meticulously organized. Oversight over various governmental activities was tightened, with communication and

postal officers elevated to supervise governors, aiming to prevent separatist movements and rebellions. Despite these efforts, rebellions emerged in various regions, with some conquered territories breaking away.

During the early period of the Abbasid Dynasty, there was still emphasis on territorial expansion. Efforts towards expansion led the Abbasids to fortresses in Asia, such as the city of Malatia, the region of Cappadocia, and Sicily from 775 to 785 CE. Their forces also reached northward, traversing the Taurus Mountains and approaching the Bosphorus Strait, negotiating with Emperor Constantine V during the truce (755-765 CE). Byzantium paid annual tributes during this ceasefire. Abbasid forces also encountered Turkish Khazar armies in the Caucasus, Daylamis, and the Caspian Sea, and Turks in other parts of the Oxus, and India. Unlike the Umayyad Caliphate, Abbasid caliphs adopted the title of "throne" (takhta). For example, Al-Mansur's title with the throne Abu Ja'far was more well-known than his actual name.

If the foundation of the Abbasid Dynasty was laid by Abu Abbas al-Saffah and Abu Ja'far al-Mansur, then the pinnacle of its glory lay in the seven caliphs who succeeded them, from the reign of Caliph al-Mahdi (775-785 CE) to Caliph al-Wasiq (842-847 CE).

### ***Shift in Policies***

The peak of the dynasty's popularity occurred during the reign of Caliph Harun al-Rashid (786-809 CE) and his son al-Ma'mun (813-833 CE). These rulers emphasized the development and cultivation of Islamic civilization and culture rather than territorial expansion pursued by the Umayyads. This focus on civilizational development distinguished the Abbasid and Umayyad dynasties, with the former prioritizing cultural advancement. As a result of this policy shift, remote provinces on the periphery began to break away from Abbasid control.

Two tendencies emerged. Firstly, local leaders led successful uprisings that established full independence, such as the Umayyad Caliphate in Andalusia (Spain) and the Idrisid Dynasty in Morocco. The second approach involved governors appointed by the caliph becoming powerful, as seen in the Aghlabid Dynasty (Bani Taghlib) in Tunisia and the Tahirid Dynasty in Khurasan.

During al-Mahdi's reign, the economy flourished, with irrigation projects leading to agricultural yields doubling compared to previous periods. Mining and natural resources increased, and international trade intensified towards the East and West. The city of Basra became a vital transit port, flourishing with comprehensive amenities. The highest level of prosperity was attained during Harun al-Rashid's reign, extending into al-Ma'mun's era. Al-Ma'mun distinguished himself through intellectual and scientific pursuits, translating Greek texts.

The voluntary participation of Muslims as militia members during journeys was no longer heard of. The military was then composed of

professional Turkish soldiers. The Abbasid military became exceedingly robust, leading to their dominance and significant influence over the caliph, even turning them into puppets.

In response to this reality, Caliph al-Wasiq (842-847 CE) attempted to break free from Turkish military domination by relocating the capital to Samarra, but this effort failed to diminish Turkish dominance.

The following factors contributed to the success of the Abbasid Caliphate in its early period: Firstly, assimilation occurred within the Abbasid Caliphate, notably with Persian elements, in the establishment of the House of Wisdom and the Palace of Wisdom initiated by Caliph Harun al-Rashid and reaching its peak during the reign of Caliph al-Ma'mun.

These libraries resembled universities rather than mere reading spaces, where people came to read, write, and engage in discussions. The libraries also served as translation centers, notably translating works in medicine, philosophy, mathematics, chemistry, astronomy, and natural sciences. Islamic scholars eventually made their developments and discoveries. This is where the Islamic contribution to Western or global science and civilization lies.

#### ***Resistance Movements by Opposition Groups***

During this period, numerous political movements disrupted stability, both from within the Abbasid family and from external forces. These included remnants of the Umayyad Dynasty and factions within the Abbasid clan. Revolutionary forces such as the Kharijites in North Africa, the Zindiq movements in Persia, and the Shia movements also posed significant opposition. All these opposition forces were eventually subdued.

In such a situation, the caliphs maintained a strong principle of being both the political and religious center. Without this dual role, as seen in subsequent periods, stability would become uncontrollable, with caliphs themselves falling under the influence of other powers.

The development of civilization and culture during this time encouraged the rulers to indulge in luxury, often excessively. Each caliph tended to live more luxuriously than his predecessor. This luxurious lifestyle was imitated by wealthy individuals and the children of officials, while the general populace lived in poverty and hardship. The weakened leadership of the caliphs and the widening gap between the rich and the poor created opportunities for the military to seize control of the government. This shift contributed to the decline of Abbasid power within the Abbasid Caliphate. This marked the beginning of the dynasty's downfall, although it managed to survive for over four more centuries.

The Umayyad descendants who fled westward succeeded in establishing a new caliphate in Cordoba, in the Iberian Peninsula, known as the Andalusian Caliphate or the Western Caliphate. Additionally, the emirate of Morocco rebelled under the leadership of Idris, eventually founding the Idrisid Dynasty. These cases exemplify the first type of disintegration,

rebellion. The second form of disintegration occurred when governors, feeling powerful, separated to establish their Islamic states. For instance, in Tunisia, Bani Taghlib founded the Aghlabid Dynasty, while in Khurasan, the Tahirid Dynasty emerged.

To consolidate the caliph's position, it was conceptually declared that the caliph was no longer "Khalifah fi al-'Ardh," or the representative of God on Earth. The new slogan adopted was "Sultan Allah fi al-'Ardh," meaning the holder of God's power on Earth.

Subsequently, all rivals were eliminated without discrimination. Even comrades in arms were removed if they were perceived as threats. For instance, Abdullah bin Ali, the governor of Egypt, and Salih bin Ali, the governor of Syria, were both killed as enemies. Even Abu Muslim al-Khurasani, a trusted Persian ally, was not spared. Additionally, Shia, Umayyad, and Kharijite individuals were relentlessly pursued.

### *The Golden Age*

The Abbasid Caliphate is often associated with Caliph Harun al-Rashid, depicted as the most famous ruler during the golden age of the Abbasid Caliphate. His rule is portrayed as wise, always accompanied by his advisor, Abu Nawas, a humorous poet essentially a sage or ethicist. The golden age is depicted in the tales of "One Thousand and One Nights" as a land of wonders (Mufrodi, 1997). This golden age began with the rule of Caliph al-Ja'far and peaked during Caliph Harun al-Rashid's era. During these times, the caliphs developed various forms of art, particularly literature, and culture in general. High-quality books were translated from Indian and Greek civilizations. From India, for instance, anonymous fable stories and various mathematical principles were translated. From Greece, ancient philosophical works, including ethical and logical philosophy, were translated. This led to the rise of the Mu'tazila school of thought, which highly valued reason and logic in the Islamic world. Persian literature was translated by figures such as Ibn al-Muqaffa, who died in 750 CE.

Other cultural figures of the time included Abu Tammam, who died in 845 CE, and Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani, who died in 967 CE. There was also the renowned translator of foreign literature, al-Jahiz (died 869 CE).

In addition to literary translators, there were scholars in other fields such as philology, grammar, jurisprudence, theology, history, and geography. By 800 CE, translations from ancient Greek works in medicine, philosophy, and astronomy were also underway. By the 75th year of the Abbasid Caliphate, translations of Aristotle and Neoplatonic philosophy had been completed. Through such means, the Abbasids led Islam into a global civilization, making Islam a worldwide phenomenon rather than just an Arab phenomenon. From the history of Arabic literature, we can observe the evolution of the language's function. In ancient times, Arabic was primarily used for composing eulogies. After Islam, it was also used for writing religious works (theology). After the Prophet's death, Arabic became a language of



science, philosophy, and socio-political discourse. Arabic became the language of the Persians, Palestinians, Egyptians, Tunisians, Algerians, and Moroccans. Since then, the nature of jihad in Islam shifted from the use of the sword to the use of language and literature.

The emergence of the Seljuk Turks in the Turkish Caliphate posed a challenge to the Abbasid's glory. Historically, the downfall of the Abbasids was marked by the devastating attack of Hulagu Khan's Mongol forces.

## **2. The Second Period (232 AH/847 CE - 334 AH/945 CE)**

During the reign of Caliph al-Mu'tasim (833-842 CE), the Abbasid Caliphate saw the integration of Turkish elements into the military, primarily due to the rivalry between Arab and Persian factions that had been evident during the time of al-Ma'mun and earlier. Al-Mu'tasim and his successor al-Wathiq (842-847 CE) were able to control these Turkish elements. However, the beginning of this period marked a decline in Abbasid power with the ascension of Caliph al-Mutawakkil (847-861 CE), a weak ruler under whom the Turks quickly seized control after his death. The Turks began to select and install caliphs according to their will, effectively stripping the Abbasids of their power, even though they remained the nominal rulers. Efforts to break free from Turkish domination consistently failed.

In 892 CE, Baghdad was reinstated as the capital, and intellectual life continued to flourish. However, internal conflicts among the Turkish military began to weaken their hold. This decline allowed Caliph al-Radi to hand over power to Muhammad ibn Ra'iq, the governor of Wasit from Basra, giving him the title of "amir al-umara" (commander of commanders). Despite these changes, the situation for the Abbasids did not improve. Of the twelve caliphs during this period, only four died naturally; the rest were either murdered or forcibly deposed.

During this period, various rebellions, such as the Zanj Rebellion in southern Iraq and the Qarmatian Revolt centered in Bahrain, occurred, yet these uprisings were not the primary obstacles to achieving political unity within the Abbasid Caliphate. Several significant factors contributed to the decline of the Abbasids. The vast territory of the caliphate, combined with slow communication systems, made effective governance challenging. Additionally, there was a significant lack of trust among rulers and government officials, which hindered administration. The professionalization of the military led to an increased dependency on them, straining financial resources due to the high costs of maintaining a large standing army. As the military's expenses grew, the caliphs faced financial difficulties, weakening their ability to enforce tax collection and maintain control over distant provinces. As military strength waned, the caliphs could no longer compel provinces to send taxes to Baghdad, further diminishing their authority and accelerating the decline of the Abbasid Caliphate during this period.

### **3. The Third Period (334 AH/945 CE - 447 AH/1055 CE)**

The primary characteristic of the third period is the Abbasid Caliphate's subjugation under the Buwaihid dynasty. The caliph's situation was significantly worse than in the previous period, particularly because the Buwaihids adhered to Shia Islam. As a result, the caliph's role was reduced to that of a salaried official under their control. The Buwaihids divided their dominion among three brothers: Ali controlled the southern regions of Persia, Hasan governed the northern regions, and Ahmad ruled over al-Ahwaz, Wasit, and Baghdad. Consequently, Baghdad was no longer the center of Islamic governance, as it had shifted to Shiraz, where Ali bin Buwaihi held the reins of power.

Despite these political changes, the Abbasid Caliphate continued to experience advancements in knowledge during this period. Prominent scholars such as al-Farabi (870-950 CE), Ibn Sina (980-1037 CE), al-Biruni (973-1048 CE), Ibn Miskawayh (930-1030 CE), and the Ikhwan al-Safa study group emerged during this time. Economic, agricultural, and commercial sectors also saw progress, accompanied by the construction of canals, mosques, and hospitals. It is also noteworthy that under Buwaihid's rule in Baghdad, there were several social clashes between the Sunni and Shia factions, as well as military uprisings.

### **4. The Fourth Period (447 AH/1055 CE - 590 AH/1199 CE)**

The fourth period is marked by the rule of the Seljuk dynasty within the Abbasid Caliphate. The Seljuks' presence in Baghdad came at the "invitation" of the caliph to subdue the power of the Buwaihids. The caliph's condition improved, particularly in terms of religious authority, which had been under Shia control for some time.

Similar to the previous period, knowledge and learning continued to flourish. Nizam al-Mulk, the prime minister during the reigns of Alp Arslan and Malik Shah, established the Nizamiyyah schools in 1067 CE, which were founded in almost every city in Iraq and Khurasan. These schools produced numerous scholars in various disciplines. Notable figures from this period include al-Zamakhshari, an author in the fields of tafsir and theology (ushuluddin); al-Qushayri in the field of tafsir; al-Ghazali in theology (kalam) and mysticism (tasawwuf); and Omar Khayyam in the field of astronomy.

Politically, the center of power was not in Baghdad. The Seljuks divided their realm into several provinces, each headed by a governor. As the central authority weakened, these provinces gradually declared their independence. Conflicts and wars among them further weakened their power, allowing the political strength of the caliph to gradually increase, particularly in Iraq. Their rule in Iraq ultimately ended at the hands of Khwarazm Shah in 590 AH/1199 CE.

### **5. The Fifth Period (590 AH/1199 CE - 656 AH/1258 CE)**

During the fifth period, there were significant changes in the Abbasid Caliphate. The Abbasid caliphs were no longer under the control of any particular dynasty. They were independent and wielded power, but only in Baghdad and its surroundings. The limited territory of the caliphate highlighted its political weakness. It was during this period that the Mongol and Tatar armies arrived, destroying Baghdad without resistance in 656 AH/1258 CE.

The factors that weakened and eventually led to the downfall of the Abbasid Caliphate can be categorized into internal and external factors. Internal factors included: (1) Unhealthy competition among various ethnic groups within the Abbasid Caliphate, particularly Arabs, Persians, and Turks. (2) Disputes among religious groups, which escalated into bloodshed. (3) The emergence of smaller dynasties due to prolonged social fragmentation. Finally, (4) Economic decline caused by political conflicts. External factors included: (1) The prolonged Crusades in several waves, and (2) The Mongol and Tatar forces led by Hulagu Khan, who plundered all centers of power and knowledge, including the libraries of Baghdad (Su`ud, 2003).

The Abbasid caliphs, a total of 37, are listed below:

1. Abū al-‘Abbās al-Saffāh (132-136 AH / 750-754 CE)
2. Abū Ja’far al-Mansūr (136-158 AH / 754-775 CE)
3. Abū ‘Abdullāh Muhammad al-Mahdi (158-169 AH / 775-785 CE)
4. Abū Muhammad Musa al-Hādī (169-170 AH / 785-786 CE)
5. Abū Ja’far Hārūn al-Rashīd (170-193 AH / 786-809 CE)
6. Abū Musa Muhammad al-Amin (193-198 AH / 809-813 CE)
7. Abū Ja’far ‘Abdullah al-Ma’mūn (198-218 AH / 813-833 CE)
8. Abū Ishaq Muhammad al-Mu’tasim (218-227 AH / 833-842 CE)
9. Abū Ja’far Hārūn al-Wathīq (227-232 AH / 842-847 CE)
10. Abū al-Fadhl Ja’far al-Mutawakkil (232-247 AH / 847-861 CE)
11. Abū Ja’far Muhammad al-Muntasir (247-248 AH / 861-862 CE)
12. Abū al-‘Abbās Ahmad al-Musta’in (248-252 AH / 862-866 CE)
13. Abū ‘Abdullah Muhammad al-Mu’tazz (252-255 AH / 866-869 CE)
14. Abū Ishaq Muhammad al-Muhtadi (255-256 AH / 869-870 CE)
15. Abū al-‘Abbās Ahmad al-Mu’tamid (256-279 AH / 870-892 CE)
16. Abū al-‘Abbās Ahmad al-Mu’tadid (279-289 AH / 892-902 CE)
17. Abū Muhammad ‘Ali al-Muktafi (289-295 AH / 902-905 CE)
18. Abū al-Fadhl Ja’far al-Muqtadir (295-320 AH / 905-932 CE)
19. Abū Manshūr Muhammad al-Qāhir (320-322 AH / 932-934 CE)
20. Abū al-‘Abbās Muhammad al-Rādhi (322-329 AH / 934-940 CE)
21. Abū Ishaq Ibrahim al-Muttaqi (329-333 AH / 940-944 CE)
22. Abū al-Qāsim ‘Abdullāh al-Mustakfi (333-334 AH / 944-946 CE)
23. Abū al-Qāsim al-Fadhl al-Muti’ (334-362 AH / 946-974 CE)
24. Abū al-Fadhl ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Ta’i (362-381 AH / 974-991 CE)
25. Abū al-‘Abbās Ahmad al-Qādir (381-422 AH / 991-1031 CE)

26. Abū Ja'far 'Abdullah al-Qāim (422-467 AH / 1031-1075 CE)
27. Abū al-Qāsim 'Abdullah al-Muqtadi (467-487 AH / 1075-1094 CE)
28. Abū al-'Abbās Ahmad al-Mustazhhir (487-512 AH / 1094-1118 CE)
29. Abū Manshūr al-Fadhī al-Mustarshid (512-529 AH / 1118-1135 CE)
30. Abū Ja'far al-Mansūr al-Rāshid (529-530 AH / 1135-1136 CE)
31. Abū 'Abdillāh Muhammad al-Muqtafi (530-555 AH / 1136-1160 CE)
32. Abū al-Muzhaffar al-Mustanjid (555-566 AH / 1160-1170 CE)
33. Abū Muhammad al-Hasan al-Mustadhī (566-575 AH / 1170-1180 CE)
34. Abū al-'Abbās Ahmad al-Nāshir (575-622 AH / 1180-1225 CE)
35. Abū Nasr Muhammad al-Zhāhir (622-623 AH / 1225-1226 CE)
36. Abū Ja'far al-Manshūr al-Mustanshir (623-640 AH / 1226-1242 CE)
37. Abū Ahmad 'Abdullah al-Musta'shim (640-656 AH / 1242-1258 CE)

The reign of al-Saffāh, the founder of the Abbasid dynasty, was very brief, lasting from 750 CE to 754 CE. Before Abū al-'Abbās al-Saffāh passed away, he had already designated his successor, his brother Abu Ja'far, and subsequently his nephew Isa ibn Musa. This system of announcing two heirs to the throne, similar to the Umayyad practice, often led to conflicts between the crown princes.

The Abbasid caliphate relied on many systems previously practiced by other civilizations, both Muslim and non-Muslim. The foundation of the Abbasid governance was laid by the second caliph, Abū Ja'far al-Mansūr, known as the builder of the caliphate. During his reign, there were purges of influential figures who had helped seize power from the Umayyads, as the caliph wanted to eliminate potential rivals to secure his authority.

Initially, the capital was centered in Anbar, with its palace known as al-Hasyimiyah. After al-Mansūr took power, he moved the capital to Baghdad in 762 CE, named Dār al-Salām. This move was due to Anbar's location between Syria and Kufa, which was vulnerable to Shia threats. Baghdad, strategically situated and irrigated by the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, became the Abbasid administrative and political center.

Baghdad was initially divided into three main parts: the military quarter in al-Harbiya, the workers' quarter in al-Karkh, and the administrative quarter in Madīnat al-Salām or Dār al-Salām. Baghdad was not just a city but a metropolis that blended various regional elements from all over the Tigris River. At that time, Baghdad was the largest city in the world, second only to those in China.

In this new capital, al-Mansūr consolidated and organized his government. He appointed personnel to executive and judicial positions, created the role of the vizier as a departmental coordinator, and established state protocol, secretariat, and police departments, while also reforming the armed forces. Under his rule, the postal service was tasked with gathering information from the provinces, ensuring smooth state administration. He also sought to reclaim regions that had previously declared independence from central authority and secure the borders.

The significant influence of Persian support and contributions during the Abbasid era was evident due to the Abbasids' control over former Persian territories. The Abbasids adopted Persian models for their governance. The Persians believed in the divine right of kings, thus Abbasid caliphs were seen as rulers appointed by God rather than the people. As Abū Manshūr said, "Innamā anā sultān Allāh fī ardhihi" (Indeed, I am the Sultan of God on His earth). Consequently, Abbasid caliphs were governed by divine authority, distinguishing them from the Umayyads.

Unlike the Umayyads, the Abbasid caliphs used regnal titles, with Abu Ja'far adopting the title al-Mansūr. These titles often became more recognized than their actual names. The highest authority in the Abbasid governance lay with the religious scholars, making their rule a theocracy. The caliphs wielded authority not only in worldly matters but also in religious leadership. They adopted the title of Imam to emphasize their spiritual leadership of the Muslim community, a title historically used by the Shia in support of Ali bin Abi Talib. This helped the Abbasids secure ongoing support from the Shia.

#### **Achievements of the Abbasid Dynasty**

If the foundational principles of the Abbasid Dynasty were laid and built by Al-Saffāh and Al-Manshūr, then the golden peak of this dynasty was reached under the next seven caliphs: Al-Mahdi, Al-Hadi, Harun al-Rashid, Al-Ma'mun, Al-Mu'tasim, Al-Wathiq, and Al-Mutawakkil. Thus, it can be said that during the first period, the Abbasid government reached its golden age (Syalabīy, 1978).

During Al-Mahdi's reign, the Abbasid Dynasty enjoyed a state of peace and tranquility. The economy began to improve with advancements in agriculture through irrigation and increased mining yields of gold, silver, copper, and iron. This period became known as a time of ease and prosperity due to significant internal improvements, reflecting mature thinking.

The progress made by the Muslim community during the Abbasid era can be classified into several categories:

#### ***Administration***

During the Umayyad rule, strategic positions were filled by the Umayyad family, who were predominantly Arab. In contrast, the Abbasid Dynasty filled these positions with non-Arabs. The Caliph, as the head of state, held supreme power, encompassing both governance and religious authority as a sacred leader. It is noted that the caliphs did not have a fixed rule for appointing heirs, a practice that began during Al-Amin's time.

During this period, important roles were filled by a wazir (minister), who performed duties according to Islamic law, including the appointment and dismissal of officials. There were two types of wazirs: wazir tafwid, akin to a prime minister with extensive power, and wazir tanfiz, with limited authority.

Other important positions included the hajib, who acted as an intermediary between the people and the caliph. Foreign visitors first encountered the hajib before meeting the caliph. The ballad, or executioner, carried out punishments and was always present behind the caliph.

A distinguishing feature between the Abbasid and Umayyad dynasties was the number of key ministries. The Umayyads had five ministries, while the Abbasids expanded to fourteen, including:

- Diwan al-Jund (War Office)
- Diwan al-Kharaj (Department of Finance)
- Diwan al-Rasa'il (Board of Correspondence)
- Diwan al-Khatam (Board of Signet)
- Diwan al-Barid (Postal Department)

An additional ministry during the Abbasid period was Diwan al-Azimah (the Audit and Account Board).

To ensure smooth administration, the Abbasid Caliphs divided the government into central and regional administrations. Each region was considered a province, led by an amir who acted on behalf of the caliph and was accountable to him.

### ***Social***

During the Abbasid era, the Arab identity diminished, transforming society into a diverse community. To facilitate integration between Arabs and conquered peoples, practices such as polygamy, concubinage, and slave trade were effective. As pure Arab elements declined, mawali (non-Arab Muslims) and freed slave women's children began to take their places. Women also contributed politically, with figures like Khaizuran (wife of Caliph Al-Mahdi), her daughter Ulayyah, and Harun al-Rashid's wife Zubaydah playing notable roles. Although slavery persisted, the government treated slaves humanely, equal to Arabs.

### ***Scientific Activities***

The Abbasid period is synonymous with the era of scientific development. The term "golden age" is often attributed to advances in various fields of knowledge. This progress was influenced by Caliph Al-Mansur's efforts to gather Persian scholars and appoint them to key positions, as well as the establishment of the House of Wisdom (Bait al-Hikmah) as a center for study. These scholars' positions did not diminish their passion for advancing knowledge in all fields. For example, philosophy thrived in regions like Damascus, Alexandria, Kairouan, Fustat, and Cairo. The Mu'tazilah school of thought, which promoted intellectual freedom, also played a significant role. During Caliph Al-Ma'mun's reign, Mu'tazilah became the official state doctrine.

Al-Ma'mun's adherence to Mu'tazilah led to the Mihna event, where the faith of state officials and scholars was scrutinized. Those who disagreed were dismissed or tortured, as happened to Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal.

The personal interest of the caliphs in learning also stood out, with figures like Al-Mansur, Harun, and Al-Ma'mun being avid readers and supporters of education. Their policies significantly enhanced scientific and educational development. Religious studies, languages, and literature were deeply explored during the Abbasid era. The emergence of the four major Islamic schools of jurisprudence (fiqh) was a highlight, alongside rapid advancements in medicine, logic, sports, astronomy, and other sciences.

### ***Government Role***

The progress achieved was largely due to the leaders' efforts, including the translation of knowledge from foreign languages into Arabic. However, the books collected in the House of Wisdom were eventually thrown into the Tigris River, turning its clear waters black from the ink of the books.

## **D. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the above discussion, the writer concludes that the Abbasid Dynasty was established through two primary methods: first, by spreading propaganda missions through secret networks, and second, by amassing military strength to overthrow the Umayyad power. To achieve maximum results, the Abbasids devised a well-thought-out strategy, deploying propagandists to support the caliphate from the Prophet's kin. This revolution required effective organization, activating three key locations to implement their strategy: Humaimah, Kufa, and Khurasan. Each place had distinct roles based on its location and character—Humaimah for strategic planning, Kufa for spreading propaganda and serving as a link between Humaimah and Khurasan, and Khurasan for executing the uprising to topple the Umayyad rule. The advancements of the Abbasid Dynasty were accompanied by economic improvements, particularly in agriculture through irrigation and increased mining yields of gold, silver, copper, and iron. Progress in these sectors was followed by significant internal improvements in administrative and governmental systems, reflecting mature thinking and governance.

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