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## THE PLACE OF LIBRARIES IN THE HISTORY OF THE ISLAMIC WORLD

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## РОЛЬ БИБЛИОТЕК В ИСТОРИИ ИСЛАМСКОГО МИРА

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*Abstract.* Libraries in the Islamic world were considered, first of all, an important place for preserving the Quran and Hadith and transmitting them perfectly to future generations. Later, they served as the basis for the emergence of large scientific institutions. Gradually, these scientific institutions turned into large academies that promoted and researched both religious and secular knowledge. Book treasures also played a significant role in the emergence of scientific institutions such as "Bayt ul-Hikma" and "Ma'mun Academy".

*Аннотация.* В исламском мире библиотеки считаются важным местом хранения Корана и хадисов и передачи их поколениям. Позже они послужили основой для создания крупных научных центров. Постепенно эти центры знаний превратились в крупные академические учреждения, которые продвигают и исследуют как религиозные, так и светские знания. Книжные сокровища сыграли важную роль в создании таких учебных заведений, как «Бейт уль-Хикма» и «Академия Маъмуна».

*Keywords:* calligrapher, tablet, sahaf, muzahib, madrasa, mosque, Quran, Baghdad, Aleppo, Timbuktu.

*Ключевые слова:* каллиграф, лаввах, саххаф, музахиб, медресе, мечеть, Коран, Багдад, Алеппо, Тимбукту.

The role of libraries in the history of mankind is incomparable. In the period after the invention of paper, their number and importance have grown significantly. Representatives of the Islamic world also played a great role in the growth and appreciation of libraries.

As Islam spread and Muslim states multiplied, the role of libraries in disseminating enlightenment increased dramatically. Even in librarianship, a number of developments were observed. In particular, there are assumptions that Islamic libraries were among the first to introduce a catalog of relevant materials. In this case, the contents of the bookshelf were written on paper and attached to the end of the shelf, thus giving rise to an ancient form of cataloging. Like Christian libraries, Islamic libraries mainly contained books made of paper and were filled with books in a modern form instead of codices or scrolls. This, in turn, influenced the development of a number of book-related professions, such as calligraphers, scribes, and muzahibs. Libraries were mainly established in mosques, madrasas, private homes, and palaces.

Initially, libraries were not considered such an attractive place for Muslims. But with the emergence of a new religion, the situation changed. The reason for the emergence of book

collections in the Muslim world was the need to preserve the holy book of Muslims — the Quran, and the task of transmitting the deeds and customs of the prophet of Islam Muhammad (peace be upon him) to future generations. If earlier traditions and history were oral, the need to preserve the words of the Quran required a method of preserving these words not orally, but by other means. As a result, mosques, which were the center of everything in the daily life of Muslim society, turned into libraries that stored all kinds of knowledge, from the Quran to books on philosophy and medicine. In addition, the ideas that acquiring and spreading knowledge is a meritorious deed in Islam served as a great impetus for the development of this field.

Especially during the Abbasid period, those influenced by the Quran and hadiths vigorously propagated the idea that “the ink of a scholar is equal to the blood of a martyr” [1]. This propaganda even alarmed the rulers. As a result, the caliphs, governors, and viceroys sponsored the writing of books and the establishment of libraries and centers of learning. As a result, the Muslim world quickly began to have many centers of learning, which contained various encyclopedias, translations, commentaries, and treatises written by Muslim philosophers and scholars.

By the 8th century, first the Iranians, then the Arabs, had mastered the secrets of papermaking from China [2]. By now, papermaking was no longer a novelty for the Islamic world, and there is even information that a “paper factory” was opened in Baghdad in 794. As a result of this technical improvement, books were easily produced and became more widely available. Great strides were made in the promotion of science and translation, and public and private libraries began to develop throughout the Islamic world. A number of famous libraries were established in Islamic territories and developed along with the spread of Islamic law. The satisfaction of the need for paper led to the emergence of public libraries in many Islamic cities by the 9th century. They were usually called “Dar ul-ilm”, that is, “Houses of Science”. Gradually, these “houses of knowledge” became centers of learning, in modern terms, universities and academies, where many scholars conducted research, copyists translated works of other nations into Arabic, and scholars taught students of knowledge [3].

The largest and perhaps oldest mosque library in the Middle Ages, housed in the Great Mosque of Aleppo (now Aleppo), Syria, contained a large collection of books, 10,000 volumes of which were donated by Sayf al-Dawla, one of the most famous princes of Aleppo [4]. Islamic states in Africa began to develop rapidly in the field of education from the 11th century onwards. One of the libraries of particular importance was the library in Timbuktu, which housed many important manuscripts for 600 years. One of the most famous scholars of Timbuktu at that time was Ahmed Baba, who wrote various manuscripts over a period of more than 40 years. During the Arab and European invasions, many manuscripts and buildings were destroyed, and in 1591 many intellectuals, including Ahmed Baba, were taken prisoner. Despite the invasions, about 700,000 manuscripts have survived to this day, albeit in poor preservation conditions [5].

The flourishing of learning in the Islamic world declined during the Mongol invasions. Many libraries and institutions of learning were destroyed by the Mongol invaders, while others fell victim to wars and religious conflicts in the Islamic world. However, a few examples of these medieval libraries, such as the Chinguetti Library in West Africa, have survived intact and relatively unchanged. Another ancient library from this period is still active and expanding: the Astan Quds Razavi Library in Mashhad, Iran, which has been operating for more than six centuries. In addition, there were many other famous libraries in Islamic countries. Among them, the Abbasid Caliph al-Mutawakkil, who lived in the 9th century, founded the “Zawiyat Qurra” library in Iraq [3].

The library founded in the same century by Yahya ibn Abu Mansur of Merv, the court astronomer during the reign of Caliph al-Ma'mun, also had a large number of books on various

sciences and sciences, especially astrology. This library was called the “Treasury of Wisdom” or “Khazana al-Hikma” [6].

The Samanid of Bukhara, Nuh Ibn Mansur (10th century), also had a library of books that were considered very unique for his time. The famous scholar Abu Ali ibn Sina became very close to the ruler after he treated him. After finding information about medicines in the books, he asked the ruler for permission to have permanent access to the library. The collection of books consisted of many rooms, each room had many boxes, and each box was filled with collections of books. Ibn Sina described the library as “extraordinary” in terms of the number of volumes and the value of the books [7-10].

In the 10th century, an Iranian vizier named Sahib ibn Abbad founded a library in the city of Ray with a collection of 200,000 copies. However, when Ray was captured by Mahmud of Ghaznavi in 1029, part of the library was destroyed, and the necessary books were taken to the library in Ghazna [11].

In subsequent periods, Muslim rulers also founded many scientific centers and libraries, making a great contribution to science and enlightenment. The fruits of their services were used by both the scholars and virtues of their time and the scholars of future generations. Therefore, it can be said that the libraries that emerged in the Islamic world in the Middle Ages made an incomparable contribution to the preservation of valuable books, religious and secular knowledge to later times, and even to the present day. And today, not only Muslims, but also the people of the whole world enjoy these sciences.

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