



Science, Power, and Legitimacy: The Political Role of Rulers in the Dynamics of the Development of Science in the Classical Islamic World (Abbasid–Andalusian)

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Abstract

The development of science in the classical Islamic world was not only organic. Still, it was also shaped by power relations that made science a means of political legitimacy and social control. A research gap arises from the lack of studies that explicitly highlight how political patronage not only supported but also framed science's epistemological direction and institutionalization. This study aims to specifically identify the political mechanisms by which rulers influence the production, authority, and institutionalization of science, and examine their implications for the formation of power legitimacy. A qualitative historical-analytical approach is employed by analyzing primary sources, including chronicles and documents from scientific institutions, as well as contemporary secondary literature that discusses the patronage of science in the Abbasid, Fatimid, and Andalusian periods. The results reveal three main mechanisms of ruler intervention. First, financial and symbolic patronage of scholars and scientists created intellectual authority and strengthened claims to power. Second, the institutionalization of science was facilitated through the establishment of the Bayt al-Hikmah, the Nizamiyyah madrasah, and the University of Córdoba, which became centers of knowledge production, curation, and dissemination. Third, cultural diplomacy facilitated the transfer of knowledge from Greek, Persian, Indian, and Arabic traditions, leading to intellectual transformation across civilizations. In conclusion, the relationship between knowledge and power during the classical Islamic

period not only enriched intellectual traditions but also became a hegemonic instrument that strengthened political legitimacy through scientific authority directed toward social welfare and the construction of a universal civilization.

Keywords: Knowledge; Power; Legitimacy; Politics; Classical Islam

Abstrak

Perkembangan ilmu pengetahuan dalam dunia Islam klasik tidak hanya lahir secara organik, tetapi dibentuk melalui relasi kekuasaan yang menjadikan ilmu sebagai sarana legitimasi politik dan kontrol sosial. Celah penelitian muncul dari kurangnya kajian yang secara eksplisit menyoroti bagaimana patronase politik tidak sekadar mendukung, tetapi juga membingkai arah epistemologis dan institusionalisasi ilmu pengetahuan. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengidentifikasi secara spesifik mekanisme politik penguasa dalam memengaruhi produksi, otoritas, dan pelebagaan ilmu, serta menelaah implikasinya terhadap pembentukan legitimasi kekuasaan. Pendekatan kualitatif historis-analitis digunakan dengan menelaah sumber primer seperti catatan kronik, dokumen institusi keilmuan, serta literatur sekunder kontemporer yang membahas patronase ilmu pada periode Abbasiyah, Fathimiyah, dan Andalusia. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan tiga mekanisme utama intervensi penguasa. Pertama, patronase finansial dan simbolik terhadap ulama dan ilmuwan yang menciptakan otoritas intelektual sekaligus memperkuat klaim kekuasaan. Kedua, institusionalisasi ilmu melalui pendirian Bayt al-Ḥikmah, madrasah Nizamiyah, dan universitas Kordoba yang menjadi pusat produksi, kurasi, dan diseminasi pengetahuan. Ketiga, diplomasi budaya yang mendorong transfer ilmu dari tradisi Yunani, Persia, India, dan Arab hingga melahirkan transformasi intelektual lintas peradaban. Kesimpulannya, relasi ilmu dan kekuasaan pada periode Islam klasik bukan hanya memperkaya tradisi intelektual, tetapi menjadi instrumen hegemonik yang mengokohkan legitimasi politik melalui otoritas ilmiah yang diarahkan pada kemaslahatan sosial dan konstruksi peradaban universal.

Kata Kunci: Ilmu; Kekuasaan; Legitimasi; Politik; Islam Klasik

Introduction

The development of science in the classical Islamic world is a historical phenomenon that demonstrates the close relationship between political authority and intellectual dynamics (Bakar, 2023). From the Abbasid period to Andalusia, Islamic civilization experienced rapid advances in philosophy, medicine, astronomy, and mathematics, but these developments did not arise entirely from intellectual autonomy. Rulers used science as a medium of legitimacy and an instrument of power, so the relationship between scientists and political authorities often existed in a complex negotiation space (Lucas, 2024). This situation indicates that science did not develop in a free space but within a power structure that shaped its direction, actors, and authority.

Historically, support for science has often been accompanied by political interests. Al-Ma'mūn's policy of establishing the Bayt al-Ḥikmah, for example, not only encouraged the translation and production of knowledge but also reinforced the Abbasids' image as an intellectually authoritative ruler (Hussain Mir & Anjum, 2025). A similar pattern is seen in the construction of libraries and academies in Córdoba by the Andalusian Umayyads, which served to counter the hegemony of

Baghdad (Delgado, 2019). However, this patronage also fostered the dependence of scholars on power, led to ideological compromise, and even repression of dissenting views (İhsanoğlu, 2020). This relationship demonstrates that science simultaneously served as an arena for legitimacy, control, and political negotiation.

Previous studies have touched on the relationship between knowledge and power, albeit with varying focuses. Ali (2024) suggests that madrasas emerged as part of a political project aimed at strengthening religious authority. Montgomery (2018) asserts that the translation movement during the Abbasid period was influenced by political ambitions to establish intellectual supremacy. El-Hibri (2021) notes that the patronage of scholars was a tool used to consolidate Abbasid legitimacy amidst political fragmentation. Fuadi (2024) highlights the role of social and religious factors in shaping scientific authority. Meanwhile, Şenel (2025) identifies classical Islamic science as an arena for the integration of power interests and scientific authority. However, these studies still focus on patronage and the protection of knowledge, failing to thoroughly examine how political legitimacy is constructed, maintained, and contested through the production and authority of knowledge.

Based on these gaps, the research problem is formulated as follows: how science is utilized as an instrument of political legitimacy for rulers and to what extent power relations shape the direction of intellectual development in the classical Islamic world. This research aims to analyze the political role of rulers in determining scientific authority through institutions, policies, and patronage, while also examining the forms of control they exert over scientific discourse. The basic argument is that science does not develop independently, but becomes part of political strategies and symbols of legitimacy. Thus, this research offers a new contribution by positioning political legitimacy as a key analytical variable in understanding the development of science, as well as opening up space for reflection on the relationship between power, knowledge, and authority in both historical and contemporary contexts.

Method

This research employs a qualitative method with a historical-analytical approach, operationally directed at reconstructing and interpreting the dynamics of the relationship between political power, legitimacy, and the development of science in the classical Islamic world of the Abbasid-Andalusian era. Data sources consist of primary and secondary sources selected based on their relevance, authenticity, and credibility; primary sources include works of *tārīkh* and *fiqh siyāsah* such as *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, *al-Aḥkām al-Sulṭāniyyah* by al-Māwardī, while secondary sources include contemporary works such as the writings of George Makdisi, Marshall Hodgson, and relevant scientific journal articles. Data collection techniques are carried out through literature studies, which involve systematic stages: identification of the main corpus, selection based on author authority and historical context, extraction

of thematic data on patronage, education policy, and political legitimacy, and cross-verification across sources to minimize historical bias. Data analysis was conducted through thematic categorization, grouping information based on political, intellectual, and social dimensions. It was then interpreted using historical hermeneutics to understand the contextual significance of power practices on the development of science. Furthermore, a comparative analysis across periods was conducted by examining the dynamics of the relationship between science and power during various phases of government, yielding a comprehensive understanding of the construction of the ruler's legitimacy and its influence on the intellectual landscape of classical Islam.

Results and Discussion

Science as an Instrument of Power

Science in classical Islamic civilization never existed as an autonomous entity separate from the power structure; rather, it became part of a political construct used by rulers to establish symbolic authority and moral legitimacy (Dallal, 2010). Rulers, particularly during the Abbasid period, understood that military power or lineage were insufficient to sustain government stability without the appearance of leadership built on rationality and scholarly tradition. Therefore, political authorities sought to establish intellectual authority by presenting themselves as protectors of knowledge, rather than merely holders of administrative power (Wang, 2024). Within this framework, knowledge was treated not merely as an intellectual product, but as symbolic capital that served to expand the ruler's claim to legitimacy before society and the religious elite.

The relationship between rulers and scientists was established through the practice of patronage, which not only provided financial support but also created a mechanism for ideological control over the production of knowledge (Rusydi, Saepudin, & Murodi, 2023). The palace became a space where scholars, philosophers, and translators were presented as part of the palace's legitimacy, while also legitimizing the scientists who received patronage to develop research or engage in intellectual projects (Şenel, 2025). This pattern of relationships demonstrates that patronage was not a form of neutral respect for knowledge, but rather a hegemonic strategy to bind intellectual authority within the orbit of state power. However, this practice also gave rise to ambivalence: on the one hand, it opened access to the development of knowledge, but on the other, it created a form of epistemic dependence that limited the independence of scholars and philosophers. This phenomenon is evident in the role of the *'ulamā' al-Sultān*, who were used to support the formal narrative of power while simultaneously stifling theological criticism from independent circles (El-Hibri, 2021).

The Abbasid period is the most complex example of the use of knowledge as a means of dynastic legitimacy. Caliphs such as al-Manşūr and especially al-Ma'mūn not only established intellectual centers like the Bayt al-Ḥikmah, but also created

state policies that made knowledge an explicit part of the caliphate's identity (Al-Mawardi, 1989). Through massive translation projects from Greek, Persian, and Indian, the rulers established an image as *ḥāmī al-'ilm* (protector of knowledge) and controller of epistemic discourse (Bsoul, 2019). However, this political-scientific phenomenon was not singular and linear. Al-Ma'mūn supported Mu'tazilah and rationalism as the basis of legitimacy (Obeidat, 2024), while al-Mutawakkil later reversed the political direction of knowledge by siding with the traditionalist scholars of *Ahl al-Ḥadīth*, rejecting state intervention in theological matters, and ending the Mihnah (Archer, 2015). This demonstrates the dynamic that knowledge can also be a source of resistance, not just legitimacy.

The translation of Greek philosophy and science, led by figures such as Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq, al-Kindī, and Šābit ibn Qurrā, not only enriched the intellectual treasury but also became a political medium to demonstrate the intellectual superiority of the Abbasid Caliphate over global powers like Byzantium (Putri & Priyoyudanto, 2023). By supporting the sciences of logic, medicine, astronomy, and mathematics, the rulers constructed a narrative that their leadership was not based on arbitrary power, but on the mastery of cosmopolitan-oriented scientific authority (Bahri, 2025). However, the integration of foreign sciences into the Islamic tradition also sparked theological resistance from jurists who considered the state to have exceeded the limits of religious authority. This resistance reached its peak in the Mihnah, when al-Ma'mūn imposed the Quranic doctrine of *khalq* as a political test against scholars, including Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (Aniq, 2023). This incident demonstrates that the state, in exploiting knowledge, also instrumentalized doctrine as a means of control.

These dynamics demonstrate that science in classical Islamic civilization cannot be understood merely as the result of independent intellectual struggles, but as an arena for power struggles. The state not only protected science but also framed it within a structure of legitimacy to assert itself as the center of civilization. Patronage of scientists and the establishment of scientific institutions served to create symbolic authority, but also created tensions with independent groups of ulama who rejected epistemic subordination. This suggests that science could be an instrument of power or an instrument of resistance. This ambivalence shaped the direction of subsequent scientific development, including the establishment of madrasas, the creation of scientific bureaucracies, and the institutionalization of orthodoxy.

Institutionalization of Science and the Role of the State

The institutionalization of science in the classical Islamic world did not emerge organically from individual initiative but rather through strategic state intervention that understood the political value of knowledge production. Rulers utilized the establishment of scientific institutions as a means to strengthen their legitimacy and as a mechanism to control the scientific discourse circulating in

society (Brentjes, 2022). During the Abbasid period, particularly under al-Ma'mūn, science was viewed not only as a source of civilization but also as an ideological tool to strengthen political authority through the promotion of state rationalism (Makdisi, 1981). Within this framework, the institutionalization of science became part of the architecture of power that regulated the relationship between intellectuals, material resources, and state authority.

The Bayt al-Ḥikmah in Baghdad is often considered the pinnacle symbol of the institutionalization of knowledge, but its existence actually reflects the ambivalence between intellectual patronage and political hegemony. Although known as a center for translation and research, the Bayt al-Ḥikmah was not entirely free as a space for knowledge production; it also functioned as an arena for selecting discourses aligned with the ruling doctrine (Algeriani & Mohadi, 2017). Al-Ma'mūn's Mihnah policy towards traditionalist scholars, such as Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, demonstrates that the state utilized scientific authority as a form of ideological legitimacy (Aniq, 2023). Thus, the financial support, provision of facilities, and collection of manuscripts within the institution should be understood as a state strategy to consolidate epistemic claims, not simply as a commitment to intellectual freedom.

The madrasas, as an educational institution, further demonstrate the political dimension of the institutionalization of knowledge, particularly through their involvement in shaping Sunni orthodoxy. The establishment of the Nizamiyah madrasas by Nizam al-Mulk in the 11th century aimed not only to provide education for a new generation of scholars but also to consolidate the power of the Seljuk state in the face of Shia theological influence and various rationalist schools (Ogli, 2025). The *waqf* (endowments) that supported the madrasas were managed bureaucratically, providing financial stability for both teachers and students; however, this stability was accompanied by standardization of the curriculum and selection of doctrines to suit the interests of the state (Dabbour, 2021). In practice, the madrasas became a tug-of-war between scholars who defended scholarly autonomy and rulers who sought ideological uniformity (Hatim & Younis, 2021). Figures such as al-Ghazālī, who taught at the Nizamiyah, demonstrated that the state could channel its influence through authoritative educational figures without intervening explicitly (Indana & Mustofa, 2024).

State libraries, often viewed as neutral repositories of knowledge, were in fact crucial tools for knowledge curation within power structures. The establishment of large libraries integrated with palaces or educational institutions allowed the state to control access to texts deemed legitimate or beneficial to political stability (Ihsanoğlu, 2022). The copying, cataloging, and preservation of manuscripts were carried out by librarians appointed through state patronage, ensuring that knowledge production and reproduction took place within the orbit of legitimate power (Algeriani & Mohadi, 2017). While these libraries expanded

scholars' access to foreign and local sources, they also served as a filtering mechanism for discourse deemed subversive or heterodox, indicating that the state not only facilitated knowledge but also defined its boundaries (Taylor, 2015).

This overall institutional structure demonstrates that the intellectual development of classical Islam cannot be understood solely in terms of the creative dynamics of the scientific community, but must be examined in its relationship to state power. The ruler acted as a patron, regulator, and guardian of epistemic orthodoxy, determining the direction of scientific development. The institutional stability generated by state funding and bureaucratization enabled the transmission of knowledge across generations, but it also opened the potential for the instrumentalization of science for political gain. Amid the latent tension between patronage and autonomy, the institutionalization of science became an arena in which political legitimacy was negotiated through intellectual authority. This tension later emerged explicitly in the ambivalent relationship between scholars, scientists, and rulers.

Tension between Scholars, Scientists, and Rulers

The tension between scholars, scientists, and rulers during the classical Islamic period cannot be reduced to a simple conflict between revelation and reason; rather, it reflects a contestation over epistemological authority in political and social spaces. The Islamic scientific tradition was not only built on the dichotomy of *bayān* (textual) and *burhān* (rational), but also on an epistemological spectrum encompassing *ta'wīl*, *kalām*, and philosophy (Griffel, 2021). In this context, the production and legitimacy of knowledge always intersect with power, as Michel Foucault (1995) emphasized through the concept of the regime of truth, where truth is not neutral but is shaped and disseminated by institutions wielding social authority. Therefore, the epistemological tension in Islamic history represents a dialectic between religious authority, rational reason, and the political projects of rulers in regulating the discourse of knowledge.

The political intervention of rulers not only exacerbates epistemic differences but also demarcates orthodoxy and heterodoxy through mechanisms of legitimacy. To maintain stability, rulers choose a particular scientific orientation as the basis for intellectual hegemony (*Gramsci*), thus allowing scholars and scientists to enter the negotiation space, not merely as opposition (Wang, 2024). Support for a particular school of thought is a political strategy to control the narrative of truth in society (Alatas, 2021). Thus, epistemological conflict is not merely academic, but part of a struggle for symbolic capital that determines who has the right to define religious truth, morality, and rationality in classical Islamic society.

The case of the Mihnah during the reign of al-Ma'mūn is the clearest example of the formation of a truth regime through state intervention. The application of the doctrine of the Quran as a creature was not merely a theological debate but an attempt by the state to institutionalize the Mu'tazilah's rational epistemology as

official orthodoxy (Aniq, 2023). Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's rejection of this doctrine cannot be understood simply as textual resistance, but as resistance to the state's epistemic monopoly on religious truth (Melchert, 1997). Within a Foucauldian framework, the Mihnah reflects the practice of epistemic discipline, in which the state uses coercive power to limit legitimate interpretations of revelation (Foucault, 1980). This incident demonstrates that scientific truth does not always emerge from scientific consensus but can be enforced through the instruments of power.

The shift in power orientation after the Mihnah reveals the dynamics of bargaining between ulama and rulers. When rulers supported textual traditions, ulama gained legitimacy to construct orthodoxy through formal institutions such as the Nizamiyyah madrasah, the office of *qāḍī*, and the *fatwā* structure (El-Hibri, 2021). However, the dominance of *bayān* epistemology did not eliminate the role of reason, as many scholars, such as al-Ghazālī, utilized Aristotelian logic to strengthen Ash'ari theology (Mahmood et al., 2022). At this point, it becomes clear that '*ulamā*' were not merely victims or opponents of power, but active actors shaping religious hegemony through institutional work and the reproduction of doctrine. The relationship between '*ulamā*' and rulers is more accurately understood as an ideological coalition that formed a normative regime of truth.

The epistemological struggle between philosophers such as al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā and orthodox scholars reveals another dimension of the politics of knowledge. al-Ghazālī's critique in *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah* was not simply a rejection of metaphysics, but rather an attempt to rescue the authority of revelation from the dominance of rational philosophy (Griffel, 2016). Ibn Rushd then responded in *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*, asserting that reason and revelation could be reconciled within the framework of epistemic hierarchy (Rusyd, 2010). The court's response to this debate was crucial to the fate of philosophy; when political patronage supported philosophy in al-Andalus, it flourished, but as clerical pressure increased, its space narrowed (Habeeb & Nahar, 2022). This demonstrates that the sustainability of the scientific tradition depended heavily on the strategic relationship between argument production and the support of power.

Thus, the conflict between scholars, scientists, and rulers in classical Islamic history represents a dialectic of the politics of knowledge, not simply a doctrinal dispute. Epistemological relations were never fully autonomous, but rather negotiated through the influence of authority, patronage networks, and institutional legitimacy. Cases such as the Mihnah, philosophical debates, and the formation of madrasas demonstrate that scientific orthodoxy was shaped through a hegemonic process involving accommodation, resistance, and alliances. This dynamic confirms that the development of knowledge in classical Islam emerged from a complex interaction between rational argument, the authority of revelation, and political power, a historical process that laid the foundations for intellectual plurality in Islamic civilization.

Legitimacy, Cosmopolitanism, and Intellectual Transformation

Intellectual cosmopolitanism in classical Islamic civilization did not emerge as a natural consequence of scientific progress, but rather as a conscious political strategy to establish the legitimacy and authority of civilization. In this context, cosmopolitanism is not only understood as openness to diverse knowledge but as a cultural design nurtured by rulers to create an image of civilized authority (Hansen, 2010). As Marshall Hodgson (2002) demonstrates through the concept of “civilization of *adab*,” support for science and culture became a means of forming symbolic hegemony, in which power displayed not only military strength but also the capacity to manage intellectual diversity. The political stability created by the Abbasids, Fatimids, and Umayyads of Andalusia provided the prerequisites for the formation of a space for the circulation of knowledge across religions, ethnicities, and schools of thought. Still, this space remained within a framework of state-controlled legitimacy (Supriyadi, 2008).

Baghdad during the Abbasid period is the clearest example of how power used knowledge as a project of universal legitimacy. The massive translation project centered at the Bayt al-Ḥikmah was not merely an intellectual initiative, but a political policy designed to position the Abbasids as the authoritative inheritors of global civilization (Hasanah, 2022). Through the patronage of rulers like al-Ma’mūn, Greek, Persian, and Indian texts were not only translated but positioned as part of the court’s identity, thus creating the impression that Islamic rule transcended religious boundaries and entered the realm of universal rationality (Nawas, 2015). However, this cosmopolitanism was not without paradox. The policy of Mihnah (doctrinal inquisition) demonstrated that acceptance of foreign knowledge remained under the control of state orthodoxy (Şenel, 2025). The narrative of Baghdad’s cosmopolitanism should therefore not be interpreted as absolute freedom, but rather as an arena for negotiation between scholarly independence and the ruler’s ideological control.

Unlike Baghdad, Cairo during the Fatimid and Mamluk periods represented a cosmopolitanism built through the management of intra-Islamic diversity. Al-Azhar’s establishment served not only as a center of learning but also as a space for ideological discourse, enabling the intersection of *Sunnī* and *Shī’a* theology and various philosophical schools (Bano, 2015). From Habermas’s (1989) perspective on the public sphere, al-Azhar served as a discursive arena while remaining within the framework of state oversight. The Fatimids utilized this discursive flexibility to present themselves as protectors of knowledge and difference (Daud, 2022), while the Mamluks maintained *Sunnī* authority while making room for the traditions of kalam and philosophy (Mahamid, 2023). This is where Cairo’s cosmopolitanism finds its political character: not a celebration of difference, but rather a regulation of difference for the symbolic stability of power. Knowledge became a tool for

demonstrating the state's capacity to produce and direct discourse, thus establishing political legitimacy not through coercion, but through epistemic authority.

Andalusia, particularly under the Umayyad rule of Córdoba, developed a cosmopolitan culture through interfaith diplomacy and the integration of Mediterranean civilizations. Andalusia's geographic position at the boundary between East and West facilitated exchange among Islam, Christianity, and Judaism (Capilla, 2018). However, Andalusian cosmopolitanism was not synonymous with passive tolerance, but rather a form of political engineering that utilized the patronage of knowledge as an instrument of power representation through translation institutions in Toledo and networks of Jewish-Muslim scholars. The Umayyad rulers constructed a narrative that their rule protected knowledge across traditions (Castaño, Martínez, & Periañez, 2017). What Menocal (2002) calls the "civilization of convivencia" is actually intertwined with a hegemonic strategy: presenting the kingdom as a stage for civilization that transcends religious and ethnic boundaries. The epistemological transformation in Andalusia arose from a political arena that demanded symbols of global civilization while simultaneously strengthening the dynasty's legitimacy *vis-à-vis* Latin Europe (Alotaibi, 2025).

From Baghdad to Andalusia, cosmopolitanism is not merely a socio-intellectual condition but also part of the state's soft power. In Joseph Nye's (2004) framework, soft power operates through cultural and intellectual appeals that create non-violent legitimacy. Classical Islamic rulers built diplomatic networks through knowledge: inviting foreign scholars, sending manuscripts to the Byzantine court, or providing patronage to philosophers and physicians. This scientific diplomacy positioned the ruler as the protector of reason and knowledge, extending the symbolic influence of Islam beyond the realm of power (Bsoul, 2019). This demonstrates that knowledge served not only as an internal tool for identity formation but also as a universal language that strengthened the image of Islamic civilization in the global arena.

The intellectual transformation born of this political cosmopolitanism had a structural impact on the birth of modern science. Anthony Giddens (1984) emphasized that modernity was shaped by the reflexive interaction between tradition and globality, a dynamic already present in classical Islamic civilization. Medieval universities in the West, such as Bologna and the Sorbonne, developed through models borrowed from the madrasas and scholarly assemblies of Baghdad, Cairo, and Andalusia (Kreckel, 2017). However, this transfer of knowledge did not occur neutrally; colonialism and secularization subsequently altered the epistemological orientation of the Islamic heritage, shifting knowledge from revelation to pure rationality (Lumbard, 2025). Therefore, understanding classical Islamic cosmopolitanism is not simply a matter of glorifying the past, but a critical reconstruction of the foundations of civilization that integrates politics, science, and cultural diplomacy.

Conclusion

Science in the classical Islamic world did not develop autonomously, but was closely intertwined with power structures and the need for political legitimacy. The main findings indicate that the development of science in the classical Islamic world took place in a reciprocal relationship between intellectual interests and political power, where the patronage of rulers through the establishment of institutions such as the Bayt al-Ḥikmah and material support created a cosmopolitan space for the transmission of knowledge across cultures while also serving as a means of legitimizing authority. However, this relationship was not entirely free from tension, as scholars often maintained moral-religious authority when rulers used science as an instrument of power. This tension gave rise to productive intellectual dynamics and influential networks of scientific diplomacy that persisted into the modern era. Theoretically, this study emphasizes that Islamic intellectual history should be read as an interactive process among science, legitimacy, and power. At the same time, practically, it provides a critical reflection on the position of academics and scientific independence in the contemporary context. The limitations of this research lie in the limited primary sources and temporal-geographical coverage, which have not yet touched on the variations of dynasties and non-palace institutions, so that future research needs to integrate interdisciplinary approaches based on social history, political anthropology, or intellectual network studies, so that the picture of the relationship between science and power becomes more comprehensive.

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