

THE TRANSMISSION SYSTEM OF THE GRECO-ARABIC TRANSLATION MOVEMENT DURING THE ABBASID ERA AND ITS PHILOSOPHICAL CONTRIBUTION

Radya Cantika Suhardiman Putri*, Febri Priyoyudanto

Universitas Al Azhar Indonesia, Indonesia

Abstract

This study aims to determine the factors underlying the occurrence of the Greco-Arabic Translation Movement, how its process takes place, how the translation transmission system works, who are the figures behind it, and what its contributions are to the advancement of philosophy. This article uses the qualitative method through library research with data sources in the form of historical books written in the Abbasid dynasty, a book titled 'Greek Thought, Arabic Culture' by Dimitri Gutas, and articles related to the object of research. It can be concluded that the factors underlying the occurrence of the translation movement were the conquests by the Arabs, the Abbasid Revolution and the demography of Baghdad, and the pre-Abbasid translation movement. Based in Baghdad, this project lasted from the 8th century to the 10th century AD. The translation transmission system applied is the Greco-Syriac-Arabic translation. Some of the figures who played crucial roles in this project were caliph al-Mansur, caliph Harun ar-Rashid, caliph al-Ma'mun, Hunayn ibn Ishaq, the Banu Musa brothers, and Thabit ibn Qurra. This movement birthed the philosophy study. This project contributed to the advancement of philosophy both in classical and modern eras of Arab civilization and the world.

Keywords: Translation movement; Greco-Arabic; Abbasid Dynasty; Philosophy

INTRODUCTION

The Abbasid Dynasty was a remarkable dynasty that ruled the Arab region from 750 to 1258 AD (Nunzairina, 2020). The founder of this dynasty was Abdullah ibn Ali ibn Abdullah ibn al-Abbas from Bani Hashim. He is a descendant of the Prophet's uncle, al-Abbas ibn Abdul Muttalib (Muttalib, 2022). Therefore, the name of this dynasty was taken from his name (Hasanah, 2022). The dynasty selected Baghdad as its capital city, Islam as its legal religion, and Arabic as its official language (Daulay, Haidar Putra, 2020).

The Golden Age of Islam occurred during the Abbasid dynasty when Islam reached its peak of glory. That is why the Abbasid period is one of the sources of pride for Muslim communities worldwide. The Golden Age of Islam occurred during the first ruling period of the dynasty, especially during the reign of Caliphs Harun Ar-Rashid and al-Ma'mun (Nunzairina, 2020).

The discourse on the Abbasid Dynasty as the primary milestone of the Islamic Golden Age still invites much debate among historians. The cause of the controversy is that the term only emerged in the early 20th century from modernist Islamists who made the Abbasid reign the primary reference to restore Islam to its rightful place. So, the term's use is more ideological than seeing historical facts for what they are. In addition, the Abbasid dynasty in Baghdad was not the only support for the progress of Islamic Arab civilization at that time because, in the West, there was also the Umayyad dynasty in Cordova as an accommodator of the process of scientific progress. There was also the Fatimid dynasty in Cairo, Egypt, which competed in advancing civilization. Regardless of this debate, it cannot be denied that the Abbasid era was an era of progress in Islamic civilization that departed from the process of translating classical books of various disciplines to create scientific transmission from Ancient Greece to Islamic Arabia.

*Correspondance Author: radysuhardiman@gmail.com

Article History | Submitted: 29 Maret, 2023 | Revised: 30 April, 2023 | Accepted: 04 Juli, 2023

HOW TO CITE (APA 6th Edition):

Radya Cantika Suhardiman Putri, Febri Priyoyudanto. (2023). The Transmission System of the Greco-Arabic Translation Movement during the Abbasid Era and Its Philosophical Contribution. *Juspi: Jurnal Sejarah Peradaban Islam*. 7(1), page.9-20

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.30829/juspi.v7i1.15373>

A translation attempts to transfer a written message or statement from one language into another (Newmark, 2001). People worldwide have exchanged ideas, thoughts, knowledge, and information using their languages for thousands of years. Translation enables the exchange of information, knowledge, ideas, and history across the world from one era to the next (Silalahi, 2005). Reserving the Abbasid dynasty's treasure trove of knowledge for the next generations was possible because of translation. Much of the original Greek literature has yet to survive to this day. However, the Arabic-translated versions of these books have survived and contributed to the advancement of various fields of science (Gutas, 1998).

Researchers used several previous studies as a guide and comparison in this study. In this state of art, researchers selected 4 journals consisting of 2 international journals and 2 national journals, namely: an article entitled "The House of Wisdom (Bayt Al-Hikmah) and Its Civilizational Impact on Islamic Libraries: A Historical Perspective" from the Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences journal by Algeriani, Adel Abdul-Aziz, and Mawloud Mohadi in 2017 which focuses on the role of Bayt al-Hikmah on the improvement of Islamic libraries, an article entitled "The Landscape of Translation Movement in the Arab World: From the 7th Century to the Beginning of the 21st Century" from the Arab World English Journal by Fadi Jaber in 2015 which examines translation in the Arab World from the 7th to the 21st century AD, an article entitled "The Abbasid Dynasty: The Progress of Islamic Civilization, Education, and the Awakening of Intellectuals" from the Journal of Islamic History and Civilization (JUSPI) by Nunzairina in 2020 about the advancement of the Abbasid dynasty in the fields of science and education, and an article entitled "The Contribution of the Abbasid dynasty to Science" from the Journal of History and Culture by Salmah Intan in 2018 which examines the advancement of Abbasid science, especially in the fields of religion, philosophy, education, and science.

Although these four studies have discussed the translation movement in the Arab world and the scientific achievements of the Abbasid dynasty, further research is still needed. This research will produce different findings from the previous studies because this article seeks to find knowledge and truth related to the transmission system of manual translation in The Greco-Arabic Translation Movement, a project of translating Greek, Roman, Aramaic, and other writings into Arabic that lasted from the 8th to the 10th century AD. Moreover, this article also discusses the translation project's contribution to the development of philosophy in Arab civilization. From this research, it is hoped that the data presented along with the results obtained can contribute in the form of information and knowledge in the fields of history, culture, and translation for students, scholars, researchers, and the general public, to know the past translation system so that it can be utilized to improve and update the current translation system and enhance the development of modern-day science.

Therefore, the researchers pose the study question of how was the translation transmission process in the Greco-Arabic Translation Movement and to what extent the influence of the movement contributed to the development of philosophy. This discussion is interesting to be studied further to find out what the factors underlying the Greco-Arabic Translation Movement, how the Greco-Arabic Translation Movement process took place, how the Greco-Arabic Translation Movement transmission system worked, who are the figures who played a role in the Greco-Arabic Translation Movement, and what are the contribution of the Greco-Arabic Translation Movement for the advancement of Arabic civilization philosophy.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, researchers used a historical qualitative approach because it aims to seek truth and knowledge related to past events whose results are presented in the form of words. The data used in this research are texts from the Abbasid era until 2022 related to the Greco-Arabic Translation Movement, the advancement of science in the Abbasid dynasty, and philosophy. The primary data sources used are two classic history books written during the Abbasid period, namely *Tarikh at-Thabari* by at-Thabari (Al-Thabari, 1991) dan *al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh* by Ibn Atsir (Al-Atsir, 1978). The secondary data sources comprise 11 books and 22 scientific articles related to the research

object. Following the research stages of the historical method, researchers collected data using heuristic techniques and analyzed it using external and internal criticism techniques, interpretation technique, and historiography technique (Ismaun, 2005).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Background of The Greco-Arabic Translation Movement

The Greco-Arabic Translation Movement was a project of translating Greek literature into Arabic that lasted for more than two centuries in Baghdad, the center of the Abbasid dynasty. From the 8th to the 10th century AD, almost all non-literary and non-historical Greek books in the Byzantine Empire and the Near East were translated into Arabic. The Greco-Arabic Translation Movement was continually carried out using scientific methodology and strict philological precision from generation to generation (Gutas, 1998).

Some of the events that led to the Greco-Arabic Translation Movement are:

Conquests by Arabs

Less than 30 years after the death of the Prophet Muhammad (he died in 632 AD), the Arab civilization carried out massive territorial expansion. Some of the areas that were conquered by the Arabs were Persia (Sasanid Empire), Fertile Crescent, and Egypt (Byzantine Empire), as well as Southwest Asia and Northeast Africa (Alexander the Great's domain). By 732 AD, the jurisdiction of the Arab civilization had extended from Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent to Spain, Persia, Mesopotamia, Syria-Palestine, and Egypt (Gutas, 1998).

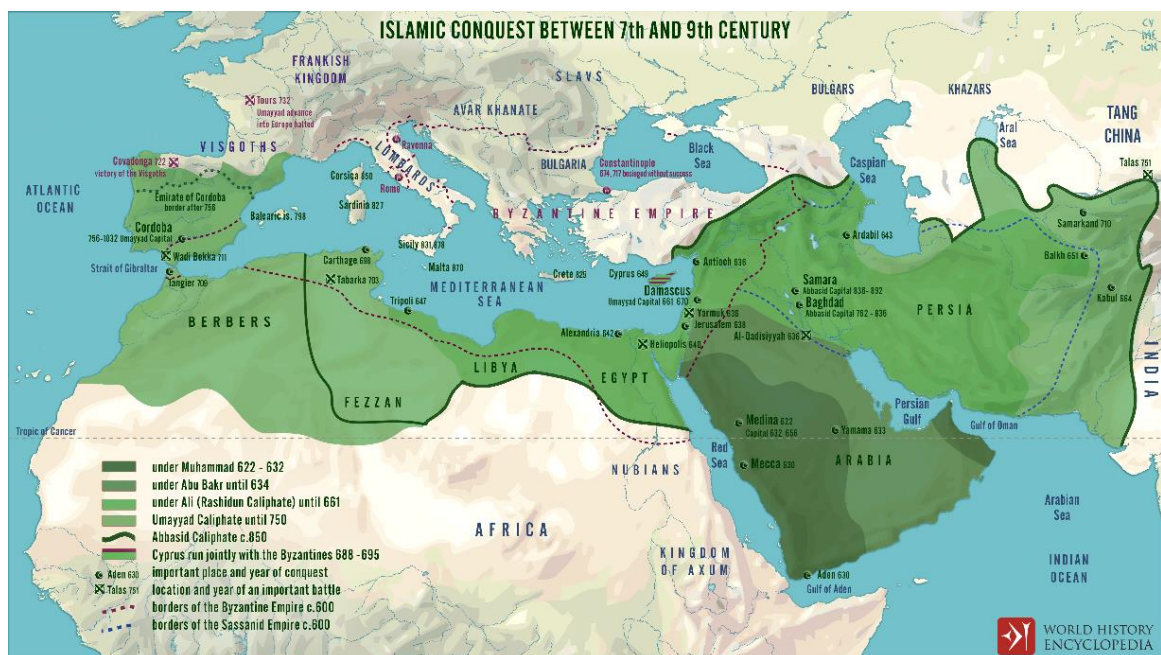


Figure 1.1 By worldhistory.org: The Rise and Expansion of Islamic Caliphates and Dynasties

Initially, Eastern Mesopotamia belonged to the Sasanid Empire (Lawrence & Wilkinson, 2017), and Western Mesopotamia (Fertile Crescent) belonged to the Byzantine Empire. When the Arabs conquered them, the barrier between the two sides was lifted, allowing trade to flow freely. During this period, there was growth in the spreading of raw materials, finished products, agricultural products, luxury goods, services, techniques, skills, ideas, methods, and ways of thinking (Gutas, 1998).

Another impact of the Arab conquest that was equally important in the emergence of translation projects was the introduction of papermaking technology by Chinese war prisoners in 751 AD. With this, Greek learning began to take root and spread in the Fertile Crescent. Moreover, the Byzantine Empire that the Arabs conquered included areas of Ancient Greek heritage. Therefore, many Byzantine scholars were proficient in Greek (Treadgold, 1997). The development

of the Greek language in Arab civilization provided many Arab scholars with Greek educational backgrounds. This strong influence of Hellenism then gave birth to The Greco-Arabic Translation Movement (Gutas, 1998).

The Abbasid Revolution and the Demographics of Baghdad

Before the rise of the Abbasid dynasty, Arab civilization was led by the Umayyad Dynasty (661-750 AD), with the center of government located in the city of Damascus. It should be noted that Damascus was a city with a powerful Byzantine cultural influence (Gutas, 1998). This phenomenon was due to the historical factor that the city was one of the territories of the Byzantine Empire before the Arabs conquered it in 636 AD (Shboul & Walmsley, 1998).

The administrative system of the Umayyad Dynasty used Greek before being reformed by Abd al-Malik. Throughout the Umayyad period, Greek was widespread in Syria and Palestine as the mother tongue of most of the local population and the lingua franca of trade and business. Many Umayyad government officials were able to speak Greek. At that time, the prevailing high culture in Damascus was Greek Orthodox Christianity, supported by the Constantinople (Byzantine) Empire. Thus, the bureaucratic system of Damascus society followed the prevailing culture in Constantinople (Gutas, 1998).

By the seventh century, this Byzantine high culture had changed, the study of Greek Paganism had lost its importance, and Hellenism was no longer an essential part of Damascus. Hellenism was even seen as something to be despised. This drastic change in the cultural orientation of the Greek-speaking Christian community resulted in a decline in the influence of Ancient Greece at that time. Under these conditions, it is not easy to envision a Greco-Arabic Translation Movement in Damascus (Gutas, 1998).

There was a drastic change after the Abbasid Revolution and the transfer of the dynasty's capital from Damascus to Baghdad. Away from Byzantine culture, a multicultural civilization consisting of Aramaic, Persian, and Arabic-speaking people was formed. The administrative bench of the Abbasid dynasty was filled with Persians, Christian Arabs, and Aramaeans. In contrast to the people in Damascus, the people of Baghdad were more open to the Hellenization process. In other words, if the capital had not moved to Baghdad, the Greco-Arabic Translation might not have happened (Gutas, 1998).

Pre-Abbasid Translation Movement

Translation in the Near East had been practiced since the second millennium BCE when Sumerian documents were translated into Akkadian. Many Greek secular works were translated into Near Eastern languages, including Arabic. Some of the translations that occurred include Greek-Syrian, Greek-Arabic, Sanskrit-Arabic, and Greek-Pahlavi (Persian) (Gutas, 1998). The translations that took place before the Abbasid period inspired the Abbasid dynasty leaders to continue and create official translation projects.

The Process of the Greek-Arabic Translation Movement

The Greco-Arabic Translation Movement of the Abbasid period began when the Abbasid dynasty rose to power (McDonald, 2018). Although there had been translation movements before the Abbasid era, the translation project of this era was much more advanced with the rapid development of science (Jaber, 2015). This translation project was one of the most outstanding achievements of the Muslims that impacted the advancement of philosophy and science (McDonald, 2018). In addition, during this period, the Qur'an was first translated into Persian and other languages (Jaber, 2015). The scientific progress of Arab civilization at that time defeated European civilization, which was still in the dark ages (Mustofa, 2018). The Greco-Arabic Translation Movement lasted almost three hundred years, with its peak during the time of Caliph al-Ma'mun (833 M) (McDonald, 2018).

For two hundred years, Greek, Persian, and Indian manuscripts were translated into Arabic (McDonald, 2018). The entire Abbasid elite fully supported the translation project, ranging from

caliphs, princes, commoners, military leaders, merchants, bankers, scholars, and scientists (Gutas, 1998). Many noble families, such as the Barmakis and the Banu Shakers, were wealthy enough to send emissaries to various places to purchase rare manuscripts. Their interest in this translation project was generally based on a simple desire to spread knowledge or ingratiate themselves with their rulers (McDonald, 2018).

One of the factors in the birth of the Greco-Arabic Translation Movement was the policy of the early caliphs of the Abbasid dynasty, especially Caliph al-Mansur (754-775 M) (Gutas, 1998). Al-Mansur proposed the translation of Persian, Greek, and Indian books of science, philosophy, and literature into Arabic (Jaber, 2015). The first Greek-Arabic translator at the time of al-Mansur was Yahya ibn al-Bathriq. He translated books of medicine and astronomy by Galen, Hippocrates, Ptolemy, and Euclid. Besides al-Bathriq, ibn al-Muqaffa translated the books *Kalila wa Dimna* and *as-Sind wa al-Hind* from the Pahlavi language (Oktaviani, 2018).

The translated books ordered by the previous caliphs then became the pillars of the establishment of *Bayt al-Hikmah* or The House of Wisdom by Caliph Harun ar-Rashid (789-803 M) (Algeriani & Mohadi, 2017). *Bayt al-Hikmah* was a library in Baghdad that became the center of intellectual activity of the Abbasid dynasty and the official institution of the Greco-Arabic Translation Movement (Algeriani & Mohadi, 2017). *Bayt al-Hikmah* was a center for collecting, copying, and translating various books containing foreign knowledge into Arabic (Irfan, 2016). When Harun ar-Rashid conquered Ankara, the caliph organized an expedition to acquire books from various libraries, which were then sent to *Bayt al-Hikmah* for study (Algeriani & Mohadi, 2017).

Bayt al-Hikmah is divided into several sections, namely the book deposit section, book lending, copying and binding, maps and manuscripts, and translation and writing. Some of the foreign languages that *Bayt al-Hikmah* translators focus on are Greek, Indian, Aramaic, and Persian (Algeriani & Mohadi, 2017).

The Greco-Arabic Translation Movement then peaked during the al-Ma'mun caliphate (813-833 M). After being appointed caliph, al-Ma'mun greatly prioritized and supported this translation movement (Gutas, 1998). Caliph al-Ma'mun sent many translators to the East and West to bring and translate various books (Jaber, 2015).

The Abbasid caliphs paid great attention to translating ancient civilizations' heritage into Arabic to produce innovations and inventions using the acquired knowledge. Caliph al-Ma'mun commissioned a special party to purchase books from the libraries of Rome, Greece, Constantinople, and Cyprus to be translated and studied at *Bayt al-Hikmah* (Algeriani & Mohadi, 2017). He even requested the King of Byzantium, Leon of Armenia, to send science books to the Abbasid Dynasty (Dawami, 2008).

Translators worldwide came to Baghdad to partake in the most significant translation movement in the Abbasid dynasty. Caliph al-Ma'mun employed many Jewish and Christian scholars to translate foreign books into Arabic. Some of the prominent translators of this project were Abu Zakariya Yahya ibn Bathriq, Al-Kindi, Jibrain ibn Bakhtyashu, Sahl at-Tabari, Ibnu Sahda, Al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf, Tsabit ibn Qurra, Banu Musa (three brothers), Abu Zakariya Yuhanna ibn Masawaih, Qusta ibn Luqa, Hubaish ibn al-Hasa, dan Stephanos (Dawami, 2008). Many of the translators of this project were Greek-speaking Syriac Christian priests. Therefore, the Greek manuscripts were usually translated into Old Syriac first before being translated into Arabic (Gutas, 1998). This translation transmission system will be discussed further in the next section.

The task of translation at *Bayt al-Hikmah* was divided among several prominent Abbasid scholars based on the subject of the translated book. For example, Abu Ja'far ibn Musa ibn Shakir and his brothers translated books on mathematics and engineering, Ya'qub al-Kindi and Ibn Farkhan al-Tabari translated books on the movement of the stars and philosophy, and Ibn Ishaq al-Harani translated medical books (Algeriani & Mohadi, 2017).

Once the translators can access foreign books at *Bayt al-Hikmah*, the initial translation process occurs. The resulting translation products would then be sent to writers with beautiful writing skills and neat writing. Caliph al-Ma'mun handpicked these writers. Once a copy had been

made, it was sent to the person responsible for binding and decorating the book. The final product of this lengthy process was then distributed to other libraries outside Baghdad, such as those of Tunisia and Cairo (Algeriani & Mohadi, 2017).

The Greco-Arabic Translation Movement cost so much money. The Abbasid dynasty had an exceptional budget for translators, writers, binders, scholars, and servants at Bayt al-Hikmah. The budget also included funds for housing and the purchase of food, books, pens, and papers. One source mentions that the salaries of some translators, such as Ibn al-A'sam and Thabit ibn Qurra reached 500 dinars per month. Caliph al-Ma'mun used *waqf* funds to finance this project. The funds collected at *Bayt al-Hikmah* are estimated to have reached almost two hundred thousand dinars (Algeriani & Mohadi, 2017).

When al-Ma'mun died, this translation movement began to decline (McDonald, 2018). Then, the Abbasid dynasty began to enter its collapsing phase. There was political instability that affected the Greco-Arabic Translation Movement. Power struggles, the strengthening influence of the Turks, economic decline, the emergence of cults, and threats from the Mongols eventually brought the Abbasid dynasty to the brink of collapse. In 1258 CE, Baghdad finally fell to the Mongols, with the line of authority ending with Caliph al-Musta'shim. The Mongol army then destroyed the science centers of Baghdad (Riyadi, 2014). Bayt al-Hikmah was burned, and most of its books and manuscripts were thrown into the Tigris River (Jaber, 2015). Scholars, imams, and writers were killed. This massacre and destruction marked the end of the Greco-Arabic Translation Movement that had brought glory to Islamic civilization for nearly two centuries (Riyadi, 2014).

Translation Transmission System

Since 500 years before the Greco-Arabic Translation Movement, there have been translations of texts from Greek into Syriac. In fact, at that time, there was no record of written translations from Greek into Arabic. Thus, the translation of most philosophical, medical, and scientific texts in the early days of the Greco-Arabic Translation Movement was divided into two stages: translations from Greek to Syriac and from Syriac to Arabic. Therefore, Syriac-speaking scholars played a vital role in this translation movement (Brock, 2004).

The first Greek texts to be translated were Biblical texts. It is estimated that as early as the 3rd century, the Greek Gospels were translated into Syriac. Then, in the early 4th century, a Syrian translation of the Greek New Testament appeared. Non-Biblical texts began to be translated in the late 4th century AD, such as some works by Eusebius and Titus of Bostra. In the 5th century AD, there was an increase in translations of Greek texts in the field of patristic philosophy, such as the works of Basil of Caesarea and Cyril of Alexandria. A century later, the works of Severus of Antioch were translated into Syriac (Brock, 2004).

During the Umayyad Dynasty, Arab civilization expanded its territory by sending its troops to the Near East. One of the effects of this conquest was the emergence of an international group of scholars that spread from the Eastern Mediterranean to India. These scholars spoke Pahlavi, Greek, and Syriac. Among its members were two famous Syrian scholars, Severus Sebokt and Jacob of Edessa (Watt, 2004). At that time, the Greco-Syrian Translation Movement was conducted on a much smaller scale than the Greco-Arabic Translation Movement. Some popular disciplines translated into Syriac included theology, famous ethical works, high philosophy (Aristotle's works), and medicine (Galen's works). With extensive knowledge of Galen's and Aristotle's works and the ability to speak Greek, the Syrians were seen as the right instrument to fulfill the Arabs' curiosity about Greek science (Watt, 2004).

The Greco-Syriac Translation Movement was not the leading cause of the Greco-Arabic Translation Movement. However, this movement led to the advancement of logic in translation during the Abbasid period. The Greco-Syriac translation is considered one of the foundations of philosophical studies in Islam (Watt, 2004).

One of the famous translators who mastered Greek, Syriac, Arabic, and Persian was Hunayn ibn Ishaq. He translated many of Galen's works into Syriac and Arabic. In a letter written by Hunayn

to Ali ibn Yahya called the *Risala*, he mentioned that one of the difficulties he faced in translating Greek texts into Syriac was the absence of previous translations that could serve as a guide in translating the texts (Brock, 2004).

Hunayn did two types of translation: total translation and revision translation. Total translation means translating a text from Greek into Syriac or Arabic entirely from scratch. Conversely, revising a translation means correcting someone else's translation in certain parts that need improvement. Generally, revision translation is done to save time and money (Brock, 2004).

Once, Salmawayh (Hunayn's teacher) asked him to revise the translation of Galen's *Methodos* by Sergius. This revision was done manually. Salmawayh would read Sergius' Syrian translation, and Hunayn would listen while reading the original Greek text of *Methodos*. If there were an error, then Hunayn would correct the passage. However, they later realized that this method could have been more effective. Eventually, the book was retranslated by Hunayn in its entirety from the beginning (Brock, 2004).

In the *Risala*, Hunayn also mentioned that when he translated Galen's works from Greek to Syriac, he always tried to ensure the author's thoughts were well conveyed in the translated text. Therefore, it can be concluded that Hunayn used a reader-oriented translation method. This method contrasts with the 7th-century translation method, oriented towards the source text. The seventh-century translators tried to maintain the language structure of the source text so that the translation tended to be literal and complex for readers to understand. One of the earliest translators criticized by Hunayn was Ayyub. He considers Ayyub's translation challenging to understand because it is too literal and oriented to the source text (Brock, 2004).

Some of the translation strategies used by Hunayn include adding explanations to unclear parts and shortening the text by replacing it with questions and answers. As-Safadi, a 14th-century scholar, mentioned two translation approaches at that time: the atomistic approach of translating word by word (practiced by Ayyub) and the sentence-by-sentence translation approach (practiced by Hunayn and his friends) (Brock, 2004).

Although the literal translation method practiced in the 7th century was no longer used in 9th-century Baghdad, the 7th-century translators were still very instrumental in facilitating the Greco-Arabic Translation Movement by contributing the lexicons needed by the 9th-century translators (Brock, 2004).

However, circumstances and changing political boundaries separated the Syrian speakers from Greek culture over time. The development of Greek in Syria and Palestine suffered a real setback from the reign of Abdul Malik (5th caliph of the Umayyad Dynasty) when the language of the dynasty's public service was changed from Greek to Arabic. Copies of Syrian texts slowly disappeared. Although these manuscripts could still be found in the 12th-13th centuries, there are now almost no Syrian-language intermediate manuscripts (Brock, 2004).

The reason for the disappearance of these Syrian manuscripts is the need for more appreciation and awareness of the vital role that Syrian scholars played in the early stages of the Greco-Arabic Translation Movement. Without them, the Abbasid translation movement would not have been as successful. Brock presents two reasons why these intermediate Syrian manuscripts were not preserved. Firstly, the Syriac translation manuscripts at that time had an intermediary function, so once the texts were translated into Arabic, this intermediary was no longer needed. Secondly, the conversion of the language of science, medicine, and philosophy to Arabic was among the Syrian-speaking groups themselves. Hence, they no longer needed to translate the Greek texts into Syriac first (Brock, 2004).

Figures Who Played a Role in the Greco-Arabic Translation Movement

Some important figures who played a role in the success of The Greco-Arabic Translation Movement include: Caliph Abu Ja'far al-Mansur, Caliph Harun ar-Rashid, Khalifah al-Ma'mun, Hunayn ibn Ishaq, Banu Musa, Thabit ibn Qurra.

Caliph Abu Ja'far al-Mansur

Al-Mas'udi, a historian who died in 956 CE, explained that the second Abbasid caliph, al-Mansur, was the first caliph to show interest in astrologers and act on astrological predictions. He was also the first caliph to order foreign books to be translated into Arabic (Gutas, 1998). Ibn Khaldun mentions that al-Mansur is credited with translating Euclid's theory of elements into Arabic.

One of al-Mansur's greatest contributions to this translation project was his request to the Byzantine emperor to send their mathematics and physics books to Baghdad, later translated into Arabic into the book of Euclid, the first Greek work to be translated into Arabic during his reign (Azamat, 2021).

Al-Mansur collected books in Greek, Byzantine Greek, Pahlavi (Middle Persian), Neopersian, and Aramaic, which were then translated and began to be published for the general public. Some of the translated books that resulted from al-Mansur's order were by Aristotle, Nicomachus, and Ptolemy. Among the translated books that entered his private collection were *Kalila wa-Dimna* and *Sindhind* (Gutas, 1998).

Caliph Harun ar-Rashid

One of Harun ar-Rashid's greatest contributions to The Greco-Arabic Translation Movement was the establishment of *Bayt al-Hikmah* (Algeriani & Mohadi, 2017). *Bayt al-Hikmah* later became the official institution of the translation movement (Young, Latham, & Serjeant, 1990). This library served as a center for collecting, copying, and translating various books of foreign knowledge into Arabic (Irfan, 2016). When Harun ar-Rashid conquered Ankara, the caliph organized an expedition to obtain books from various libraries, which were then sent to *Bayt al-Hikmah* to be studied (Algeriani & Mohadi, 2017).

Caliph al-Ma'mun

The Greco-Arabic Translation Movement reached its pinnacle during the caliphate of al-Ma'mun. Al-Ma'mun was born when this translation movement was taking place, so he grew up as a young man who loved studying ancient books. After becoming caliph, al-Ma'mun greatly prioritized and supported this translation movement (Gutas, 1998)

Bayt al-Hikmah was fully utilized during his regime with more intense translation activities. Caliph al-Ma'mun employed many Jewish and Christian scholars to translate foreign books into Arabic (Young et al., 1990).

Hunayn ibn Ishaq

Hunayn ibn Ishaq is the head of The Greco-Arabic Translation Movement. He was a Christian scholar with proficiency in many languages. His ability in Arabic, Greek, Persian, and Syriac made him an invaluable translator. In translating foreign books, Hunayn introduced a new way of translating sentences instead of words. Assisted by other *Bayt al-Hikmah* translators, he translated various books into Arabic. He traveled to Alexandria, Syria, and Palestine to collect ancient books (Irfan, 2016).

Hunayn coined many medical and anatomical terms that did not exist in Arabic. The books he translated ranged from philosophy, medicine, dreams, Greek mythology, and history. His extraordinary ability and perseverance earned him the nickname "the Sheikh of Arab Translators" (McDonald, 2018). He earned a relatively high salary.

Banu Musa

Three brothers named Jafar Muhammad ibn Musa, Ahmad ibn Musa, and al-Hasan ibn Musa, known as Banu Musa or the Sons of Musa, were prominent scholars of the Abbasid period. They were often the patrons of this translation project. According to historical records, they spent as much as 500 gold dinars per month on translation activities (Young et al., 1990).

In addition to sponsoring translation projects, the three brothers often provided training to individuals considered talented in translation, such as Thabit ibn Qurra. Muhammad met Thabit

in Harran while searching for foreign manuscripts in the Byzantine Empire. Because of Thabit's talent in linguistics, Muhammad invited him to return to Baghdad. Al-Hasan then trained Thabit in mathematics and translation (Faiq, 2018).

Thabit ibn Qurra

Thabit ibn Qurra translated Greek and Aramaic medical books. Together with Hunayn, Thabit published revised versions of the *Almagest* and *Tetrabiblos*. He also established a school for mathematicians and astrologers, which his children and grandchildren later continued. They translated Archimedes and Apollonius of Perga in this school, valuable physical theory and geometry texts. Because of his outstanding contributions, Thabit ibn Qurra's salary reached 500 dinars monthly (Young et al., 1990).

The Greco-Arabic Translation Movement's Contribution to Philosophy

The Greeks were famous for their refinements in Philosophy. That is why one of the greatest contributions of the Greco-Arabic Translation Movement to Arab civilization is the rapid progress in philosophy. The influx of Greek philosophy then encouraged the birth of Islamic philosophy. Hence, Islamic philosophy is strongly influenced by Greek, Persian, and Indian philosophy (Ramadhani, 2020).

The core studies of Islamic philosophy are God, nature, and man. Islamic philosophy is divided into five primary sects: kalam science, peripateticism, illuminism, Sufism, and wisdom (Abror, 2020). Islamic philosophy has a philosophical tendency toward Aristotle's philosophy, as seen in the works of al-Farabi and Ibn Sina (Ramadhani, 2020).

Before being translated into Arabic, Greek philosophical works were first translated into an intermediary language, namely Syriac (Ramadhani, 2020). This translation project gave rise to famous Muslim philosophers such as al-Kindi, al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, al-Ghazali, and Ibn Rusyd (Abror, 2020). Hunayn ibn Ishaq also did many philosophical translations. Some of Hunayn's translations include Aristotle's *Hermeneutics*, Plato's *Republic*, and *Categories* (Ramadhani, 2020). The main language used in philosophy at this time was Arabic. Regardless, not all philosophers were Arabs. Many of them came from Persia and Central Asia. Christian and Jewish philosophers also wrote their philosophical works using Arabic (Adamson, 2016). During this period of translation, the Abbasid Muslim community used philosophy as an instrument to explain religious doctrines and theology (Ramadhani, 2020)

The main figures who supported the advancement of philosophy in Arab civilization during the Abbasid period were the Muslim caliphs and philosophers. In the early days of the Abbasid dynasty, Caliph al-Mahdi (775-785 M) ordered the translation of Greek philosophy books, especially the works of Aristotle, into Arabic. This translation was done by a patriarch named Timothy with the help of Abu Noah (Gutas, 1998). The books were studied and translated at Bayt al-Hikmah, which then served as the development center of philosophy.

The seventh caliph of the Abbasid Dynasty, al-Ma'mun (813-833 M), was a Mu'tazilah. Mu'tazilah is a sect of Islamic theology that embraces theological concepts due to a rational approach. It can be said that Mu'tazilah has provided theological legitimacy for developing the spirit of humanism, which then encouraged the progress of the scientific field of Arab society in the 10th century AD, including Islamic philosophy. Many Mu'tazilah beliefs are in line with the philosophical theories of Greek scholars. For example, when they talk about the existence of God, they use the term "al-Jauhar al-Fard" which means atomic theory. The use of this term supports Aristotle's theory of eternal things. During the reign of al-Ma'mun, Mu'tazilah schools flourished, and the influence of Greek philosophy continued to spread in the Islamic world. Some other Mu'tazilites who were philosophers or lived in a philosophical environment were al-Nazzam, Mu'ammār ibn 'Ibbad al-Sulami, and Abu Hashim al-Jubba'i (Ramadhani, 2020).

Along with the emergence of Islamic philosophy, Muslim philosophers were born. Adamson divides the development of Arabic Civilization philosophy chronologically into two main periods: before Ibn Sina and after Ibn Sina (Adamson, 2016).

In the period before Ibn Sina, most Muslim philosophers devoted their attention to translating Greek philosophical texts, especially the works of Aristotle. Two famous philosophers who practiced Islamic philosophy oriented towards Aristotelianism were al-Kindi and al-Farabi (Adamson, 2016). Abu Yusuf Ya'qub ibn Ishaq al-Kindi (801-873 M) was the first Muslim philosopher. He was instrumental in the philosophical advances of the dynasty (Oktaviyani, 2018). Al-Kindi hired prominent translators to translate Greek philosophy books. Some were a Christian translator named Eustathius, who translated most of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, and Ibn Na'imah al-Himsi who translated the *Theology of Aristotle* (Young et al., 1990). Meanwhile, al-Farabi (872 – 950 M) was a brilliant Muslim philosopher nicknamed 'al-Mu'allim al-Tsani or 'the Second Master' (after Aristotle's 'First Master of Philosophy'). Al-Farabi was one of the pioneers of the peripatetic school of Islamic philosophy. He tried to combine the ideas of Plato and Aristotle (Abror, 2020). Al-Farabi has an extraordinary ability to pour philosophical knowledge into his work in an organized manner so that his readers easily understand it. One of his works in philosophy is the book *Ihsha'ul Ulum* (Wiyono, 2016). Both philosophers were very familiar with the works of Aristotle and believe that these works are very important for Arab civilization.

Meanwhile, in the period after Ibn Sina, the philosophical world of Arab civilization changed completely. At the end of the 10th century, a Muslim philosopher was born who is known throughout the world even today. He is Ibn Sina, known as Avicenna by the West (980-1037 M). Ibn Sina was an intelligent scholar combining the theories of Aristotle, Neoplatonism, and Islamic theology into something new. One of his works in philosophy was a book titled *al-Syifa'*. His works contributed to every major area of philosophy, from logical, physical, to metaphysical.

Consequently, after the time of Ibn Sina, the science of philosophy in the Eastern world tended to be oriented towards Avicenna's philosophical theories rather than Aristotle's. As a result of his bright mind, in the 12th century, Ibn Sina was named one of the two most famous philosophers in the Iberian Peninsula (Andalusia) (Adamson, 2016).

In contrast to Ibn Sina, al-Ghazali (1058 – 1111 M) is a philosopher who considers the idea of peripatetic philosophy as something contrary to Islam. He criticized Ibn Sina's Neoplatonist works which al-Ghazali put into a book entitled *Tahafut al-Falasifah* (The Confusion of Philosophers). Al-Ghazali has abilities in the field of Sufism and mystical knowledge (Abror, 2020).

Meanwhile, Ibn Rushd (1126 – 1198 M), whom Westerners call Averroes, is an Andalusian philosopher who initiated the Averroism school of philosophy (Asra, Rifai, & Abd. Azis, 2020). He was given the nickname 'The Commentator' due to his work in philosophy which contains comments and notes on Aristotle's philosophical works. He contradicted the Neoplatonist theories of al-Farabi and Ibn Sina. According to him, philosophy and Islam are two things that are in line, so Muslims must study Islamic philosophy (Abror, 2020).

As a result of the strong Greek influence on Islamic philosophy, doubts arose regarding the boundaries between the teachings adopted from other cultures and the original teachings of Islam. Muslim philosophers of the time, including al-Kindi, defended their beliefs by explaining the connection between Greek philosophy and Islamic teachings. They claimed that Near East inspired Greek philosophical knowledge thought. Al-Farabi even mentioned that philosophy had existed since ancient times in Iraq, then the Egyptians learned it, and the Greeks adopted it. Greek philosophy then developed and spread back to Syria. Syrian philosophical texts were then translated into Arabic for Abbasid scholars to study (Ramadhani, 2020).

These philosophers emphasized that the Greeks derived their wisdom from the Prophets and nobles of the East. For instance, they explained that Empedocles learned from Luqman al-Hakim in Syria-Palestine. Thus, they argue that applying Greek philosophical knowledge to Islamic philosophy is not adopting something new but developing existing Islamic teachings (Ramadhani, 2020). Al-Kindi highlighted that philosophy and religion have the same goal even though the means of achievement are different. The philosophy at the time of al-Kindi and some time afterward tended to be oriented towards metaphysical issues. Even al-Kindi wrote a book, "*Fi al-Falsafah al-Ula*," which discussed this issue (Ramadhani, 2020).

From the above explanation, we can understand that the Greco-Arabic Translation Movement of the Abbasid era was the foundation of the birth of philosophy. This project made a huge contribution to this branch of science. Even now, Islamic philosophy is increasingly widespread in the world. The works of Muslim philosophers are now translated into English, French, German, Spanish, and Italian. The ideas of Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd are still one of the topics often discussed in international conferences (Arif, 2014).

CONCLUSION

The Greco-Arabic Translation Movement was motivated by the Arab conquest, the Abbasid revolution and Baghdad's demography, and the pre-Abbasid translation movement. The movement lasted from the 8th to the 10th century AD. Its epicenter was located in Baghdad, with its official institution being a library called Bayt al-Hikmah. This project was supported by the entire community of the Abbasid dynasty, ranging from caliphs, princes, military leaders, scientists, and civilians. In this project, Greek, Aramaic, Pahlavi, and Indian books were translated into Arabic. The translation transmission system adopted in the early days of The Greco-Arabic Translation Movement was Greco-Syriac-Arabic translation. Greek texts were first translated into Syriac as an intermediary language. They were then translated from Syriac into Arabic. On the contrary, the Greek works were directly translated into Arabic in the middle and late stages of the translation project. The Greco-Arabic Translation Movement was supported by several important figures, namely Caliph al-Mansur, Caliph Harun ar-Rashid, Caliph al-Ma'mun, Hunayn ibn Ishaq, Banu Musa brothers, and Thabit ibn Qurra. This movement was the foundation of the birth of philosophy, especially Islamic philosophy. Without this movement, Islamic philosophy might not have existed and developed in various parts of the world as it is today. The data presented, and the results obtained from this research can be useful for future research. The researchers recommend for future studies utilize this data to continue the discussion with a broader scope, such as comparing the development and achievements of Arab civilization with other civilizations existing in the 8th to the 10th century AD.

REFERENCES

- Abror, R. H. (2020). The History and Contribution of Philosophy in Islamic Thought. *Buletin Al-Turas*, 26(2), 317-334. <https://doi.org/10.15408/bat.v26i2.15867>
- Adamson, P. (2016). *Philosophy in the Islamic World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Al-Atsir, I. (1978). *Al-kamil fi at-Tarikh*. Beirut: Dar al-Fikr.
- Al-Thabari, M. bin J. (1991). *Tarikh At-Tabari*. Beirut: Dar Al Kutub Al-Ilmiyah.
- Algeriani, A. A.-A., & Mohadi, M. (2017). The House of Wisdom (Bayt al-Hikmah) and Its Civilizational Impact on Islamic libraries: A Historical Perspective. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 8(5), 179-187. <https://doi.org/10.1515/mjss-2017-0036>
- Arif, S. (2014). Filsafat Islam antara Tradisi dan Kontroversi. *Tsaqafah*, 10(1), 1. <https://doi.org/10.21111/tsaqafah.v10i1.61>
- Asra, M., Rifai, M., & Abd. Azis, M. (2020). Institut Agama Islam Al Mawaddah Warrahmah Kolaka. *Jurnal Ushuluddin Adab Dan Dakwah*, 3(1), 49-61. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5076703>
- Azamat, K. (2021). Translation Process in the Arab World (XX-XXI Centuries). *Thematic Journal of Applied Sciences*, 5(1), 14-17. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5212883>
- Brock, S. (2004). Changing Fashions in Syriac Translation Technique: the Background to Syriac Translations under the Abbasids. *Journal of the Canadian Society for Syriac Studies*, 4.
- Daulay, Haidar Putra, D. (2020). Masa Keemasan Dinasti Umayyah dan Dinasti Abbasiyah. *Jurnal Kajian Islam Kontemporer (JURKAM)*, 1(2), 72-77.
- Dawami, M. I. (2008). Kontribusi Penerjemah Pada Zaman Keemasan Islam. *Adabiyat: Jurnal Bahasa Dan Sastra*, 7(1), 99. <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajbs.2008.07106>

- Faiq, S. (2018). Discourse in Translation. In *Discourse in Translation*. London: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315098791>
- Gutas, D. (1998). *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early 'Abbasid Society (2nd-4th 5th-10th c.)*. London: Routledge.
- Hasanah, U. (2022). Intellectual Development of Islam during the Abbasid Dynasty (750 – 861 M). *Jurnal El Tarikh*, 3(1), 1–11.
- Irfan, I. (2016). Peranan Baitul Hikmah dalam Menghantarkan Kejayaan Daulah Abbasiyah. *Jurnal As-Salam*, 1(2), 139–155.
- Ismaun. (2005). *Pengantar Belajar Sejarah Sebagai Ilmu dan Wahana Pendidikan*. Bandung: Historia Utama Press.
- Jaber, F. (2015). The Landscape of Translation Movement in the Arab World: from the 7th Century Until the Beginning of the 21st Century. *Arab World English Journal*, 6(4), 128–140. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2843933>
- Lawrence, D., & Wilkinson, T. J. (2017). The Northern and Western Borderlands of the Sasanian Empire: Contextualising the Roman/Byzantine and Sasanian Frontier. In E. W. Sauer (Ed.), *Sasanian Persia: Between Rome and the Steppes of Eurasia*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Mcdonald, N. (2018). A Polemical Introduction. *Pulp Fictions of Medieval England: Essays in Popular Romance*, 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.7765/9781526137593.00004>
- Mustofa, A. (2018). Masa Keemasan Pendidikan Islam (Studi Tentang Peran Khalifah Harun Al-Rasyid Dalam Pendidikan Islam). *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 4(2), 107–132.
- Muttaqiin, Z. (2022). Sejarah Dinasti Abbasiyah: Telaah Pendidikan pada Masa Kejayaan. *Jurnal Al-Makrifat*, 7(1), 187–201.
- Newmark. (2001). *A Textbook of Translation*.
- Nunzairina. (2020). Dinasti Abbasiyah: Kemajuan Peradaban Islam, Pendidikan, dan Kebangkitan Kaum Intelektual. *JUSPI (Jurnal Sejarah Peradaban Islam)*, 3(2), 93. <https://doi.org/10.30829/juspi.v3i2.4382>
- Oktaviyani, V. E. (2018). Ilmu Pengetahuan dan Teknologi Dinasti Abbasiyah Periode Pertama. *JUSPI (Jurnal Sejarah Peradaban Islam)*, 2(2), 47. <https://doi.org/10.30829/j.v2i2.1734>
- Ramadhani, Y. (2020). The Beginning of Islamic Philosophy. *Ilmu Ushuluddin*, 19(2), 19–31.
- Riyadi, H. F. (2014). Perpustakaan Bayt Al-Hikmah, "The Golden Age of Islam". *Jurnal Perpustakaan Libraria*, 2(1), 94–117.
- Shboul, A. M. H., & Walmsley, A. (1998). Identity and Self-image in Syria-Palestine in the Transition from Byzantine to Early Islamic rule; Arab Christians and Muslims. *Mediterranean Archaeology*, 11, 255–287.
- Silalahi, R. (2005). Penerjemahan dan Penyebaran Nilai-nilai Budaya: dalam Konteks Sejarah. *BAHAS*, (59).
- Treadgold, W. (1997). *A History of the Byzantine State and Society*. California: Stanford University Press.
- Watt, J. W. (2004). Syriac Translators and Greek Philosophy in Early Abbasid Iraq. *Journal of the Canadian Society for Syriac Studies*, 4.
- Wiyono, M. (2016). Pemikiran Filsafat Al-Farabi. *Substantia: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin*, 18(1), 67–80.
- Young, M. J. L., Latham, J. D., & Serjeant, R. B. (1990). *Religion, Learning and Science in the Abbasid Period*. New York: Cambridge University Press.