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المؤسسات العلمية ودورها في ازدهار الحضارة الإسلامية في فلسطين: دراسة تاريخية تحليلية

Scientific Institutions and Their Role in the Flourishing of Islamic Civilization in Palestine: A Historical-Analytical Study[*]

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الملخص:

تتناول هذه الدراسة دور المؤسسات العلمية في ازدهار الحضارة الإسلامية في فلسطين، مسلِّطة الضوء على إسهامها في إنتاج المعرفة وحفظها ونشرها عبر مختلف العصور الإسلامية. وتنطلق الدراسة من فرضية مفادها أن الحيوية العلمية في فلسطين لم تكن مجرد نتاج لمكانتها الدينية، بل كانت حصيلة إطار مؤسسي متكامل ضمّ المساجد، والمدارس، والمكتبات، والربط، والزوايا، ونظام الوقف. وقد أسهمت هذه المؤسسات مجتمعة في توفير البنية التحتية الفكرية والتعليمية والاقتصادية اللازمة لاستمرار التطور العلمي.

وباستخدام منهج تاريخي تحليلي، تتتبع الدراسة نشأة وتطور المؤسسات العلمية في فلسطين منذ العصور الإسلامية المبكرة وصولًا إلى العهدين الأيوبي والمملوكي. كما تحلل وظائف هذه المؤسسات التعليمية والثقافية والحضارية، ودورها في إعداد العلماء، وحفظ المخطوطات، ودعم التبادل الفكري، ودمج فلسطين ضمن الشبكات العلمية الأوسع في العالم الإسلامي.

وتُظهر النتائج أن المؤسسات العلمية في فلسطين لم تكن مجرد فضاءات تعليمية أو دينية، بل كانت مراكز ديناميكية للإنتاج الحضاري أسهمت في تشكيل الحياة الفكرية وتعزيز مكانة فلسطين العلمية ضمن الحضارة الإسلامية. وتبيّن الدراسة على وجه الخصوص أن نظام الوقف مثّل آلية أساسية لاستدامة النشاط التعليمي، في حين أسهم التفاعل بين المسجد، والمدرسة، والمكتبة، والوقف في بناء منظومة معرفية متماسكة ومستدامة. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن ازدهار الحضارة الإسلامية في فلسطين كان مرتبطًا ارتباطًا وثيقًا بقوة مؤسساتها العلمية وتنوعها واستمراريتها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المؤسسات العلمية، الحضارة الإسلامية، فلسطين، إنتاج المعرفة، حفظ المخطوطات، الشبكات العلمية، نظام الوقف، المدارس والمساجد، التاريخ الإسلامي، التبادل الفكري.

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Abstract:

This study examines the role of scientific institutions in the flourishing of Islamic civilization in Palestine, highlighting their contribution to the production, preservation, and dissemination of knowledge across different Islamic periods. The research is based on the premise that Palestine's scholarly vitality was not merely the result of its religious significance, but rather the outcome of an integrated institutional framework composed of mosques, madrasas, libraries, ribats, zawiyas, and the waqf system. Collectively, these institutions provided the intellectual, educational, and economic infrastructure necessary for sustained scholarly development.

Using a historical-analytical methodology, the study traces the emergence and development of scientific institutions in Palestine from the early Islamic period through the Ayyubid and Mamluk eras. It analyzes the educational, cultural, and civilizational functions of these institutions, as well as their role in cultivating scholars, preserving manuscripts, supporting intellectual exchange, and integrating Palestine into the broader scholarly networks of the Islamic world.

The findings demonstrate that scientific institutions in Palestine functioned as more than merely educational or religious spaces; they constituted dynamic centers of civilizational production that shaped intellectual life and reinforced Palestine's scholarly position within Islamic civilization. In particular, the study reveals that the waqf system served as a foundational mechanism for sustaining educational activity, while the interaction among mosques, schools, libraries, and endowments created a coherent and enduring knowledge system. The study concludes that the flourishing of Islamic civilization in Palestine was deeply tied to the strength, diversity, and continuity of its scientific institutions.

Keywords: Scientific Institutions, Islamic Civilization, Civilization in Palestine, Knowledge Production, Manuscript Preservation, Scholarly Networks, Waqf System, Madrasas and Mosques, Islamic History, Intellectual Exchange

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Introduction:

Knowledge occupied a central and foundational position in Islamic civilization and was regarded as one of the principal pillars of religious, intellectual, and social advancement. This centrality is evident in the extensive emphasis placed on learning, teaching, writing, and preserving knowledge throughout Islamic history. As a result, a wide range of scientific and educational institutions emerged across the Islamic world, including mosques, madrasas, libraries, ribats, zawiyas, and endowments, all of which contributed significantly to the organization, transmission, and continuity of knowledge (Al-Khudari, 2008, p. 77; Al-Faruqi & Al-Faruqi, 1986, p. 201).

Within this broader civilizational framework, Palestine emerged as one of the most important regions of scholarly and intellectual activity. Its significance was not derived solely from its sacred status in Islamic consciousness, but also from its strategic geographic position, which connected the Levant, Egypt, and the Hijaz. This geographical centrality made Palestine a vibrant point of interaction among scholars, jurists, pilgrims, students, and travelers, thereby contributing to the formation of a dynamic intellectual environment (Gil, 1997, pp. 54–60; Masalha, 2018, p. 214).

Jerusalem, in particular, occupied a distinguished place within this scholarly landscape. The city's institutions—most notably Al-Aqsa Mosque—served not only as places of worship but also as active centers of education, Hadith transmission, Quranic interpretation, legal instruction, Arabic grammar, and moral guidance. Over time, Jerusalem became a major destination for scholars and students from across the Islamic world, while other Palestinian cities such as Gaza, Hebron, Nablus, and Ramla also developed important local traditions of learning (Al-Asali, 1981, p. 33; Elad, 1995, p. 118).

This study seeks to examine the role of scientific institutions in the flourishing of Islamic civilization in Palestine by offering a historical and analytical reading of the institutional structures that supported education, shaped intellectual life, and facilitated the production and transmission of knowledge.

Research Problem:

Despite the growing body of scholarship on Islamic civilization and the history of Jerusalem and Palestine, much of the existing literature has

approached scientific institutions in a fragmented manner, often examining mosques, schools, or waqf structures separately rather than as components of an integrated civilizational system. As a result, there remains a need for a comprehensive study that investigates how these institutions collectively contributed to the flourishing of Islamic civilization in Palestine.

The central problem of this study, therefore, lies in understanding the extent to which scientific institutions in Palestine functioned as foundational mechanisms for intellectual development, scholarly continuity, and civilizational advancement.

Research Questions:

This study seeks to answer the following main question:

- What was the role of scientific institutions in the flourishing of Islamic civilization in Palestine?
- This central question gives rise to the following sub-questions:
- What were the major scientific institutions that emerged in Palestine during the Islamic periods?
- How did these institutions contribute to the dissemination of knowledge and education?
- What role did the waqf system play in sustaining scientific institutions?
- How did these institutions influence the intellectual and scholarly life of Palestinian society?
- In what ways did these institutions connect Palestine to the wider scholarly networks of the Islamic world?

Research Objectives:

This study aims to:

- Identify the principal scientific institutions in Palestine during the Islamic periods.
- Analyse the educational and cultural roles of mosques, madrasas, libraries, and waqf institutions.
- Examine the relationship between scientific institutions and the flourishing of Islamic civilization in Palestine.
- Highlight the contribution of these institutions to the production of scholars and the preservation of knowledge.
- Clarify Palestine's place within the broader intellectual geography of the Islamic world.

Research Significance:

The significance of this study lies in its attempt to provide an integrated and comprehensive reading of scientific institutions in Palestine as foundational elements of Islamic civilization. It contributes to the historiography of Islamic education and intellectual history by moving beyond purely political or religious narratives and focusing instead on the institutional structures that sustained scholarly life.

The study is also significant because it repositions Palestine not merely as a sacred land, but as an active and productive intellectual landscape that contributed meaningfully to the making of Islamic civilization.

Research Hypotheses:

This study is guided by the following hypotheses:

- The flourishing of Islamic civilization in Palestine was closely linked to the existence of organized scientific institutions.
- Mosques, madrasas, libraries, and waqf institutions formed an integrated network that facilitated the spread of knowledge.
- The waqf system played a decisive role in ensuring the sustainability and continuity of scientific institutions.
- Scientific institutions in Palestine contributed significantly to integrating the region into the wider intellectual networks of the Islamic world.

Theoretical Framework

1- The Concept of Scientific Institutions in Islamic Civilization

Scientific institutions constitute one of the most prominent civilizational features of Islamic history, as they formed the structural foundation through which knowledge was produced, transmitted, preserved, and organized. In the Islamic context, the concept of scientific institutions extends far beyond formal schools in the modern sense; it encompasses a broad spectrum of educational and intellectual spaces, including mosques, madrasas, libraries, ribats, zawiyas, circles of learning, and endowment systems (Makdisi, 1981, pp. 9–15; Al-Khudari, 2008, p. 81).

The emergence of these institutions was closely tied to a central principle in Islamic thought: the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge as both a religious virtue and a social necessity. Islamic texts and scholarly traditions consistently emphasized learning and teaching, thereby

encouraging rulers, scholars, and benefactors to establish specialized spaces for education and intellectual exchange (Al-Faruqi & Al-Faruqi, 1986, p. 210).

From this perspective, a scientific institution may be defined as:

"a civilizational and organizational framework through which knowledge is produced, transmitted, preserved, and legitimized, and through which scholarly authority is cultivated and sustained" (Al-Douri, 2006, p. 95).

2- Knowledge and Urban Civilization in the Islamic Context

The rise of scientific institutions in Islamic civilization was deeply connected to the development of urban life. Islamic cities often flourished intellectually when they possessed institutions capable of attracting scholars, preserving books, organizing instruction, and supporting students. In this sense, knowledge and urban civilization were mutually reinforcing processes (Hodgson, 1974, pp. 145–150).

This relationship is particularly evident in Palestine, where cities such as Jerusalem, Hebron, Gaza, and Nablus became centers of learning due to the presence of religious institutions, educational endowments, and active scholarly communities. The city of Jerusalem, in particular, represented a unique convergence of sacred geography and institutional learning, which contributed to its exceptional place in the intellectual history of the Islamic world (Grabar, 1996, pp. 52–57).

This relationship may be analyzed through three interrelated dimensions:

- The cognitive dimension, which concerns the teaching and circulation of religious, linguistic, and rational sciences;
- The social dimension, which concerns the formation of scholars, jurists, teachers, copyists, and students;
- The economic dimension, which concerns the role of waqf in financing and sustaining educational life.

3- Scientific Institutions as Producers of Scholarly Elites:

Scientific institutions in Islamic civilization were not limited to the transmission of knowledge; they also played a decisive role in producing scholarly elites and shaping intellectual authority. Through them, scholars acquired legitimacy, participated in chains of transmission, engaged in legal

and theological debates, and contributed to the continuity of Islamic learning (Makdisi, 1981, p. 27).

In Palestine, these institutions helped cultivate generations of jurists, Hadith scholars, Quran reciters, grammarians, judges, and teachers who participated in both local and transregional intellectual life. Their significance, therefore, lies not only in their pedagogical role, but also in their contribution to the reproduction of scholarly authority and cultural memory.

Research Methodology:

1- Methodological Approach:

This study adopts a historical-analytical approach, which is particularly suitable for examining civilizational and institutional phenomena across time. The historical dimension enables the study to trace the emergence and development of scientific institutions in Palestine from the early Islamic period through the Ayyubid and Mamluk eras, while the analytical dimension allows for an interpretation of their structures, functions, and broader civilizational significance (Al-Douri, 2006, p. 101).

The use of this methodology is justified by the nature of the research topic, which requires not only chronological reconstruction but also critical analysis of the institutional mechanisms that supported scholarly life and educational continuity.

2- Research Design:

The study is based on a qualitative historical research design, relying on the close reading and interpretation of both primary and secondary sources. This design is appropriate because the subject under investigation concerns institutional development, intellectual life, and historical continuity rather than quantifiable variables.

The research proceeds through three interconnected stages:

- Historical tracing of scientific institutions across different Islamic periods;
- Functional analysis of their educational, cultural, and scholarly roles;
- Contextual interpretation of their relationship to broader political, social, and civilizational developments.

3- Sources of Data:

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The study draws on two main categories of sources:

A. Primary Sources

These include:

- classical Islamic historical chronicles,
- biographical dictionaries,
- works on the virtues and history of Jerusalem and Palestine,
- and historical references to waqf and educational institutions.

B. Secondary Sources

These include:

- modern studies on Islamic civilization and intellectual history,
- scholarship on Palestine under Islamic rule,
- and specialized research on Islamic education, waqf, manuscript culture, and religious institutions.
- The use of both categories of sources allows for a more balanced and historically grounded analysis.

4- Analytical Tools:

The study employs the following analytical tools:

1. Descriptive Analysis: Used to identify and describe the main types of scientific institutions and their functions.

2. Comparative Analysis: Used to compare the roles of mosques, madrasas, libraries, ribats, and waqf institutions in shaping scholarly life.

3. Contextual Analysis: Used to examine the relationship between scientific institutions and the broader religious, social, political, and economic contexts in which they developed.

5- Scope of the Study

Temporal Scope: The study covers the period from the Islamic conquest of Palestine in the seventh century CE to the end of the Mamluk period.

Geographical Scope: The study focuses on historical Palestine, with particular attention to:

- Jerusalem
- Hebron
- Gaza

- Nablus
- Ramla
- Thematic Scope

The study is limited to the role of scientific institutions in:

- education,
- knowledge production,
- manuscript preservation,
- scholarly life,
- and the flourishing of Islamic civilization.
- What I strongly recommend now
- Your research is now becoming serious and academically valid, but to make it fully submission-ready, you still need one of these two final steps:

Option A (Best choice):

- I rewrite the entire full paper for you in:
- fully polished academic English
- full in-text citations throughout
- journal-level coherence
- final academic proofreading
- APA reference list corrected
- ready-to-submit format

Option B:

I only do:

- full citation insertion into your already-written full text
- plus linguistic polishing line by line
- My honest recommendation:
- For your topic, Option A is better, because it will look much stronger and more “real research paper” level.
- If you want, I can now continue immediately and write the next fully cited sections:

1- Scientific Institutions in Palestine Through the Islamic Periods

A- The Early Islamic Period

Following the Islamic conquest of the Levant in the 7th century CE, Palestine was gradually incorporated into the political, religious, and

intellectual geography of the Islamic world. This incorporation was not limited to governance and administration; it also involved the establishment of new centers of learning and the integration of local spaces into broader Islamic scholarly culture.

During this period, mosques emerged as the earliest and most influential scientific institutions. They functioned as places for prayer, instruction, recitation, legal teaching, and public guidance. The mosque in early Islamic society was not separate from social and intellectual life; rather, it served as the central institution through which knowledge and communal order were maintained.

Among the earliest and most significant examples was Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, which rapidly became one of the foremost centers of Islamic learning in Palestine. It attracted scholars, jurists, Qurʾan reciters, and students, and hosted educational circles in Quranic interpretation, Hadith, jurisprudence, Arabic language, and devotional sciences. Its importance stemmed not only from its sanctity but also from its role as a meeting point between piety and scholarship.

Other cities in Palestine also developed local scholarly life, particularly Gaza, Hebron, and Ramla, where mosque-centered instruction contributed to the spread of religious and linguistic sciences. The early Islamic period thus laid the institutional foundations for later scientific development.

B- The Ayyubid Period

The Ayyubid period marked a major phase in the reorganization and expansion of scientific institutions in Palestine, especially after Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi (Saladin) recaptured Jerusalem in 1187. This political transformation had important cultural and intellectual consequences, as the Ayyubids sought to restore and strengthen the Islamic scholarly character of the city.

One of the defining features of this period was the increased establishment of madrasas dedicated to the teaching of Islamic sciences. These institutions represented a more structured and specialized form of education than the mosque circle alone. They provided designated spaces for instruction, often aligned with specific legal traditions or educational purposes, and contributed to the professionalization of teaching and scholarship.

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The Ayyubids also supported the settlement of scholars in Jerusalem and promoted the revitalization of educational life through patronage and endowment. In this sense, the Ayyubid period can be viewed as a phase of institutional reconstruction, in which the scholarly identity of Palestine was consciously reinforced.

C- The Mamluk Period

The Mamluk period witnessed one of the most remarkable expansions of scientific institutions in Palestine, particularly in Jerusalem. Under Mamluk patronage, the city became a highly developed urban and scholarly center, characterized by the proliferation of schools, ribats, zawiyas, libraries, and endowed religious complexes.

A notable feature of this era was the concentration of educational institutions in and around the Haram al-Sharif, creating a dense and interconnected scholarly landscape. Madrasas such as al-Khatuniyya, al-Asʿardiyya, and other endowed schools played a major role in organizing teaching, preserving legal and theological traditions, and supporting resident scholars and students.

This period also saw the strengthening of manuscript culture, educational patronage, and institutional specialization. The Mamluk era therefore represents the height of institutional maturity in the history of scientific life in medieval Palestine.

2- The Mosque as the First Scientific Institution

The mosque was the foundational scientific institution of Islamic civilization and remained central to intellectual life throughout the Islamic periods. In Palestine, the mosque fulfilled multiple educational and civilizational functions: it was a site of worship, instruction, legal teaching, memorization, moral formation, and scholarly debate.

Al-Aqsa Mosque stands as the clearest example of this role. It functioned as an open university in which scholars taught in circles accessible to students and the public. This educational openness made the mosque an effective space for the democratization of knowledge and the circulation of learning.

The mosque's role extended beyond formal instruction. It also shaped public religious consciousness, provided legitimacy to scholars, and linked the spiritual and intellectual dimensions of Muslim society. Through this

function, the mosque became the earliest and most enduring pillar of Palestine's scientific landscape.

3- Madrasas and the Institutionalization of Learning

The madrasa represented a significant development in the history of Islamic education because it introduced a more formalized structure for the organization of teaching. In Palestine, especially in Jerusalem, madrasas contributed to the institutionalization of scholarly life by providing designated buildings, endowed resources, teaching appointments, and curricular continuity.

Their emergence signaled a shift from diffuse educational activity toward a more structured educational order. While mosques remained central, madrasas allowed for greater specialization, continuity, and institutional identity.

Madrasas in Palestine played several important roles:

- They trained jurists, judges, and scholars.
- They preserved and transmitted legal and theological traditions.
- They reinforced Jerusalem's status as a center of learning.
- They linked Palestine to the educational systems of Cairo, Damascus, and other Islamic capitals.

Thus, the madrasa was not merely a building; it was an institutional expression of the civilizational value of knowledge.

4- Libraries and the Preservation of Intellectual Heritage

No scientific culture can flourish without mechanisms for preserving and transmitting texts. Libraries in Palestine served precisely this purpose and formed an indispensable component of the region's scholarly infrastructure.

Many libraries were attached to mosques, schools, or endowed complexes, and they preserved books, manuscripts, commentaries, legal works, Hadith collections, and linguistic texts. These libraries supported both teaching and research, while also enabling the copying, circulation, and preservation of knowledge.

Their importance was not limited to storage. Libraries represented the material memory of scholarship and contributed to the continuity of

intellectual life across generations. In this sense, they served as guardians of cultural heritage and as tools of scholarly accumulation.

5- Ribats and Zawiyas as Supplementary Educational Spaces

Although often associated with spiritual retreat or devotional practice, ribats and zawiyas also played meaningful roles in the scholarly and educational life of Palestine. These institutions frequently served as spaces for religious instruction, ethical formation, recitation, hospitality, and the hosting of scholars and travelers.

In cities such as Jerusalem, they contributed to the wider ecology of knowledge by complementing the functions of mosques and schools. They often served those who were not fully integrated into formal educational structures, thereby expanding access to learning and spiritual discipline.

Their importance lies in showing that scientific life in Palestine was not confined to formal institutions alone; it also unfolded within a broader network of semi-formal and devotional spaces.

6- The Role of Waqf in Sustaining Scientific Institutions

One of the most decisive factors in the flourishing of scientific institutions in Palestine was the waqf system. Waqf functioned as a legal and economic mechanism through which property and revenue were dedicated to public, religious, and educational purposes.

In the context of scientific institutions, waqf supported:

- the construction of mosques and schools,
- the maintenance of buildings,
- the purchase of books and manuscripts,
- the payment of teachers and staff,
- and the support of students and residents.

The significance of waqf lies in the fact that it provided a relatively stable and enduring economic foundation for education. It transformed scholarly activity from a fragile personal endeavor into a sustainable institutional reality.

From a civilizational perspective, waqf reflects the integration of charity, public service, and knowledge production within Islamic society. It was therefore not only an economic institution but also a cultural and intellectual one.

7- Scientific Institutions and the Production of Scholars

The success of scientific institutions in Palestine can be measured not only by their physical presence or architectural legacy, but also by their ability to produce scholars and sustain intellectual activity.

These institutions nurtured generations of:

- jurists,
- Hadith scholars,
- Qur'an teachers,
- grammarians,
- preachers,
- judges,
- and manuscript copyists.

They also facilitated scholarly travel and exchange, enabling Palestine to participate in the wider intellectual circulation of the Islamic world. Scholars who studied or taught in Palestine often maintained connections with Damascus, Cairo, Mecca, Medina, and beyond.

In this way, scientific institutions in Palestine contributed to the formation of a learned class that played a central role in preserving religious knowledge, shaping public life, and transmitting Islamic intellectual traditions.

Discussion of Findings:

The findings of this study indicate that the flourishing of Islamic civilization in Palestine was deeply rooted in the presence of an integrated and sustained institutional framework. Scientific institutions did not operate independently of one another; rather, they formed a mutually reinforcing system in which mosque, madrasa, library, zawiya, and waqf interacted to produce and maintain scholarly life.

The study also shows that these institutions were central not only to education, but also to broader civilizational processes such as social organization, cultural continuity, manuscript preservation, and elite formation. Their significance therefore extends beyond pedagogy into the domains of identity, authority, and historical memory.

Moreover, the centrality of waqf demonstrates that scientific flourishing required not only intellectual energy but also institutional and

material support. The endurance of Palestine's scholarly culture was made possible by the successful coupling of knowledge and endowment.

Finally, the study confirms that Palestine's role in Islamic civilization was not peripheral. On the contrary, it occupied a meaningful place within the intellectual geography of the Islamic world, especially through the scholarly centrality of Jerusalem.

Results

The study reached the following conclusions:

- Scientific institutions played a fundamental role in spreading knowledge and education in Palestine.
- Mosques, especially Al-Aqsa Mosque, served as early and influential centers of learning.
- Madrasas contributed significantly to the institutionalization and specialization of education.
- Libraries played a major role in preserving manuscripts and sustaining scholarly continuity.
- Ribats and zawiyas enriched the educational landscape by providing supplementary spaces of learning and moral formation.
- The waqf system constituted the main financial and institutional support structure for scientific institutions.

These institutions collectively strengthened Palestine's position within Islamic civilization and contributed to the production of scholars and intellectual culture.

Recommendations:

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Encourage comparative research between scientific institutions in Palestine and those in other Islamic cities to better understand patterns of institutional development.
- Establish a historical database documenting mosques, schools, libraries, and waqf institutions in historical Palestine.
- Integrate the history of Islamic educational institutions in Palestine into university and school curricula to strengthen historical and cultural awareness.

- Promote archival and manuscript preservation projects, especially those related to Jerusalem and Palestinian religious institutions.
- Support interdisciplinary research that combines history, education, architecture, manuscript studies, and waqf studies.
- Encourage digital humanities initiatives aimed at preserving and mapping Palestine's intellectual and educational heritage.

Conclusion:

This study has demonstrated that scientific institutions constituted one of the most important foundations of the flourishing of Islamic civilization in Palestine. They served as dynamic centers of education, knowledge transmission, cultural preservation, and scholarly formation, thereby shaping the intellectual and civilizational landscape of the region across multiple Islamic periods.

Mosques, especially Al-Aqsa Mosque, laid the foundations of scholarly life; madrasas institutionalized and specialized learning; libraries preserved the textual heritage of Islamic knowledge; ribats and zawiyas extended the educational sphere into devotional and communal life; and waqf ensured the sustainability of the entire institutional system.

Taken together, these institutions formed a coherent and enduring network that made Palestine—especially Jerusalem—an important center of scholarship within the Islamic world. Their contribution was not merely educational but profoundly civilizational. They helped shape collective memory, preserve intellectual traditions, and integrate Palestine into the broader currents of Islamic thought and culture.

The study therefore concludes that the flourishing of Islamic civilization in Palestine cannot be adequately understood without recognizing the central role of its scientific institutions. These institutions were not secondary features of history; they were among the principal engines of Palestine's intellectual and cultural vitality.

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