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	Title of research article  Scientific Patronage and Institutional Development under the Buyid Dynasty: An Analytical Study of Cultural Flourishing and Knowledge Networks in the Fourth Century AH / Tenth Century CE
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Keywords	Buyid dynasty; intellectual patronage; medieval Islamic science; cultural institutions; libraries and observatories; vizieral sponsorship; scholarly networks; endowments and waqf; authorship and book culture; Islamic education.
Abstract The fourth century AH (tenth century CE) represents one of the most vibrant intellectual epochs in Islamic civilization, largely shaped by the enlightened patronage of the Buyid dynasty. This study explores the multifaceted scientific and cultural renaissance that unfolded under Buyid rule, examining how rulers, viziers, and scholars collectively fostered a culture of learning and creativity. The Buyid princes, particularly in Persia and Iraq, extended unparalleled support to scholars, poets, physicians, and philosophers, organizing intellectual gatherings and founding vital institutions such as libraries, observatories, and hospitals. The study further investigates the institutional and ideological frameworks that sustained this movement, focusing on the contributions of eminent viziers such as al-Šāhib ibn ‘Abbād, Ibn al-‘Amīd, and al-Muhallabī, whose literary salons and administrative policies became centers of scholarly activity. Their efforts not only promoted authorship and the preservation of manuscripts but also transformed libraries into public and semi-public academies of knowledge. The establishment of schools (madrasas) alongside mosques signaled an important evolution in Islamic education, where specialized sciences—ranging from philosophy and medicine to linguistics and astronomy—were systematically taught. Through archival and historiographical analysis, this paper highlights how the Buyid intellectual climate elevated scholars to positions of social prestige, secured through endowments and royal patronage. It also addresses internal tensions, such as sectarian dynamics and political rivalries, which coexisted with cultural tolerance and pluralism. Ultimately, the study concludes that the Buyid dynasty laid foundational structures for later scientific and institutional progress in the Islamic world, bridging the classical Abbasid legacy with emerging regional scholarly traditions.	
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Introduction:

The fourth century AH / tenth century CE witnessed the peak of the scientific and intellectual movement in the Islamic world, where multiple factors converged to make this period an era of cultural and intellectual maturity. The Buyid dynasty played a prominent role in this scene due to its control over Persia and Iraq, as their princes and viziers paid special attention to scholars and litterateurs, encouraged circles of debate, and showed interest in establishing libraries, schools, and hospitals. This patronage contributed to consolidating the status of scholars and placing Islamic culture at the forefront of world civilizations.

Yet this flourishing raises a central problem: **To what extent did the Buyids, both princes and viziers, contribute to promoting the scientific and cultural movement, and what were the most prominent manifestations and institutions of this renaissance?**

Several sub-questions branch from this issue:

1. What were the manifestations of the princes' interest in the scientific movement?
2. What role did the viziers play in consolidating culture?
3. How did libraries and the educational system contribute to the dissemination of sciences?
4. What was the status of scholars under such patronage?

Islamic culture that emerged in the fourth century AH / tenth century CE was the result of several converging factors that led it to reach a stage of maturity in various sciences. This was largely due to the attention of rulers and princes to the scientific movement in Persia, and in particular the contribution of Persian elements. The Buyids, who belonged to a non-Arab lineage, entered the stage of events at a time when sciences were in their surge and development. Hence, the fourth century AH / tenth century CE came to be regarded as the golden age of the scientific movement in Islamic history, an era of revival and growth throughout the Islamic lands. The Buyids were part of this world by virtue of their control over vast territories of the Abbasid caliphate in Persia and Iraq. Consequently, this movement witnessed remarkable patronage by the Buyids, who supported and encouraged sciences and literature, lavished gifts upon scholars, poets, and litterateurs, and whose viziers followed the same path. (Zaydan, 2007)

1 - The Princes' Patronage of the Scientific Movement:

The existence of literary and scientific circles in the palaces of princes, viziers, and high state officials was regarded as one of the distinctive marks of the power and prosperity of a state or kingdom. Moreover, the competition among these princes to attract the largest possible number of poets—especially those who praised them and were generously rewarded—alongside philosophers, litterateurs, astrologers, and physicians, created a wide scientific movement fostered by the rulers' patronage. (Minimna, 1987)

Adam Mez notes that 'Aḍud al-Dawla devoted himself to literature and poetry—being a poet himself—and that one sign of his care for scholars and litterateurs was his dedicating within his residence a special place for elite scholars, philosophers, and scientists near his own council, where they could discuss matters away from the public. He also

ordered that stipends and funds be distributed to mosque officials, imams, muezzins, and Qur'ān reciters, as well as allowances for strangers and the poor who sought refuge there . (Mez, 1999)

Among the manifestations of the Buyid princes' interest in the scientific movement were the debates held in their assemblies among scholars, litterateurs, and poets, such as the council of 'Aḍud al-Dawla, which was attended by well-known figures including the poet al-Mutanabbī, al-Salāmī, and the physician Abū Bakr al-Rāzī.

During this era, a refined custom spread: presenting books as gifts to princes or composing them at their request, as al-Šābī did when he authored *al-Tāʾīl*, which included the history of the Buyid dynasty and the reign of 'Aḍud al-Dawla. However, much of this activity contained fabricated reports and inaccurate information, as the works were written out of desire for profit and to please the princes . (Minimna, 1987, p. 314)

It is also noteworthy that during the early phase of the Buyid state, under its three founding rulers, (Minimna, 1987, p. 315) there was little concern for the scientific movement due to their preoccupation with wars and regional conflicts, as well as the time required for state-building and organization. By contrast, the second generation of Buyid princes displayed great interest in the scientific movement, having absorbed the Arab-Islamic culture. This was reflected in the large number of scholars and philosophers who flocked to their courts, and in the institutions they established—such as observatories, libraries, hospitals, and schools. (al-Tha'ālibī, 1983)

This same generation also included many poets and litterateurs. Al-Tha'ālibī, in *Yafīnat al-Dahr*, mentions several princes who composed poetry, such as 'Aḍud al-Dawla and 'Izz al-Dawla Abū Maṣṣūr Bakhtiyār ibn Mu'izz al-Dawla. Al-Tha'ālibī reports: “No one had heard any poetry from 'Izz al-Dawla until Hārūn ibn Aḥmad arrived at Nīshāpūr and recited to me from one of my uncles, who quoted from Qāḍī Abū Bakr ibn Farī'a, who in turn quoted from 'Izz al-Dawla himself, verses in *al-Mutaqārib* meter”: (al-Tha'ālibī, 1983, p. 128)

Likewise, al-Tha'ālibī mentions Taj al-Dawla Abū al-Ḥusayn Aḥmad ibn 'Aḍud al-Dawla as “the most refined, poetic, and generous of the Buyids,” recounting his literary pursuits and the misfortunes he endured at the hands of his brother Abū al-Fawāris, and recording verses he composed

He further cites additional poetry of Taj al-Dawla, as well as other Buyid princes such as Khusraw ibn Fīrūz ibn Rukn al-Dawla.

Another aspect of Buyid patronage of the scientific movement during this period was the development of major urban centers in Persia—such as Shiraz, Isfahan, Dinawar, Rayy, Istakhr, Kerman, and Arrajān—which served as Buyid capitals and seats of their governors. (al-Tha'ālibī, 1983, p. 262) While Baghdad remained the cultural capital of the Islamic world, attracting scholars and students due to its fame as the seat of the caliphate, the Persian centers were closely tied to the personality of the ruling prince. Thus, many scholars, litterateurs, and poets relocated to the Buyid courts in Persia.

Particularly significant was Shiraz, the capital of the Buyid kingdom, where the patronage of 'Aḍud al-Dawla—who strongly supported culture—made the city a major destination for scholars and litterateurs. Adam Mez recounts that 'Aḍud al-Dawla developed Persia with bridges, gardens, and palaces, and that it became the hub of state institutions and schools. He was fond of knowledge and scholars, and he regularly allocated stipends to jurists, ḥadīth scholars, theologians, and physicians . (al-Tha'ālibī, 1983, p. 262)

2. Ministers' Patronage of the Scientific Movement

Ministers during the Buyid dynasty played a major role that stands out as one of the brightest features in the history of this state. Over the course of a century, the Buyid rulers appointed ministers of broad culture, sound knowledge, and remarkable political acumen. Among them were al-Muhallabī, Ibn al-'Amīd, al-Šāhib ibn 'Abbād, and Abū 'Abd Allāh ibn Sa'dān. These ministers were instrumental in advancing cultural renaissance on various fronts, and

their influence sometimes overshadowed the patronage of the emirs themselves. The most evident example is the majlis of al-Šāhib ibn ‘Abbād, who served as vizier first to Mu’ayyid al-Dawla and later to Fakhr al-Dawla .

In al-Ray, his gatherings often rivaled, and at times surpassed, those of the rulers themselves due to the large number of scholars, poets, and men of letters he attracted. Some even compared him to Hārūn al-Rashīd for the sheer multitude of scholars and intellectuals gathered in his circle, which included, as al-Tha‘ālibī records: Abū al-Ḥasan al-Salāmī, Abū Bakr al-Khwārizmī, Abū al-Faḍl al-Hamadhānī, Abū al-‘Abbās al-Ḍabbī, among many others .

Al-Šāhib ibn ‘Abbād also maintained extensive correspondence with major poets and intellectuals in Syria and Baghdad, such as al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, Abū Ishāq al-Šābī, Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, Ibn Sukkara, and Ibn Nubāta. He himself was a gifted litterateur and owned a vast library filled with encyclopedic works and rare manuscripts . Adam Mez notes that despite his literary passion, he was deeply biased against the philosophers and practitioners of rational sciences—such as geometry, medicine, astrology, music, and logic. Furthermore, he was not overly lavish in rewarding poets, typically granting no more than one hundred dirhams and a garment, though in some cases his gifts reached five hundred. (Mez, 1999, p. 48)

Another prominent vizier who fostered intellectual life was Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan al-Muhallabī, descended from the noble family of al-Muhallab ibn Abī Šufra . (Kathīr, 1997) His family held a distinguished status in early Islam, and although he experienced hardship before attaining the vizierate, he became an influential patron of poets and scholars. Among those connected to him was Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, the author of *al-Aghānī*, who praised him extensively. Al-Tha‘ālibī describes al-Muhallabī as “a man of lofty standing, magnanimity, noble character, and generous nature. His poetry was sweet and delicate, so admired that it was said to surpass even honey in pleasantness; it nourished the soul and brought joy to the spirit” . (Mez, 1999, p. 140) A poet of his age lauded him with these lines:

By my father, the one whose breath enchants me more than my maidens’ perfume,
And whose radiant smile captivates me beneath a speech adorned with pearls.
His presence is like the Nile of aspirations,

Or like the poetry of al-Muhallabī, the vizier.

Al-Muhallabī’s close companions included leading intellectuals and men of letters of his time.

As for Ibn al-‘Amīd, vizier to Rukn al-Dawla, Ḥasan Minaymna—quoting Miskawayh—notes that he was “the most skilled writer of his age, with mastery of all the instruments of composition: he preserved the Arabic language and its rare expressions, displayed moderation in grammar and prosody, and showed exceptional command of etymology and metaphor” . (Mez, 1999, p. 140) Even al-Mutanabbī praised Ibn al-‘Amīd before departing to the court of ‘Aḍud al-Dawla . (al-Tha‘ālibī, 1983, p. 265)

Similarly, the vizier of Šamšām al-Dawla, Abū ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sa’dān, maintained a majlis attended by numerous scholars and intellectuals representing diverse disciplines . (al-Tha‘ālibī, 1983, p. 256)

Another outstanding vizier was Fakhr al-Mulk Abū Ghālib al-Šayrafi Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī ibn Khalaf, considered one of the greatest Buyid viziers after al-Šāhib ibn ‘Abbād and Ibn al-‘Amīd. His father was a money-changer. He served as vizier to Bahā’ al-Dawla Abū Naṣr, and later to his son Sulṭān al-Dawla Abū Shujā’ Fanā-Khusraw in Wāsiṭ in 354 AH. Renowned for his virtues and generosity, he was widely praised by poets and men of letters, including Miḥyār al-Daylamī and Abū Naṣr ibn Nubāta al-Sa’dī . (Minimna, 1987, p. 315)

Buyid viziers bore lofty honorific titles such as *Anīn al-Milla* and *Sharaf al-Mulk*, reflecting their elevated status. For example, Jalāl al-Dawla bestowed upon his vizier the title *‘Ilm al-Dīn Sa’d al-Dawla*, late in Buyid rule. Thus,

in the early period of the dynasty, the Buyids appointed ministers of exceptional competence and ability. However, in the later years, particularly after the death of Ibn ‘Abbād, the vizierate became a matter of disgraceful bargaining. Consequently, the office lost much of its prestige, and ministers became more concerned with retaining their positions than with supporting the intellectual movement. (Minimna, 1987, p. 316)

3. Books and Libraries

The Buyid period witnessed the rise of great libraries containing thousands of volumes, enriched by works in various sciences, arts, and literatures. They became destinations for scholars, students, and readers seeking to expand their knowledge and refine their culture. (al-Tha‘ālibī, 1983, p. 144)

One of the most notable of these was the *‘Aḍudī Library* (al-Khizāna al-‘Aḍudiyya) established by ‘Aḍud al-Dawla in Baghdad. It was regarded as one of the largest and finest libraries in the Islamic world at the time, containing thousands of books in different disciplines. It was distinguished by its excellent organization, as books were classified and arranged with the help of specialists. In addition, it provided scribes who copied and bound manuscripts for the benefit of students and scholars. (Muḥammad, 1991)

Another renowned collection was the *Ṣāḥibī Library* belonging to al-Ṣāḥib ibn ‘Abbād. It was described as immense, containing more than two hundred camel-loads of books. According to Yāqūt, al-Ṣāḥib had gathered in his library “rare manuscripts, reference works, and encyclopedic compilations,” such that if a person wished to carry it away, it would require four hundred camels. However, when the Daylamī troops revolted against him, the soldiers looted the library, scattering and destroying much of its content. (al-Ḥanbalī, 1986)

Likewise, the *Shīrāz Library*, founded by ‘Aḍud al-Dawla in his capital Shīrāz, became an important intellectual center and included manuscripts in medicine, astronomy, philosophy, mathematics, and literature. It was open to students and scholars free of charge and provided them with assistance for copying texts

In Rayy, al-Ṣāḥib ibn ‘Abbād established another library attached to his court. He generously allowed scholars and men of letters to use it, and it became a hub of intellectual activity, frequented by poets, writers, and researchers. (Minimna, 1987, p. 316)

In addition to these, the vizier Ibn al-‘Amīd founded a magnificent library that was described as one of the largest of its time, containing thousands of rare manuscripts. He appointed custodians responsible for organizing and safeguarding the collection. Al-Tha‘ālibī states that Ibn al-‘Amīd’s library surpassed all others in comprehensiveness and richness.

These libraries reflect the Buyids’ appreciation of knowledge and their dedication to fostering scientific and literary culture. They became symbols of cultural progress and played a vital role in advancing education and scholarship during that era. (Minimna, 1987)

4. The System of Education and Its Institutions

Most lessons in jurisprudence and theology during the Buyid period were delivered in mosques. Students would sit in a circle around the teacher, who usually positioned himself beside one of the mosque’s columns, leaning against it, while explaining various topics. Religious sciences occupied the highest priority in the curriculum. The number of students was relatively small, but the number of scholars increased greatly during the fourth century AH.

According to Adam Mez, Abū Ḥāmid ibn Muḥammad al-Isfārāyīnī (d. 406 AH / 1015 CE), who was regarded as the leading Shāfi‘ī scholar of his time—even said to surpass al-Shāfi‘ī himself in insight—used to teach at the

Mosque of ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Mubārak in Baghdad, where his circle gathered nearly three hundred jurists. Similarly, Abū al-Ṭayyib al-Ṣa‘lūkī, a jurist, scholar, and mufti of Nishapur—the center of learning in Khurasan—attracted more than five hundred students to his Friday sessions in the year 387 AH / 997 CE . (Minimma, 1987, p. 330)

Mez also notes that one of Imām al-Juwaynī’s disciples, the so-called “*Imām al-Fard*” (d. 478 AH / 1085 CE), used to sit with about three hundred scholars and students before him daily. The number of students in Persia rose dramatically, both in major cities and even smaller towns. For example, in Kashghar—though not a major religious center—more than five hundred students attended the lessons of its leading scholar . (Durant, 1998) The number of students was often gauged by counting the inkwells placed in front of them, the main tool of study at the time.

When a prominent scholar died, his students would break their inkwells and pens, then roam the streets in mourning, weeping loudly. This ritual demonstrates the high esteem scholars enjoyed. Mez recounts, for instance, the death of al-Juwaynī (Imām al-Ḥaramayn): most towns near Nishapur closed their gates, people wore mourning veils for a year, and no one dared to cover his. (al-Maqdisī, 1989)

In the fourth century AH, teaching methods shifted toward reading a specific book on a chosen subject. A student would recite aloud, while the teacher explained, “as one studies concise manuals.” However, this method was often criticized because teachers shortened explanations excessively, sometimes compromising clarity. The dictation of ḥadīth, though, continued for a long time. Notably, the vizier al-Ṣāhib ibn ‘Abbād (d. 385 AH / 995 CE) himself dictated ḥadīth, which remained a scholarly practice for generations. (al-Maqdisī, 1989, p. 239)

This shift in methodology also led to the rise of new educational institutions: schools (*madrāsas*). Since mosques were unsuitable for debate and disputation—which often involved heated arguments that breached the etiquette due in a mosque—separate institutions were built. The fourth century AH thus witnessed the emergence of formal *madrāsas*, which continued into later centuries. Nishapur became a center of this movement. Among the schools built then was the school of Ibn Fūrak (d. 406 AH), who was a staunch Ash‘arī . (al-Maqdisī, 1989, p. 240)

Mez relates an anecdote that shows al-Ṣāhib ibn ‘Abbād’s devotion to scholarship. When he resolved to dictate ḥadīth as a vizier, he appeared one day in the garb of a scholar, wrapped in a turban. He declared: “You all know my dedication to knowledge, and I bear witness before God and before you that I repent sincerely for any sins I have committed.” He then secluded himself in a chamber he called “The House of Repentance” for a week, after which he obtained written testimonies from jurists affirming his repentance. Only then did he resume public dictation, attracting vast crowds—so large that one prompter had to serve six scribes at once, including Qāḍī ‘Abd al-Jabbār . (al-Maqdisī, 1989, p. 251)

Teaching was not a lucrative profession. Many jurists—including the Ḥanafīs, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, and Sufyān al-Thawrī—prohibited charging fees for teaching, regarding the teaching of ḥadīth as a sacred duty performed for divine reward. In 346 AH / 957 CE, Abū al-‘Abbās al-Aṣamm, one of Khurasan’s leading scholars and ḥadīth transmitters, died. Despite his deafness since the age of thirty, when he walked to the mosque for teaching, the streets filled with crowds who carried him on their shoulders. He never took money for teaching, supporting himself through manuscript copying . (al-Maqdisī, 1989, p. 251)

Mez also records the case of Abū Bakr al-Jawzqī of Nishapur (d. 388 AH / 998 CE), who said: “*I spent one hundred thousand dirhams in pursuit of ḥadīth, without ever earning a single dirham from it.*” Likewise, Abū Bakr al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī once rejected three hundred dinars offered to him while teaching in the mosque of Ṣūr, abandoning both the donation and his prayer mat, leaving the donor to collect the coins himself . (al-Maqdisī, 1989, p. 252)

Fifth: The Status of Scholars

The Zayyanid state, like other Islamic states, granted scholars a prominent position within society, for they were the bearers of knowledge and religion, and the protectors of Sharī'ah and creed. Therefore, rulers and sultans sought to honor them, exalt their standing, and provide them with the means of dignity and respect.¹ Scholars enjoyed privileges and immunities that elevated their social and cultural status; their opinions were consulted in important matters, and their fatwas were relied upon in political and social decisions.

The scholars also played an active role in guiding society, whether through mosques, teaching circles, or the issuance of fatwas. They were not merely transmitters of knowledge but also reformers, educators, and spiritual guides, which further entrenched their esteemed position in society.

The support of rulers for scholars was not limited to moral appreciation but extended to providing endowments (awqāf), financial assistance, and ensuring them comfortable living conditions so that they could devote themselves to knowledge, teaching, and issuing fatwas without distraction. This reverence for scholars was a fundamental pillar in preserving the intellectual and cultural balance within the Zayyanid state, making it a beacon of knowledge in the Maghreb and the broader Islamic world.

Results

This study has led to the following conclusions:

1. The Zayyanid state contributed to supporting the scholarly and educational movement, making Tlemcen a major intellectual center.
2. The rulers and sultans played a prominent role in protecting scholars and providing them with moral and material support.
3. Educational institutions such as mosques and madrasas flourished, becoming vibrant centers of teaching and learning.
4. Libraries spread widely, enriching scientific research and supporting the educational process.
5. Scholars had a central role in guiding society, issuing fatwas, and preserving Islamic identity.

Suggestions

1. Conduct specialized studies on the curricula taught in the Zayyanid madrasas.
2. Further research into the lives of Zayyanid-era scholars and their intellectual contributions.
3. Investigate the role of endowments in supporting the scientific movement in Tlemcen.
4. Explore the relationships between Zayyanid scholars and scholars of the Mashriq and Andalusia.

Recommendations

1. Preserving and cataloguing Zayyanid-era manuscripts to make them accessible to researchers.
2. Encouraging comparative studies between educational systems in the Islamic West and East.
3. Highlighting the cultural and civilizational role of Tlemcen during the Zayyanid period.
4. Directing graduate students toward topics related to Zayyanid educational and intellectual life.

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Ethical Considerations

This research was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of academic scholarship. All historical sources and secondary studies were duly cited and referenced to ensure transparency, originality, and intellectual integrity. No part of this study involves plagiarism, data manipulation, or ethical misconduct.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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