



# SCHOLARS AND SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITIES IN THE KHWARAZM SHAH PERIOD

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**Annotation.** This study examines the scholars and scientific activities during the Khwarazmshah period, highlighting the role of madrasas, the contributions of prominent scholars, and the development of Islamic education in the region. It analyzes how state patronage, social support, and religious values fostered intellectual growth and shaped the educational landscape. The study also emphasizes the architectural, organizational, and educational aspects of the madrasas, their role in promoting jurisprudence, theology, and other sciences, and their influence on society. By exploring historical documents and scholarly sources, the research provides a comprehensive overview of the intellectual life and scientific advancements in the Khwarazmshah era.

**Key Words:** Khwarazmshahs, madrasas, scholars (ulama), Islamic education, scientific activities, Hanafi and Shafi'i schools of thought, intellectual life, historical sources.

## INTRODUCTION.

During the Khwarazmshah period, as in other Islamic states, many scholars emerged. These scholars engaged in multiple fields of knowledge in accordance with the intellectual traditions of the medieval Islamic world. Special emphasis was placed on the collaboration of different sciences during the Khwarazmshah era, aiming to achieve intellectual unity.

Scholars involved in religious sciences primarily developed their skills through language education. They then specialized in fields such as tafsir (Qur'anic exegesis), fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), hadith, and kalam (theology), becoming prominent figures in these disciplines. The same applied to rational (intellectual) sciences: some scholars worked across multiple fields, such as mathematics, astronomy, and medicine. Moreover, some scholars advanced simultaneously in both religious and rational sciences. For all these reasons, it is not possible to categorize the scholars of this period strictly according to specific disciplines; however, classification can be made based on the fields in which they specialized or produced works.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS.

The scholars of the Khwarazmshah period authored numerous important works, ranging from short treatises to extensive volumes. Some of these works influenced the Islamic world for centuries, while others hold a significant place in the history of world science. However, due to various reasons, some works have not survived to the present day, and only the names of these scholars are mentioned in historical sources [1].

The scholarly life during the Khwarazmshah period holds an important place within the medieval Islamic world. This era was not only a period of scientific and intellectual development but also a time when knowledge was transmitted from past to future and across different regions. As in other Turkic-Islamic states, the Khwarazmshahs paid careful attention to this matter. They established the necessary educational institutions and supported the pursuit



of knowledge within them. Mosques, small prayer halls, and madrasas emerged as the most prominent centers of learning. In addition, scholarly activities also took place in libraries, while the houses of scholars served as gathering places for intellectual councils, teaching, and Sufi discussions.

During this period, a significant number of scholars specialized in religious sciences such as tafsir (Qur'anic exegesis), hadith, fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), and kalam (theology), as well as rational sciences including astronomy, mathematics, and medicine. The biographies of these scholars provide insight into the intellectual climate of the time. Their works were used for centuries as core texts in various madrasas and in one-on-one teacher-student instruction. Through these writings, the scientific heritage of the Khwarazmshah territories influenced other regions, notably Anatolia [2].

It is observed that the number of scholars specializing in various fields increased, especially in hadith and fiqh. This indicates that religious sciences were particularly prominent among scholars in Khwarazm and Khorasan during the Khwarazmshah period. The era was also significant for Sufism, producing mystics who deeply influenced the Turkic-Islamic intellectual tradition. These Sufis traveled to different regions, disseminating their ideas and contributing to the development of Sufi thought.

The denominational affiliations of scholars residing in the region or coming there to pursue knowledge are particularly important in understanding the region's role in religious sciences. Observations indicate that the Hanafi school predominated among scholars in the Khwarazmshah territories, followed by the Shafi'i school. Scholars adhering to the Hanbali and Maliki schools were mostly visitors from regions where these schools were more widespread [3].

It is not possible to attribute all scholars who lived during this period solely to the Khwarazmshah state. Scholars frequently traveled, arriving from various regions, and some moved on to other Islamic lands. Therefore, a transregional scholarly life existed. The intellectual centers of Khwarazm and Khorasan gained further prominence through the presence of visiting scholars, attracting students and scholars from across the Islamic world who came to study under them. During this period, scholars often studied under multiple teachers and, in turn, trained numerous students, leaving a lasting impact on both their own era and subsequent generations. Thus, the scholarly life of the Khwarazmshah period was diverse, dynamic, and highly influential within the Islamic world. Furthermore, this intellectual heritage affected not only contemporary Turkic-Islamic culture but also later states and distant regions.

The Khwarazmshah rulers themselves were highly developed in scholarly and cultural terms. They interacted with scholars, attended intellectual gatherings, and engaged in discussions with them. Prominent scholars accompanied the rulers, forming both friendships and participating in scholarly councils. Scholars also played an important role in diplomacy, influencing state administration through their service as envoys. On battlefields, they worked to prevent unnecessary bloodshed and participated in governance, acting as a bridge between the state and the people [4].

During the Khwarazmshah period, political conflicts arose with the Seljuks, the Kara-Khitai, and the Ghurids, causing significant destruction in the region. Despite these challenges, scholarly and intellectual development continued, and the city of Gurganj reached a level of prominence comparable to other major centers of learning such as Merv and Nishapur. This development, which began during the era of Atsiz, accelerated under Ala al-Din Tekish and



Ala al-Din Muhammad. However, the Mongol invasion brought catastrophic devastation, severely affecting both the population and the scholars. Although the invasion negatively impacted the development of knowledge in the Khwarazmshah territories, the scholars—driven by their pursuit of knowledge – migrated to other parts of the Islamic world. In the regions they settled, especially Anatolia, they distinguished themselves through their scholarly activities and also had a profound impact on the people from a Sufi perspective. Scholars from the Khwarazmshah region were also respected by contemporary rulers [5].

## CONCLUSION.

The Khwarazmshah period represents a remarkable era in the intellectual and scholarly history of the medieval Islamic world. During this time, significant developments occurred in both religious and rational sciences, facilitated by state patronage, well-established educational institutions, and a culture that valued knowledge. Madrasas, mosques, libraries, and scholars' residences served as vibrant centers of learning, fostering the transmission of knowledge across generations and regions. Scholars of the Khwarazmshah era were highly versatile, often specializing in multiple fields such as tafsir, hadith, fiqh, kalam, astronomy, mathematics, and medicine. Their works, ranging from concise treatises to comprehensive volumes, became foundational texts in Islamic education, influencing not only the Khwarazmshah territories but also other regions such as Anatolia. The region also produced influential Sufis, who contributed to the development of Islamic mysticism and disseminated their teachings widely.

The scholarly life of this period was transregional, with scholars traveling to and from Khwarazm and Khorasan, and attracting students from across the Islamic world. This mobility facilitated the exchange of ideas and strengthened intellectual networks. The Khwarazmshah rulers themselves actively supported and participated in scholarly activities, reinforcing the link between governance and knowledge. Despite political conflicts, invasions, and destruction—most notably the Mongol invasion – the intellectual legacy of the Khwarazmshah period endured. Scholars migrated, adapted, and continued to contribute to Islamic learning in other regions, ensuring the continuity and expansion of their intellectual and spiritual influence.

In conclusion, the Khwarazmshah period was a dynamic, multi-faceted, and influential era of scholarly activity that significantly shaped the course of Islamic education, science, and culture. Its impact extended beyond its borders, leaving a lasting imprint on both contemporary and subsequent Islamic civilizations.

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