

Aspects of Economics from the First Century to the End of the Umayyad Era (1-132 AH/621-750 AD)

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Abstract

This study is an interdisciplinary study that relies on historical sources to explore diverse economic information. This is a result of the recent developments in historical writing and the openness of its fields. We see the presence of issues of economic and social history in researchers' studies, which has had an impact on arriving at new and supportive results from traditional historical writing, which focused on political studies and their figures. Therefore, history books of all types and fields are a rich source for various studies in various fields of knowledge.

The study aims to shed light on aspects of the economy and its foundations in the state from the first century until the end of the Umayyad era (1-132 AH/621-750 AD). It also details economic organization, its foundations, and its role in preserving economic life and activity, making it a component of Arab-Islamic civilization.

Keywords: Economy, Umayyad era, first century, regulations, state.

Introduction

Studies related to economics are of great importance, as they help clarify many aspects of Islamic life, understand the means of production and the economy and its foundations, and explain the manifestations of economic and social stability witnessed by the Islamic state in general, as well as its variations from one state to another. Studying the topic of economics and its development in the Islamic state is an important topic in Islamic history, as it relates to identifying the roots of this economic system, studying its foundations, resources, and expenditures, and the consequences of all this on the course of life in the Islamic state and the development that has occurred over the ages. Hence, the issue of Islamic economics, the stability of its principles and foundations, and the emergence of its system with its various components are considered a manifestation of stability and a dignified life in the Islamic state. The economic stability witnessed by the Islamic state and the regularity of people's living conditions did not come from a vacuum. It is the result of the great efforts of the righteous sons of the Islamic nation and a long history replete with achievements. This economy derives its foundations and pillars from the Islamic religion, and then elements were added to it that were in line with the growing needs of society and the developments of life. All of this contributed to the emergence of the pillars of the economy in the Islamic state, based on a solid approach capable of confronting various life circumstances, making it unique among other economic principles and regulations.

From this perspective, the study was divided into an introduction that clarified the research's premise and broad outlines, followed by four chapters, as follows: Chapter One: The meaning of the economy and its linguistic and historical meaning. Chapter Two: Economic organization in the first century. Chapter Three: The resources and expenditures of the economy. Chapter Four: The impact of the economy on the course of life in the Islamic state.

Reasons for choosing the topic:

The motivations for choosing this topic can be summarized as follows: First, the importance of the economy and its role in the building and downfall of nations. Second, the economic development we are witnessing has a rich history from which we can learn and benefit from its lessons.

The importance of the research lies in the fact that the economic development witnessed by the Islamic State cannot be ignored, as it reflects the past of this economy, its beginnings, its positives and negatives. Rather, it is imperative that every individual go back in time and consider these beginnings, the intellectual and civilizational heritage they contain, and how they developed into what they are today.

Problem of the Research:

The following questions are the focus of this study:

- What does the term "economy" mean in language dictionaries?
- What are the most prominent features and characteristics of the economy from the

establishment of the state until the end of the Umayyad era?

- What are the resources and expenditures of the economy?

Objectives of the Research:

- Examine the salient aspects of the development of the economy in the state from the first century until the end of the Umayyad era.
- Define the meaning of economics and its relationship with Islamic law and history.
- Understand the foundations upon which the economy in Islam is built and what made it unique and enduring.
- Highlight the factors contributing to the development of the economy in the Islamic state

Methodology of the Research:

The research used a descriptive and analytical historical approach, which included collecting information from authentic sources, extrapolating it, and classifying it according to the research plan. Then, it was analyzed and critiqued, taking into account the interconnectedness of the information, the sequence of events, and linguistic agreements, to achieve the desired results.

Resources of the Research:

The research relied on authentic sources that have the merit of precedence and foundation of the subject of the study, such as the book "Mu'jam al-Buldan" by al-Baladhuri, the book "History of Baghdad" by al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, and the book "Al-Muqaddimah" by Ibn Khaldun, in addition to a number of secondary sources that support the subject of the research, such as the book "The Principles of Islamic Economics" by Rafiq Yunus al-Masri, the book by Nahed al-Qaisi: "Currency in the Arabian Gulf from the Beginning of Islam until the End of the Ottoman Era," and the book by Muhammad Diya' al-Din al-Rayyis entitled: "The Land Tax and the Financial Systems of the Islamic State".

Chapter One: The meaning of economics and its linguistic and historical meaning:

The root of the word "economy" is derived from "qasd" (meaning moderation between two extremes), and "qasd" (doing something). The meaning of "qasd" in something is the opposite of excess, and it is between extravagance and miserliness (Ibn Manzur, 1414 AH, 3/pp.353-354). Technically, "economy" refers to the economic principles and foundations that govern a country's economic activity in terms of its resources, expenditures, etc. (Mustafa et al., 1972 AD, 2p.738). It has been said that "economy" is "a rank between two ranks, and a station between two stations" (Ibn Abd al-Salam, 1991 AD, 2p.205). The first refers to negligence, and the second to excess and extravagance (Al-Masry, 2010, p. 13).

Economy is required in all matters in order to achieve the linguistic meaning of obtaining benefit without harm or corruption, as stated by Al-Jahiz in his saying: "You must be prudent and moderate,

neither laziness nor excess" (Al-Jahiz, 1406, p.267). If economy is not achieved, foolishness and mismanagement will occur. On the other hand, economics is considered one of the rational sciences, which are multiple, diverse and intertwined with each other, such as arithmetic, inheritance, astronomy, medicine, education... and others (Ibn Khaldun, 1425, pp. 171-172).

As for the word "economy" mentioned in historical sources, we note that most of them focus on mentioning one aspect of the economy, including the meaning of preserving money and not being extravagant with it. Evidence of this is, for example, the sermon of Amr ibn al-As in Fustat when he preached to the people and urged them to pay zakat, maintain kinship ties, and commanded them to be economical (Ibn Asakir, 1415, 46p.162).

It seems that the concept of economics did not stop at this meaning, as it was introduced into many meanings by the texts of Islamic law, as will be explained below.

As for the references to economics in the sources of Sharia and history, we note that the word "economics" was not mentioned explicitly in the sources of Sharia, nor even in the early historical sources. However, it was indirectly referred to through the abundant economic information it provided about its field, its foundations, principles, and branches. That is, it provided references to one of its aspects and through the directives it explicitly stated in the economic field, which paved the way for the entry of this science into Muslim countries and facilitated their knowledge of it before it became independent and its features developed.

The economy is mentioned in the texts of the Holy Quran with reference to its main pillar, which is money, as it is mentioned in many Quranic verses - both singular and plural - and the verses of the Holy Quran also include a call for people to earn money and seek lawful sustenance in various ways and means. Reference is made to preserving money by every possible means, and the expenditure of this money and the various financial transactions and methods are made clear.

As the texts of the Noble Hadith have clarified and explained much of what is stated in the Holy Qur'an regarding the economic aspect and added to it basic foundations and rules for the regulation of economic life in particular and human life in general (Al-Nawawi, 1430, p.97).

Hence, the foundations and rules upon which the economy was based were concentrated, and it became a system with integrated features, and the individual became obligated to follow and implement them in order to seek the pleasure of God and His Messenger, unlike the capitalist system, which is based on the wealth of the rich, and does not pay attention to the poor and the weak and reducing the gap between the two groups (Al-Masry, 2010, pp.45-46).

Chapter Two: Economic Organization in the First Century:

The Quranic verses urge people to earn, work, and seek a livelihood. They also clarify many of the rules and principles that govern the economy. The Prophetic Sunnah (Prophetic tradition) explains many Quranic verses and clarifies the benefits, rewards, and legal rules they contain. For example, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said: "The best of what a man eats is from what he earns, and his children are from his earnings" (An-Nasa'i, 1409, 3p.928). Consider how the principles of economic thought are embedded in the content of these verses and hadiths. We note that the aforementioned legal evidence confirms the outline of the economic principles that Muslims are required to follow, and demonstrates the impact of the Islamic economy on humanity in this worldly life and its connection to the afterlife.

The economic system in Islam focuses on achieving a decent standard of living for the individual and society on one level. Achieving the former guarantees the achievement of the latter through a balanced system. This is what distinguishes Islamic economics from Western economics (Khafaji, 1992, p.110). To achieve this lofty goal, Islam forbade usury, unjustly consuming people's wealth, and hoarding. Conversely, it encouraged social solidarity by imposing zakat, encouraging charity, and spending on the poor and needy (Khafaji, 1992, p.111). The various types of spending mentioned above are merely to ensure the happiness of all people, which in turn achieves the unity of the Islamic state.

Related to this axis is a reference to the most prominent rules of Islamic economics. Sharia has indicated several rules regulating this aspect, including the rule of taxation with guarantee (Al-Tirmidhi, 1437, 2p.414). This is an important economic rule, as it is linked to many aspects of life, and because it guarantees benefits and prevents harm to the owner of the wealth, regardless of its type. We can also consider what Islamic Sharia has stipulated regarding determining the shares of heirs and regulating the transfer of inheritance after a person's death in a fair manner, as part of the rules of economics. It aims to organize wealth and prevent its inflation and accumulation in a few hands.

Punishments were also imposed on those who violated the regulations established by Islamic law and encroached upon the property of others. For example, the hand of a thief who stole a quarter of a dinar or more would be cut off (Ibn Abi Khaythama, 1424, 2p.267). Sources also indicated warnings against unlawfully taking the sultan's money and gifts (Ibn Hibban, 1419, 3p.340).

As for the market system and its organization, which is considered one of the institutions of the economic system in the Islamic state, building markets is essential for people's lives in society, as it provides what meets their needs and nourishes their

lives. In the beginning, the market's layout was simple, consisting of an open space, devoid of buildings and not designated for a specific craft. Rather, whoever arrived first would sit there and then return home when finished (Al-Ali, 1986, p.127). Then, areas designated for buying and selling were allocated for it. An example of this is Khalid bin Abdullah Al-Qasri's organization of the markets of Kufa, where he made roofs built of brick and plaster during his governorship of Iraq (Al-Baladhuri, 1932, p.284). The market continued in this form until it developed into allocating each craftsman a special area according to their profession (Salman, 2005, 1p.73). We note that markets, in addition to their role as one of the components of the economy in the Islamic state, play a role as a social center where various types of people meet, such as merchants, sellers, buyers, and customers and friends who visit them to bargain or talk.

Examples of Arab markets that were famous in pre-Islamic times and continued to exist in Islam include the Habashah market and the Ukaz market (Ibn Manzur, 1414, 2/210; Al-Afghani, 1974, p.277). As for the Mirbad market in the city of Basra, its fame spread during the Umayyad era and it became a public market and a community for various people. Councils were held there and people went out to it every day (Al-Afghani, 1974, pp.407-408).

Regarding the regulation of market affairs, the Prophet's directives contain references to regulating market affairs and controlling their conditions, including combating corrupt transactions (Muslim, 1955, 3p.228). They also include setting prices and regulating weights and measures. This step, i.e. setting prices, is considered a forward-looking step through which unity and stability can be achieved among the various currencies circulating in the country's markets and controlling their weights.

The above indicates that the Islamic religion did not neglect to pay attention to money, due to its important impact on people's dealings with one another. We see that it was concerned with regulating it and determining its value so that there would be no way to tamper with it or cause chaos in its circulation.

Prioritizing all these rules was the monitoring of markets and the regulation of their work by establishing the Hisbah system, which originated in the first century and the establishment of the Islamic state in the capital, Yathrib (Al-Tatar, 2015, p.27). This system helped to regulate public order, monitor markets, and eliminate any problems that arose in them (Al-Naysaburi, 1990, 2p.10). The Hisbah system proved its worth during the Umayyad era (41-132 AH/661-750 AD) and was entrusted to competent employees to manage its affairs (Mawlawi, 1958, pp.177-181).

It is noteworthy that the state's resources and financial expenditures are arbitrary. Rather, the

Islamic state took care to have an organized financial system to follow. This was represented by its establishment of the Muslim treasury, where the Caliph monitors its affairs, both internally and externally, and disposes of it in a manner that serves the interests of the people (Ibn Abi Khaythama, 1424, 2p.392).

Section Three: Economic Resources and Expenditures:

We note the diversity of the state's financial resources, including zakat, jizya, 'ushur, and kharaj, among others. In parallel, I also point to the state's financial expenditures and their organization, to achieve equality and social justice, such as zakat expenditures, charity expenditures, and charitable giving (Kızılkaya, 2019, p. 9). The reader will also find in various sources countless examples of the various aspects of economic activity that people have engaged in throughout the ages, starting from the first century, when they practiced all forms of economic activity, such as sheep herding, farming, agriculture, industry, land and sea hunting, and engaging in various types of trade (Bukhari, 1426, 3p.244).

Indirectly, the sources revealed the nature of the goods and materials produced by society, from the first century until the end of the Umayyad era (1-132 AH/621-750 AD), such as oil, dates, corn, and honey (Ibn Abi Hatim, 1430, 1p.191).

In the same context, currency is closely linked to and influenced by state resources. However, we have not yet identified the first financial transactions and revenues, especially at the beginning of the Islamic state in Medina. This situation continued until the financial system was developed and its features became clear. The currencies in circulation during this period were those that existed before Islam, including Sassanian and Yemeni silver coins, and the Byzantine dinar (Al-Qaisi, 2004, p.133).

When the conquest of Iraq was completed during the Caliphate of Umar ibn al-Khattab in 23 AH/644 AD, Muslims discovered a number of Sassanian mints and benefited from them after adding Arabic touches (Al-Qaisi, 2011, pp.15-16). This trend continued until the Arabization of the bureaus that applied the Persian system into Arabic during the Umayyad era, under the direction of Caliph Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan in the year 74 AH/693 AD (Ibn Maskawayh, 2002, 2pp.386-387).

The table below was prepared by the researcher and shows the most important currencies in the country during the study period, along with some clarifications about their modern measurements.

Currency	Weight by modern standards	Weight in grams
Dinar - Dinars	In gold, a dinar is equal to ten dirhams, equivalent to four and a quarter grams of gold.	A mithqal equals 4.25 grams.
Dirham - Dirhams	In silver, it is called "wariq." A dirham is equal to seven-tenths of a dinar, equivalent to sixty fils, equivalent to approximately three grams of silver.	Equal to seven-tenths of a mithqal, which equals 2.975 grams.
Fils - Fulus	In copper, every sixty fils is equal to one dirham; and every (720) fils is equal to one dinar.	Equal to 1/72 of a grain, or 0.00082 grams.
Danq	It is an Islamic measure used for weights and measurements. A daniq is one-sixth of a dirham, plural dwaniq and dawaniq. The word is Persian, and a daniq is equivalent to the weight of eight medium-sized barley grains.	Equal to approximately 50 grams.
Ouqiyah	The ounce is one of the units of measurement used in ancient times. It is equivalent to forty dirhams.	Equal to approximately 28 grams.
Qirat	It is a standard for measuring the weight of gold and jewelry, as well as the mass of precious stones, diamonds, and pearls. In quantities: it is half a daniq. Every twenty carat is equal to a dinar.	Equal to 18 grams of gold, or 16 grams of silver.

The table above clearly demonstrates the diversity of currencies that circulated in the state from the first century until the Umayyad era. These currencies varied in value, with the dinar being the most valuable, the fils the least, and the silver dirham in between. All three currencies were known to Muslims and were widely used among them.

It is noteworthy that this interest in the field of economics in all its branches produced a group of

specialized books on various aspects of economics and financial systems after the Umayyad era, such as the Book of Taxation by Abu Yusuf Ya'qub ibn Ibrahim and the Book of Taxation by Yahya ibn Adam al-Qurashi (al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, 1417, 14p.246; al-Dhahabi, 1413, 14pp.431-433). Al-Qasim ibn Salam also compiled the Book of Funds, and there is the Book of Funds by Ibn Zanjawiyya, and another book by Qudamah ibn Ja'far on taxation

and the art of writing (al-Khazraji, 1416, p.312; al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, 1417, 3pp.148-149).

It is clear from the above that scholars have spared no effort in serving the field of economics, each according to his area of specialization and interests.

Chapter Four: The Impact of the Economy on Life in the Islamic State:

Through the directives of Sharia and state regulations, the economy has become one of the most important influences on the life of the individual and the Islamic society alike. The importance of knowing it extends beyond taking appropriate economic measures and policies in the event of crises and disasters (Al-Masry, 2010, p.25). Sharia directives have helped in addressing many of the economic problems that the Islamic state faced throughout history. For example, in the story of dividing the tax of Sawad in the lands of Iraq during the reign of the Rightly-Guided Caliph Omar ibn al-Khattab in the year (12 AH/633 AD), he was guided in this matter by the verses of the spoils of war, so Caliph Omar ibn al-Khattab, may God be pleased with him, divided the spoils transported from those lands among the fighters and did not divide the land among them (Ibn Hisham, 1955, 2pp.337-338).

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The sources also indirectly showed that the rulers of the state took preventive measures to prevent problems from occurring and to be able to solve them before they worsened if they occurred, through economic reform. The first steps of this were represented in civil society after the migration of the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, to it, through the brotherhood that was established between the immigrants and the Ansar in the year (1 AH/621 AD) without regard to the social, material or tribal status of anyone (Ibn Hisham, 1955, 1pp.504-507), and what resulted from that in terms of sharing money and overcoming the problem of disparity of wealth and the immigrants losing their money and property in exchange for their migration.

One of the most difficult things that people faced during the reign of the Rightly-Guided Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab, may God be pleased with him, was in the Year of Ashes in the first year (18 AH/639

AD), in which a severe famine occurred, the land became dry, food became scarce, and people became poor. Caliph Umar did not take alms from the people in this year, and he and his workers strove to supply the people with wheat, oil, flour, and other things from Egypt, the Levant, and various countries (Ibn Kathir, 1407, 44p.347).

The buying and selling operations were present in the sources. This is Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman buying a piece of land from the tax (Ibn Ma'in, 1979, 4p.416), while Musa ibn Talhah bought land from the land of al-Sawad (al-Uqayli, 1435, 1p.267).

We conclude from the above that the various actions and activities undertaken by the individual and the state to provide a livelihood and a decent life all have a historical background stemming from the spirit of Islamic law and are subject to the principle of order and discipline and avoiding excess and neglect (Al-Hadi, 2021, p.291). Money and material wealth are the rights of the individual and the state, and securing them is a legitimate right for both, without one of them overriding the interest of the other.

Conclusion:

The study concluded with several findings, as follows:

- The flexibility of the economy and its ability to adapt to developments in modern life.
- The goal of the economy since the first century has been based on protecting the interests of both the individual and society, without conflict between the two.
- Adherence to the pillars of Islamic economics is sufficient to regulate economic life.
- The study revealed a diversity of information related to economics and its diverse historical and linguistic sources.
- Studying the history of economics is crucial for understanding the economic development witnessed by countries and the reasons for their success in establishing a strong and stable state.

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