

The Measures of the Financial and agricultural Reformation during the 1st Era
The Measures of the Financial and agricultural Reformation during
the 1st Era of the Abbasid State

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Abstract :

This study aims to show that the early Abbasids were very interested to form a good economic. They focused on two main fields of economic ;agriculture and finance. They tried to be strict during dealing with the sources and the expences . They tried to rationalize their economic according to the available agricultural and financial sources, Al-anbari and Abu-youcuf...such as decreasing the taxes on the farmersand suggesting the system of Almuqasamah ...

Keywords :-finance.- reform.- abbasids.- ministers.- economic.-system.-taxes. – al-kharaj.

ملخص:

لقد قوي اهتمام الخلفاء العباسيين الأوائل بتكوين اقتصاد قوي متكامل. لذلك ركزوا على جانبين اقتصاديين هما الزراعة والمالية. فحاولوا تحديد الموارد، وترشيد النفقات. معتمدين على اقتراحات مشاهير الكتاب والوزراء، بمن فيهم ابن المقفع والعنبري وأبو يوسف وغيرهم...

الكلمات المفتاحية:المالية. الوزراء. الكتاب. إصلاح. اقتصاد. العباسيون. المقاسمة. نظام. الخراج. الضرائب.

The Abbasids started the operation of the economic reformation. They begun with the lands reclamation and digging the rivers, forming the farms. This agricultural domain based on feudalism of the death lands. So the scholars were interested in developing the economical and the financial system . they encouraged increasing the land surface, inorder to exploit it to get an integrated economy.

1/the financial policy of the early abbasid caliphs :

The benefit of any state requires to exist a good financial system. As a result of the abbasid revolution , the general abbasid life was affected. Thanks to the early Abbasid Calihis who tried to reform many economical and financial issues.

A/ The view of the early Abbasid Caliphs to the mony :

The early Abbasid Caliphate were very interested in saving and managing money. So the finance of the state was very specific and well organized.⁽¹⁾

The organization of those caliphs affected to organize many public achievements like schools and hotels in all over the state, eslecially in *Baghdad* , *Samarra* and *El_Mosul*.⁽²⁾

At the beginning of the Abbasid state , the first caliph_ *Abul abbas saffah* paid his full attention to care of the new caliphate. He excessed a lot of money in this purpose.As a result , he left only some simple things .

In the same way, *El-Mansur* the real founder of the abbasid state had a wide experience to manage money. His financial policy depended on saving money resources and expenses. He improved a strict control *Alkharaj*⁽³⁾ collectors. Then he ordered them to accept only trusted dirhams.⁽⁴⁾

He made tax collectors under a strict control, inorder not to oppress and reap people's money.⁽⁵⁾ He issued a decree to delay the harvest till he came and saw the corps of their lands.⁽⁶⁾He said showing his financial policy :«whoever his money is less , his men will be less . and whoever his men are less , his enemys will be sronger».⁽⁷⁾

whereas in the caliphate of his son *El-mahdi* .Who started to discover the secrets of his policy . and his economy was not only agricultural , but a reserve one also. He liked to make as his father 's economical policy.⁽⁸⁾ compared with his fother , *El-mahdi* was very

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generous . He almost spent what his father left (more than 6million dirhams) regardless what he collected in his reign.⁽⁹⁾

When The houses of money had been empty , the stirekeeper would have thrown the keys beneath the hands of the caliph, and said : «No meaning to money houses without money.»⁽¹⁰⁾

Al-anbari was one of the consultants if the caliph *El-mahdi*, consulting him to economize and keep money. In the time when *El-mansur* left after his death more than 960million dirhams.⁽¹¹⁾

For a reason or an other , the caliph *El-mahdi* dismissed Al-anbari of his ministry and appointed yakub ibn dowdwho applauded his passion in sparing moneyon his pleasures and lusts.⁽¹²⁾

Whereas , during the caliphate if *Haroun ar-rachid* who was full of good intentions. He tried more than once to make more understanding with his opponents.He used to go to pilgrimage and distributed a large amount of money on people of the two holly cities.⁽¹³⁾

In addition , *Haroun Ar-rachid* was very generous. He gave from his free money a great amount (1000 dirhams) and when went to pilgrimage , he took 100 scholars with him, and in the next he had been sent 300 men to pilgrimage .⁽¹⁴⁾

But the caliph *Ar-trachid* was blamed in his fianancial policy. That his minister of *Albaramika* took the money without him. Cosequently he couldn't find any even a little of money.⁽¹⁵⁾

B/the evaluation of the financial policy of the early Abbasids :

The gifts of the caliphs reached a high extent . Some of them had a good economical system , whereas some others were very generous to achieve general goals.⁽¹⁶⁾

The first caliph *Saffah* encouraged the to better their living conditions, and organizing the relation between the caliph and his people, that was the reason of economical renaissance and the social movement . the financial sources were increasing from time to time. The caliph *Abulabbas* was the least caliph in gathering money . But he acquired a great amount of money exploited in duilding the new state.

We observed that the early Abbasids had excessed great amount of money in order to establish the state on solid pillars.Whereas in the caliphate of of *El-mansur* , the money had increased more and more. So the historians blamed him on his severe financial policy, which was aimed to get a real economy. Eleminating the financial corruption that spread in the late *ummayade* era.

This severe policy meant that the caliph might know the places of expenditure to expend more money. And he might catche As it is said « he caught as if he never expended anything before ».unless he found the appropriate position to expend that.

The caliph *El-mahdi* tried to engage in his father 's economical system in saving money. He opened his reign with giving back grievances to their owners. That were detained by his father who wrote on each one the name of the owner.

He continued a lot of measures , where he expended a great amount of money. He achieved big plans worthy to mention ; He ordered when was in *El-madina* to be with 500men of his supporters as body-guards. We can understand that the father *El-mansur* was prepaeing his son to this matter. Inorder to open his rein with such honorable deeds. And really , this is what *El-mansur* planned for before .⁽¹⁷⁾

Whereas , in the caliphate of *El-hadi* , a new measure was done.Which was his segregation bewteen what was special income and what was general one to state treasury. The last one was compound of a lot of sources of lands and seized ummayad properties. In addition, Rent shops , houses , hotels and public baths...⁽¹⁸⁾

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In the caliphate of *Haroun ar-rachid* , the treasury of the state was overflowing with money. Obtained from taxes which reached 72million dinnars. Regardless, taxes on lands crops.⁽¹⁹⁾

During the reign of *Ar-rachid* , baghdad reached a high degree of civilization and urbanism. More over , the caliph Ar-rachid was blamed to release the hands of *El-baramika* acting as much as they pleased. Untill he become not concerned with everything . Really, they were acting in tyranny.⁽²⁰⁾

The minister of them could appoint workers and judges after simple reviw, and it was habitual to the assignee minister to collect taxes. So did the workers in the countries. They were confiscating the properties of the small owners and the employees.⁽²¹⁾

Thus , the early Abbasid caliphs became the richest kings during the middle ages. With those huge financial sources and immaginative wealth. They could make many civil and militray achievements.

2/ The aspects of the financial reformation :

From its beginnings , the Abbasid state insisted on holding a balance between its sources and expenses. So the early five caliphs were able to manage their financial policy. They aimed to save their sources and expend them in the right way.

A /Taking Al-kharaj(alfai) from its places fairly :

The most important financial source was *Al-kharaj* or alfai. They perservered in collecting it. Although , some excesses were emerged, caused great harms with *Al-kharaj'* people from the collectors. Sich as punisjment, taxes and seizure.

The early Abbasid caliphs were ready to save people's money from the injustice of workers. So *Ibn almukaff'a* suggested to put a law to organize collecting *Al-kharaj*. Inorder to prevent the collectors excesses .⁽²²⁾

The Abbasid caliphs tried to be sure of no injustice in collectting *Al-kharaj* . The judge *Abu youcuf* confirmed this meaning with his saying : «the justice with the oppressed people will be a reason to increase *Al-kharaj* and build the country. The pond with justice , while it is lost with the injustice ».⁽²³⁾ So did *El-mansur* before , he put the collectors of *Al-kharaj* under his own control, to prevent their injustice and stealing people's money .⁽²⁴⁾

In the commandment to his crown prince, El-mansur said : «be chaste of *Al-kharaj* , you'll never need to something else after what i would leave to you .».⁽²⁵⁾

One of the aspects of interest with *Al-kharaj* (sources and expenses) . the early Abbasids were aware of this important point from the beginnings of their caliphate. *El-mansur* confirmed that every region is worthy to manage its own *kharaj*. And he promised to apply this point.⁽²⁶⁾

At that time many members of the army in *Khurasan* were unpleased to send the surplace to the center(the capital) Because they thought that it was their right considering themselves as conquerors worthy , rather than others. They thought also that *Al-kharaj* of their region might be devided between them. And the rest returned to money house of the region .⁽²⁷⁾

It is noticed that some suggestions like *Al-anbari* 's ones and other scholars were taken from conchcsions of succussful deeds in the early beginnings of the islamic state.

B/ Taking and distribution to the obliged charity(Azzakat)

We found *Al-anbari* the minister of the caliph *El-mahdi* suggested that *Azzkat* might be taken and distributed fairly. He claimed to take it with no increase or decrease . *Al-anbari* confirmed in cosultation to take *Sadakat* from its places.⁽²⁸⁾

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During the caliphate of *Ar-rachid*, the judge *Abu youcef* thought that mentioned in the Quoranic verse were not existed. And the collectors used to have their part regularly.⁽²⁹⁾ *Abu youcef* advised *Ar-rachid* with the necessty of aking and giving charities fairly. He said : «Oh the prince of the believers, order the collectors to take and give the *Sadaka (zakat)* according to what was used in the prophet's traditions and the caliphs after Him. »⁽³⁰⁾

Abu youcef distinguished between *Al-kharaj* which was a right to all muslims. And the *Sadakat (zakat)* which is concerned with some special classes of people called « the expenditures » mentioned in the Quoranic verse.⁽³¹⁾

There was a council of *Sadakat (zakazat)* in the capital of the caliphate. So the same thing in the other islamic cities. There were some conditions might be existed in the boss of this council such ; knowledge with the rules of *Fiqh* concerning *zakazat*, with no injustice.⁽³²⁾

3 /Rationalizaion of expenses :

This policy means the use of the available sources to supply the needs of people. It aims to get most extent of luxury all people, and that requires full attention to expend money , in order not to have any empty treasury of the state, because of squandering, or to be full of tightening on people's revenues.

The real wealth of any state is measured by what is left in its treasury after all expenses. And not by the volume of income . So the state fall under the weakness.

The Abbasid state established a council specialized in review the caliphate expenses and needs. And the payments of the workers. And costs of buildings which established by the caliph order.

4 / The measures of the agricultural reformation :

The early Abbasids called to The equality and the reformation to prevent the corruption that spread in the late *Ummayad* era. They started trully to apply the policy of economical reformation in a good way, especially gathering and distrubuting *Al-kharaj*.

The caliph *El-mahdi* followed his faher with creating a lot of money to organize the economy. So did *Haroun Ar-rachid* when he asked his judge to solve many economical problems. He answered him in a book such an economical instiution to the state.

It is noticed that those caliphs were recieved many reports and messages . each one like a program , and suggesting the solution . *El-mansur* was recieved the message of the writer *Ibn almuqaff'a* , and *El-mahdi* was recieved the message of the minister *Al-anbari* , and *Haroun Ar-rachid* recieved the book of *Al-kharaj* from *Abu youcef*.

A /The system of Almuqasamah :

The early Abbasids were aware of the importance of the agriculture as a source of income of the state.⁽³³⁾

They discovered that many issues might be reformed. They tried early to reform some economical reformations. *El-mansur* was the first caliph who started these reformations . *Ibn almuqaff'a* suggested to get the taxes on lands according to *Almuqasamah* system instead of the system of the surface. So the tax became on the real product.⁽³⁴⁾

Historically , *El-mahdi* didn't started his new system of land taxes , untill he realized hat the previous system was not effective. Throughout the study made by the minister *Ibn yassar* about the circumstances of *Al-kharaj* people. And the unfairness which they were suffering from.

In addition, to the unstability of the prices . this study included many practical suggestions to improve the living conditons of people.⁽³⁵⁾

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That matter was was *Ibn almuqaff'a* pointed to before. Warning that the unstability of prices affected on *Al-kharaj*, and therefore , the reasury will be affected directly . The caliph *El-mansur* was interested in organizing *Diwan Al-kharaj* .⁽³⁶⁾ and the boss of this *Diwan*⁽³⁷⁾ was very reliable to manage everything about *Al-kharaj*. His opinion was more important than anyone in the caliphate .He was only submitted to the supervision of the caliph.

Ibn yassar suggested the system of *Almuqasamah* on *Ahl El-sawad* according to the means of irrigation. He suggested to devide the taxes on a half when the land is irrigated by rain. And on third when it is irrigated by effort and cost. But the palms and the trees remained on *Kharaj* of the surface.⁽³⁸⁾

Despite , it is noticed that *El-mahdi* didn't apply all the suggestions. He added ten percent over what was suggested. It became 60percent instead of 50 percent. Also he didn't apply the suggestion of his writer to rent rivers .

But he made conditions to the benefited from the river he digged- river of *Sila* - to devide on two fifths 50 years.⁽³⁹⁾ In the caliphate of *Ar-rachid* , the judge *Abu youcef* consulted the caliph *Ar-rachid* to apply the system of *Almuqasamah* .⁽⁴⁰⁾

It is obvious that the Abbasid state ordered the scholars to manage the new modification. These suggestions were added o the previous ones, to give us a clear view on the achievements in the Abbasid caliphate.⁽⁴¹⁾

B /Decreasing the taxes on the farmers :

The agriculture is not only the responsibility of the farmers . Even though, they are the direct responsables, but they must be helped and encouraged by the state. With both contributions ; material and moral. when the farmers didn't find a sufficient interest, they would leave and give their lands up totally.

In the first Abbasid era , the early Abbasids were interested in agriculture and farmers. They accepted many projects and schemas aiming to develop and reforme the agriculture . Some calighs insisted on giving details in the agricultural issues. As what did the caliph *Ar-rachid* with his judge *Abu yousuf* and his book «*AL-kharaj*».They started decreasing taxes on the farmers , who were suffering from heavy taxes, leading them to give their lands up, emigrating to the cities, searching for jobs.

At the beginning of the Abbasid state, the farmers became in better living conditions. This is *Ibn Almuqaff'a* started to criticize the prevailing situation in the domain of taxes. He noticed that *Al-kharaj* was taken with no law .⁽⁴²⁾

So he advised to issue a common law of taxes applied in the regions and the provinces, depended on precised registers.⁽⁴³⁾ He complained the mess in *Al-kharaj* in his message to *El-mansur*. who didn't accept during collecting taxes, except the real money which was like *El-Hebiryia, El-Khalidya* and *El- youcufya...* the best money of *the Ummayades* .⁽⁴⁴⁾

To conclude , the early Abbasids founded with the help of their ministers and writers a good economic (financial and agricultural) system. They got benefits from many suggested plans and schemas. They depended on agriculture and taxes to improve the economic and fill the treasury , in order to avoid any probable financial crisis.

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³*Al-kharaj* is land tax that is lived by the state on the state –owned lands whether he cultivation is lease-holder or a permanent tenant. The rates can be different in different times. *Al-kharaj* is

payable only once in a year , irrespective of the number of crops , except in the case of Al-kharaj Almusasamah where it is assessed on each crop.

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⁹Ibid.

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¹¹Al-jahchyari: al-wizara w al-kuttab ,1 st edition, Egypt , 1938, p118.

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¹⁸Mohamed abdelhai chaban: Al-thowra al-abbassia , p44.

¹⁹Tarikh tabari, 8/238.

²⁰Hssen Ahmed Mahmoud: Ibid.

²¹Mohamed abdelhai chaban:Ibid, p43.

²²Hana al-fakhuri : Ibn al-muqaffa , dar almaarif , Egypt, p25.

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²⁵Tarikh tabari 8/106.

²⁶Zebeir ibn bakkar : AL-thakhaif w al-tuhaf , keweit , 7/57.

²⁷Tarikh tabari 7/95.

²⁸Ibn hajar :Fathulbari 3/450.

²⁹Abu youcuf : ibid , p81.

³⁰Abu youcuf : ibid , p76.

³¹Abu youcuf : ibid , p81.

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³³Al-kharboutly: al-mahdi al-abbassi , el-dar el-misrya , p 70.

³⁴Sabar Hussein : El-dowla fi Al-asr al-abbassi , 2nd edition , dar el-fikr, ,2001, p74.

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³⁶Diwan Al-kharaj is a finance department of the central government during the Abbasid period (750-945 ad) It had a number of wings . It functioned as an in internal office over the wazirs , and also looked after the agricultural and economical produci vity of the provinces.(seen Islamic Banker limited).

³⁷This boss or manager called in the Islamic *FIQH*“*Sahib Ala-kharaj*“ is an officer of the Muslim government resposible for the collection and administration of Al-kharaj. (seen Islamic Banker limited).

³⁸Abu youcuf : ibid , p51.

³⁹Kudama ibn jaafar : Al-kharaj w sina'at al-kitaba ,dar Arrachid, Baghdad, 1981, p 248.

⁴⁰Abu youcuf : ibid , p49-50.

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⁴²Ibn almuqaff'a : Resalt Sahaba , among jamharat rassail alarab ,Ajmed Zaki Safwat , Beyrouh , p45.

⁴³Mohamed Abed El-jabri : Alakl el-siassi , p 347.

⁴⁴El-balatheri : Futuh el-bulden , p 657.