



IMPACT OF MONGOL INVASION ON THE ECONOMIC CONDITION OF ISLAMIC EMPIRE

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Paper Received On: 5 FEBRUARY 2023

Peer Reviewed On: 28 FEBRUARY 2023

Published On: 01 MARCH 2023

Abstract

Mongol invasion on Islamic empire is a land mark event in the history of world. This invasion began in around 1219 A.D. from Otrar a city under the dominion of Khwarazm dynasty situated in Transoxiana and ended with the capturing of Baghdad, the capital of Islamic empire in 1258A.D. Al-Mustasim, the Abbasid Caliph was captured and assassinated. Thus, in 1258 A.D. the Islamic empire came to an end. The Mongol invasion on Islamic empire was devastative. Apart from political and social institutions Mongol invasion had destroyed the economic systems and the source of livelihood of the people. A glimpse of the economic history of the Islamic empire suggests that though trade also existed the society was mainly agrarian. People depended on cultivation but due to continuous Mongol invasions, destruction of crops peasants have left the cultivation work which certainly caused poor production of crops and ultimately people were compelled to die in poverty and due to hunger.

Introduction: Mongol invasion on Islamic empire began in around 1219A.D. from Otrar under the dominion of Khwarazm dynasty. Mongol army destroyed and plundered all the cities which, came in their way. In 1258A.D. Mongol army reached Baghdad where Al-Mustasim, the Abbasid Caliph was ruling. Without any resistance Baghdad, the capital city of the Islamic Empire was surrendered to the Mongol army. The impact of Mongol invasion on Islamic empire was more destructive. During Mongol invasion cities where people tried to resist the aggressive army of the Mongol were destroyed and plundered. Agricultural lands were attacked and crops were destroyed or taken in the possession for the Mongol army personnel. Due to invasion of Mongol peasantry class of the Islamic empire stopped planting crops in their fields which resulted in the paucity of the grain in the market. Trade with various countries was also flourishing but due to attack on Caravan trade was also largely affected which certainly brought

poverty and hunger in the society. Thus, the Mongol invasion on Islamic empire largely affected the economic condition of the people of all strata of the society.

Review of literature: The topic impact of Mongol invasion on the economic conditions of Islamic empire is quite interesting and important. However, the review of literature suggests that so far, no systematic research has been done on the topic. It is therefore, that this topic has been selected for this research article.

Case Study

The Mongol invasion on Islamic empire began from 1219 A.D. which continued till 1258 with the sack of Baghdad, the capital of Islamic empire. From 1219 till 1258 Mongols continued invading and capturing the parts of Islamic empire. It was only in 1258 that after establishment of Mongol rule peace had returned but as the Mongols were barbarous people were afraid. The fear of Mongol had not only affected the trade but agricultural activities were also stopped. If we have a glimpse of the economic history of Islamic empire we will find that before Mongol invasion there was well established economic system in the Islamic empire and day by day economy was flourishing.

The Arab invasion is sometimes represented as *ipso facto* a penetration by nomads and thus, *ipso facto* negative in its results and harmful to agriculture. Such a view may perhaps be partially true of the later invasions of the Turks and, even more, of the Mongols, but it was not so with the Arabs. In the first place, the town garrisons, even when they still retained a strong sense of tribal allegiance, didn't hold to the Bedouin way of life, whatever may have been the Bedouin habits of their ancestors. On the other hand, even though certain Arabs, in the most dispossessed regions of the centre and east, were pure Bedouins and frequently insufferable to the inhabitants of the agricultural fringes, economic relations between the nomads and the farmers, with the resulting exchange of products, were rather a factor of mutual enrichment than of disorder.

The nomad economy thus made a positive contribution to regions which without it would have remained empty, because cultivation was not practicable. In this respect the Middle age showed an advance on antiquity, for pre-Islamic Iran lacked enough proportion of nomad economy. It is, however, important to distinguish between the semi-nomadism or change of pasture of those who reared sheep in the mountains, as the Kurds had done for many centuries and the great nomadic movements of Arab camel-drivers on Arab camels, and by certain Turks with the Turkish camel (which was acclimatized to cold winters and suffered in excessive summer heat). The Arab occupation and, even more the subsequent Turkish conquest, were to

impose both types of nomadism on the country, but the Arab occupation made very little change in the semi-nomadism of the mountain regions. (1)

There is no doubt that mediaeval Iran continued to be mainly an agricultural country, although it is very difficult, there as in other Muslim and non-Muslim countries, to examine closely the life of the rural inhabitants; in the literature, which is exclusively urban, they are scarcely mentioned, apart from their tax returns. From pre-Islamic times Iran had known flora and fauna (including the silk-worm) which the general Arab-Muslim domination must have distributed over other countries not previously familiar with them; the interest brought to agricultural projects, and especially to irrigation which was essential to them, is demonstrated by the publication, for example, of specialized treatises on the *qanat*, the subterranean irrigation canals of ancient Iran. It would be useful to know whether the change in sovereignty or subsequent developments provoked notable transformation in the economic and social management of the land. In general, the agreements concluded at the time of the Arab conquest stipulated, in Iran as elsewhere, the right of indigenous owners to retain their property. However, the Muslim state inherited the domains of the Sasanian state, including private and states which were left without heirs, and distributed them as *qatai* (plural of *qatia*), conferring on the beneficiary's rights which were in effect almost equal to those of true owners.

These were the *dihqans*, literally village chiefs, a name which in fact covered a whole gamut of people, from simple cultivators of the soil, who were scarcely better off than their neighbors and subordinates, to true lords of the manor and founders of dynasties. Small properties were often poor, and restricted in scope by debts and mortgages, but at the same time reinforced by the solidarity of the village community, both from the point of view of fiscal responsibility, and because they consisted of developing parcels of land which passed in rotation from one group to another. The great estates, *diya*, were for their part cultivated by tenants, *muzari (in)*, whose methods varied according to the likely yield and the local working conditions (particularly about irrigation), as has been the case throughout the whole of the Near and Middle East since ancient times. (2)

The peasants were despised, although sometimes a voice would make itself heard in their favour. Even if they were not actually attached to the land, the business of the obligations involved in communal development and of tax debts kept them there for practical purposes when they were not about a large city. Peasant risings sometimes broke out locally and some of the revolts, presented in the texts from a religious standpoint, have an undeniably social and rural character. The overlords against whom the revolt was directed could be Iranian or Arab

indiscriminately. The whole subject is, however, very difficult to elucidate from the documents available and has been too little studied for it to be possible to make any more precise assertions. (3)

The person responsible for living conditions in the trading community, as in the rest of Islam, was the *muhtasib* "police inspector", or in a large town the *arif* (sometimes *amin*) representing each separate trade under the direction of the muhtasib. Even if this personage himself belonged to the muhtasib. Even if this personage himself belonged to the trade (which, for the latter, was by no means always the case), there was nothing to prevent his being appointed by the government to be a government official, without the benefit of any professional "counsel" at his side. The system under consideration, therefore, though perhaps less severe, was in the same category as that which prevailed in Rome and Byzantium. Members of trades or professions were registered by the administration-it was said that they had a *divan*. The government agents, at least in certain cases, exercised close control over the manufacture of products (this fact is known with reference to the textiles of Kazarun). Various trades were obliged, instead of paying other taxes, to make deliveries in kind, the deduction and collection of which obviously suggest a certain degree of organization, though there is not necessarily anything corporate about it. The origin of the muhtasib himself is not clear, in that he was evidently continuing in a way the work of those agents in the ancient cities with comparable functions, while at the same time answering certain requirements appropriate to Arab-Muslim cities. Existing knowledge of Iranian affairs is too imperfect for it to be possible to specify exactly how the transition from the ancient system to the new was affected.(4)

It may be inferred that, within each craft, several young apprentices and slaves worked around a master. In general, it was a matter of small workshops, which were not always separate either from the dwelling of the master or from the little shop where he marketed the product which had been manufactured under the eyes of the customers. sometimes, however, it appears that quite many workmen were to be found in the same premises working on the same product, though what it amounted to was a juxtaposition of individual crafts rather than a chain of production; at most it represented a series of independent operations. This method appears to have been applied to the manufacture of textiles, spinning being often the province of women, weaving and subsequent process handled by men. Where costly fabrics were involved, there was state control, as evidence in Kazarun. There were also state workshops in the capital cities for luxury textiles (*titraz*), weapons, coins, paper etc.(5)

In so far as the biographical dictionaries, in giving the names of personages, normally mention the trade or profession to which they or their parents belonged, they give some indication of the nature and statistical distribution of craft, at least in certain cities. Certainly, it is possible to gain some idea at least of the wide diversity of crafts which existed, of which there is independent evidence, and perhaps the variations of time and place might also be ascertained. It is necessary, however, to realize that professions are indicated for only limited classes, and that occupations which are not sufficiently exalted are passed over in silence; the statistical picture may thus be completely falsified; many important textile merchants will be found, but hardly any weavers.(6)

As in most societies before the arrival of large-scale modern capitalism, instances of limited capitalism, where they existed, were commercial rather than industrial, while again in certain cases, such as the textile industry, it is difficult to follow the exact line of demarcation. Indeed, even in the realm of commerce there was not enough independence in relation to other sectors of the economy. To a considerable extent the merchants drew the capital with which they conducted their business not only from the profits of previous transactions, but from the revenues derived from land acquired out of those profits or from the estates of prominent persons who were anxious to obtain interest, by means of various contracts of association and commend, on the income from their property, or again from state revenues which they administered, either when trading for the treasury or as marginal profit on tax-collection. Whatever may have been the social standing of businessmen, they were not the masters-it was the military who were to achieve that eminence. (7)

There existed besides the trade of the Indian Ocean which had its terminus at Basra in Iraq, with ports of call in the Persian Gulf which became increasingly important with the establishment of the autonomous Iranian principalities. The route from Khurasan to Iraq was also the pilgrims' road, marked out by cities which owed to it some part of their significance if not the whole-Samarqand, Marv, Balkh, Nishapur, Ray and Hamadan. On the Gulf the great Iranian port was Siraf, until in about 390/1000 an earthquake, and circumstantial changes, which operated in favour of the Red Sea and to the detriment of the Persian of the Persian Gulf, ruined it without producing a substitute. Meanwhile other cities were attracting the merchants, political capitals, or rich provincial centres such as Shiraz, Isfahan, Herat, later Ghazna, and others.(8)

The merchants belonged to different religions and moved about and did business together. Iran was travelled over by Arabs or Arabicized Semites coming from Syria or

Mesopotamia and by Jews of more distant provenance, if the account by Ibne Khuradadbiḥ of the Rahdanites is to be taken literally. There is little doubt however that the Iranians themselves formed most of the merchants, both on land and in the Indian Ocean from Malaysia (and sometimes even as far as China) to East Africa. A whole history of Persian expansion needs to be worked out. In the realm of commerce, Sindbad the sailor was a symbol, popularized in Arabic, but the vocabulary of business and of navigation (outside the Mediterranean) was, even in Arabic, deeply imbued with Persian.(9)

It should be reiterated here that the above sketch is based essentially on some general knowledge of the problems confronting the Muslim world, where, whereas Iran has a specific history of its own. Conversely, however, it is possible to gain the impression that certain authors, even in the Muslim epoch, regarded the history of Iran as a separate reality, isolated from its Muslim environment and from integration in the Muslim world. Obviously if research is to be productive, consideration much be given both in the Muslim world and to the traditions of Iran. Such efforts have been made in the realm of political and cultural history, but very little about social matters and here there is an urgent need still to be satisfied.(10)

The dihqans, or landed aristocracy, of Sasanian times remained under the new Islamic dispensation as the government's representatives in rural areas. Their main task was collection of the Kharaj from the cultivators and its transference to the central treasury of the Muslim community. The Kharaj on land was of course levied from the agrarian classes, and it was the duty of the dihqan to apportion what was due among the peasants who had to pay it. Thus, as in Sassanian times, under the Muslim government the cultivator continued bound to work the land and render taxes to the government.(11)

Besides the lands left under the dihqans control, there were estates which had belonged to the former imperial house or to soldiers slain or missing in the wars. These also were left to their former cultivators, but became in effect the *khalisa* or, so to speak "crown lands" pertaining to the caliphs, who held them as *sawafī*, i. e. the part of the booty which went directly to the imam as distinct from what was divided among the soldiers. They sometimes distributed them as they wished in the form of Iqta fiefs.(12)

The collection of revenue and disbursements out of it depended on the creation of a *divan*, treasury office, and thus began in Iraq in the time of Muḡhaira b. Shubā under the direction of an Iranian named Piri or Piruz. After him, his son, Zadan Farrukh was for a time in charge of it. After a short while, the second caliph, Umar, expanded this divan of Iraq, creating an establishment in which the entire income and expenditure of the Islamic realms

were registered along with all those who were entitled to stipends or a share of the booty. Reforms had to be carried out in the operations of the divan in the time of Muawiya, when Ziyad b. Abihi was governor in Iraq. Another problem that arose was the gradual Islamization of the dhimmis and likewise the unavoidable changes and transference which occurred in lands and their ownership, with steps taken by recent converts among the mawali to leave their lands and escape the Kharaj by going to the cities—all these matters were a source of concern to the caliph and their revenue officers. (13)

In Khurasan however another kind of difficulty arose in connection with the Kharaj. The local aristocracy and marzbans of this region gave up hope of a restoration of the Sassanians after the fall of Ctesiphon and the final Arab victory, and most of them peacefully submitted to the Arabs. This submission, however, was accompanied by acceptance of an arrangement whereby they were to pay a fixed sum annually to the Arab conquerors. It was by making this kind of peace, whereby a fixed sum should be paid and should not be subject to any arbitrary changes, that the cities of Tabasain, Kuhistan, Nishapur, Nasa, Abivard, Tus, Herat and Marv fell to the Arabs, each making its treaty separately. Unlike Iraq, where the Muslims had the lands and their extent and table value registered in the divan and where their officials could interfere directly in the affairs of revenue collection, in Khurasan this was left to the local *kadkhudas* or overseers, who accomplished it in collaboration with the local religious officials. The revenue collection was carried out according to former practices or in whatever way suited the men responsible for doing it. Of what occurred, only the amount stipulated in the treatise made at the time of the conquest was paid to the Arabs. (14)

Since the tax gatherers were, as has been shown, working in conjunction with officials of the former religious faith so when they saw one of their own faith turning to Islam or accepting it, not only did they not excuse him taxes, from which in theory he thus became exempt, but, since his conversion was to their disadvantage, they were venal enough to find means to increase the burden of his tax over that paid by those who had retained their former religious allegiance Bahram Sis, who in the last days of the Umayyads was in charge of collecting Kharaj from the Zoroastrians of Khurasan, used this device as did others.

Conclusion

In the light of the above facts it may be concluded that the Islamic empire had a prosperous economic system. In this economic system trade with other countries played an important role but the economy was mainly based on agriculture. But due to Mongol invasion both trade and agriculture were affected due to the fear of Mongol which led to poverty and

hunger. People were not able to pay the taxes as the rich people who paid the taxes to the government were already looted, which affected the social welfare works done by the government as government was not receiving the estimated tax money.

Notes and References

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