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ECONOMY V. FROM THE ARAB CONQUEST TO THE END OF THE IL-KHANIDS (PART 1)

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In the early Islamic period. The economic order in Islamic Persia was in theory, if not always in practice, derived from Islamic norms. Society was conceived of essentially as a political and moral entity, and extra-economic criteria were taken as the basis for material life. In Sasanian Persia society was theoretically divided into four estates: the religious classes; the warriors; the bureaucracy, among whom were included biographers, doctors, poets, and astronomers; and lastly peasants, shepherds, merchants, and artisans (Christensen, *Iran Sass.*; Ebn Esfandīār, p. 12). A similar hierarchical division of society is found in the works of philosophers and in mirrors for princes in the Islamic period. These not only reflect, in some measure, historical reality—although that reality was, in fact, much more complex—but also, to some extent, molded the way men thought of themselves. However, in practice, the division between the various classes was not rigid. There was much more movement between them and also intermarriage (see CLASS SYSTEM).

Abū Naṣr Fārābī (d. 339/950) also arranges the citizens of the Good City in a hierarchical order, at the bottom of which were those who produced the wealth of the city, namely, cultivators (*fallāḥīn*), herdsmen, merchants, and the like (p. 50). Some three centuries later Naṣīr-al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274; *Aḵlāq-e nāṣerī*, p. 305), writing shortly before the fall of the ʿAbbasid caliphate, resolves society into four classes: men of the pen; men of the sword; men of affairs, such as merchants, craftsmen, artisans, and tax-collectors; and husbandmen, such as agricultural laborers and peasants, those who plant trees and carry on agriculture, who prepare the food of all groups, and "without whom the continued existence of anyone would be impossible." From Sasanian times onward, the general assumption was that the function of those who worked on the land was to provide for the rest of the population. Thus, Rašīd-al-Dīn Vaṭvāṭ, who lived in Khorasan and witnessed the capture of Sanjar by the Ḡozz in 548/1153-54, in a letter to one of the outlying governors refers to the ordinary people of the country (*ʿāmmat al-balad*), who were craftsmen and cultivators (*arbāb-e ṣenāʿat wa aṣḥāb-e zerāʿat*), and states that "the final aim of their work was to provide sustenance (for others) ... The well-being of the province depended upon the crafts of such people, while the orderly course of the affairs of other classes rested upon the labor of their hands and the sweat of their brows" (Rašīd-al-Dīn Vaṭvāṭ, apud Lambton, "Aspects," p. 108). There was, thus, a general perception of the importance of agriculture for economic prosperity, but it did not issue in a coherent policy.

The economic history of Persia from the Arab conquest to the fall of the Il-khanids is at many points shrouded in obscurity. The sources are sparse, especially for pre-Islamic Persia and for the first two centuries of the Islamic period. It is, therefore, difficult to state with any precision what the situation was before the Arab conquest or immediately thereafter. From about the 3rd/9th and 4th/10th centuries information becomes increasingly available but it is still spasmodic; comprehensive surveys of land use and continuous records of taxation, prices, wages, and population movements are lacking. So far as prices of commodities are mentioned, it is usually on the occasion of famine or scarcity. A good deal of economic information is, however, contained in the bureaucratic and administrative literature of the medieval period (see further Lewis, 1970, p. 90).

Deeds constituting *waqf* (*waqf-nāma*) also contain material on economic matters. A number of studies have appeared recently on the social and economic significance of the *waqf*, but they relate mainly to the post-Il-khanid period. Apart from the haphazard nature of the sources, such records as exist were, for the most part, written for rulers by officials and members of the ruling classes. They tend to give a one-sided view; and we see the mass of the population, if at all, through their eyes. Against the statements of prosperity, well-being, and good government must be set the periods of tyranny, disorder, insecurity, drought, famine, hoarding, and war, to which the inhabitants of the country were from time to time subjected.

The Sasanian empire, as well as the Omayyad and ʿAbbasid caliphates and the empires of the Great Saljuqs and the Il-khanids extended over a much wider area than that included within the geographical frontiers of present-day Persia. Baghdad, the capital of the ʿAbbasid caliphate, was founded near Ctesiphon, which had been one of the capitals of the Sasanian empire and was included within the Saljuq empire and the Il-khanate, while the Central Asian provinces, which had been by the Islamic period Turkified, were of great military and commercial importance. In what follows reference will therefore be made also to regions beyond the geographical boundaries of present-day Persia, notably to Iraq and Transoxania.

In broad general terms, settlement patterns were determined by the availability of water and the nature of the irrigation system. In pre-Islamic Persia the irrigation system was highly developed; most sites with adequate water supplies and land had probably been settled before the Arab conquest. This suggests that agriculture was profitable and played an important part in economic life. There is a long history of the construction of dams (N. Smith; see BAND), and *qanāt*s, known from Achaemenid times onward, played an important part in the siting of settlements and the spread of cultivation (de Planhol, pp. 481-83; Goblot, 1963).

The rule of the later Sasanian monarchs was marked by disorders and economic decline. Monetary activities were hampered by oppressive fiscal policies which drained coinage off the markets into the imperial treasury in Ctesiphon (Pigulevskaya, apud Ehrenkreutz, 1977, p. 86). Although the battles of Qādesīya and Jalūlāʾ, both in 16/637, and Nehāvand (21/642) were decisive in the overthrow of the Sasanian empire, the conquest, undertaken mainly from the garrison cities of Baṣra and Kūfa, took place piecemeal and was not completed for many years, while the conversion of its people to Islam took much longer. The conquest swept away the political framework of the empire. The ruling family, the territorial princes, and landed magnates disappeared and the power of the Zoroastrian clergy was broken, but much of the former administrative and economic system continued in operation. The cities were not destroyed, and it seems likely that their boundaries and dependencies largely survived under the Arabs. The road system continued to link the towns and cities and was of great importance for long distance, regional, and local trade and for military and administrative reasons. Traders, merchants, learned men, pilgrims, and goods, as well as armies moved along the roads.

The construction and maintenance of irrigation works were vital to agricultural and communal life and to the prosperity of the state. Established technological skills appear to have survived the Arab conquest. Ancient irrigation works, especially in ʿErāq-e ʿArab and southern Persia, were repaired and in some cases extended (N. Smith, pp. 77 ff.). On the other hand, there are instances of irrigation works falling into disrepair. In eastern Iran, where there had been dam-building by the Sasanians, there were new developments by the Muslims (idem, p. 86; Lambton, "Māʾ").

*Qanāt*s retained their importance. Their construction and upkeep involved the expenditure of considerable sums of money, as did the maintenance of irrigation generally both by the government and private individuals (even if the labor was often provided by corvées). Inherently, the irrigation system was fragile and this imposed a certain pattern on society and resulted in caution toward political change among those whose livelihood and income depended upon agriculture. The acceptance of a common discipline demanded by irrigation practices fostered local cohesion; but shortages of water were perennial and disputes over the misappropriation of water were of common occurrence (Lambton, "Reflections," p. 287; idem, *Continuity*, p. 161). In times of insecurity there could be no investment in *qanāt*s but that there were many instances of *qanāt*s being made or repaired in different places at different times in the Islamic period is indirect evidence of the existence of pockets of local prosperity. The history of Qom and Yazd provides examples of this (Lambton, "The Qanats of Qum," pp. 151-76; idem, "The *Qanāt*s of Yazd," pp. 21-35).

Information concerning agricultural practices and techniques and their effect on economic conditions in the early centuries of Islam and in the medieval period is casual and spasmodic. The general impression is that agricultural production was not much harmed by the conquest and that there was continuity of the means of agricultural production, but that this was coupled with technological conservatism.

Wheat and barley have been staple crops in Persia since early times (Spuler, *Iran*, pp. 387-90). Yields varied but in general were probably low; there were exceptions, however. The Marv oasis was very productive. Mostawfī reports that seed corn in Marv gave a hundred-fold the first year, and from the ungathered over-fall some thirty-fold for the second year was obtained and as much as ten-fold of the original sowing in the third year (*Nozhat al-qolūb*, ed. Le Strange, p. 157). Ebn al-Balḵī states that the yield of rain-fed wheat in Īrāhestān, one of the districts of Māndestān on the Persian Gulf, was a thousand-fold (*Fārs-nāma*, p. 135, repeated in *Nozhat al-qolūb*, ed. Le Strange, p. 119). Sorghum and millet were widely grown. In early Islamic times rice was cultivated in Ḵūzestān and, on a small scale, in parts of Fārs, Ṭabarestān, and Māzandarān. Sugar-cane was grown in Ḵūzestān and its cultivation is mentioned by the early Muslim geographers in reference to various other parts of Persia. Oil seeds, including sesame, and a variety of pulses were cultivated from an early time and played an important part in the nutrition of the people. Fodder crops, lucerne, clover, and alfalfa were widely grown. Cotton was found on the plateau and was of particular importance for the textile industry. Silk was probably introduced into Persia in the latter part of the Sasanian period and sericulture in Islamic times, especially in Gīlān and parts of Khorasan. Dye plants were grown mainly in the central Zagros region and Kermān. Other plants used in industry, such as hemp, flax, saffron, madder, henna, and jute, were cultivated from early times. Indigo may have been brought to Persia in the reign of Ḵosrow I Anōšīravān (531-79). Vegetable gums, including gum tragacanth and asafoetida, were cropped and oak-gall was used for medicinal purposes from early times. Pepper was known since the Sasanian period, having presumably been introduced from India. A variety of flowers and a kind of willow were cultivated for scent and also contributed to bee-keeping. Persia has been famous for fruit-growing since early times and many varieties of dates were cultivated in the south and on the coastal plains bordering the Persian Gulf. Viticulture was already highly developed in ancient Persia.

Agricultural continuity was frequently interrupted by drought, famine, disease, sudden storms, floods, violent winds, and earthquakes. These calamities often caused much damage, loss of life, and sometimes the abandonment of villages as well as the conversion of cultivated land into dead land. They were, however, seldom countrywide. On the other hand, isolated outbreaks of famine could not easily be relieved by surpluses from other regions because of the great distances between them often involved. Military campaigns also interrupted agriculture at different times and in different places.

The majority of the population in pre-Islamic and Islamic times were probably engaged in arable farming, though flocks also played an important part in the life of the countryside. Under the Sasanians the head of the tax administration was known as the *wāstryōšān-sālār*, whose title meant “the head of the farmers.” Taxation rested primarily on agriculture. The peasants were attached to the land and were liable to corvées and service in the army as foot soldiers. They paid taxes to the state or to the holder of the land, or possibly to both (Christensen, *Iran Sass.*, pp. 117, 315-16; Hahn, pp. 149-60). Landed estates, whether held in absolute ownership or in return for service, probably varied in extent from the large estate or province, held by members of the royal family and landed magnates, to small estates. Prior to the reign of Ḵosrow I Anōšīravān the land tax had been assessed as a share of the crop. Anōšīravān replaced this by measurement as the basis of the assessment (Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 1991, p. 15). He also reformed the poll tax and graded it according to the taxpayer’s supposed income. The royal family, important families, leading officials, clergy, and soldiers were exempt from its payment. The village was, to a great extent, a self-contained community, whose relations with the government were conducted for the most part by the *dehqān*s.

The village land was divided into ploughlands (*joft*, *ḵīš*, *zawj*), the amount of land which could be cultivated by a pair of oxen annually. The size varied with the nature of the soil, the type of agriculture practiced (dry or irrigated), fallow practices, the crops grown, the draught animals used, and the pressure on the land. In some districts the basic unit was defined by a share or shares in the water supply. The ploughland, or peasant holding, was probably usually run as a family concern, though extra labor was probably required at harvest time or other busy periods. Sometimes, three or four ploughlands were run together as a unit (*bona*); but often the ploughland was subdivided into smaller units.

As a result of the Arab conquest, there was a redistribution of wealth, and the position of both landowners and peasants underwent considerable change in matters of tenure and taxation. The owners of private properties, so far as they had not fled or been killed, probably continued to cultivate their estates. In those districts from which the landed magnates had disappeared peasant holdings may have spread. Under the Sasanians the peasants, on the whole, had been unfree. With conversion to Islam a major change took place in their condition. Technically, they became free. How long it took for this change to be accomplished, or what the local variations were, is not entirely clear. The effect of conversion on the status of the land is better documented (see below). There was both at the time of the conquest and thereafter much variation. Persia was not a uniform whole but consisted of different regions and separate provinces differentiated both by geography and the circumstances of their conquest. There is no general paradigm for the country as a whole: only local variations and exceptions, and often contradictory data. There was, however, a measure of continuity between pre-Islamic and Islamic times, especially in taxation and local administration. Michael G. Morony ("Landholding"; idem, *Iraq*) has shown this to have been the case in ʿErāq-e ʿArab.

Evidence for the size of the population in pre-Islamic and Islamic times is meager. There are too many unknown factors to obtain a clear view of demographic trends. The urban population was probably small in numbers at the time of the conquest, although there had been a growth of cities in the Sasanian period, and there were flourishing cities situated especially at road junctions on the Silk Road. Spasmodic figures for the population of individual cities are available, but it is difficult to assess their accuracy. To what extent the ethnic composition of the population was modified by the Arab conquest is not known with any certainty. The Arab armies were followed by pastoral Arabs, and there was some settlement of soldiers and immigrants, chiefly in the towns, and of tribal groups, especially in southern Persia, Kermān (on a small scale), and Khorasan (see CITIES iii, p. 618; Lapidus, "Arab Settlements, " pp. 191 ff.; Qomī, *Tārīḵ*, p. 264). In the latter province considerable numbers were settled in the second half of the 7th century. Balāḏorī states that in 52/672-73 fifty thousand warriors with their dependents went to Khorasan (*Fotūḥ*, p. 410; Shaban, pp. 85, 88, 103, 173-74). For the most part it would seem that they merged, in due course, into the local population. There was also extensive settlement in Azarbaijan in the first and second centuries of the *hejra* (Madelung, p. 227)

The time and circumstances of the conquest varied in different provinces. From this stemmed differences in the tax administration and the ownership of the land, which went through a troubled and disputed development (Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 1991, pp. 7ff.; see also CITIES iii, pp. 607-08). In theory, conquered land became *ʿošr* land, whereas land left in possession of its former holders paid *ḵarāj* (land tax). After the defeat of the Sasanian army at Jalūlāʾ, the caliph ʿOmar b. Ḵaṭṭāb made a comprehensive settlement of the Sawād.

This had considerable economic implications and was to become the theoretical basis for later settlements. ʿOmar also instituted the first *dīvān* and is traditionally credited with organizing the grant of cash stipends (*ʿaṭāʾ*) to members of the victorious Arab armies. This required the adoption of a standard monetary unit and the availability of large amounts of cash. The basic silver Sasanian unit, the *drachma*, was selected for use in the operation of the *dīvān* and was known as the dirham. The cash needed was obtained from the booty which flowed into Medina during the conquests and from tax collections. The economic demands of the Arab settlers stimulated production and the circulation of money increased. Hoarded coins also appeared on the market, either for reasons of fiscal demands or because of prospects of profitable investment (Ehrenkreutz, 1977, pp. 88-90).

Prior to the battle of Jalūlāʾ three or four towns in ʿErāq-e ʿArab had surrendered to the Arabs during the campaigns of Ḵāled b. Walīd and agreed to pay tribute. They raised the money by whatever means they wished and, having paid, were then released from further interference. After the battle of Jalūlāʾ large areas of the Sawād were abandoned by the former ruling classes who had fled or been killed, although the peasants remained on the land. ʿOmar b. Ḵaṭṭāb decided to immobilize the land and to levy a land and poll tax on the inhabitants, the revenue therefrom to constitute *fay*ʾ. However, the traditions concerning ʿOmar's decision are confusing and conflicting (Dennett, pp. 20 ff.; Shaban, 1971a, pp. 48 ff.). In the case of estates still in possession of their former owners, ʿOmar decided that the legal title belonged to the Islamic state, but he allowed the former owners to remain in possession on condition that they paid the taxes formerly paid to the Sasanian state and that they acted as the agents of the Muslim state in their collection. It would appear that the rates of agricultural taxes were raised and additional kinds of produce taxed, while the arrangements for taking part of the tax in kind were regularized (Morony, *Iraq*, pp. 100 ff.). In general taxes were levied upon villages collectively. Non-Muslims also paid a graded poll tax, except in the towns which had capitulated by treaty and paid such a tax only as their own officials assessed it (ibid., pp. 106 ff.). On conversion they entered Arab Muslim society as *mawālī*. However, there is no evidence of widespread conversion after the early conquests, but apparently some of those who were exempt from the payment of poll tax under the Sasanians became Muslims rather than pay poll tax to the Muslims with its implication of a lower status.

Towns which had asked for an armistice were required to pay a poll tax in money and a contribution in kind, which could be increased or decreased as the population changed. Their lands were known as *ṣolḥ* lands in contradistinction to ʿ*ahd* lands, which had capitulated without fighting. Whereas *ḵarāj* land was closely regulated by the Arab *dīvān*s, *ṣolh*á and ʿ*ahd* lands remained under local administration. Further reforms were carried out by ʿOmar II (99-101/717-20). He gave fiscal equality to all Muslims regardless of their origin and laid down that *ḵarāj* land, whether held by Arabs or Muslim converts, should continue to pay *ḵarāj* (Shaban, 1971a, p. 134). Throughout the rule of the orthodox caliphs and the Omayyads the situation varied in the different provinces with the ebb and flow of conquest, and it is difficult to assess to what extent economic expansion was hindered or stimulated.

Monetary operations were hampered in many areas by the chaotic conditions which prevailed in the matter of the coinage, which confused producers, merchants, artisans, laborers, buyers, and sellers, complicating the work of tax assessors, revenue collectors, and the bookkeeping staff of the *dīvān*. To cope with the last, a fictitious standard money of account was used in the *dīvān*; and in 79/698-99 the Omayyad caliph ʿAbd-al-Malek (65-86/685-705) launched a policy of monetary reorganization (see COINS and COINAGE). New coins, Islamic dinars and dirhams appeared in 77/696-97 and 79/698-99, respectively. The standard fineness of the dinar was fixed at 96 percent of purity of gold alloy, equal, if not superior, to that of the contemporary Byzantine *solidus*. Ḥajjāj b. Yūsof, governor of Iraq and the eastern provinces, was charged with the implementation of the reform in the former Sasanian empire. Except in the outlying eastern provinces, where Arab-Sasanian coin survivals still appeared a century later, all the existing mints in the eastern part of the Omayyad empire were forced to adopt the reformed silver currency. ʿAbd-al-Malek’s reform could not have succeeded without sufficient stocks of precious metals, which must have been attracted to the mints by favorable market conditions to be turned into legal tender. It was also facilitated by ʿAbd-al-Malek’s access to oriferous regions, including Khorasan, from which gold and silver came as a result of natural commercial exchanges or tribute arrangements (Ehrenkreutz, 1977, pp. 93-94; idem, 1959 p. 138).

Information concerning developments in Khorasan is fuller than for other Persian provinces, but the evidence is conflicting. There the local leaders had mainly concluded treaties (ʿ*ahd*), which stipulated that a fixed sum be paid annually to the Arabs. Administration remained in local hands and the inhabitants for the most part continued to pay land, trade, and poll taxes as they had under the Sasanians. Conversion was probably higher in Khorasan than in many other regions, but the local tax collectors do not appear to have released all converts from poll tax, or if they did, they increased the converts' other taxes to compensate for the loss to the revenue from their poll taxes. The result was discontent and rebellion. Precisely when *ʿahd* land was changed to *ḵarāj* land is not clear. In any case, the reform apparently was not extended to Transoxania. Ašras, the governor of Khorasan, invited the people of that province to accept Islam in return for the remission of *jezya* (although whether this was a poll tax, as Dennett assumes, or a land tax, as Shaban supposes, is uncertain). Apparently great numbers accepted Islam. Realizing that this would mean a great decrease in the revenue, Ašras went back on his promise and ordered *ḵarāj* to be taken from the converts. This resulted in rebellion. It was suppressed, but military operations of a somewhat confused nature continued for the next ten years or so. Arab dominion was not fully restored until the governorship or Naṣr b. Sayyār (121-31/738-48). He decreed that Muslims and non-Muslims alike must pay *ḵarāj* and that the latter must pay poll tax as well. Although his rule corrected some of the abuses in the tax administration and brought a measure of prosperity to Khorasan, he failed to restore order fully or to remove the grievances of either the Arab settlers or the *mawālī*. It was among these two groups that ʿAbbasid propaganda achieved its success in Khorasan (Dennett, pp. 116-28; Shaban, 1970, pp. 109-12, 129-31; Barthold, *Turkestan*, pp. 189 ff.).

In the ʿAbbasid period. The significance of the ʿAbbasid victory for Persia lay especially in the transfer of the center of the empire from Syria to Iraq. Al-Manṣūr (136-58/754-75) established the ʿAbbasid capital in a new city, Madīnat-al-Salām, usually known as Baghdad, near the ruins of Ctesiphon. Although a series of revolts in Persia and elsewhere took place after the ʿAbbasid victory, it was ultimately "followed by a great economic revival based on the exploitation of the resources of the Empire through industry and trade, and the development of a vast network of trade relations both within the empire and with the world outside… The Islamic town was transformed from a garrison city to a market and exchange and in time to the center of a flourishing and diversified urban culture" (Lewis, "ʿAbbāsids," pp. 19-20).

With the development of trade and its concentration in Baghdad and the major Persian cities, a change took place in the financial administration of the state. The old silver standard, which had prevailed in the central and eastern part of the Sasanian empire was replaced by the gold standard. The decisive step was taken in Baghdad between 261/874 and 303/915, although the silver standard continued in existence beside the gold standard. The situation was complicated because of the diversity of coins in circulation and their fluctuating values. In the tax-rolls of the 2nd/8th and 3rd/9th centuries, the revenues of the western provinces were stated in gold and those of the eastern ones in silver. In a 4th/10th century budget, all items were expressed in gold, necessitating the conversion of coins received by the treasury. This function was performed by bankers, known as *jahābeḏa* (sing. *jahbad*ò); and a *dīvān al-jahābeḏa* is mentioned in 316/928 (Fischel, pp. 3 ff; Spuler, *Iran*, pp. 408-10).

The functions of the *jahābeḏa* were concerned with the administration, remittance, and supply of funds. Prominent officials all had their own *jahbad*ò, with whom they deposited funds for safe-keeping and administration. By the 4th/10th century it was customary to pay debts by letters of credit (*softaja*) as well as in cash. Their use in private commercial transactions and in the financial administration of the state—particularly with regard to the remission of taxes from the provinces—greatly facilitated the mercantile relations and governmental business of the ʿAbbasid empire (for two documents on the responsibility of a *jahbad*ò for the payment to the government of *ḵarāj* on behalf of taxpayers, see Qomī, pp. 149-55; for tr. of these documents, see Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 1991, pp. 42-45).

Gradually, the legal framework within which economic life according to the ethical norms of Islam could be carried on was formulated, but as with the fiscal system (Cahen "*Kharādj*"), the centralizing efforts of the ʿAbbasids and the conceptualization of the jurists (*foqahāʾ*) never entirely removed or absorbed local variations. A substantial body of water law, based on custom, was incorporated into Islamic law. According to the Sunni jurists, the water of the great rivers belonged to the Muslims in common, but according to the Shiʿite jurists, it belonged to the Imam. It might be used by anyone for irrigation and power, provided its use in this way did not harm the community; and anyone could divert water from the great rivers by means of a canal unless such diversion was prejudicial to interests already acquired. Most jurists permitted the transmission of water rights and water sources so far as they were private property. They also permitted their constitution into *waqf* if they were on private property. According to the Sunnijurists, the upkeep of the great rivers was vested in the head of the community, the imam. Cleaning and dredging and the repair of their banks was carried out by him and paid for by the public treasury. If, however, no funds were available for such work, he could compel the Muslims to give their services for the purpose. The cleaning and repair of canals leading water from the great rivers to individual villages was the responsibility of the owners of the adjoining land. If they refused to carry out the necessary work, they could be compelled to undertake it, since neglect of their duty might result in injury to the community and might diminish the supply (Abū Yūsof, tr. Fagnan, pp. 144, 148). In the provinces responsibility for the control of the water of the great rivers was in practice delegated to the provincial governors; with the rise of semi-independent dynasties, this responsibility passed to those who held power locally, by whom water dues might be levied. There was no uniform system.

Gardīzī mentions that ʿAbd-Allāh b. Ṭāher (governor of Khorasan, 213-30/828-44) assembled the jurists from Khorasan and Iraq to write a book on *qanāt*s and the rules for the distribution of their waters, since disputes were continually taking place over them. He states that the book which resulted from their labors, the *Ketābal-qonī*, was extant in his day (Gardīzī, ed. Nazim, p. 8; Spuler, *Iran*, pp. 395-96).

Land laws regulating the relationship of landholders with the government and of peasants with landlords, a theory of crown lands (*ṣawāfī*), and regulations for the cultivation of dead lands (*eḥyāʾ al-mawāt*) were drawn up, based on the supposed or actual acts of the prophet, his immediate successors, and their officers during the conquests; these laws remained the theoretical legal basis for the ownership and taxation of the land. There were many differences of opinion between the schools of law as to the details of the taxation and tenure of the land, and in practice many deviations from theory. The distinction between Muslims and non-Muslims came to be largely abandoned, and the Muslims paid rates of taxation which were strictly speaking uncanonical, while land which was in theory immobilized for the benefit of the Muslim community was often in fact alienated (Lambton, *State and Government*,p. 216; idem, *Landlord and Peasant*, 1991, pp. 17 ff.).

Much of the wealth deriving from trade and much of the fortunes accumulated by officials of the bureaucracy and military leaders were invested in land, although how far this was true of all provinces is not known. It seems likely that there were frequent changes of ownership. As security deteriorated, many small landowners placed their estates under the protection of a stronger neighbor, who would often in due course take possession of the estate placed under his protection. Crown lands (*ṣawāfī),* deriving from the conquests and also from expropriation, were extensive and large grants of crown land were made to military leaders and others. Small-scale exploitation was for the most part practiced in both large and small estates. Slave labor was the exception.

The most common form of exploitation of the land was probably under a *mozāraʿa* contract between the owner of the land and the husbandman or under a *mosāqāt* contract in the case of plantations of fruit trees or vines. The roots of this type of exploitation go back to pre-Islamic times but the jurists laid down detailed regulations for its validity under the *šarīʿa*. It is problematical to what extent, if any, this type of exploitation was detrimental to economic development. There is no evidence which enables the yield of land worked on a crop-sharing basis to be compared with the yield on land worked in other ways. However, the fact that Anōšīravān is alleged to have changed the basis of the tax assessment from *moqāsama* (under which the tax was assessed as a share of the crop) to *mesāḥa* or measurement of the land and that this was regarded in the sources as a reform would suggest that crop-sharing was considered to be detrimental to the well-being of the husbandmen. Perhaps it was considered, as in modern times, to discourage innovation and development, although to the advantage of the peasants in the event of crop failures.

Direct intervention by the state in economic affairs, apart from the levy of tolls and taxes, and the occasional establishment of monopolies, was on the whole limited, although rulers and their officials often took part in trade in a private capacity (see below). In the towns governmental intervention was exercised by the *moḥtaseb*, an official who was entrusted with the application of the *ḥesba,* the duty “to promote good and forbid evil.” He was concerned with what might be termed “public amenities” and, more particularly, with the oversight of markets. It was his duty to check weights, measures, and prices and to prevent fraud and dishonest dealing by merchants and artisans. In the course of time, he came to regulate also the internal affairs of the crafts to some extent (Lambton, “Ḥisba”). Royal factories for the manufacture of *ṭerāz* were a special case. Their products, embroidered bands with inscriptions in the caliph’s or the ruler’s name, with which robes of honor (*ḵelʿa*) were embellished, were necessarily a state monopoly. Access to the factories was restricted to the authorities with a view to the maintenance of standards (Rogers, 1994, pp. 30-31).

Although the level of intervention by the state in economic and commercial affairs was generally low, there was widespread discussion of commercial matters in the works of the juristsin order to bring existing practices within the limits of the *šarīʿa* by legal devices (*ḥīal*, sing. *ḥīla*; Schacht, 1964, pp. 78 ff.). Udovitch (1968, p. 73) remarks that “the jurists’ discussion of commercial matters was based on a fairly clear and accurate understanding of the economic realities of their environment, and that they were quite conscious of the likely effects of their promulgations on the conduct of economic life. Without obliterating the distinction between how people actually conduct their affairs and how they should be conducted, the jurists strove, within reasonable limits, to narrow the gulf between the two.” The principal field in which they expended their efforts was the institution of partnerships, which “were one of the chief means in the medieval Islamic world enabling merchants and others to combine their resources and skills for investment in commercial undertakings. According to the various schools of Islamic law, resources could take the form of either a cash investment or of goods and merchandise, and skills, or commercial know-how, and /or a particular skill on the part of one or all of the partners in some type of trade or craft” (Udovitch, 1968, p. 64). These partnerships took several forms. A *możāraba* contract, also known as *moqāraba* and *qerāż*, was a commercial association, whereby the investor entrusted capital to an agent who traded with it and shared with the investor a pre-determined proportion of the profits. Such contracts played an important part in commercial activity, especially in long distance trade, and are treated at length in classical *feqh* works. They were also a device to lend money with interest while circumventing the Koranic prohibition on unlawful gain (*rebā*). “As in the case of several other commercial arrangements, Islamic law justifies the licitness of the *ḳirāḍ* contract on the religious grounds of traditional practice (*sunna*), the consensus of the community (*id̲j̲māʿ* [see EJMĀʿ) and, more interestingly, on the practical grounds of its economic function in society” (Udovitch, “Ḳirāḍ,” p. 130). There were also a variety of partnerships in which labor (usually a skill in some kind of manufacture, such as tailoring, dying, weaving) formed a part. This enabled craftsmen to form work partnerships without pooling any cash or goods, their sole asset consisting of their particular skills (Udovitch, 1968, pp. 65 ff.). However, as Udovitch states (ibid., p. 80), the legal texts do not provide us with any details concerning the manner in which, or the extent to which, such partnerships were actually employed. It is probable that many irregular transactions were tolerated on the ground of equity (*esteḥsān*) and necessity (*żarūra*).

There is one further legal matter which must be considered, namely the *waqf* (pl. *awqāf*) or *ḥabs*, because of the effect it had, at different periods, on the economy of the country. In its simplest form the *waqf* or *ḥabs* is the withdrawal from circulation of the substance (*ʿayn*) of a property owned by the founder and the spending of the proceeds (*manfaʿa*) for a charitable purpose. An essential feature is the permanence of its purpose, which may be anything not incompatible with the tenets of Islam; therefore, if, in the case of a family *waqf*, the beneficiaries are, for instance, the descendants of the founder, the poor or some other permanent purpose must be appointed as subsidiary beneficiaries in case the original beneficiaries should die out. Objects of a *waqf* are mostly immovables, but also movables so far as this is customary (Schacht, 1964, pp. 125-26).

The roots of the *waqf* are various, and include the practices of Sasanian Persia. Among the motives which came into prominence after the early centuries was the wish to counteract some of the effects of the Islamic law of inheritance, notably the fragmentation of property, and also the wish to protect property from confiscation by the state (Fischel, p. 14). The constitution of property into *waqf* was also probably seen as a means of preventing interference by the government in the way in which private fortunes might be spent. In theory, by constituting a property into *waqf* both the capital and the way in which the revenue was spent were placed outside the control of the government. This limited the freedom with which the capital could be used, but it also limited the freedom of the government to interfere with its use. The effect of *awqāf* on the economy of the country is difficult to gauge. That they contributed to the accumulation of large fortunes by rulers and their ministers and others would appear to be the case, especially where *bāzār*s in the towns and cities were concerned. The discretionary power of the *motawallī* (the administrator of the *waqf*) was limited by the principle of *maṣlaḥa*, the well-being of the *waqf,* but it was also to some extent controlled by the state in that the judge in certain cases was empowered to remove and to appoint the *motawallī*. The state, which had a fiscal interest in *waqf* property, might also appoint a special agency to oversee the operation of *awqāf,* as, for example, the *dīvān-e awqāf* under the Samanids (Naršaḵī, p. 31).

The reign of Hārūn al-Rašīd (170-93/786-809) is generally regarded as the apogee of ʿAbbasid power, but in spite of the evident prosperity, portents of decline were already to be seen. There were a number of revolts in Persia, and after the civil war between al-Amīn and al-Maʾmūn the authority of the caliphs declined in the provinces. From the 3rd/9th century onward the financial stability of the state deteriorated. Various devices were adopted to obtain money: offices were put up to auction, crown lands were sold, and private fortunes were confiscated. This last, a practice also adopted by later rulers, had the effect of putting large sums of money in the possession of rich men back in circulation (cf. Ashtor, 1976, p. 135). The farming of state revenues, already found under Hārūn al-Rašīd and earlier caliphs, became widespread from the death of al-Maʾmūn in 218/833 onward. Many of the tax-farmers, like the Barīdīs, who farmed extensive regions in the Wāseṭ district and in Ḵūzestān in the third and fourth decades of the 4th/10th century, accumulated vast fortunes (on the profits of tax-farmers and the insecurity of their position, see Ashtor, 1976, pp. 138-39).

Meanwhile a change was taking place in the composition of the caliph's armed forces. From the reign of al-Motawakkel (232-47/847-61) there was an increase in the number of Turkish slave troops, who, themselves or their forebears, had been captured or bought on the frontiers of the Islamic world. The difficulty of paying them was perennial. Increasingly, their pay was made by fiscal arrangements (*tasbībāt*) and also assignments of land (*eqṭāʿāt*; see EQṬĀʿ), and, as a result, their control over the political authority grew.

Internal revolts, foreign wars, the growing luxury of the court, over-taxation, extortion by officials, the consequent decline in agricultural production, especially in ʿErāq-e ʿArab, and the exhaustion or loss of control of the silver and gold mines, which came under the domination of the Taherids (205-59/821-72) and their Samanids successors (261-389/874-999), contributed to the decline of the caliphate. In the 3rd/9th and 4th/10th centuries large quantities of Muslim silver coins were exported through Transoxania to the Baltic lands and Scandinavia (see COINS and COINAGE), but it is not known by what channels this trade was carried on. The Zanj revolt in the southern part of ʿErāq-e ʿArab, during which parts of Ḵūzestān were taken by the rebels, further weakened the caliphate. It lasted for fourteen years and was not put down until 270/883 (Ashtor, 1976, pp. 115 ff.).

During the rebirth of Persia. Political power was contested in Persia during the 3rd/9th and 4th/10th centuries by various dynasties, the Taherids, the Saffarids (254-90/868-903), and Samanids in eastern Persia, the ʿAlids in Ṭabarestān (250-316/864-928), the Ziyarids (316-434/928-1042) in Gorgān, the Buyids (320/932-447/1055) in western and central Persia, and a number of minor local dynasties. Military campaigns between the contending parties were common, and districts frequently changed hands. But the size of their armies was probably fairly small. On the whole, the countryside was not laid waste except by bands of condottieri at the time of the rise of the Buyids. The towns and cities, with occasional exceptions, were not destroyed. Revenue appears to have been collected and tribute in some cases sent to Baghdad. ʿAbd-Allāh b. Ṭāher, at his death in 230/845, held Khorasan, Ray, Ṭabarestān, and Kermān and was administrator of the Sawād and military commander of Baghdad (*wālī al-ḥarb wa'l-šorṭa*). The revenue from his territories was said to amount to 48 million dirhams (Ṭabarī, III, pp. 1338-39; Bosworth in *Camb. Hist. Iran* IV, p. 98). The relatively modest nature of this sum compared with the figures in the three tax rolls belonging to the second half of the 2nd/8th century and the first half of the 3rd/9th century examined by von Kremer (*Culturgeschichte* I, pp. 266 ff.) suggests that his rule was not unduly harsh.

For much of the period of the Taherids Khorasan enjoyed firm and orderly government and economic prosperity as did Transoxania and Khorasan under the Samanids. The slave trade across their territories was highly organized and made a major contribution to their prosperity. Permanent slave markets existed in Šāš, Esfījāb, and other towns behind the frontier. Bukhara, Samarkand, Nīšāpūr, and other cities in Khorasan increased in size during the Samanid rule. *Dehqāns* and peasants appear to have flocked to the cities. The reasons for this are not clear. There is no evidence that the Samanids paid tribute or taxes to the caliphs, but gifts were sent from time to time (Frye, pp. 140, 153). Barthold states that "the condition of the masses in the Sāmānid period was fairly prosperous in view of the guarantee of external peace and the considerable development of trade and industry" (*Turkestan*,p. 234), and he quotes Moqaddasī's account of the merchandise exported from the towns of Transoxania (ibid., pp. 235-36). He concurs with Eṣṭaḵrī's affirmation "that the inhabitants of Transoxania possessed everything in abundance and were dependent for nothing on the produce of other lands" (ibid., p. 236). Barthold also notes the importance of trade with the nomads both for Transoxania and Ḵᵛārazm (ibid., pp. 237-38). There is, however, evidence of a shortage of money in the late Samanid period. In Bayhaq levies were made on the estates of those who died, a practice which Maḥmūd of Ḡazna abolished if the dead man had heirs (Bayhaqī, p. 130).

Sīstān prospered under the Saffarid rulers, Yaʿqūb (254-65/868-78) and his brother ʿAmr (265-87/878-900). When Yaʿqūb took Nīšāpūr from the Taherids in 259/872, he obtained a rich haul of money, clothing, and weapons. Yaʿqūb had added to his resources plunder obtained from raids on the eastern frontiers of the Islamic world, and his conquest of Fārs in the 260s/870s not only put him in possession of one of the richest provinces of the ʿAbbasid empire, but also deprived the caliphate of its revenue. ʿAmr, who succeeded his brother Yaʿqūb, received from the caliph a diploma for Khorasan, Fārs, Isfahan, Sīstān, Kermān, and Sind, and, according to some accounts, also for Gorgān and Ṭabarestān in return for tribute of one million dirhams. His relations with the caliphate were turbulent. In 270/883 he received a new diploma from al-Mowaffaq and sent a tribute of 4 million dirhams to Baghdad. In 275/889, after suffering various defeats at the hands of the caliph's forces, his governorships were restored to him in return for a tribute of 10 million dirhams. In 285/896 he sent to the caliph 4 million dirhams and magnificent presents captured by him in Eastern Afghanistan (Bosworth in *Camb. Hist. Iran* IV, pp. 119-20). Both Yaʿqūb and ʿAmr left well-filled treasuries; this suggests careful financial management on their part. The former left 50 million dirhams and 4 million dinars (or according to some sources, 800,000), and the latter 36 million dirhams and a quantity of dinars. His successor squandered this sum in about six years (ibid., p. 122).

By the third decade of the 4th/10th century the Buyids had taken possession of much of western, southwestern, and central Persia. Their main centers were Ray, Shiraz, and Baghdad, of which Moʿezz-al-Dawla took possession in 334/945. His seizure of power set the seal on the dominion of the military over the caliphate. The distribution of *eqṭā*ʿs to the troops became even more widespread. The result of this in ʿErāq-e ʿArab was disastrous.

Legally, the possession of an *eqṭā*ʿ did not give the beneficiary any juridical rights over the inhabitants. But, in practice, the system contributed to the spread of patronage and was, in the Buyid period, accompanied by widespread acts of usurpation by the military. It seems likely that Claude Cahen is right in thinking that as a result peasant proprietorship tended to disappear ("L'évolution"). Whether this was the case or not, the general picture which emerges in ʿErāq-e ʿArab and the western provinces of Persia is one of indescribable confusion and insecurity. Meskawayh states that "the landowners (*tunnā*ʾ) were reduced to wretchedness; some fled, some patiently endured the oppression, to which they were subject and for which no redress could be obtained, while others sought to surrender their estates to the *moqṭa*ʿsto placate them and to save themselves from their evils. Cultivation was at a standstill" (Margoliouth and Amedroz, *Eclipse* II, pp. 97-98, V, p. 102).

The situation was further aggravated by the fact that Buyid troops were composed of two groups, Turks and Daylamites (who were foot soldiers), between whom there was constant dissension. In 347/958-59 Moʿezz-al-Dawla ordered the pay of the Turks to be made a charge on Wāseṭ, Baṣra, and Ahvāz. Meskawayh states that they interfered with the finance officials, appropriated land, took various persons under their protection, and usurped the dues of the treasury. He adds that their example was followed by the Daylamites, whose evil exceeded all bounds after the death of Moʿezz-al-Dawla in 356/967 (Margoliouth and Amedroz, *Eclipse* II, pp. 174, 176, V, pp. 178-88, 190). Mutinies over pay by the Turks and the Daylamites continued to be a frequent occurrence.

It was not until ʿAżod-al-Dawla made himself master of ʿErāq-e ʿArab, Dīār Rabīʿa, and most of the Jazīra in 367/978 that a measure of stability was achieved and army pay issued punctually. He appears to have established an orderly administration and to have put down brigandage (Margoliouth and Amedroz, *Eclipse* II, p. 300, III, p. 43, V, pp. 322-23, VI, p. 40). He undertook measures for the development and repair of irrigation works and agriculture in ʿErāq-e ʿArab, Fārs, and Kermān, and erected many public buildings, especially in Shiraz and Baghdad. Outside Shiraz he built a military cantonment for his army, which became a small town in which business flourished and which provided him with an annual revenue of 16,000 dinars. After his death it fell into ruins (Kabir). Under his rule Fārs, and possibly other provinces in Persia, achieved economic prosperity.

Meskawayh states that ʿAżod-al-Dawla increased the basic tax (*aṣl*) in the Sawād by 10 percent; imposed a number of new dues; interfered with *awqāf*; levied duties on sales in the markets for horses, asses, and camels; increased duties on imports and exports; and instituted monopolies of the manufacture of ice and silk (Margoliouth and Amedroz, *Eclipse* III, p. 71,VI, p. 72). His practices in his home province of Fārs may possibly have been more moderate, but, if Ebn al-Jawzī is correct in stating that the tax revenue of Fārs under ʿAżod-al-Dawla was three times what it had been at the beginning of the 4th/10th century, the question arises whether ʿAżod-al-Dawla's public works were paid for by an unduly high rate of taxation or whether conditions had so improved that production had enormously increased.

Continued in Part 2.