

The Economic Role of the Caliphs' Sons in Egypt (132-232 AH / 750-847 CE)-.**Ali Hussein Faisal¹, Prof. Dr. Intisar Naseef Shaker²**¹ Tikrit University, College of Education for Humanities, Department of History, Iraq.**Specialization:** Islamic History / Abbasid / Crusades**Contact No.:** 07739352866**Email:** ahfpedh1477@st.tu.edu.iq² Tikrit University, College of Education for Humanities, Department of History, Iraq.**Specialization:** Islamic History / Abbasid / Crusades**Contact No.:** 07703069236**Email:** antsarnaseef@tu.edu.iq**Abstract**

First: Their Participation in Managing Funds, Endowments, and Grants

Second: Their Influence on Wealth Distribution and Public Spending

Section One: The Economic Role of the Caliphs' Sons

After the Abbasids seized power and the caliphate, wealth became the ultimate goal and objective of the caliphate, a tool they used to gain the loyalty of commanders and subjects. When Abu al-Abbas al-Saffah addressed the people of Kufa, he said: "God has brought you our state, so you are the happiest and most honored people in our eyes. I have increased your stipends by one hundred dirhams, so prepare yourselves, for I am al-Saffah, the one who permits bloodshed and the avenger who destroys." The Abbasids displayed extreme zeal and keen interest in accumulating and hoarding wealth to secure their state and the stability of its institutions. Consequently, matters were controlled by them and dictated by their whims. Caliph Abu Ja'far al-Mansur adopted a serious and decisive financial policy. In his sermon in Baghdad on the Day of Arafah, al-Mansur said: "O people, I am but God's sovereign on His earth, ruling you with His guidance and support. I am His treasurer of His treasury, acting according to His will, distributing it according to His desire, and giving it by His permission. God has made me a lock upon it; if He wills to open me for your stipends, the distribution of your treasury, and your provisions, He will open me; and if He wills to close me"...

I am locked up, so turn to God, O people, and ask Him on this blessed day on which He has bestowed upon you from His bounty what He has informed you of in His Book, where He, the Blessed and Exalted, says: "This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion" to guide me to what is right and direct me to what is right, and inspire me with compassion for you and kindness towards you, and open me to your gifts and the just distribution of your provisions to you, for He is All-Hearing, Ever-Near

Firstly: Their participation in the management of funds, endowments, and gifts:

During the reign of Caliph Abu Ja'far al-Mansur, the Abbasid family seized control of the reins of power; as al-Mansur distributed its positions among his uncles and close associates; Isma'il ibn Ali was appointed governor of Basra, Sulayman ibn Ali of Basra, Isa ibn Musa of Kufa, Salih ibn Ali of Qinnasrin and the border regions, al-Abbas ibn Muhammad of al-Jazira, Abdullah ibn Salih of Homs, al-Fadl ibn Salih of Damascus, Muhammad ibn Ibrahim of Jordan,

Abd al-Wahhab ibn Ibrahim of Palestine, al-Sari ibn Abdullah of Mecca, Ja'far ibn Sulayman and Yahya ibn Muhammad of Mosul, whom he later dismissed and appointed his son Ja'far in his place. According to al-Mas'udi's account, he gave his ten uncles ten thousand dirhams in a single day. Some historians have claimed that Caliph Abu Ja'far al-Mansur was stingy, earning him the nickname "Abu al-Dawanik" (Father of Coins). However, al-Tabari recounts al-Mansur's generosity: "Al-Mansur would give generously and wisely when his giving was prudent, and he would withhold even the smallest and insignificant when his giving was excessive." He also mentions that Caliph al-Mansur spent 4,833,000 dirhams on the city of al-Mudawwara. Furthermore, al-Mansur's gifts and presents were numerous, which refutes the historians' claim that he was stingy. It is noted that Caliph Abu Ja'far was the first caliph to give away 1,000 dirhams from the treasury, which was distributed through the Diwans (government offices). He also gave 10,300,000 dirhams to two sons of so-and-so (whom he named), and

700,000 dirhams to one of his wives. He granted his concubines vast estates; his estates extended westward into the Rusafa district, and another estate was given to his concubine "Hilana," whose name is well-known in Bab al-Risafa. The converter.

The reason for al-Mansur's abundant gifts was that he believed money was the strongest means of consolidating his rule. He used to say, "He whose wealth is meager will have few men; he whose men are meager will be overpowered by his enemy; he whose enemy is overpowered will see his kingdom weakened; and he whose kingdom is weakened will have his sanctuary violated." Al-Mansur spent vast sums of money to secure the succession from Isa ibn Musa to his son Muhammad al-Mahdi. The pledge of allegiance took place in 147 AH/764 CE. Accounts in the sources differ regarding the amount paid by Caliph Abu Ja'far al-Mansur to Isa ibn Musa in exchange for his relinquishing the succession. Al-Dhahabi states that al-Mansur gave Isa ibn Musa 500,000 dinars; Ibn Kathir states that al-Mansur gave Isa 12,000,000 dirhams; al-Jahshiyari states that the amount was 10,000,000 dirhams; Ibn al-Athir states that Caliph al-Mansur paid 11,000,000 dirhams to promote al-Mahdi over Isa ibn Musa; and al-Tabari states that Isa clothed his children with garments worth 10,200,000 dirhams.

When Caliph Al-Mahdi assumed the caliphate in Dhu al-Hijjah 158 AH/774 AD, he worked to transfer the succession from Isa bin Musa to his son Musa al-Hadi and after him to Harun al-Rashid, and he spent large sums of money to Isa bin Musa in return for his giving up the succession. This amount was estimated at (20,000,000) twenty million dirhams and many estates. There is another account that mentions that what Al-Mahdi paid to Isa bin Musa was equal to (10,000,000) ten million dirhams and estates in Upper Zab and Kaskar.

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The expenditures of the caliphs during the Abbasid era increased for themselves and their families. Caliph al-Mansur, who was known for his inclination towards moderation and frugality, spent two thousand dirhams annually, which means he spent approximately two and a half dirhams per day—a very small amount compared to the budget. The state during his reign clearly reflects the wealth of the state treasury. Caliph Harun al-Rashid's total daily expenses reached ten thousand dirhams, bringing his monthly expenses to three hundred thousand dirhams and his annual expenses to three million six hundred thousand (3,600,000) dirhams.

Caliph al-Ma'mun's daily expenses were not far behind his father's, reaching six thousand dinars, with a monthly expenditure of one hundred and eighty thousand dinars and an annual expenditure of two million one hundred and sixty thousand dinars (2,160,000). Caliph al-Ma'mun took pride in these expenditures to demonstrate his generosity, magnanimity, and freedom from stinginess.

The caliphs also spent lavishly on their sons, bestowing generous sums upon their tutors. Caliph al-Mahdi granted his tutors generous salaries and continuous stipends. Similarly, Caliph Harun al-Rashid bestowed gifts and money upon his sons' tutors, especially if he observed good manners and broad culture and knowledge in his sons. Caliph al-Rashid even allocated ten thousand dirhams monthly to one of his son's tutors. Caliph al-Ma'mun followed suit. The tutor would allocate salaries and stipends to his sons in recognition of their efforts in raising them.

The caliphs also bestowed financial gifts upon their sons. It is recorded that Caliph al-Mansur granted his son Salih a stipend of 300,000 dirhams, and Caliph Harun al-Rashid granted his daughter Hamduna a stipend of one million dirhams, in addition to an annual income of one hundred thousand dirhams. Al-Rashid also lavished gifts upon his son al-Qasim, even granting him access to the treasury. Al-Qasim built ornate palaces, purchased slave girls and pages, held gatherings for poets, singers, and courtiers, granted them estates, and bestowed upon them

whatever gifts he desired, to the point that some of them received in their own regions more wealth than they received from the caliph's own financial rewards.

Caliph al-Rashid ordered numerous stipends for his two sons, Muhammad al-Amin and Abdullah al-Ma'mun. Al-Amin received two hundred thousand dinars, and al-Ma'mun received one hundred thousand dinars. Later, Caliph al-Ma'mun received another one hundred thousand dinars when... He was with him in Raqqa, and shortly before al-Rashid's death, he granted al-Ma'mun a gift estimated at seven million dirhams. When al-Ma'mun became Caliph, he once granted his son al-'Abbas a gift of five hundred thousand dirhams.

The sons of the Abbasid Caliphs played a role in endowments, especially during the Hajj season. It is mentioned that Caliph al-Mahdi developed the Kufa Hajj route, digging wells and cisterns in al-Tha'labiyya and al-Hajir. He also had three wells with sweet water in al-Naqra on the Baghdad-Mecca road, and built two cisterns on the Medina road in al-Rawha'. He ordered the construction of palaces along the Mecca road, to be similar to those built by his uncle, Abu al-'Abbas al-Saffah, from al-Qadisiyya to al-Zubala. He also ordered the expansion of Ibn al-'Abbas's existing palaces along the route. In addition, he ordered the construction of waterwheels at every watering place and the renewal of the water markers and cisterns, as well as the digging of new wells and reservoirs.

Caliph Harun al-Rashid also paid attention to the Hajj route, endowing a number of wells, springs, and cisterns. He had a pool in al-Ghamra, and ordered the digging of wells in al-Naqra, al-Rawha', and al-Sayyala. Caliph Muhammad al-Amin also had wells dug in 'Alal (between Mecca and Medina) and endowed them for the service of pilgrims.

Among the wells dug by the sons of the caliphs along the Hajj route was the well of al-Husna, belonging to Umm Ja'far Zubayda bint Ja'far ibn al-Mansur. She also ordered the digging of the well of 'Ayn al-Mashash and channeled it twelve miles to Mecca, spending 1,700,000 dinars on it. She then built water reservoirs, fountains, and ablution facilities around the Grand Mosque, and constructed public water houses and water reservoirs in Mina and Arafat. She also had wells dug in Mina along the road to Mecca and endowed properties to them, the yield of which was 30,000 dinars annually.

Zubayda bint Ja'far al-Mansur also built pools near al-Qa', and in al-Shuquq, she built a circular pool with a filter. Six miles from al-Shuquq, she built a pool, and in Al-Ajfar, a Zubaydi pool called Al-Balla, and in Tawz, she built two round pools, the first known as Al-Tarfiya and the second as Al-Anaba, as she built a round pool in Samira, and in Al-Muhaddath, she built two wells and a pool for Zubayda, and she built a pool in Qaruri, and in Ma'din Bani Salim, she built a pool, and she also established a round pool in Dhat Irq. Thus, Lady Zubayda completed these projects of water pools and rest stops from Iraq to Mecca for the comfort of pilgrims and travelers, especially the poor and pious pilgrims who used to cross the road on foot, either because of their poverty or because of their piety, to gain reward, piety, and the pleasure of God Almighty.

Secondly: Their influence on wealth distribution and public spending:

As a result of the vast sums of money flowing into the treasury, some caliphs and their families indulged in extravagance and wastefulness. Consequently, the expenses of the Abbasid court soared to enormous proportions. It is reported that Caliph al-Ma'mun ibn Harun al-Rashid distributed more than twenty-four million dirhams in tax revenue in a single day. Caliph al-Mu'tasim and his son al-Wathiq would only wear a shirt once, unless it was a rare and unusual garment. The Abbasids inherited the numerous estates left by the Umayyads and their followers, expanding and adding to them through various means, including purchase, gifts, and confiscation. Consequently, the Abbasid family's holdings, particularly those of the caliphs, expanded considerably, with their state-owned estates spreading across many regions of Iraq, such as the Sawad, Kufa, Basra, Wasit, the outskirts of Baghdad, the area around Mosul, Ahwaz, Rayy, and Isfahan.

One of the reasons for the increase in the number of estates owned by the caliphs and their relatives was the system of "al-Ijja" (legal protection). Weak landowners would entrust their estates to powerful figures within the caliph's family. This involved registering the land in the name of a powerful prince to whom the landowner could turn for protection. The influential figure would then pay the land tax and manage all financial matters related to the estate, often until it came under his sole ownership.

This system of "al-Ijja" meant that the landowner would seek refuge with a prominent figure. He would register his estate or properties in his own name, so the tax collectors would not dare to use violence or injustice in collecting the land tax. They might even accept only half or a quarter of the tax, out of consideration for his status

as a powerful figure. The owner of the estate would then become a sharecropper for him, and this would be recorded in the government registers. Over the years, the estate would become the property of the one to whom he had entrusted it, and the original owner would become a partner in its produce. In other words, small landowners would entrust their lands to influential Arabs, who would then register them in the name of the Caliph or one of the high-ranking officials to protect them from the exploitation and oppression of the tax collectors. They would give these influential figures a portion of the revenue in exchange for protection from these injustices. This practice of entrusting lands arose as a means of self-preservation against the practices of highwaymen or to escape the high taxes imposed by the state, which in many cases were transferred from one province to another to relieve someone of their tax burden. The Abbasid state, in its policies towards those subject to the land tax, was keen to ensure justice and remove injustice from them. Al-Mahdi (158-169 AH / 777-785 CE) began his reign by redressing grievances, acting on his father's advice: "You must develop the land by reducing the taxes." He issued an order to all officials to alleviate the suffering of taxpayers, but they did not comply, and instances of abuse and oppression by tax collectors continued. Caliph al-Mahdi even went so far as to severely punish tax collectors by torturing those who demanded payment, beating them with clubs and placing stones on their shoulders. Therefore, the practical solutions of coercion that had been in place previously to prevent the abuses and injustices of tax collectors remained in use during this era.

During the reign of Caliph Harun al-Rashid (170-193 AH / 786-808 CE), al-Qasim, son of the Commander of the Faithful, al-Rashid, was appointed governor of Jurjan, Tabaristan, and Qazvin. So the people of Zanzan entrusted their lands to him, seeking his protection and to ward off the harm of brigands and the injustice of the officials. They wrote down the leases for them to him, becoming his farmers, and their lands became part of the estates. Another example of this entrustment is that the people of the Caucasus entrusted their lands to al-Qasim ibn al-Rashid, agreeing to pay him a second tithe in addition to the tithe due to the public treasury. Thus, their lands became part of the estates. Among the incidents that illustrate the extent of the entrustment system in the early Abbasid era is that Caliph Harun al-Rashid appointed a governor named al-Jarshi over the mountain. Al-Jarshi had a commander named Hammam ibn Hani' al-Abdi. The people of the desert in that region entrusted their lands to Hammam, who paid the public treasury dues until his death, when his son was too weak to continue the work. When Al-Ma'mun (198-218 AH / 813-833 AD) came from Khorasan, heading towards Baghdad, his sons took refuge with Al-Ma'mun, as they appealed to him with the consent of all its people to give him its neck, and to be his farmers in it on the condition that they would be honored and prevented from the vagrants and others. So he accepted it and ordered that they be strengthened and helped in its construction and interest. So it became one of the estates of the Caliphate

References

- (1) Al-Tabari, History of the Prophets and Kings, vol. 7, p. 426.
- (2) Surah Al-Ma'idah, part of verse 3.
- (3) Al-Tabari, History of the Prophets and Kings, vol. 8, p. 89.
- (4) He is Ismail ibn Ali ibn Abdullah ibn Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib ibn Hashim ibn Abd Manaf, Abu al-Hasan al-Hashimi (d. 147 AH/764 CE), the uncle of al-Saffah and al-Mansur. He was with them at al-Humaymah and went out with them when they went out to seek the caliphate. He was appointed governor of the Hajj season in the year 137 AH during the caliphate of al-Mansur and was governor of Basra. Ibn Asakir, History of Damascus, vol. 9, p. 24; al-Dhahabi, History of Islam, vol. 3, p. 818.
- (5) Ibn Khayyat, History of Khalifa ibn Khayyat, p. 127. () He is Sulayman ibn Ali ibn Abdullah ibn Abbas (d. 142 AH/759 CE): The Abbasid prince, uncle of al-Saffah and al-Mansur, one of the most generous and praised men. Al-Saffah appointed him governor of Basra and its surrounding districts, the Tigris region, Bahrain, and Oman in 133 AH. He remained there until al-Mansur dismissed him in 139 AH. He stayed in Basra until his death. Ibn Khayyat, Tarikh Khalifa ibn Khayyat, p. 127; al-Dhahabi, Tarikh al-Islam, vol. 3, p. 882.
- (6) He is Isa ibn Musa ibn Muhammad al-Abbasi (d. 167 AH/783 CE): The Abbasid prince, nephew of al-Saffah. He resided in Kufa until his death. Ibn Asakir, Tarikh Dimashq, vol. 48, p. 7; al-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam al-Nubala', vol. 7, p. 434. () He is Salih ibn Ali ibn Abdullah ibn Abbas al-Hashimi (d. 151 AH/768 CE): Uncle of al-Saffah and al-Mansur, and the first Abbasid caliph to govern Egypt. He pursued Marwan ibn Muhammad when he fled

from Syria and killed him at Busir in 132 AH. Al-Saffah then appointed him governor of Egypt in early 133 AH. He died in Qinnasrin. (Ibn Asakir, *Tarikh Dimashq*, vol. 23, p. 357;

(8) al-Dhahabi, *Siyar A'lam al-Nubala'*, vol. 7, p. 18).

(9) He is al-Abbas ibn Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Abdullah ibn Abbas (d. 186 AH/802 CE): Brother of al-Mansur and al-Saffah. Al-Mansur appointed him governor of Damascus and all of Syria. He also served as governor of al-Jazira during the reign of Harun al-Rashid. Al-Mansur sent him to conquer the Byzantines with sixty thousand men. (al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, *Tarikh Baghdad*, vol. 14, p. 5;

(10) Ibn Asakir, *Tarikh Dimashq*, vol. 26, p. 394).

(11) He is Abdullah ibn Salih ibn Ali ibn Abdullah ibn Abbas (d. 186 AH): He was with his father in al-Humayma in the Sharah region of Balqa. Al-Rashid appointed him governor of al-Awasim in the year 98 AH. (Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, vol. 11, p. 152; Ibn Asakir, *Tarikh Dimashq*, vol. 29, p. 178).

(12) He is al-Fadl ibn Salih ibn Ali ibn Abdullah ibn Abbas (d. 172 AH/788 CE): Al-Mansur appointed him to lead the Hajj pilgrimage in the year 138 AH. He was appointed governor of Egypt by al-Mahdi at the end of the year 168 AH while he was in Iraq. His governorship lasted less than a year. He was appointed governor of Damascus, where he renovated the gates of its mosque and the dome in its courtyard. (Ibn Asakir, *Tarikh Dimashq*, vol. 48, p. 317).

(13) He is Muhammad ibn Imam Ibrahim ibn Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Abdullah ibn al-Abbas al-Hashimi (d. 185 AH): He was appointed governor of Damascus by his cousin al-Mahdi, then by al-Rashid, and he was also in charge of Mecca and the Hajj season. He was a man of great importance and was considered a potential successor to the caliphate. Al-Dhahabi, *Siyar A'lam al-Nubala'*, vol. 9, p. 88. () He is Abd al-Wahhab ibn Ibrahim al-Imam ibn Muhammad, from the Banu Abbas (d. 157 AH/774 CE). His uncle, al-Mansur, sent him in 140 AH with seventy thousand men to Malatya, and sent al-Hasan ibn Qahtaba with him. The Byzantines feared them, and they rebuilt Malatya after it had been destroyed by the Franks. He performed the Hajj in 146 AH and led the summer campaigns in 15 AH and 152 AH. He died in Baghdad. (Ibn Khayyat, *Tarikh Khalifa*, p. 123; Ibn Asakir, *Tarikh Dimashq*, vol. 37, p. 299).

(14) He is al-Sari ibn Abd Allah ibn al-Harith ibn al-Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib. Al-Mansur appointed him governor of al-Yamamah and also made him deputy governor of Mecca. (Ibn Khayyat, *Tarikh Khalifa*, p. 122; Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya wa al-Nihaya*, vol. 13, p. 386).

(15) He is Ja'far ibn Sulayman ibn Ali ibn Abdullah ibn Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib (d. 175 AH): He was a generous and praiseworthy man, a learned and virtuous scholar, and one of those described as courageous and chivalrous. He was born in al-Sharah in Balqa, and he held the governorship of the Hijaz and the governorship of Basra. Al-Dhahabi, *Siyar*, vol. 8, p. 239;

(16) Al-Dhahabi, *Tarikh al-Islam*, vol. 4, p. 593.

(17) He is Yahya ibn Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Abdullah ibn Abbas (d. 135 AH/752 CE): brother of al-Saffah and al-Mansur. He was among those who supported the Umayyads. When the Abbasids rose to power, al-Saffah appointed him governor of Mosul, then transferred him to the governorship of Fars, where he remained until his death. Ibn Asakir, *Tarikh Dimashq*, vol. 64, p. 366.

(18) Al-Tabari, *Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk*, vol. 8, pp. 25-26.

(19) Muruj al-Dhahab, vol. 3, p. 218.

(20) Al-Daniq: a thief (metaphorically). Al-Daniq: one-sixth of a dinar or dirham. Al-Tabari, *Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk*, vol. 7, p. 619;

(21) al-Zubaidi, *Taj al-Arus*, vol. 25, p. 310.

(22) *Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk*, vol. 7, p. 655.

(23) Al-Dinawari, *Al-Akhbar al-Tiwal*, p. 326.

(24) Al-Tabari, *History of the Prophets and Kings*, vol. 8, p. 85.

(25) Al-Tabari, *History of the Prophets and Kings*, vol. 8, p. 26.

(26) Qati'at Risana is located near Bab al-Sha'ir in western Baghdad. Al-Hamawi, *Mu'jam al-Buldan*, vol. 4, p. 377.

(27) Hilana, with a fatha on the ha' and a silent ya', followed by an alif and a nun, is the name of the steward of al-Mansur, the Commander of the Faithful. She held a high position with him, and it is said that she was named Hilana because she frequently said "Hiya al-an" (I am now) when she urged someone to do something quickly.

She dug this basin on the eastern side and made it public, so it was named after her. At Bab al-Mahwal on the eastern side are fiefs granted to Hilana by al-Mansur. Al-Hamawi, Mu'jam al-Buldan, vol. 2, p. 320.

(28) Al-Hamawi, Mu'jam al-Buldan, vol. 2, p. 320.

(29) Al-Ya'qubi, Tarikh al-Ya'qubi, vol. 2, p. 466.

(30) Al-Dhahabi, Shams al-Din Muhammad ibn Ahmad, Duwal al-Islam, Dar Ihya al-Turath al-Islami, Qatar, 1988, vol. 1, p. 101.

(31) Ibn Kathir, Al-Bidaya wa'l-Nihaya, vol. 13, p. 408.

(32) Al-Wuzara' wa'l-Kuttab, edited by Mustafa al-Saqqa et al., 2nd ed., Matba'at al-Babi al-Halabi, Cairo, 1980, p. 146.

(33) Al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh, vol. 5, p. 151.

(34) Al-Tabari, Tarikh al-Rusul wa'l-Muluk, vol. 8, p. 25.

(35) Ibn Kathir, Al-Bidaya wa'l-Nihaya, vol. 13, p. 479..

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