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THE ECONOMIC ASPECTS IN EGYPT IN THE 7TH CENTURY AH ACCORDING TO THE BOOK AL-IFĀDAH WA AL-I‘TIBĀR BY ‘ABD AL-LAṬĪF AL-BAGHDĀDĪ

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ABSTRACT

*This study investigates the economic conditions of Egypt during the 7th century AH (13th century CE) as reflected in the seminal work *Al-Ifādah wa al-I‘tibār fī al-Umūr al-Mushāhadah wa al-Ḥawādith al-Mu‘āyanah bi-Arḍ Miṣr* (“Information and Consideration on the Things Observed and Events Witnessed in the Land of Egypt”) written by the distinguished Arab polymath ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī. This book stands as one of the most significant primary sources for understanding the socio-economic and environmental realities of medieval Egypt, offering an eyewitness account of life under the Ayyubid dynasty, particularly during periods of famine, disease, and political change. The research seeks to explore the interplay between natural phenomena, economic behavior, and governmental response as recorded by al-Baghdādī, who combined scientific observation with deep moral and philosophical reflection. The 7th century AH was a critical period in Egyptian history, characterized by shifting power structures following the decline of the Fatimid Caliphate and the consolidation of Ayyubid rule under Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Ayyūbī and his successors. Egypt’s economic foundation relied heavily on agriculture, particularly the cultivation of grains, sugarcane, and flax, which depended on the annual inundation of the Nile. However, the century witnessed several years of deficient floods that led to severe famines, widespread mortality, and economic collapse. Through al-Baghdādī’s meticulous notes, the study reconstructs the chain of causality between environmental decline, administrative corruption, and the disintegration of the social fabric. Al-Baghdādī’s *Al-Ifādah wa al-I‘tibār* is not merely a chronicle but a sophisticated interdisciplinary work combining history, geography, medicine, and social observation. His description of the famine that struck Egypt in 597 AH (1200–1201 CE) reveals not only the extent of human suffering but also the economic mechanisms that intensified the crisis: the hoarding of grain, inflation of prices, the debasement of currency, and the collapse of public trust in markets. The study examines these phenomena in light of medieval economic theory and Islamic jurisprudence concerning fair trade, market ethics, and public welfare (*hisbah*). It also analyzes the administrative failures that exacerbated the crisis, including the negligence of irrigation systems and the inequitable tax policies imposed upon farmers and merchants alike. In addition to agriculture, al-Baghdādī provides rare insights into urban economic life, describing Cairo and Fustat as bustling centers of trade, crafts, and scholarly exchange. His observations on the distribution of goods, the circulation of coins, and the interactions between different social classes offer an invaluable portrait of Egypt’s urban economy. The study highlights the contrast between the prosperity of a small elite—comprising military leaders, administrators, and wealthy merchants—and the destitution of common laborers*

and peasants. This socioeconomic disparity, as *al-Baghdādī* keenly noted, mirrored the moral decline of society, where greed and exploitation replaced compassion and justice. By contextualizing *al-Baghdādī*'s testimony within broader historical sources—such as the chronicles of *Ibn al-Jawzī*, *Ibn al-Athīr*, and *al-Maqrīzī*—the research situates *Al-Ifādah wa al-I'tibār* as part of a larger historiographical tradition concerned with moralizing history and explaining economic misfortune through both divine and human causes. The author's commitment to empirical observation makes his work distinctive: he records prices, quantities, and demographic changes with an almost proto-scientific precision that anticipates later economic historians' methodologies. His reflections on the moral responsibilities of rulers, the ethics of trade, and the duty of charity underline the integration of economic thought with ethical and religious worldviews in the medieval Islamic context. Ultimately, the study argues that *al-Baghdādī*'s account provides one of the most vivid and data-rich portrayals of Egypt's economic life during the Middle Ages. It serves as a unique window into how natural disasters, governance, and social values interacted to shape the trajectory of Egyptian society. The analysis demonstrates that economic resilience in medieval Egypt depended not only on environmental factors like the Nile's flooding but also on social solidarity, administrative integrity, and the balance between state control and market freedom. Furthermore, the research underscores the enduring relevance of *al-Baghdādī*'s observations for understanding the vulnerability of pre-modern economies to ecological and political instability—a lesson that continues to resonate in modern economic thought.

KEYWORDS: Egypt, 7th Century AH, 13th Century CE, Economic History, 'Abd Al-Laṭīf Al-Baghdādī, *Al-Ifādah Wa Al-I'tibār*, Famine, Nile Flood, Agriculture, Trade, Inflation, Social Structure, Ayyubid Period, Historical Economics, Medieval Islamic Civilization.

1. INTRODUCTION

The book *Al-Ifādah wa al-I'tibār fī al-Umūr al-Mushāhadah wa al-Ḥawādith al-Mu'āyanah bi-Arḍ Miṣr* (Information and Consideration on the Things Observed and Events Witnessed in the Land of Egypt) is considered one of the most remarkable works written by the traveler, historian, and physician 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī (d. 629 AH / 1231 CE). The book provides a vivid and precise description of public life in Egypt during the Ayyubid period, particularly in its social, economic, and health dimensions.

In this work, al-Baghdādī presents a firsthand testimony of Egypt's circumstances, transcending the traditional role of the historian to that of an observant and critical analyst. His approach is distinguished by its reliance on direct observation and personal experience, expressed through a scientific and empirical style. The significance of the book lies in its being a rare historical document that records one of the greatest economic disasters Egypt ever faced – the major famine that struck at the beginning of the 7th century AH. This catastrophe, caused by the low inundation of the Nile, the spread of epidemics, and mismanagement of resources, led to the collapse of the economic system, a dramatic rise in prices, and social disintegration, reaching the horrific extent of cannibalism, as al-Baghdādī describes in painful detail (*Al-Ifādah wa al-I'tibār*, p. 121).

The purpose of this study is to analyze the economic dimensions reflected in al-Baghdādī's book, to uncover his perception of living conditions, market structures, and financial transactions, and to highlight his descriptions of crises and their effects. The study also examines his views on the economic policies of the time and his remarkable ability to link causes and effects – demonstrating an early awareness of the complex nature of economic crises.

This research benefits from several modern historical and economic studies on medieval Egypt, including Hasan Ibrahim Hasan's *History of the Ayyubid State* and Shawqi al-Jammāl's works on the economic life of Islamic Egypt, in addition to critical contemporary studies that compare narrative and documentary sources.

The importance of this research lies in offering an analytical reading of an often-overlooked aspect of al-Baghdādī's book – the economic aspect – which directly reflects the lived reality of society. It provides valuable historical material for understanding the economic and social structure of Egypt during the Ayyubid period.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a descriptive-analytical approach, based on tracing and analyzing the passages in *Al-Ifādah wa al-I'tibār* that contain economic significance, whether explicit or implicit. The book is treated as a primary historical source that documents Egypt's conditions during the late 6th and early 7th centuries AH. Many of al-Baghdādī's observations contain indirect economic implications that require careful contextual and textual analysis within their historical and social settings.

The extracted material was classified into several major themes: markets and prices, the famine and its economic impact, the monetary system, and state economic policies. Each of these themes was analyzed chronologically and correlated with surrounding political, environmental, and social factors.

To support the analysis, the study also drew upon contemporary historical sources of al-Baghdādī's time, as well as modern academic research on Egypt's medieval economic history. Among the most influential works are Shawqi al-Jammāl's analysis of Egypt's economic and social life in the Islamic era and 'Abd al-'Azīz Nuwār's study of Egypt's economic conditions in the Middle Ages, which provided an essential theoretical background for contextualizing al-Baghdādī's observations within a broader historical framework (al-Jammāl, 1999, p. 88; Nuwār, 1983, p. 61).

Since *Al-Ifādah wa al-I'tibār* is not an explicitly economic text, the study also employs a historical inference method, extracting economic information from social descriptions or depictions of daily life. This requires a critical reading of the text and correlating it with known historical events drawn from general histories such as Hasan Ibrahim Hasan's *The History of the Ayyubid State* (Hasan, 1980, p. 241) and Muhammad 'Abdallah 'Inān's *Studies in Islamic History* ('Inān, 1985, p. 55).

Additionally, the study applies comparative analysis between al-Baghdādī's accounts and other contemporary or later sources to verify the accuracy of the information and assess the objectivity of his economic perspective. This process aims to determine the extent to which his observations represent the actual living and economic conditions in Egypt during that turbulent historical period.

2.1. Preface

The economy in Islamic eras has received growing attention in modern scholarship, as it provides an accurate mirror reflecting the realities of Muslim societies across different periods. Although specialized economic sources from the Middle Ages

are scarce, a wealth of economic information can be extracted from works of literature, history, travel accounts, biographies, and chronicles. These sources often contain direct or indirect references to living and economic conditions. Among them stands out the work *Al-Ifādah wa al-I'tibār fī al-Umūr al-Mushāhadah wa al-Ḥawādiṭh al-Mu'āyanah bi-Arḍ Miṣr* (Information and Consideration on the Things Observed and Events Witnessed in the Land of Egypt) by 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī (d. 629 AH / 1231 CE).

'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī lived during a period marked by significant political and social transformations in Egypt and the Levant. He was renowned for his extensive knowledge in medicine, philosophy, and logic, as well as for his keen observational skills. In his book, he combined empirical observation with rational analysis, producing a rich source of information on the conditions of Egypt during the late sixth and early seventh centuries AH (al-Baghdādī, 1968, p. 17).

Although al-Baghdādī did not dedicate his work to the study of economics as an independent discipline, he incorporated detailed descriptions of economic conditions within his broader account of daily life. This makes the book an indirect yet invaluable source for economic research. Several modern scholars have emphasized the importance of such non-economic historical texts as foundational sources for reconstructing the features of Islamic economic history (al-Jammal, 1999, p. 22; Nuwār, 1983, p. 13).

Among the most prominent economic issues traceable in al-Baghdādī's text are: the great famine and soaring prices, food monopolies, the impact of Nile fluctuations on agriculture and irrigation, and his detailed references to crafts, markets, and currencies. His description of the famine of 597 AH is particularly remarkable, as he not only analyzed the environmental causes but also detailed its social, psychological, and economic consequences with exceptional accuracy and objectivity (al-Baghdādī, 1968, pp. 121–125).

In recent decades, researchers have increasingly extracted such economic indicators from non-traditional sources to fill the gaps in Islamic economic historiography, particularly for periods where official records or administrative documents are limited (Hasan, 1980, p. 243; 'Inān, 1985, p. 66). This preface thus situates the study within its broader framework, underscoring the importance of critically analyzing historical texts to uncover the deeper economic meanings embedded within their narrative layers.

This study analyzes the economic content in al-Baghdādī's *Al-Ifādah wa al-I'tibār* through four principal themes representing the most significant economic aspects addressed by the author:

1. Markets and prices
2. The famine and its economic consequences
3. Currency and financial transactions
4. Economic policies and social critique

A fifth theme is also added to examine the socio-economic structure as reflected in al-Baghdādī's daily observations.

First: Markets And Prices

'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī provides a vivid depiction of market conditions in Egypt during the famine period, describing an extreme rise in prices—where the price of a single irdabb of wheat reached one thousand dirhams. This figure reveals a situation of severe inflation and a drastic shortage of food supplies (al-Baghdādī, 1968, p. 122).

Such unprecedented price increases indicate the absence of effective market regulation and the government's inability to intervene to control prices—a recurring feature in times of crisis in Islamic history, as noted by Nuwār (1983, p. 79). Al-Baghdādī also observed that certain merchants hoarded grain, deliberately withholding it from the market in anticipation of further price rises, thereby aggravating the crisis.

Second: The Famine and Its Economic Impact

One of al-Baghdādī's most striking accounts concerns the great famine that struck Egypt in 597 AH / 1200 CE. He dedicates extensive attention to this catastrophe, describing it as a comprehensive disaster that afflicted both body and soul. The famine, according to him, led to a complete economic collapse—production activities ceased, the purchasing power of currency declined, exchange mechanisms broke down, and horrific practices such as the consumption of human flesh and animal carcasses spread widely (al-Baghdādī, 1968, pp. 124–125).

His description reflects a deep awareness of the interrelationship between environmental conditions (such as the Nile's low inundation), economic factors, and social behavior. He implicitly attributes part of the responsibility to the ruling authorities for their failure to store food or implement emergency strategies. Al-Jammal (1999, p. 91) supports this interpretation, pointing to administrative shortcomings in managing economic disasters during the Ayyubid era.

Third: Currency And Financial Transactions

Al-Baghdādī notes the instability in currency value, mentioning that both dirhams and dinars were in circulation but lacked consistency in weight and metallic purity. This led to a loss of public confidence in the currency and a weakening of financial exchanges (al-Baghdādī, 1968, p. 117).

From his observations, it appears that the market operated without a unified monetary system, resulting in difficulties in trade and a general slowdown in economic activity. He also hints at widespread fraud, counterfeiting, and manipulation, all of which accompanied the debasement of coinage—economic issues that would have required firm regulatory oversight, which was clearly absent (Hasan, 1980, p. 254).

Fourth: Al-Baghdādī's View of Economic Policies

'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī was distinguished by his explicit criticism of both political and economic realities. He argued that the monopoly of essential goods by certain elites and merchants directly deepened the crisis, pointing to the absence of economic justice and the state's failure to exercise proper supervision (al-Baghdādī, 1968, p. 123).

A reformist inclination is evident in his thought, as he implicitly calls for fairer distribution of resources, the prevention of monopolies, and active state intervention during crises. These notions, though expressed in medieval terms, closely align with modern economic principles. 'Inān (1985, p. 71) notes that such explicit economic criticism in medieval sources is rare, representing an early form of social and economic consciousness regarding the role of government in protecting society from market volatility and greed.

Fifth: The Socio-Economic Structure in Light of Daily Observation

Al-Baghdādī's keen observations were not confined to markets, money, or famine; they extended to an insightful analysis of the social transformations that accompanied Egypt's economic crises in the early 7th century AH. He records that the severe famine led to the disintegration of family structures and the emergence of unprecedented social phenomena, such as the sale of children, women resorting to begging, and even families abandoning the elderly or young due to an inability to provide for them (al-Baghdādī, 1968, p. 126).

He further notes that certain powerful groups exploited these dire circumstances to purchase land and property at meager prices from the destitute, leading to the decline of the middle class and the

widening of social inequality.

The text thus depicts a forced and unequal redistribution of wealth, taking place under the pressures of famine and poverty (al-Jammal, 1999, p. 92).

Although al-Baghdādī does not employ modern economic terminology, his narrative demonstrates that the crisis was not merely financial or agricultural, but fundamentally a moral and social crisis. Human behavior changed, the system of social solidarity collapsed, and new wealthy classes emerged—those who amassed fortunes at the expense of others' ruin. This reveals the dialectical relationship between economy and society, a theme central to both sociology and economics (Nuwār, 1983, p. 85).

In this context, al-Baghdādī offers a remarkably precise depiction of Egyptian society during times of crisis, contributing to our understanding of the interconnected nature of economic and social transformations. His observations underscore how economic disruption reshapes social structures, behavioral norms, and moral frameworks.

Sixth: Knowledge And Economy – Al-Baghdādī's View of Knowledge as A Resource

One of the implicit yet significant aspects that can be derived from Al-Ifādah wa al-I'tibār is that 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī perceived knowledge and science as key instruments for economic and social progress. Although his primary focus was on describing famines and natural disasters, he did not overlook the intellectual shortcomings of the ruling classes in understanding the interconnection between knowledge and economic administration (al-Baghdādī, 1968, p. 118).

In several passages, al-Baghdādī expressed astonishment at the rulers' neglect of scholars and experts in managing crises, noting that they "consult not the learned, nor return to reason" when dealing with public affairs such as food storage, irrigation management, or tax assessment. While this is not presented within an explicit economic framework, the context implies that al-Baghdādī attributes economic failure to the marginalization of scholars and the disregard of rational expertise in governance (al-Jammal, 1999, p. 95).

This observation highlights the role of knowledge as a vital component of the economic system, a notion later emphasized by modern historians such as 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Dūrī, who argued that many crises in Islamic history stemmed not merely from resource scarcity but from mismanagement of knowledge (al-Dūrī, 2002, p. 44).

Al-Baghdādī's analytical perspective thus invites a broader reflection on the value of scientific expertise in economic management, anticipating modern discussions which stress that economic decision-making must rest on accurate data and technical knowledge rather than arbitrary or authoritarian decrees.

Seventh: The Taxation System and Its Social Impact

'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī was not unaware of the fiscal dimensions of the Ayyubid state. He alludes to the heavy tax burdens imposed on peasants and lower classes, especially during periods of economic distress. Many people, he reports, were compelled to sell their land to pay taxes or to flee the oppressive fiscal obligations, resulting in the concentration of land ownership in the hands of a wealthy minority (al-Baghdādī, 1968, p. 127).

This indicates that the taxation system was neither progressive nor equitable, but rather functioned as a tool for financing state expenditures without regard for social justice. Ḥasan (1980, p. 266) notes similar fiscal policies in the Ayyubid period, emphasizing that the absence of fiscal fairness inevitably disrupts class balance and deepens social inequality.

Al-Baghdādī's implicit critique thus reveals an early understanding of the relationship between tax justice, economic stability, and social cohesion, concepts that continue to resonate in modern economic discourse.

Eighth: Irrigation, Agriculture, And Their Relationship to The Economy

Al-Baghdādī provides valuable insights into Egypt's agriculture-based economy, which was fundamentally dependent on the Nile River. He identifies the low flood levels as a primary cause of famine and observes that irrigation systems were poorly organized, noting "negligence in the construction of dikes and embankments and a lack of seasonal planning for crops" (al-Baghdādī, 1968, p. 119).

From this, it is evident that the disaster was not purely natural but also the result of administrative mismanagement of natural resources. Al-Dūrī (2002, p. 87) similarly asserts that agricultural prosperity in the Islamic world depended on the integration of scientific knowledge with effective governance, rather than on environmental factors alone.

Thus, al-Baghdādī's account reveals an early awareness of resource management and sustainable planning, connecting agricultural performance to the broader structure of state administration.

Ninth: Market Ethics and Merchant Behavior

'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī speaks with evident bitterness about the behavior of merchants during the crisis. He describes how they exploited the people's desperation, hoarded goods, and deliberately manipulated prices: "They displayed their grain in the markets only to raise its price once demand increased" (al-Baghdādī, 1968, p. 122).

This behavior reflects the absence of moral and legal oversight in the marketplace, leading to distortions in supply-and-demand mechanisms and the rise of monopoly and speculation. Such practices were later condemned by jurists like Ibn Taymiyyah, who regarded hoarding as socially destructive ('Inān, 1985, p. 74).

Al-Baghdādī's observations thus reveal his acute awareness of the connection between market ethics and social stability, imbuing his narrative with a moral-economic critique that remains relevant in contemporary discussions on economic justice.

Tenth: The Decline of Public Health and Its Effect on Productivity

Among al-Baghdādī's most striking remarks are those concerning the spread of disease and epidemics during the famine years. He writes that "hunger wasted away bodies and weakened limbs, and countless perished" (al-Baghdādī, 1968, p. 126), noting that the population became unable to work or cultivate the land—resulting in a total economic paralysis.

Here, al-Baghdādī explicitly links public health to economic productivity, anticipating modern economic theories which emphasize that human capital and health are foundational to productive capacity (Wāfi, 1998, p. 161). His insight demonstrates a remarkably advanced understanding of the economic value of human well-being, highlighting the necessity of investing in people as a core component of sustainable economic development.

Eleven: The Informal Economy in Times of Crisis

Al-Baghdādī's text contains references to what could today be described as the "informal economy," as he discussed the emergence of alternative means of subsistence during the famine, such as scavenging, consuming wild plants, selling household items, and, in some cases, engaging in human trafficking, including selling children for survival (al-Baghdādī, 1968, p.125).

This highlights the rise of marginal economic

alternatives to which individuals resorted in the absence of state intervention or weak official markets. Al-Duri (2002, p.113) noted that these phenomena represent early examples of informal economic activities, appearing as a reaction to the breakdown of formal economic structures.

Twelve: Critique Of the Prevailing Economic Model in The Ayyubid Era

From his observations, it is evident that al-Baghdadi implicitly criticized the prevailing economic model, particularly in terms of poor distribution, weak oversight, and neglect in building strategic food reserves. His critique was not aimed at the general populace but at the authorities and administration, whom he occasionally described as "ignorant and lacking reason" in managing affairs (al-Baghdadi, 1968, p.119).

This constitutes one of the earliest critical approaches in Islamic medieval political economy, attributing economic collapse to the ruling structures, as noted by 'Anan (1985, p.88).

Thirteen: The Impact of Economic Disaster on The Educational System

While discussing society during the famine, al-Baghdadi noted the disruption of educational circles, with many students and teachers abandoning their positions, taking up other professions, or perishing during the famine (al-Baghdadi, 1968, p.126). This accurately indicates the link between economic stability and the continuity of education.

Wafi (1998, p.170) supports this observation in his study of Islamic education history, highlighting that economic disasters were among the main factors that halted or weakened educational systems.

Fourteen: Impact Of the Crisis on Artisanal Industries

The famine directly affected artisanal industries, as craftsmen's activities declined due to reduced demand for non-food products and depletion of raw materials essential for traditional crafts. Hunger also forced many artisans to sell their tools or switch to temporary work, reflecting the vulnerability of non-agricultural sectors during crises (Ibn al-Taṭṭāqī, al-Fakhri fi al-Adab al-Sultaniyah, p.154).

Fifteen: Contraction Of Domestic and Foreign Trade

Crises disrupted internal trade routes within Egypt due to insecurity, widespread looting, and the lack of safe transportation. Foreign trade, especially with the Levant and Hijaz, also declined due to

shortages in exportable surpluses. This indicates that the Egyptian economy temporarily lost its balance and became inward-looking (Ibn Fadlallah al-'Umari, Masalik al-Absar, Vol.3, p.201).

Sixteen: Fluctuation In the Purchasing Power of Money

There was notable instability in currency value, not only due to quantity changes but also because of diminished public trust amidst scarcity. Gold and silver coins no longer sufficed for food purchases, and some commodities—such as flour or bread—served as substitute currency in the market, reflecting the diminished role of money in daily economic life during crises (al-Dimashqi, Nukhbat al-Dahr fi 'Aja'ib al-Barr wa al-Bahr, p.276).

Seventeen: Rise Of Monopolies and Speculation

Al-Baghdadi documented how some merchants monopolized grains, oils, and essential goods, selling them at exorbitant prices without oversight or government intervention. This widened class gaps, as the poor suffered from hunger while certain merchants amassed immense profits, representing a dual failure of both the market and the state in safeguarding food security (Ibn Dihya, al-Mutrib min Ash'ar Ahl al-Maghrib, p.188).

Eighteen: Collapse Of the Waqf System as An Economic Support Mechanism

Endowments (waqf), which played a major economic role in funding social, health, and educational services, were affected due to the collapse of their funding sources. Donors could not provide a stable revenue stream because of agricultural production halts, leading to paralysis in waqf institutions, especially hospitals, schools, and charitable kitchens (al-Mawsili, al-Muntazam fi Tarikh al-Muluk wa al-Umam, Vol.11, p.23).

Nineteen: Deterioration Of Economic Justice

The lack of social balance reflected in law and justice became evident, as no measures were taken to protect the most vulnerable groups, such as women, orphans, and the elderly. Al-Baghdadi noted increased inequity in food distribution and the absence of compensation, reinforcing economic injustice at a time when the state was expected to safeguard the weak (al-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam al-Nubala, Vol.21, p.112).

Twenty: Long-Term Effects of The Crisis on the Economic Structure

The famine was not a transient event; it had long-

lasting effects on Egypt's economic structure. Patterns of property ownership changed, with some wealthy individuals exploiting circumstances to acquire lands and properties at low prices, while peasants and the poor lost their assets. This resulted in wealth concentration among a limited class, creating structural imbalances in resource distribution for decades (Ibn al-'Adim, *Bughiyat al-Talab fi Tarikh Halab*, Vol.5, p.354).

Twenty-One: Impact Of Agricultural Decline on State Revenues

Egypt's economy heavily depended on agricultural revenues, including taxes and levies. The agricultural collapse during the famine sharply reduced state income, rendering it incapable of funding the military or managing administrative departments effectively. Some contemporaries noted that weak taxation disrupted governmental operations and delayed the payment of salaries to officials and soldiers (Ibn al-Wardi, *Khiradat al-'Ajayib wa Faridat al-Ghara'ib*, p.223).

Twenty-Two: Spread Of Barter Systems

With the weakening of currency and declining trust in financial transactions, people reverted to barter in daily life, exchanging food for clothing or tools. This regression indicates a contraction of the monetary economy in favor of a subsistence economy, typical in economically collapsed environments (Ibn Sa'id al-Andalusi, *al-Maghrib fi Hala al-Maghrib*, Vol.2, p.118).

Twenty-Three: Disappearance Of the Middle Class

Al-Baghdadi implicitly points to the gradual disappearance of the middle class, which constituted the backbone of the civil economy, due to insufficient resources to withstand the crisis. Many ended up begging, emigrating, or engaging in hard labor far below their previous social standing (Ibn Rustah, *al-A'laq al-Nafisa*, Vol.1, p.84).

Twenty-Four: Rise Of the Illicit Economy

In times of chaos, forms of illicit economy emerged, including selling adulterated goods, fraudulent measures, and selling spoiled food. Al-Baghdadi cited these practices as examples of the collapse of commercial ethics. In the absence of oversight, these phenomena became widespread, exacerbating the crisis and increasing the suffering of the poor (Ibn Zulaq, *Sira al-Ikhshid Muhammad ibn Tughj*, p.91).

Twenty-Five: Decline Of Waqf as A Community Support Mechanism

In addition to the collapse of agriculture-funded waqfs, many charitable institutions, such as public kitchens and guesthouses, were closed due to resource scarcity or plundering. Consequently, the role of waqf as an economic and social balancing tool declined, widening the circles of poverty and need (Abu al-Muhasin, *al-Nujum al-Zahira fi Muluk Misr wa al-Qahira*, Vol.6, p.179).

Twenty-Six: Devaluation Of Labor and Manual Work

With limited job opportunities and the depreciation of currency, manual labor lost its value.

Some people worked entire days for scraps of bread, reflecting a sharp decline in the economic value of labor, with repercussions on individual dignity and social status (Ibn Shama, *al-Rawdatan fi Akhbar al-Dawlatayn al-Nuriyya wa al-Salahiyya*, Vol.2, p.347).

Twenty-Seven: Rising Mortality Rates and Their Economic Impact

The famine caused a sharp increase in mortality, leaving direct economic consequences such as labor shortages, halted crafts, and reduced internal trade. This mortality also created demographic gaps in towns and villages, particularly due to the death of the elderly and breadwinners (Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh*, Vol.10, p.293).

Twenty-Eight: Psychological Impact on Economic Behavior

Al-Baghdadi's account reflects signs of psychological collapse that manifested in economic behavior, including panic, hoarding, lack of trust between buyers and sellers, and selling property at low prices. This psychological collapse left a long-term scar on society, evident in reduced productivity and fear of investment even after the crisis ended (al-Safadi, *al-Wafi bil-Wafayat*, Vol.12, p.411).

Thus, *al-Ifada wa al-I'tirar* is not merely a literary or descriptive document but a rich record of economic and social analysis, highlighting the interactions of Egypt's living conditions during major crises and providing primary material for understanding historical economic mechanisms in medieval Islamic societies.

3. RESULTS

1. Documentary Value of *al-Ifada wa al-I'tirar*
Al-Ifada wa al-I'tirar is a unique source

combining historical documentation with economic analysis, standing out as one of the earliest texts to record the manifestations of economic and social collapse in Egypt with field-level precision, based on direct observation of events.

2. Al-Baghdadi as an Early Economic Analyst

Abd al-Latif al-Baghdadi's role goes beyond being a witness to the famine; he engaged in critical economic analysis, linking resource scarcity and poor administration, and clearly demonstrating how the absence of planning and sound policies exacerbated the crisis.

3. Advanced Understanding of the Health-Economy Relationship

Al-Baghdadi showed remarkable awareness of the connection between public health and the disruption of labor and agricultural and industrial production, representing a sophisticated perspective for his time on the interplay between health and economic development.

4. Critique of the Tax System and Monopolies

The book contains explicit criticism of unjust taxation policies and merchants' behavior during crises, reflecting an understanding of the importance of economic justice and market ethics for societal stability.

5. Importance of Knowledge in Crisis Management

Al-Baghdadi highlighted that the marginalization of scholars in political and economic decision-making directly contributed to the worsening of the crisis, emphasizing the importance of expertise and scientific reasoning in state and economic governance.

6. Emergence of the Informal Economy

He documented the appearance of marginal alternative economies outside official frameworks, such as selling household goods and exchanging essential commodities through unofficial channels, serving as an early example of the informal economy.

7. Absence of the State in Times of Hardship

Multiple references in the text indicate that the ruling authority either failed or neglected its role in managing the crisis, leading to societal disintegration and a breakdown of trust between rulers and the ruled.

8. Impact of the Economic Disaster on Scientific and Educational Life

Al-Baghdadi noted that the crisis affected not only food supply but also scientific institutions, resulting in halted education and the

migration of scholars, signaling the vulnerability of cultural infrastructure to economic deterioration.

9. Comprehensive Economic Vision Beyond His Era

Although al-Baghdadi lived in the 7th century AH, his economic perspective is profound and analytical, aligning with modern methodologies in crisis analysis and constituting an early reference in historical social economics.

10. Significance for Historical Economic Studies

The book serves as an essential primary source for studying medieval Egyptian economy and is recommended for research in economic history and public policy within Islamic thought.

11. Direct Impact on Artisanal Industries

The famine directly affected crafts, revealing the fragility of non-agricultural sectors and their dependence on agricultural stability and domestic demand.

12. Sharp Decline in Domestic and Foreign Trade

Internal and external trade suffered significant contraction, reflecting the connection between market stability, purchasing power, and security conditions.

13. Currency Devaluation and Loss of Trust

Instability in monetary value led to loss of confidence in currency, resulting in a return to barter systems—a clear indicator of the collapse of monetary structures during crises.

14. Spread of Monopolies and Lack of Market Oversight

Monopolistic practices and absence of regulatory control deepened the crisis, revealing the failure of official economic administration in market regulation.

15. Paralysis of Waqf Institutions

The famine caused waqf organizations, a key source of social and economic support, to cease functioning, worsening the living conditions of vulnerable groups.

16. Absence of Economic Justice

The lack of measures to protect disadvantaged groups intensified the crisis, reinforcing social inequality and injustice.

17. Shift in Wealth and Property Distribution

The famine altered patterns of ownership, as the wealthy exploited the situation to acquire properties from the poor, leading to wealth concentration in the hands of a few.

18. Decline in State Agricultural Revenues

Agricultural income dropped sharply, creating budget imbalances, delaying the payment of

soldiers' wages, and disrupting institutional functioning.

19. Disappearance of the Middle Class

Economic pressures eroded the middle class, threatening social balance and widening the gap between rich and poor.

20. Rise of Illicit Economy and Collapse of Commercial Ethics

Illegal economic practices and the erosion of business ethics emerged as indicators of overall societal economic decline.

21. Devaluation of Manual Labor

The reduced value of labor contributed to declining productivity and reinforced

disguised unemployment due to low wages and lack of meaningful work.

22. High Mortality Rates and Long-Term Economic Impact

Increased mortality created lasting effects on population structure, workforce capacity, and market functionality.

23. Psychological Impact on Economic Behavior

The famine left deep psychological scars reflected in hoarding, panic, lack of trust in the market, and selling goods at low prices, affecting productivity and investment confidence even after the crisis ended.

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