Abstract

The social and administrative conditions in al-Sham (Syria) during the early Islamic period is the theme of this study; it commences with the definition of al-Sham, its historical and geographical boundaries during the period under study.

The first part deals with the different social classes and their part in administration, governing and stabilizing the rule of the Umayyads; therefore, the first chapter is concerned with the peoples in al-Sham, before the conquest, the regions of their settlement and their attitude towards the conquest.

The second chapter discusses the new distribution of the peoples after the conquest, especially the Arabs, and discusses the factors that affected their settlement in the different regions (al-Ajnads).

The different social classes, their social position and their part in administration and governing, are discussed in chapter three.

The fourth and the fifth chapters deal with the part of the people of al-Sham in stabilizing the rule of the Umayyads in Syria, Iraq, and in Africa, the conquests they achieved, and the advantages they acquired.

The second part of this study is concerned with the administrative, fiscal and military systems.

In dealing with the administrative system, the administrative divisions were discussed as well as the important officials, their duties and responsibilities and the different state departments (Dawarin).

Taxation, tax collection, and the measures that were carried out by Caliph Umar, and then by the Umayyads,
as well as the coinage used and the striking of the first
Arab gold coinage and its consequences are presented in
detail in dealing with the fiscal system.

The elements of the Syrian army; leadership, and
mobilization, means of defence and fortification, the
organization of the Diwan and the 'Aita' of the Muqatilah
in al-Sham are dealt with in the last chapter.

The conclusions that I have come into are presented
throughout the dissertation, amongst them are the following:

1- Al-Sham's position was unique, speaking from a social point
of view, and the social problems that arose in Iraq were
not felt so strongly in Syria; for most of the Byzantines
and their mercenaries in the coastal and internal cities
left Syria and followed Hercules to Asia Minor; the Chris-
tian Arabs in Syria before the conquest formed quite a con-
siderable proportion of the population; and when they adop-
ted Islam they were not regarded as clients; but were socially
regarded as the Moslem Arabs who joined the armies of
the conquest; this could be deduced from the increase in
the numbers of the Muqatilah in each region, and this increase
of course was not due to migration only, but to the adoption
of Islam by the Christian Arabs.

2- Most of the Arabs in al-Sham during the Umayyad period were
of Yemenite or Quda'i origin, with the exception of the
region of Qinnissin; but while the Arabs formed the majority
of the coastal cities of Jund Hims, the population of the
coastal cities belonging to the Jund of Damascus were mostly
composed of Jews and Persians, and because of the Caliph's
tolerant and indulgent policy towards the Dhimmis, Chris-
tianity remained widely spread in Syria, specially in
Palestine.
3 - The factors that defined the social position of the Moslem Arabs changed gradually in consequence of the political developments after the battles of Siffin and Marj-Rahit. The companions of the prophet, their sons, and the commanders of the conquest enjoyed the most distinguished position at first; but after the battle of Siffin and the support Mu'awiyah received from the southern tribes, who formed the majority of the Arabs in Syria, he had to change his policy and depend more and more on the notables of the tribes whether in governing the different regions of al-Sham or in commanding the armies sent against Byzantium or against Armenia in the North. After the battle of Marj-Rahit, the highest position was that of the princes of the house of Marwan and the Umayyads in general, then came the notables of the tribes and of course all the true and loyal supporters of the Umayyads.

4 - The Marwanid period showed an increase in depending on Arab governors sent from al-Sham to the two most important districts, Iraq and Egypt, and it showed also an inclination to depend more and more on the clients (al-Mawali) especially the freed slaves (Mawali al 'Itaqah) in the different departments of the state and in sending them as governors especially to Africa; but the dependence of the state on the Dhimmis in administration decreased at the end of the Umayyad period in al-Sham.

5 - As al-Sham was the central district, the duties of the most important officials were somewhat different from those of the same officials in the other districts, and the state departments (Dawawin) were greater in number and importance.
6 - Although al-Sham was the first country conquered - yet the traditions concerning the treaties with the different cities show that the Arabs distinguished clearly from the very beginning between the poll-tax (al-jizyah) and the land-tax (al-kharaj) and while the jizyah in Syria at the beginning was one dinar, Umar I changed it later to a graded tax of four dinars maximum for the well to do with reductions for the middle class and the poor, this seems to have taken place in the year 640 A.D. 20 A.H. for Theophanes mentions that in the thirtieth year of Heracules, Umar made a census of all the lands, men, animals and palms; but as the traditions concerning the kharaj land and the small lands are very few in comparison to those connected with Iraq, it was necessary to depend on them in order to clarify and illustrate the ones concerning Syria specially if there were hints allowing such comparisons, and an interpretation for the term Sulh and 'Unwah has been presented.

7 - When Mu'awiyah became Caliph he made it clear that the different districts should participate in sending the overflow of their income to the central treasury in Damascus (Bayt Mal al-Fay'), this procedure was carried out by all the other Caliphs and traditions directly or indirectly allude to this fact except where Spain is concerned. The Arab tribes in Iraq in general and the tribes of al-Kufa in particular resented this procedure which aroused their wrath against the Umayyads and the people of al-Sham, who enjoyed a number of privileges denied to others, for example, the traditions do not mention extra taxes being collected from the people in Syria like the ones mentioned in Iraq and Egypt.
8 - The important political and economic changes following the striking of the Arab gold coins have been discussed.

9 - The Army of al-Sham was mainly composed of Arabs, and the Yamanites and Guda'i tribes formed the majority, it was natural that most of the Muqatilah were from these tribes in addition to the Qaysites in Qinnisrin and al-Jazirah; but the Umayyads made use of all the man-power, so they used the Dhimmis in the frontier lines as well as the Mawali later on, for we read of Mawali troops during the Marwanid period; yet the leadership remained in the hands of the Arabs, the companions of the prophet, their sons, and the notables of the tribes during the Sufyanid period, and the princes of the house of Umayya during the Marwanid period specially in leading the Summer and Winter expeditions (al-Sawa'if wal-Shawati)

10 - The tribes and clans in al-sham still formed the prominent parts in mobilization, even when they were incorporated in larger organizations for military or fiscal purposes.