

ИСТОРИЯ

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32653/CH213416-428>



Research paper

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STUDY OF THE ECONOMIC SITUATION OF ARMENIA AND ARRAN DURING THE 10th CENTURY AD

Abstract. The study of medieval Islamic lands' social and economic conditions is central to understanding the history of Islamic civilization. Arran and Armenia, as frontier regions of the Islamic world, retained significant political and economic importance during the 10th century. This study examines the economic conditions of Arran and Armenia in the 10th century, focusing on their production and trade. Analysis of written sources reveals that economic activity flourished under the rule of the Sajid (889–930 CE), Sallarid (941–980 CE), and Rawwadid (981–1071 CE) dynasties, which controlled much of Arran and Armenia. Policies such as minting coins, reducing taxes and tributes, and fostering relations with local rulers led to increased agricultural, livestock, and industrial production, driving economic growth in these regions. Furthermore, the establishment of international markets and the availability of diverse goods facilitated exports to other regions and the importation of essential commodities for Islamic lands. Through trade expansion, Arran – and particularly Armenia – emerged as a vital commercial hub within the Islamic world. Consequently, the strategic use of abundant natural resources and favorable trade conditions enabled local populations to meet their daily needs and sustain economic activities, despite the disruptions caused by warfare.

Keywords: Arran; Armenia; economy; products; trade; Sajid dynasty; Sallarid dynasty; Rawwadid dynasty

For citation: P. Ghorbannejad. Study of the economic situation of Armenia and Arran during the 10th century ad. History, Archeology and Ethnography of the Caucasus. 2025. Vol. 21. N. 3. P. 416-428. doi.org/10.32653/CH213416-428

HISTORY

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32653/CH213416-428>



Исследовательская статья

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ИЗУЧЕНИЕ ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКОЙ СИТУАЦИИ АРМЕНИИ И АРРАНА В X ВЕКЕ

Аннотация. Изучение социально-экономического положения в средневековых исламских странах является одной из актуальных проблем в исследовании истории исламской цивилизации. Арран и Армения, как границы исламского мира, продолжали сохранять свою политическую и экономическую важность в X веке. Данное исследование рассматривает экономическую ситуацию Аррана и Армении в X в. с точки зрения их производства и торговли. На основе анализа полученных данных письменных источников становится ясным, что экономическая деятельность населения в этих странах была облегчена, когда правители династий Саджидов (889–930 гг.), Салларидов (941–980 гг.) и Раввадидов (981–1071 гг.) владели большей частью земель Аррана и Армении. Чеканка монет, снижение налогов, дани и взаимодействие с местными правителями, увеличение сельскохозяйственного, скотоводческого и промышленного производства способствовали экономическому росту этих регионов. В конечном итоге создание международных рынков и поставка различных товаров облегчали экспорт товаров в другие страны, а импорт товаров обеспечивал потребности исламских стран. С расширением торговли Арран и особенно Армения стали важными коммерческими центрами исламского мира. Таким образом, усилия людей по использованию обильных природных ресурсов и торгового положения позволили им удовлетворять свои повседневные нужды и заниматься экономической деятельностью, несмотря на разрушения, вызванные войной.

Ключевые слова: Арран; Армения; Экономика; Продукты; Торговля; Династия Салларидов; Династия Саджидов; Династия Раввадидов

Для цитирования: Горбаннежад П. Изучение экономической ситуации Армении и Аррана в X веке // История, археология и этнография Кавказа. 2025. Т. 21. No 3. С. 16-428. doi: [org/10.32653/CH213416-428](https://doi.org/10.32653/CH213416-428)

Introduction

In the 10th century, Islamic lands experienced economic growth driven by increased production and commercial exchange. However, political disturbances and wars made it challenging to accurately assess the economic conditions of Arran and Armenia. Semi-independent rulers, preoccupied with military preparations, largely refrained from intervening in economic activities. Despite these conflicts, the regions maintained prosperous economies, largely due to their favorable geographical features and agricultural wealth. This study adopts a descriptive-analytical approach, drawing on primary sources such as the works of 9th- to 11th-century travelers and geographers, as well as texts like *Futūḥ* and *Kharāj*, which provide valuable information on the taxation system and related economic data.

1. The geography

The historians and geographers of the early Islamic centuries mentioned the two countries of Arran and Armenia as frontiers of the Islamic land [Fig. 1], that had access to the west-east and south-north communication routes through Azerbaijan, the western shores of the Caspian Sea [1, p. 159], and the eastern shores of the Black Sea [2, p. 91]. Geographers defined the boundaries of Arran and Armenia based on their observations and reports. In the 10th century, the political governance of Azerbaijan, Arran, and Armenia was unified to some extent. However, the boundaries of short-lived dynasties and local rulers frequently shifted due to military conflicts. Additionally, the economic, cultural, and ethnic ties among Arran, Armenia, and Azerbaijan blurred the distinctions between their cities, complicating efforts to separate them. Consequently, geographers held differing opinions regarding the classification of cities in these regions [3, p. 87].

The name “Caucasian Albania” or “Arran”¹ and its geographical area are documented in various forms across the works of Roman, Byzantine, Armenian, Iranian, and Arab historians and geographers [4, pp. 18–19, 22].² As a result, studying this region presents significant challenges. Islamic geographers did not recognize Arran as an independent entity until the first half of the 10th century. Instead, they considered it a part of Armenia, encompassing the cities of Shīrwān (Ervin), Baylaqān, Qabala, Shakkī (Šakkī), and Shamkūr [9, p. 121; 10, pp. 122–123; 11, p. 145; 12, p. 286–287].³ However, the geographers of the late 10th century mentioned Arran as an independent country alongside Azerbaijan and Armenia and stated that it encompassed more cities such as Bāb al-Abwāb, Shīrwān, Tbilisi, Abkhāz, Baku, Bardij, and Khūnān⁴ among other, and determined its boundaries [16, pp. 154–159; 1, p. 155–156; 17, p. 91].⁵ Soviet and Russian scholars have conducted numerous studies to clarify this issue.⁶ In this article, we delineate the boundaries of Arran based on Ibn Ḥawqal’s book. Ibn Ḥawqal, who traveled to this region in the late 10th century, documented his observations by conducting research and gathering data from reliable sources.

Ibn Ḥawqal (367 AH) limited the border of Arran to the Aras River from the south and to the Caucasus Mountains from the north. Furthermore, he limited it to the Caspian Sea from the east and to Tbilisi and the continuation of the Caucasus Mountains from the west [2, pp. 81, 91, 129].

1. Greek and Byzantine historians and geographers called this land “Albania”. Albania is mentioned in Armenian works as *Aghvan* (Aghvank) or *Aluan* (Aluank) [4, p. 21]. Iranians were their southern neighbor and referred to this region as *Ardān* (اردان) or *Ārān* (اران). Finally, the Islamic geographers, especially Arabs, called it *al-Rān* (الران) or *Arrān* (اران). Kasravi and Barthold have similar views on the names that were used by the Islamic geographers [5, pp. 242–4; 6, p. 554]. Another important point is that the identification of Allan with Arran is confusing since they were two separate areas [7, p. 2/775].

2. The ancient and post-Christian geographers have focused on this geographical area. Strabo considered Albania bounded on the north by the Ceraunian mountains, an extension of the Caucasus, on the east – by the Caspian Sea, and on the south – by the lower course of the Araxes (Aras); on the west its frontiers were unstable: the frontier along the Kura [8, p. 453 (11.14.5)].

3. Mentioning the name of Arran as a region alongside the other regions could indicate the small size of its land. As a result, Arran was not mentioned as an independent country in the governmental divisions. “This issue is in accordance to some extent with the data that were provided by pre-Islamic geographers and Russian and Soviet researchers. Arran in the narrow sense of the word was understood to include the area between the Araxes and the Kur [13, p. 227; 14, p. 21].

4. Perhaps Khūnān (Jūbānt), half-way between Tiflis and Janza [1, p. 189], it stood on a large mound and was also called Qal’at al-turab [15, p. 25].

5. “Arran is a land that looks like an island. It is located between the Caspian Sea and the Aras River and is bisected by the Nahr al-Molk (King River refer to Kura River)” [18, p. 2/554].

6. Yanovski mentions the ancient geographers’ works and states that “ancient Albania was located in the plains of Alazonius (Alazan), Shakkī, and Shīrwān [19, pp. 97–136, 161–203]. Likewise, Marquart pointed out that Albania included the lands of Shīrwān, Shakkī, Qabala, and Mūqān (Mūgān) that were located between Kura River and Aras River. Similarly, Barthold noted that ancient Albania was later called Arran. According to him, Albania was located between Derbent, Tbilisi, and Aras River [20, p. 118]. Therefore, it can be concluded that the border of Albania (Arran) has been limited to the plains between the Aras and Kura rivers.

Moreover, the other geographers have determined the boundaries of Arran in an independent way. Nonetheless, there are differences between the mentioned cities [18, 2/554; 21, p. 307].



Fig. Ibn Ḥawqal's map of Armenia and Arran in *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ*

Рис. Карта Армении и Аррана Ибн Хаукаля в «Китаб сурат ал-ард»

Most geographers have recognized Armenia as an independent country and defined its boundaries.⁷ However, their opinions on its boundaries and divisions vary. Some have divided it into four parts [10, p. 122–123] or three parts [11, p. 145]. Ibn Ḥawqal, however, divided it into two parts: the internal and external parts. As Ibn Ḥawqal noted, the boundaries of external Armenia were “from the east limited to Barḍa‘a, from the west limited to Jazīrah, from the south limited to Azerbaijan and Jazīrah, and from the north limited to the Roman that are located near Qālīqalā”. Nonetheless, internal Armenia included the northern cities such as Dabīl, Nakjavān, and Qālīqalā [2, p. 307]. There were a number of conflicts between the local rulers and the rulers of Azerbaijan. Moreover, Armenia which was the border of the Islamic world against Rome was involved in the wars and was affected by the changes in territorial boundaries. Other geographers of the 10th century have determined its boundaries [1, p. 158; 12, p. 129].

Geographers have defined the boundaries of Arran and Armenia, but distinguishing their cities remains challenging due to territorial changes, shifts in ruling dynasties, and strong economic ties between them [3,

7. “The boundary of Armenia extends from Barḍa‘a to Bāb al-Abwāb. Moreover, it extends to the boundary of Rome on this side, and to Mount Qabkh, the kingdom of Sarīr (arḍ al-Sarīr), and the kingdom of Lakz (Lezgi)” [12, p. 129].

p. 79]. This study compares cities identified in geographical sources as belonging to either Arran or Armenia with those listed in *Ṣūrat al-Arḍ*. The selected cities were then analyzed. In total, this article examines 19 cities in Arran and 22 cities in Armenia. Notably, sufficient information is available regarding the economic status of all selected cities in these regions.

2. Political Situation

In the late 9th century and early 10th century, the countries of Azarbaijan, Arran, and Armenia were under the rule of Yusuf ibn Abī'l Sajj (901–927 AD), the founder of the Sajid dynasty. The Abbasid caliphs, in line with their policies and response to the requests of the local population, decided to grant the Emirate of these areas to the local rulers [22, p. 6/95; 23, p. 8/349]. Subsequently, the Sallarid families asserted control over many parts of Georgia, Shīrwān, Shakkī, Abkhāz, and imposed tribute payments on the inhabitants [2, p. 100]. Then the Rawwadid dynasty annexed Arran and Armenia to their land in addition to Azerbaijan.

These dynasties ruled most of the cities of Azerbaijan and had less control over the of Arran and Armenia. Therefore, some parts were governed by local rulers who accepted the taxation of Marzban and had an agreement [2, p. 95] with Abu al-Qasim Ja'far vizier of Sallarids [2, p. 99-100; 5, p. 109]. These rulers involved Shīrwānshāh,⁸ Vashqan bin Musa ruler of Jurzān,⁹ Abu al-Hija son of Rawad, Abu al-Qasim Khizāni,¹⁰ the Deirani¹¹ sons, the Sanbat sons, and Sankhārīb the King lord of Asūr [2, p. 95].¹² However, the Armenian chronicles do not mention those local Armenian rulers who paid tribute to these dynasties [5, pp. 108–109].

The ethnic groups in this area, including Azeris, Kurds, Arabs, Armenians, Iranians, indigenous Caucasian peoples,¹³ and followers of religions such as Islam, Zoroastrianism, and Christianity, often had good and peaceful social and economic relations with each other [29, p. 48]. At the same time, these areas were considered the fortress of Islam against Rome and were the gathering places of many people from other countries of the Islamic world for war purposes [30, p. 2/554; 31, p. 41; 12, p. 25]. The substitution of these dynasties often took place with few wars in important cities and by accepting the continued rule of local rulers in the other cities keeping relative peace and resulting in the continuation of people's economic activities. The people had a role in accepting or rejecting local rulers, and their opinions moderated the rulers' decisions.¹⁴ To gain a deeper understanding of the economic conditions of Arran and Armenia, we analyze their production, trade, taxation, and export.

3. Production

Geographers noted that the populations of Arran, Armenia, and their cities had access to abundant resources essential for their livelihoods. This wealth of resources and products bolstered the economic strength of the people. The fertile lands were well-suited for producing agricultural goods, livestock, textiles, and carpets. Additionally, there were reports of mining and industrial activities in the region.

3.1. Agriculture

The economy and livelihood of the people of Arran and Armenia have historically been heavily reliant on agriculture. Some cities in Armenia were influenced by the Roman civil system and the agricultural lands had

8. Shīrwānshāh dominated the cities of Shīrwān, Khursān, Lizān, Shamākhi, and Kurdivān [16, p. 16]. Neighboring on the kingdom of Shīrwān is another kingdom in the mountain of Qabkh, which is called Lāyzān (spelt: Lāyrān) and its king is called Lāyzānshāh [15, pp. 144–5]. The three regions of Shīrwān, Khursān, and Lāyzā were ruled by one king who was called Shīrwānshāh, Khursānshāh, and Lāyzāshāh [24, p. 163]. Apparently Kurdivan which 12 km south of Lahīj (ancient Lāyzā) [3, p. 28].

9. "Jurzān" refers to Georgia, taxpayers of Marzbān [25, pp. 82–3].

10. Located in the south of Vān.

11. Derenik-Ashot, ruler of Vaspurgan [26, p. 2/78].

12. Ashot II from the Bagratuni dynasty [26, pp. 2/3–5].

13. The Caucasus region is notable for its rich linguistic and ethnic diversity. The people of Mount Qabkh speak three hundred languages and numerous tribes live there [27, p. 94]. Arab geographers called the Caucasus Jabal al-Alsun, the Mountain of Languages. People from these ethnic groups speak their own languages, such as Lakzanī [Lezgī], Tabalanī, Filanī, Zakalanī, Haidak, Gumik, Sarir, Alanian, Assi, Zarihgarānī [Kubačī], Turkish, Arabic, and Persian [28, p. 26].

14. The kingdom of Ashot Bagratid was recognized by the caliph in 858 AD [23, p. 106].

different grades for calculating taxes [32, pp. 212–220]. Tha'alibi provides information on the method of irrigating 1000 Jeribs¹⁵ [43, p. 131]. Muslim geographers often noted the climate, rainfall, fertile soil, springs and rivers, prosperous villages, and the hard work of the residents as contributors to the high-quality crop harvest [16, p. 164; 18, p. 2/553].

The investigations suggest that the people met their food and living needs by producing an abundance of inexpensive agricultural and livestock products in fertile lands with favorable weather conditions. These products played a significant role in the economic prosperity of the cities and villages through trade. For example, the large city of Barda'a, known for its abundant cultivation, and the fertile plains of Balāshgān¹⁶ and Andarāb [2, p. 86], located nearby, were considered the agricultural center of Arran. In general, agricultural products of Arran and Armenia can be categorized into three groups: fruits, rare fruits and spices, and cereals and legumes.

Fruits were a primary source of nutrition due to their affordability and abundance. People dried fruits for consumption and for export. In most countries and cities, including Barda'a, there were a variety of fruits [18, p. 2/554]. Fruits were wasted and offered for free [2, p. 85]. Various types of grapes were cultivated throughout the region [34, p. 9], especially on the banks of the Aras River [2, p. 84; 18, p. 2/553]. High-quality pomegranates and figs were produced in Barda'a [1, p. 156; 31, p. 47]. Additionally, white mulberries were grown for both consumption and silkworm rearing in most cities, especially Barda'a [16, p. 161].

Rare fruits and spices such as hazelnuts, chestnuts, and blueberries [2, p. 85], and Caraway a special fruit that was sweeter than honey was used in Shamshāt and Shīrwān [10, p. 123]. Walnuts, almonds, and olives were cultivated in large quantities on the mountain slopes [32, p. 211]. The mass production of various fruits had led geographers to name these areas as fruit centers. Nonetheless, there are more reports about the cities of Arran, especially Barda'a.

Cereals and legumes, including wheat, barley, lentils, peas, and beans, were cultivated across most regions [2, p. 87]. Rice was grown in Davin, while grains were produced in Andarāb, west of the Caspian Sea, and in mountainous areas [2, p. 95]. As grain was a staple food for most people, its cultivation on plains and mountain slopes, as well as its storage in cities and villages, was more extensive than documented in the sources, as geographers paid limited attention to it.

Industrial and Medicinal Plants. The climatic conditions of the region supported the cultivation of both industrial and medicinal plants. Madder was widely used as a red dye for wool, silk, and cloth [16, p. 158] and was cultivated in different areas including the banks of the Aras River [2, p. 94]. Moreover, the expansion of the weaving industry spurred cotton cultivation, especially on the banks of Aras, Dvin [Dabīl], and Qabbān¹⁷ [2, p. 86; 16, p. 161]. Given the production of linen fabrics and similar climatic conditions, cotton was likely cultivated in other cities as well.

Medicinal plants were also cultivated, including lilies, which grew in most places [18, p. 2/554]. Jasmine and marigold (*Shieh*) grew near Terrīkh (Van). Furthermore, excellent common wormwood, good epithymum, lavender, useful herbs, and Roman hyacinth grew in Armenia [31, p. 51], while abundant saffron was cultivated in Derbent [2, p. 85]. Tetraclinis was also obtained in large quantities from Armenia's mountains [35, p. 4/122].

The region relied on diverse agricultural products like fruits, grains, legumes, and medicinal plants, along with industrial plants such as cotton, linen, and rose madder, which were vital for the textile industry.

3.2. Livestock Products

In the 10th century, farmers kept livestock and poultry in addition to engaging in agriculture. Herding and nomadic life, especially among the Kurdish tribes, played an important role in the development of animal husbandry [36, p. 4/310]. The watery plains and abundant pastures, including those in Abkhāz and Shīrwān, as well as the southwestern banks of the Caspian Sea, were suitable for raising all kinds of grazing animals, such as cows, sheep, goats, and rare steeds [33, p. 2/780; 16, p. 159; 2, p. 92]. The price of a single lamb was two dirhams, and it was known as the center of the cheapest meat in the Islamic world [18, p. 2/553]. In these areas, sheep were raised for their wool, milk, and meat [30, pp. 386–387]. People also used dairy products from cows [12, p. 140].

15. Equal to 0.4 hectares.

16. This plain included more than 5000 villages [18, p. 2/523].

17. Located between Tabriz and Baylaqān [33, p. 2/304].

Most of the plains and slopes were suitable for breeding horses and cattle. In Zozan¹⁸ “good, strong, and clever horses and mules” [37, p. 321; 12 p. 581–582], in Barda’a [38, p. 32], Shīrwān, the western shores of the Caspian Sea, the Shariyye (a type of Tartar horse) [2, p. 94; 39, p. 531, 538], were world-famous.

Raising horses for riding and carrying loads was necessary in mountainous areas, and they were often given as gifts and cash tributes [39, p. 531, 538]. These horses were also used to supply the cavalry armies of caliphs and local rulers. The breeding of hunting animals – dogs, greyhounds, jackals, and birds of prey – was common in the mountains and natural pastures, and these animals were used for hunting by caliphs, princes, and rulers [37, p. 52–54]. The white hawk was one of the famous birds of prey sent to the royal court as a tribute [40, p. 1/186-8; 39, p. 538].

Several useful insects, such as bees and Coccus, were raised for their therapeutic and commercial uses. Abundant and cheap honey was produced on the slopes and in the mountains of most cities [18, p. 2/553; 16, p. 143]. The Coccus obtained in Dabīl [18, p. 2/567; 16, p. 159], which was used for dyeing carpet thread and woolen fabrics, was renowned [24, pp. 421–422; 16, p. 164].

Fishing was a popular activity along the riverbanks of Aras and Kura and seashore, particularly for a delightful and tasty fish from the Aras River [16, pp. 158, 161], which was often gifted by merchants [18, p. 2/565; 2, p. 87]. A tasty fish named Terrīkh was exported to other places after salting [2, p. 93]. In addition, salt fish [12, p. 139] and a very fatty fish known as sturgeon, and the delicious Qashūbah fish were caught from the Kura and Aras rivers [38, p. 156; 33, p. 1/487].

Breeding cattle, sheep, and bees, along with fishing aquatic animals in the rivers, provided a major part of the people’s cheap food. Additionally, cow and sheep leather were used in the shoe and leather industries, while sheep’s wool and silk were used to manufacture textiles and carpets.

3.3. Handicraft Production

Most of the handicrafts in the 10th century included the production of agricultural equipment, textile and weaving, mining, construction of windmills, shipbuilding, war equipment, and accessories. People gained worldwide fame in the Islamic world by producing carpets and all kinds of textiles whose red color was their characteristic.

3.3.1. Textile production

In the 10th century, the textile and clothing industry was highly advanced. People showcased their prosperity by adorning their homes with colorful curtains, and different types of carpets, and wearing high-quality clothing [41, p. 497]. Armenia served as a significant hub for textile and clothing production, with people involved in various stages of the production process in most cities. Additionally, a wide range of top-quality raw materials, finishing equipment, and labor force services were available in most cities. The raw materials produced, including linen, cotton, wool, silk, and high-quality natural dyes, were world-famous and met the needs of the industry. Derbent was known as the second center of linen in the Islamic world after Tabaristan [1, p. 184].

In addition to the cities on the banks of the Aras River, cotton planting was also common in Yerevan, Dvin (Dabīl), and Qabbān¹⁹ [16, p. 161]. The wool that was produced in different from a special breed of sheep was world-famous [39, p. 544]. Moreover, excellent silk was produced in large quantities in Domānes²⁰ and Barda’a. It was used in fabric production and was sold as fibers [18, pp. 2/564–566]. Dyeing was a special industry throughout the Islamic world due to the production of the renowned “Armenian red” dye, which was obtained from madder and Coccus [2, p. 94; 41, pp. 134, 496].

Dabīl was considered the textile center of Armenia due to the production of all kinds of fabrics, linen, pashmina [18, p. 2/564], and silk [18, p. 2/554; 33, pp. 53-4; 16, p. 163]. Furthermore, the production of Baziyoun [fine silk] fabrics [1, p. 158], cotton, fluffy, *mar’azi*²¹, canvas, red work fabrics, glamour embroidered motifs [2, p. 90], *sabniyyah* [2, p. 90-2]²², and *zari* caused the prosperity of this industry and the production of many kinds of clothes, fabrics, and knitwear.

18. It is between Azerbaijan and Armenia [12, p. 2/640].

19. Located between Tabriz and Baylagān [33, p. 2/640].

20. A city near Tbilisi in Armenia [39, p. 1/389].

21. Wool made of fine goat hair.

22. Black chador for women.

The various fabrics and excellent clothing in the cities of Arran [2, p. 95], involved scarves [38, p. 34], burka in Baylagān [16, p. 161], and trouser straps in Dabīl (Dvin), Barkarī, Arjīš, Akhlāt, and Badlīs [38, pp. 92; 16, p. 159-60]. All kinds of handkerchiefs, soft furs, soft handkerchiefs, and pashmina clothes were produced in Janza (Ganja), Shamkūr, and Khursān²³ [16, p. 161-3]. The coverings for quadrupeds included styles of saddles and horse head coverings, as well as sleeping accessories like mattresses, pillows, and types of *zilo* rugs [42, p. 6/412], *namat* [felt], and luxurious products such as bedspread, silk curtains, and pieces of *Zari* [16, p. 161]. The useful knitwear, *javāl* [saddlebag] was made for transportation, and *palās* [rug] for high-traffic places such as caravanserais [16, p. 159].

3.3.2. Carpet production

During the 10th century, the textile industry was prevalent in various regions, particularly in Armenia. Carpets²⁴ woven in Armenia and Arran were commonly referred to as “Armenian carpets” and were distinguished by their red background color [20–30, p. 389]. These carpets were crafted using soft sheep wool and dyed with high-quality red dyes derived from insects and industrial plants [38, p. 34, 111–112]. They were highly favored over other types of carpets [43, p. 132].

The tradition of gifting red carpets to caliphs, ministers, generals, and courtiers, as well as presenting them as offerings, or sending them as part of the annual cash tribute, was common in previous centuries. These carpets held great value in the courts and homes of rulers and merchants [44, p. 172].²⁵ Eighteen thousand medium and large Armenian carpets are reported to be used in carpet warehouses [43, p. 72]. Armenian carpets were also used in the reception ceremonies of Dar al-Khilafah and the Caliph’s throne was furnished with these carpets [12, p. 1/87]. In addition to the cities of the Islamic world [11, p. 158, 170], these carpets were also known in other countries. For instance, the tent of the king of the Slavs [with a capacity of nine thousand people] was covered with Armenian carpets [40, p. 1/87]. In addition to the usual red carpets, *mar’azi* [Cashmere] carpets, and *labbūd* [38, p. 18, 34],²⁶ different types of *zilo* with designs that were similar to carpets, prayer mats [16, p. 159], and various types of coverings, and *ankhakh* [2, p. 90], were produced in the cities of Barkarī, Arjīš, Akhlāt, Nakjavān, and Badlīs [46, pp. 147–148].

In some sources, *maḥfurīyāt* – a type of wide and expensive carpet – was woven in cities such as Khursān, Derbent (Bāb al-Abwāb), and Shīrwān [16, p. 163]. Moreover, purple carpets were woven and sold in Dabīl and Shīrwān. In the 10th century, carpets were woven in other cities and areas such as Ahwaz, Asyut [11, pp. 158, 170], Ashmun of Egypt [47, p. 1/647], and Ghandjān of Fars [2, pp. 24, 66] imitated Armenian carpets, trousers, and other textile products.

Skilled craftsmen used raw materials from these areas to create high-quality textiles and carpets. The red carpets gained fame and became popular in Dar al-Khilafa. The ruling and wealthy classes’ use of these products increased their value and exports. Additionally, the carpets were accepted as part of the non-cash tribute from the districts.

3.3.3. Metalworking

There is no adequate information about metal production. The reports have focused on the production of gold and silver tools, saddles, metal tools and equipment, excellent and heavy metal containers in the areas of Arran [2, p. 94; 46, p. 31], and copper tallow lamps in the Arzenjān city of Armenia. Furthermore, the use of plows for agricultural lands and horse breeding were the reasons behind the use of steel for manufacturing agricultural tools and horse saddles. However, it is not possible to give an expert opinion about the status of the steel industry. Ajnān was known as a copper factory due to its abundance of copper [48, p. 137], and cobalt was obtained in large quantities from Armenia’s mountains [35, p. 4/122, 2/81].

3.3.4. Woodworking

Wood was used not only for heating but also as a raw material for many products. For example, wooden chests, containers, plates, pans, and cups were made from winter heath,²⁷ grapevine, and walnut trees in the

23. One of the three territories of Arrān [16, p. 163]. Khursān reads Khersan but the Armenian geography suggests Khorsan [15, pp. 25, 81].

24. Pope believes that this word comes from the name of the Armenian city Qālīqālā [carpet castle].

25. Ghazi Rashid mentions the Armenian carpet more than twenty times [45, pp. 16, 61, 63-308].

26. It refers to wool that felted or matted.

27. A type of tree used for making arrows, bows, bowls, and mugs.

mountains of Abkhāz and Shīrwān [2, p. 93]. The construction and maintenance of large mills on streams and rivers in cities such as Tbilisi, Akhlāt, Badlīs (Bitlis), Našawā (Naḵjavān), and Barkarī contributed to the prosperity of this industry. Additionally, the presence of lakes, navigable rivers,²⁸ and large commercial ports such as Bāb al-Abwāb, Baku, and Trabzon could have helped develop the shipbuilding industry in these areas since wood was the main material used for shipbuilding [16, p. 48; 2, pp. 97, 98].

3.3.5. Leatherworking

Extensive animal husbandry and large hunting grounds could provide leather for various products such as shoes, clothes, saddles, and military equipment among others. However, Ibn al-Faqīh only mentions the production of leather clothes from the skin of an animal which was called *ashagh*²⁹ and Ibn Ḥawqal mentioned the leather saddles that were worked with silver and gold in these cities and were world-famous [2, p. 90].

3.3.6 Other crafts

In the areas under study, a variety of significant products were manufactured, including striped metal containers, decorative metal containers made of gold, silver, and jewels with original and artistic shapes, strong glass containers and accessories, and precious conical crystals with gems of *Hobb* and ruby [2, p. 95] as well as fine glass crystals. The materials for these products were extracted from mines in Armenian cities [27, p. 105]. Additionally, the decorations used on riding and war horses, war equipment, armor, and wooden dishes such as plates and trays were produced from briarwood and chestnut. Carvings were also created by artists in these areas [33, p. 1/182].

4. Trade

Geographers have unanimously agreed that trade was one of the pillars of economic prosperity. The strategic locations of Arran and Armenia, along with mass production of goods, diverse commercial products [2, p. 92], efficient transportation routes, urban development, and established monetary systems, all contributed to the economic success of these countries. This facilitated trade with neighboring states and the wider Islamic world, particularly with Rome and other foreign countries. Trade mainly involved livestock products, agricultural produce, minerals, textiles, and handicrafts. The multicultural and multilingual social structure of these tribes played a significant role in expanding trade.

The cities of Bardā'a, Dvin (Dabīl), Barkarī, Arjīš, Akhlāt, Naḵjavān, and Badlīs were home to many merchants from other countries, creating prosperous markets [16, p. 158-9]. These areas were important centers for supplying goods, including cotton clothes, due to their proximity to the tribes of the North Caucasus [18, p. 1/195]. The people, along with merchants from Islamic countries, gathered in Trabzon and traded with Rome and Ferang, supplying goods needed by the Islamic countries. Trabzon became a trade center for various fabrics [2, p. 96], clothes, and carpets, importing brocade fabrics, Golābaton embroidery, Roman linen, woolen fabrics, Roman clothes, and exporting manufactured textiles to other areas. Arran played a significant role in trade from South to North and vice versa, while Armenia facilitated trade from East to West and vice versa. The key factors in trade included markets and taxes.

4.1. Markets

In the 9th century, the market played an important role in the prosperity of domestic and foreign trade due to the rapid development of commerce. In the 10th century, diverse and profitable markets were in Arran and Armenia [1, p. 160]. The supply of agricultural, livestock, and industrial products, all kinds of textiles, the exchange of money and goods between different ethnic groups, and the use of gold and silver coins in transactions led to the prosperity of the markets and attracted many merchants.

The cities According to their size, had one or more main markets and several local and regional markets. Markets, Caravanserai, inns, and public facilities of the cities provided the merchants with welfare [40, pp. 186-188]. The markets can be divided into two categories:

28. Shipping was common in the Aras and Kura rivers [2, p. 92; 21, p. 570].

29. It was a cat-like animal.

Permanent markets. In most important cities like Shīrwān, Baku, Shakkī, Malāzgird, and Akhlāt, there were permanent markets located in the middle of the city [18, pp. 2/556-60]. Bardā'a had flourishing bazaars, caravanserais, and hot springs, and was considered the Khore [Bakhsh] bazaar of Arran [2, p. 86]. Barzand was recognized as the market and port of Khore in Armenia [18, p. 2/561]. Dabīl, known for textiles, had many markets, with its main market being in the shape of a cross [18, p. 2/556-557].

Temporary markets. Many markets were established in Armenia every year due to the production of live-stock, carpets, and textiles. Various goods such as horses, silk fabrics, and Zari fabrics were sold in these markets [49, pp. 53-54]. There was a weekly market called "Korakī Bazaar",³⁰ held on Sundays outside Derbent gate in Bardā'a. This market was so significant that the people of Arran used to refer to Sunday as "Korakī" when counting the days of the week. The dimensions of this market were one parasang by one parasang [1, p. 156]. It was the largest market for silk, fabric, and textiles in Arran, attracting people from Iraq and Khuzestan who made substantial profits there [18, p. 2/505].

4.2. Tax

During the time of the Islamic governments, collecting taxes from the states was a crucial way of earning income. The taxes from Arran, Armenia, and Azerbaijan constituted a significant amount of money until the end of the 9th century and were collected by the governors of the Abbasid caliphs. However, the people were unhappy with this situation. After the establishment of the semi-independent Sajid dynasty, the rulers reduced taxes to appease the people. For example, the ruler canceled the exclusive tax imposed by the Umayyads on fishing from Lake Van. They delegated the task of collecting taxes in the cities under their rule to local rulers and peasants. The caliphs were content with the lower taxes as they maintained their sovereignty.

During the Sallarid dynasty, "all the local rulers accepted his authority and agreed to pay tribute" [4, p. 74]. The tax courts were established in these areas.³¹

Table. Tax collection reports of these areas in different years

Таблица. Отчеты о сборе налогов по этим территориям в разные годы

Row	State	Year AD	Tribute Durhams	Governor	Source
1	A, R, M	680	30,000,000	Caliph Governor	[50, p. 2/277]
2	A, R, M	786	4,000,000	Caliph Governor	[51, p. 1/226]
3	A, R, M	800	4,000,000	Caliph Governor	[17, p. 362]
4	A, R	846	4,000,000	Caliph Governor	[52, p. 101]
5	A, R, M	891	4,000,000	Sajids	[50, p. 2/272]
6	A, R	928	4,000,000	Sajids	[53, p. 149]
7	A, R, M	955	16,000,000	Sallarid	[32, p. 100]

Note: A – Azerbaijan; R – Arran; M – Armenia

The comparison of the amount of taxes from the 6th century to the 10th century indicates the size of the economy of these countries³² and the leniency of the rulers regarding tax collection. This issue could result in the relative satisfaction of the people and the prosperity of production and trade.

Collecting taxes based on economic power and paying non-cash tribute through agriculture and livestock benefited farmers and artisans. Cash tribute forced people to sell products at low prices. The non-cash tribute also provided food and necessities for the army and enabled the government to store food for times of scarcity and famine.

30. The geographers described the Sunday market of "Korakī". It is derived from the Greek word "kuriakos" or "Kyriaki" [the Lord's Day]. Sunday is called "Kiraki" in Armenia and "kvira" in Georgian [2, pp. 98-10; 45, pp. 74-5].

31. Ibn Ḥawqal mentions the total fairest tributes was 16 million dirhams [2, p. 100].

32. Ibn al-Amīd was asked to take control of these areas of 50 million dirhams [37, p. 2/350]; the region ranked fifth in tax revenue out of 25 regions [30, p. 475-9].

5. Export

The rulers aimed to increase trade and exports by enhancing trade routes and ports, leading to more business trips from Arran and Armenia to various northern and western destinations. Products were initially sent to warehouses and commercial centers before being distributed. The main export destinations were the commercial centers of Rey and Mosul in Iraq. Exports of products can be categorized into five groups:

Quadrupeds and aquatic animals. The horses that were found in most regions, especially in Zuzan, were world-famous and were exported to Iraq, Syria, and Khorasan. Likewise, livestock was exported to Mosul, Jazīrah, and other countries [2, pp. 85, 98; 32, p. 25]. All kinds of delicious fish, including Terrīkh salt fish, were exported to Mesopotamia, Khorasan, and all over the world [1, p. 159], as Salt fish to Basrah [12, p. 139], and two fish called *daragan* and *qashobeh* to the regions of Ray and Iraq [2, p. 87].

Fruits and grains. Despite the abundance of fruit and cereal, there are not many reports on the export of these products. Grapes were among the main products and were specially exported. In this regard, Ibn al-Faḳīh says: “People used to bring large old vine trunks from the mountains of Armenia and Azerbaijan, whose circumference reached twenty hand spans” [12, p. 171]. Additionally, groceries and grains were sent to Baghdad and Wasit [18, p. 2/589].

Raw materials. Silk and wool were high-quality and world-renowned products that were exported (in simple and processed form), especially from Domānes and Bardā‘a, to places like Khuzestan, Iraq, and Rey [18, p. 2/389; 1, p. 156]. Honey and beeswax, produced in large quantities for making candles and lighting, were also exported to other areas [16, p. 158; 18, p. 2/554].

Carpets and textiles. Arguably, the most significant exports were the carpets, rugs, and textiles, which were renowned across the Islamic world and highly sought after [54, p. 36]. Red dyes [54, 128; 1, p. 158] which were obtained from *Rubia tinctorum* and *Coccus* were exported to Gorgan, India, and other places for dyeing clothes [41, pp. 134, 496; 2, p. 94]. The Red fabrics and woolen clothes from Khursān, Derbent, and Shīrwān, great rugs [18, p. 2/555], and linen fabrics [for doors and windows] from Armenia were exported to the whole world [2, p. 88].

Industrial and mineral products. Borate from Lake Van, originally red and yellow orpiment was sent to the other areas [2, p. 93]. In addition, red bieberite was sent to Yemen and Wasit for dyeing wool [31, pp. 39, 46, 48]. Unusual things and wooden utensils such as plates and trays, which were made of Khalanj (*Erica arborea*) and chestnut wood [33, p. 2/182], Shīrwān benchmark stone, Baku oil, and glass stone were exported from Badlīs.

Conclusion

The study demonstrates that despite political turmoil and the displacement of people, the economies of Arran and Armenia prospered. Residents endured harsh conditions caused by internal and external conflicts, rebuilding cities and villages through diligent efforts and the strategic use of natural resources to produce agricultural and livestock goods. Additionally, a rich tradition of textile production inspired the continued creation of renowned fabrics, clothing, carpets, curtains, floor coverings, and wall accessories. Local rulers repaired damaged economic infrastructure in Arran and Armenia, revitalizing markets, docks, commercial and residential centers, and caravanserais. Furthermore, commercial caravans from other regions facilitated increased exports to Rome and other foreign markets, while goods were distributed across the Islamic world to meet diverse demands. The agricultural products of Arran, particularly silk, and Armenia’s textiles, notably carpets and cramoisy fabric, complemented each other, establishing these regions as vital trade hubs between the Islamic world and other nations. Moreover, urbanization and the thriving metal, wood, weaving, carpet, textile, and precious metal industries significantly contributed to the economic and commercial development of Arran and Armenia.

Examining the commercial infrastructure of 10th-century Arran and Armenia, including roads, markets, docks, trading houses, and merchants’ residences that facilitated east-west and south-north trade, provides valuable insights into their commercial landscape. Additionally, researchers interested in this field can explore the influence of the Silk Road on the economic development of these regions.

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Received 24.07.2024

Accepted 04.02.2025

Published 15.09.2025

Поступила в редакцию 24.07.2024 г.

Принята в печать 04.02.2025 г.

Опубликована 15.09.2025 г.