

# Revenue Administration and military system of Umayyad

## Introduction

The Umayyad Caliphate (661-750) was one of the largest and most influential empires in Islamic history. Its administrative and military system played a crucial role in its expansion and stability. This overview will explore the key features of the Umayyad revenue administration and military system.

## Revenue Administration of Umayyad

Umayyad revenue administration was a sophisticated system that ensured the financial stability of the Caliphate through various sources. Some of them are given below.



# Sources of Revenue:

## 1. Jizya (Poll Tax)

Imposed on non-muslims, with rates varying based on wealth and social status. For example Non-Muslims in Syria paid jizya, which contributed to the Caliphate revenue.

## 2. Kharaj (Land Tax)

Levied on agricultural land, with rates depending upon land productivity. In Iraq, kharaj was imposed on fertile lands, particularly in region like Sawad (Plains between Tigris and Euphrates rivers). Similarly in Egypt, the Nile valley was rich in agriculture. Also in Syria, Umayyad maintained Byzantine tax system in some areas, while adapting them to fit in Islamic principles. Persian kharaj was also sent to Caliphs.



### 3-Zakat (Alms Tax)

A religious obligation for Muslims, collected and distributed for charitable purposes. It was calculated based upon specific types of wealth. Such as livestock, agricultural produce, Gold, Silver and Trade goods.

### 4-Ushr (Tenth Tax)

A 10% tax on agricultural land, collected from the farmers based on the crops they grew. It was primarily imposed on lands that were irrigated by natural sources like rain or rivers, as opposed to lands that required artificial irrigation. It was the important component of Umayyad tax system.

### 5- Booty and Plunder

Revenue generated from military conquests. **Booty** refers



to the spoils of war captured during military campaigns, including goods, livestock and movable property.

**Plunder:** involves the looting or seizure of valuable items from conquered territories or defeated enemies. For example **Tariq bin Ziyad**, **Musa bin Nusayr** captured significant wealth from the **Visigothic kingdom**. Similarly **Muhammad bin Qasim** from **Sindh** and conquest of **Transoxiana** gives significant booty including silk, precious metals and other valuable commodities.

## 7- Customs and Duties

Umayyad empire controlled several key trade routes, including the **Silk Road** and maritime routes in the **Indian Ocean**. Custom duties were collected at major trade centers like **Damascus**, **Basra**, and **Alexandria**.



## Administrative structure

The revenue administrative structure of Umayyad was in three continents i.e. Asia, Africa and Europe, & central. This different departments had been established.

## Diwan-al-Kharaj

A specialized department responsible for taxation, land revenue and financial management. These are the high ranking officials appointed by the Caliph. This official was responsible for overseeing department's operations and ensuring that its functions were carried out efficiently. The Diwan-al-kharaj was a significant source of revenue for the Umayyad state, enabling it to fund various activities and maintain its power and influence. The Central Board of



Revenue administered the entire finance of the empire, it also imposed and collected taxes and disbursed revenue.

### Diwan-al-Rasa'il:

A regular board of Correspondence was established under the Umayyads. It used state missives and circulars to the central and provincial officers. It coordinated the work of all boards and dealt with all correspondence as the chief secretariat.

### Tax collectors:

Tax collectors were appointed to collect taxes from various regions. They were responsible for assessing taxable wealth, collecting taxes, and remitting them to treasury.



## Treasury

The treasury was responsible for managing the state's finances; including storing and disbursing revenue collected from various sources.

## centralized Authority

The Umayyad Caliph held supreme authority over revenue administration. Umayyad developed a sophisticated administrative system, with specialized departments and officials.

## Financial officers

Officials responsible for managing finances, accounting, and record-keeping. These records were essential for administrative purposes and for ensuring transparency in financial management.

a- Sahib al-Kharaj (Head of Land Tax)



Responsible for overseeing the collection of *khazaj* and managing land revenue

### b-Katib (Clerk or Accountant)

He is responsible for maintaining financial records, including tax collections and expenditures.

### Military System of the Umayyad Caliphate

Umayyad Caliphate (661-750) CE had a well-organized military system that played a crucial role in expanding and maintaining the empire. The military was instrumental in conquering new territories, defending against external threats, and maintaining internal stability.



# Key Features of The Umayyad Military System

## 1- Regular Army

Umayyads maintained a regular army composed of professional soldiers. This standing army was crucial for the state military. In early Umayyad period army was estimated around 60,000 to 80,000. During the reign of Abd-al-malik (685-705) the army was between 100,000 to 200,000.

## Tribal Levies

In addition to the regular army, the Umayyad relied on tribal levies. These were the soldiers recruited from various tribes who would fight on the behalf of the state during times of need. Syrian Tribes: Tribes in Syria such as Qays and



Kabl were significant contributors to Umayyad military. **Qasbi** tribes including those in Kofa and Basra, also supplies large number of levies.

## Mercenaries

The Umayyad also employed mercenaries, including non-Muslims soldiers, to supplement their military forces. They were the foreign troops, including soldiers from neighboring regions and states, to serve as mercenaries. Mercenaries were used to defend the empire's borders, particularly in the region like the **Caucasus** and against the **Byzantine Empire**. Mercenaries with expertise in siege warfare were crucial during sieges of fortified cities and strongholds.

## Navy

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navy that played a significant role in maritime Campaign, particularly in the **Mediterranean**. They established shipyards in various coastal cities including **Alexandria, Tyre and Acre** where ships were constructed for naval warfare and trade. They were also involved in several notable Campaigns, including the conquest of **Sicily**, raids on **Byzantine** territories, and defence of coastal cities. The Umayyads' maritime dominance helped establish the Islamic World as a major naval power in the Mediterranean and beyond.

## organization and Structure of military

### 1- Commander-in-chief

The Caliph often served as the Commander-in-chief of the military, with appointed generals leading military Campaigns. Many Umayyad Caliphs,



such as Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan and Abd al-Malik bin Marwan, took an active role in military leadership, either by directly commanding armies or by appointing trusted generals.

Some notable generals: **Hajjaj ibn Yusef** a prominent military general control over the eastern provinces.

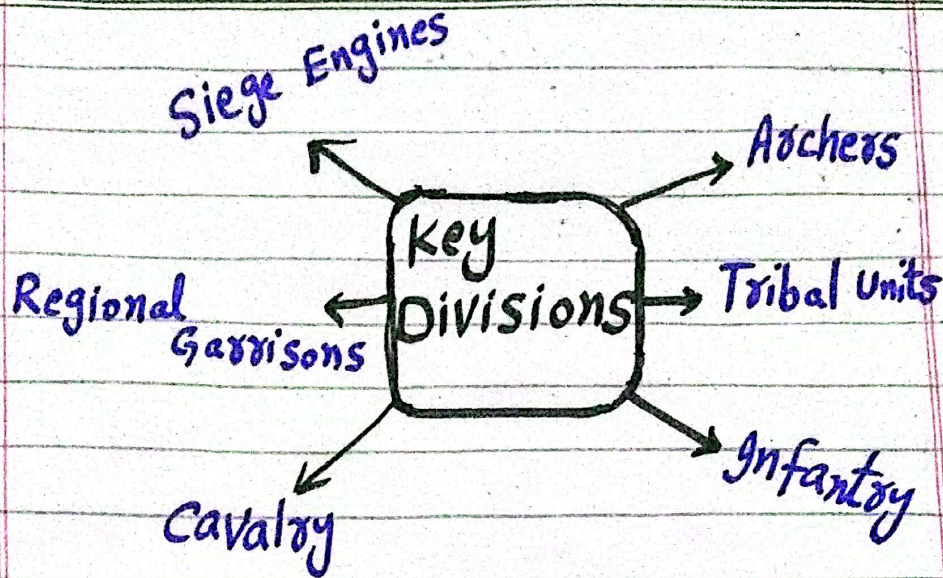
**Musa ibn Nusayr** a general who led successful campaigns in North Africa and Spain.

**Tariq ibn Ziyad** a Berber general who led the Umayyad conquest of Spain. Commander-in-Chief organized military for the expansion of Empire.

## 2. Divisions of Army

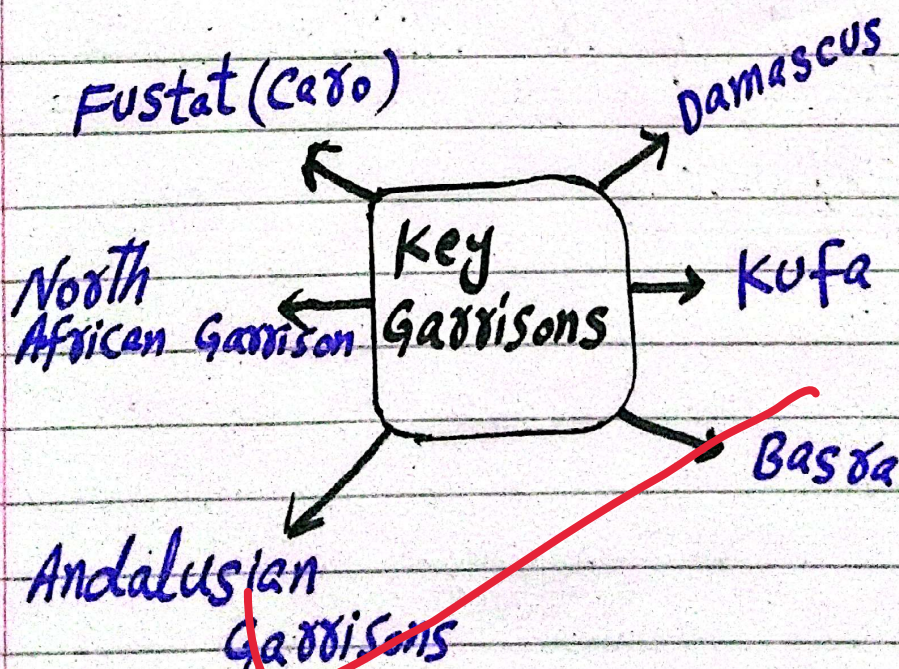
The army was organized into divisions based on tribal or regional affiliation. These divisions were often led by experienced military generals.





### 3- Garrisons

Military garrisons were established in strategic locations across the empire to maintain control and defend against threats





# Military Campaigns

## 1- Conquests

The Umayyad military was instrumental in expanding the empire through conquests in regions such as Spain, North Africa, Central Asia, and the Indian Subcontinent.

## 2- Defense

The military also played a crucial role in defending the empire against external threats, including rival states and nomadic tribes.

## Impact of the Military System

### 1- Expansion

The Umayyad military system enabled the empire to expand rapidly, establishing one of the largest empires in the history.



## 2- stability

The military maintained internal stability by suppressing rebellions and ensuring the state's authority across its vast territory.

## 3- Legacy

The military achievements of the Umayyads left a lasting legacy, influencing the development of military tactics and strategies in the Islamic world and beyond.

## Challenges and Decline

### 1- internal conflicts

Umayyad military faced challenges from internal conflicts, including tribal rivalries and regional dissent.

### 2- External conflicts

The empire also faced external threats.



from rival powers, which eventually contributed to its decline.

## Abbasid Revolution

The Umayyad Caliphate was ultimately overthrown by the Abbasid Revolution in 750 CE, marking the end of Umayyad rule and the beginning of a new era in Islamic history.

## Conclusion

The military system of the Umayyad Caliphate was a key factor in the empire's expansions and stability. Through a combination of a regular army, tribal levies, mercenaries, and a strong navy, the Umayyad were able to establish one of the largest empires in history, leaving a lasting legacy in military and political history.

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