

**The Plague of 749 AH / 1348 AD and its economic effects through the book
Tadhkirat al-Nabih in the days of al-Mansur and its building
by Ibn Habib (d. 779 AH / 1377 AD)**

An Extracted Research Paper from Master's Thesis Submitted

By

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Abstract

Epidemics and plagues are among the most dangerous natural disasters that Egyptian and Levantine societies were exposed to in the Middle Ages, especially the plague of 749 AH / 1348 AD, which had severe negative effects on all aspects of life, as it paralyzed life in society, especially the economy. Because it led to the destruction of plowing and offspring, in addition to that, it led to the deterioration of the agricultural, industrial and commercial sectors, which resulted in a stifling economic crisis in Egypt and the Levant, which had a negative impact on the Mamluk society in general.

KEYWORD :Plague - death - economic crises

INTRODUCTION

Epidemics and plagues spread in Egypt and the Levant in the Mamluk era, and the greatest of those epidemics was the plague that spread in most countries of the Mediterranean basin in particular and other regions of the world in the year 749 AH / 1348 AD, and it had clear negative effects on economic life, as life was almost Stopped in the country, the cities were like ghost cities devoid of residents, agricultural and industrial activity was absent due to the death of many farmers, artisans and manufacturers, and commercial activity and movement from one country to another stopped for fear of people from contracting this plague, as well as the lack of funds, and the large number of deaths among traders, as well as The closure of the markets because people are preoccupied with their dead and the lack of crops and goods, and their situation has gone from bad to worse and they are in a deplorable condition, all these circumstances led to the deterioration of the economic situation in the country.

This research has been divided into four main axes. The first axis dealt with the history of the outbreak of the plague, the countries in which it first spread, the names given to it, and the cities that the epidemic did not reach. As for the second axis, it talked about its symptoms, while the third axis touched on its economic effects on Mamluk society, and the fourth axis included the role of the state and the public in the face of this plague.

First: The Plague of 749 AH/1348 AD:

An epidemic of the plague ⁽¹⁾ broke out in the year 749 AH / 1348 AD during the reign of Sultan Al-Nasir Hassan bin Al-Nasir Muhammad bin Qalawun⁽²⁾ in both Egypt and the Levant. Most of the countries of the world are east, west, north and south, and the beginning of this epidemic was in Egypt since the year 748 AH / 1347 AD, and as soon as the year 749 AH / 1348 AD, it spread in all countries and continued until the year 750 AH / 1349 AD, and the like of it was not heard in earlier times, and this epidemic was known The genealogical plague because rarely a person died in it unless one of his family, children, relatives or relatives followed him. In Europe, it was known as the Black Death and its name was derived from the black swellings that appear on the injured, and it was also known as the general epidemic or the great yard because it pervaded all regions of the earth except He entered Aswan ⁽³⁾, and the city of Granada and Hama, and reached the honorable Mecca, and only Madinah Al-Munawwarah was safe from it, and it was one of the wonders and anecdotes that the epidemic did not spread in those cities ⁽⁴⁾.

Second: its symptoms

One of the symptoms of this plague is the appearance of a pimple ⁽⁵⁾ behind the ear, and the person falls into a stupor, and then a tonsil or what they call a lump under the armpit comes out ⁽⁶⁾. People, and this condition remained for a period of time, and later his symptoms changed, and the victim became hot and nauseated, and then spit blood. He prepared his shroud and prepared his coffin, then he would live in the graves after two or three nights ⁽⁷⁾.

Third: Its economic effects:

After the outbreak of this epidemic in Egypt and the Levant, it had a significant negative impact on all aspects of life, especially the economic life, which had an impact on the agricultural, industrial and commercial sectors. He died in this epidemic, as historians in Egypt (Cairo) mentioned, as it reached twenty thousand people per day, and it is noted that this number is greatly exaggerated, but the historians wanted to include these numbers as a statement and description of the large number of those who died in this epidemic. In Damascus, it reached a thousand people per day, while in Aleppo about five hundred people per day, as some of the villages were empty of their inhabitants and the streets, houses, mosques and inns ⁽⁸⁾ were filled with the bodies of the dead, as the medicines did not work for them. The cemeteries were filled with them, and they reached the point that a group of the dead was buried in one pit, as the epidemic wiped out two-thirds of the population at that time ⁽⁹⁾.

With regard to the city of Gaza, Ibn Kathir mentioned that whoever died in it on the second of Muharram to the fourth of Safar in the year 749 AH/1348 AD, as was reported by its deputy in an official letter, was a few ten thousand, while al-Maqrizi reports that whoever died in this month in the city of Gaza was more than twenty-two A thousand people ⁽¹⁰⁾, and from here we prefer the narration of Ibn Kathir, as he was a contemporary and close to the place of the event.

The death of this huge number of people had a great impact on the economic life and its deterioration in the Mamluk state. It was natural for people to be preoccupied with this plague from all their other concerns and daily work. One of its effects is the death of many farmers and the migration of others to the cities due to the abundance of health care in them. The epidemic occurred in the late days of plowing, as a man was found dead with his plow in his hand, and others were found dead with what he sowed in his hand. As soon as the harvest season came, most of the farmers perished, which led people to leave their lands and take care of them, especially after the spread of worms in them; Because of its gathering on the corpses, which led to the drying up of its orchards and trees, and the destruction of its date palms, and then to the destruction of most of its crops. So, Gharara ⁽¹¹⁾ wheat was sold for three hundred dirhams, and the price of barley, oil, beans and the sale of bread increased every eight oaq ⁽¹²⁾ for a dirham. And birds of all kinds ⁽¹³⁾, and their death had a great impact on the lives of the population ⁽¹⁴⁾, as the land was left fallow without being cultivated, and this was reflected in the shortage of crops and the increase in their prices, in addition to the reduction of the means of transportation used such as horses, camels and donkeys, which led to a rise in their prices and scarcity in the markets ⁽¹⁵⁾.

In addition to the lack of labor and its high prices, as the bearers of the dead raised their wages from one dirham to six dirhams, and grave diggers to fifty dirhams for digging each grave, but they were not happy with their money, most of them died, and with the increase in the number of the dead, most industries such as the oil and soap industry stopped if the production mills stopped The oil stopped working in this year and the year after it, due to the death and flight of the artisans and craftsmen who work in this field, as well as the Dar Al-Tarrat ⁽¹⁶⁾ in Alexandria and the Agency House ⁽¹⁷⁾ and the production of cotton, fabrics and clothing has stopped, and its prices have fluctuated between low and high, People have come to buy cloth and cotton in abundance from the markets, due to the increase in the number of dead people, which led to a rise in its prices and scarcity in the markets, if they use them to shroud the dead. Parents for buying it ⁽¹⁸⁾.

Due to the large number of dead, the manufacture of coffins and shrouds and the profession of digging graves and washing the dead were disrupted, which affected their availability, so the people were forced to carry their dead on wooden boards, doors and stairs, in addition, they did not find anyone to wash their dead, and although this profession does not require experience but kh The extent of people's disease made them not willing to practice washing the dead, especially after one of the washrooms died while washing for another woman, and the corpses were left in homes and streets for several days without access to them, and the profession of the bartenders who provide water to the families was also disrupted due to the death of many of them, so the price of the water story increased From one dirham to more than ten dirhams, and in addition, some craftsmen such as the pope ⁽¹⁹⁾, fishermen and millers, were not spared from this epidemic, as the wage of milling an ardeb ⁽²⁰⁾ wheat amounted to fifteen dirhams. about fish poisoning, which led to an increase in the price of a pound ⁽²¹⁾ of fish from two

dirhams to twenty dirhams, and on the contrary, the prices of luggage, goods, furniture, gold and silver were reduced, and books were sold with their loads at the cheapest price, as there was no one to accept to buy them, so markets and shops were closed, in addition to The death of its owners, in addition to the fact that some of the owners of crafts and professions left their jobs and delegated the recitation of the Qur'an to the dead, washing them and digging graves in order to seek reward⁽²²⁾.

As for the commercial sector, the commercial movement was paralyzed this year, due to the death of many merchants, and the fear of others of moving from one country to another for fear of infection with this epidemic, which affected the availability of commercial goods in the markets and then the rise in their prices, and life stagnated completely until the Khans Al-Qaysar⁽²³⁾ has stopped its work, as no one has come down and works in it, moreover, many carts have died with their animals, and the dead bodies have also disrupted traffic on the roads after the corpses have accumulated in the roads, and the guarantee of the dead has increased, causing many people, especially the poor, to be affected. , as a lot of money was taken from the dead, and the phenomenon of begging spread in Egypt and the Levant greatly, and the prices of renting houses were reduced because there was no one to live in them, in addition to that, most mosques and corners were closed⁽²⁴⁾ and the call to prayer stopped in them, and weddings and occasions among people were invalidated⁽²⁵⁾.

Fourth: The Role of the State and the Public:

The state has taken several measures to limit the effects of this epidemic. The Sultanate's deputy decreed that the guarantee of the launderers, porters and coffins was invalidated. In addition, the Mamluk authority stopped many coffins and coffins in the Egyptian and Levantine countries, as well as the Sultanate's deputy ordered the killing of all dogs in the country, believing that it was a reason to spread The epidemic and some of them eating the meat of the dead, and it was ordered to spill all the alcohol in the markets, in addition to that, the senior princes shrouded and washed the dead and buried them, and the tablkhana⁽²⁶⁾ of the princes abolished, and the Mamluk state resorted to reducing the salaries of employees, which is clear that all these The measures were simple in contrast to the great horror suffered by the Mamluk society, and they were of no use.

As for the common people, the people clinged to religion and the owners of the money were ascetic and gave it to the poor and the needy, and the jurists called on the people to declare repentance and leave the sins and turn to God and seek His forgiveness, and asked them to fast for three days and go out on Friday, which is the fourth day of the mosques by supplication to God Almighty and asking Him to remove the epidemic from them. So the people fasted and spent the night in the mosques and spent the night, and then judges, princes, notables, elders, dhimmis, boys and the poor went out to the desert praying to God and invoking Him⁽²⁷⁾, and it was a memorable day. And they read Surat Noah three thousand three hundred and sixty times distributed among them, and Sahih Al-Bukhari was read for three days and three nights⁽²⁸⁾.

Conclusion:

To conclude from the above, the death of a large number of farmers led to the neglect of field lands, which led to the destruction of agricultural crops, and the rise in their prices, as well as the death of craftsmen, professionals and traders, which led to the closure of markets, and the disruption of industry and trade either because of the death of their owners or their emigration, or because of the people's unwillingness By purchasing goods and commodities, they piled up in the hands of their owners. As for the death of livestock, it had a great impact on the lives of the population, which was reflected in the availability of eggs, milk and meat, which is a main food item for the population. Moreover, with the death of these animals, the land was left uncultivated, and this reflected on the lack of crops. In addition to the shrinking of the means of transportation used, such as horses, camels and donkeys, which resulted in a rise in their prices and scarcity in the markets. Moreover, the population density began to decline in some cities, either as a result of the death of its people or their migration to other areas, they thought that the plague did not reach them, and in summary it can be said that life It is almost halted and non-existent in the Egyptian and Levantine countries, as the people there are between dead and dying, and this negatively affected the Mamluk economy.

Margins

(1) Plague: It is one of the types of epidemics, and they are: every highly contagious disease, rapidly spreading from one place to another, affecting humans, animals and plants, and it is usually fatal like the plague, and it is called on every land and epidemic. As for the relationship between epidemic and plague, as indicated by Muslim scholars, it is that Between the general and the particular, the plague is an epidemic disease that affects mice, and fleas transmit it to other mice and to humans. It results in a lot of death. See: Al-Farahidi, Book of the Eye, Part 4, p. 343; Al-Sarmari, a book in which he

mentioned the epidemic and the plague, p. 11; Al-Manbaji, The Plague and its Provisions, p. 20; Karmi, What Doctors and Advocates Do, p. 7; Omar, Dictionary of the Arabic Language, Volume 3, p. 2392.

(2) Al-Nasir Hassan bin Al-Nasir Muhammad bin Qalawun: He is Sultan Badr Al-Din Abu Al-Maali Al-Nasir Hassan bin Al-Nasir Muhammad bin Qalawun, the eighth son of Sultan Al-Nasir Muhammad, born in 735 AH / 1334 AD, he took over the Sultanate in 748 AH / 1347 AD, he was a thirteen-year-old boy at that time He was inexperienced, unable to confront senior princes, so the two princes Bibgaros and his brother, Mangak al-Nasiri, took over the reins of the state. He was deposed from the Sultanate in 752 AH / 1351 AD, then returned to it for the second time in 755 AH / 1354 AD. Ibn Habib, Tadhkirat al-Nabih, vol.3, p. 102; Ibn al-Wakeel, Tuhfat al-Ahbab, pg. 64.

(3) Aswan: a large city, and a ball at the end of Upper Egypt, located at the edge of the desert, from the outskirts of the country of Nubia, The Journey of Benjamin Al-Tutuli, p. 346; Al-Himyari, Al-Rawd Al-Maatar, p. 57.

(4) Ibn Habib, Tadhkirat al-Nabih, vol.3, p. 111; See: Al-Maqrizi, Al-Suluk, Part 4, p. 80; Ibn TaghriBardi, Al-Nujoum Al-Zahirah, Vol. 10, p. 196; Sibt Ibn al-Ajami, Treasures of Gold, Volume 1, p. 158; Abdul Basit Al-Malti, Neil Al-Amal, Vol. 1, p. 181; Zakaria Al-Ansari, Tuhfat Those Who Want to Explain the Order of the Plagues, p. 39; Walker, Epidemics and Plague, p. 27.

(5) Pimple: abscess, of the plague category. Al-Farahidi: Al-Ain, Part 8, p. 222.

(6) cucumber: something like a sack. Al-Zubaidi, Crown of the Bride, vol. 11, p. 245.

(7) Ibn Habib, Tadhkirat al-Nabih, vol.3, p. 111; See: Ibn al-Wardi, History, vol. 2, p. 499; Ibn TaghriBardi, Al-Nujoum Al-Zahirah, Vol. 10, p. 198; Al-Suyuti, what was narrated by the conscious in the news of the plague, p. 10.

(8) Khans: singularly khan, hotel, temporary headquarters of foreign merchants and their trades, and people put them down, and they are built on roads and cities, Ibn Manzur, Lisan al-Arab, vol. 10, p. 313; Hallaq, The Collective Dictionary, p. 80.

(9) Ibn Habib, Tadhkirat al-Nabih, vol.3, p. 111; See: Ibn Battuta's Journey, p. 116; Al-Maqrizi, Al-Suluk, Vol. 4, p. 81; Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani, Badl Al-Ma'un, p. 368; Ibn TaghriBardi, Al-Nujoum Al-Zahira, Vol. 10, p. 195; Abdul Basit Al-Malti, Neil Al-Amal, Part 1, p. 177.

(10) Ibn Katheer, The Beginning and the End, Vol. 14, p. 225; Al-Maqrizi, Al-Suluk, Part 4, p. 82

(11) Gharara: Gharara: a large guar in which grains and flour are placed, and it is a Damascene measure of wheat, and it consists of twelve measures, or seventy-two Damascene lengths, and the weight of the Gharara is about 204.5 kg of wheat, or 265 liters, as a measure, varies Its amount varies in different places. In Gaza, it is equal to one and a half gharara of Damascus, which is about 306.75 kg, and in Jerusalem it is equal to three gharir of Damascus, or about (613,5 kg). Hunts, Islamic Measures and Weights, p. 64.

(12) An ounce: an ounce: by adding, an ounce based on an actual weight, from the verb oqa, is one of the most famous scales used by the Arabs. In the Prophetic era, it was equal to forty dirhams, and it was estimated at seven weights, and its value varies according to the weighted and even varies in different countries. Al-Maqrizi, Legal Weights and Measures, pg. 64; Al-Manawi, Muhammad Abdul-Raouf bin Taj Al-Arefin bin Ali (d. 1031 AH / 1621 AD), Money, weights and scales, edited by: Raja Mahmoud al-Samarrai, (Baghdad: Dar Al-Hurriya for printing, 1401 AH / 1981 AD), p. 37.

(13) Feddans: the singular feddan, the unit of agricultural land area varies from one Arab country to another, the area in Egypt is 1/3 333 square kasbah or approximately 4200 square meters. Mustafa, Al-Mu'jam Al-Wasat, Volume 2, p. 677.

(14) Ibn Habib, Tadhkirat al-Nabih, vol.3, p. 111; See: Al-Maqrizi, Al-Suluk, Part 4, p. 80; Ibn QaziShahba, History, Vol. 2, vol. 1, p. 542; Ibn TaghriBardi, Al-Nujoum Al-Zahirah, Volume 10, pg. 202, 210; Al-Hajji, General Affairs, p. 361; Ashour, Research and Studies in the History of the Middle Ages, p. 149.

(15) Ibn Habib, Tadhkirat al-Nabih, vol.3, p. 110; See: Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani, Badl Al-Ma'un, p. 380; Ibn TaghriBardi, Al-Nujoum Al-Zahirah, Vol. 10, pg. 200, 209; Ismail, History of the Ayyubids and Mamluks, p. 216; Gottfried, The Black Death, p. 74.

(16) Dar Al-Tarraz: It is the house that weaves all kinds of fabrics that are made in Alexandria, Damietta, and Tennis. Al-Baqali, Definition, p. 129.

(17) House of agency: It is the guest house, a term used in the Mamluk and Ottoman eras for the place similar to a hotel, where merchants stay with their goods to deposit with the intention of buying, selling and trading in general. Hallaq, The Collective Dictionary, p. 231; Dozi, Supplementation of Arabic Dictionaries, Part 11, p. 103.

(18) See: Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, Badl al-Ma'un, p. 372; Ibn QaziShahba, History, Vol. 3, vol. 2, p. 7; Ibn TaghriBardi, Al-Nujoum Al-Zahira, Vol. 10, pg. 200-208; Ibn Iyas, Badaa' al-Zohour, Volume 1,

Volume 1, p. 530; Ismail, the Ayyubids and the Mamluks, p. 217; Atta, Economic Crises, p. 76; Qassem, The Nile and the Egyptian Society, 64.

(19) Al-Baba: It is a general title for all the men of the *tastkhana*, who wash, clean and polish clothes. Al-Subki, *The Resurrected Blessings*, p. 138; Al-Qalqashandi, *Subh Al-Asha*, Volume 5, pg. 470.

(20) Ardib: A huge measure used in Egypt, equal to twenty-four Sa's. Ibn Faris, *Majml al-Lughah*, Volume 1, pg. 429.

(21) Pound: A pound is a unit of weight used in Egypt and the Levant, but it varies from country to country. A pound in Egypt is twelve ounces, and an ounce is twelve dirhams, so the Egyptian pound is one hundred or so. Forty-four dirhams, and a Damascene pound is twelve ounces, and an ounce with them is fifty dirhams, so a pound in Damascus is six hundred dirhams. Hunts, *Islamic Measures and Weights*, p. 34.

(22) Al-Qalqashandi, *The Exploits of Al-Anafa*, Volume 2, pg. 156; Ibn QaziShahba, *History*, Vol. 2, vol. 1, p. 547; Ibn TaghriBardi, *Al-Nujoum Al-Zahira*, Vol. 10, pg. 200; Al-Sakhawi, *Short Speech*, p. 34; Al-Qarmani, *Akhbar Al-Dawla*, Vol. 2, p. 286; Al-Hajji, *General Affairs*, pp. 362-363.

(23) Al-Qaysar: It is the covered market, it has doors that close at night and open in the morning, and it is the large *khan* occupied by a group of merchants. Dahman, *A Dictionary of Historical Terms*, p. 126; Hallaq, *The Collective Dictionary*, p. 182.

(24) Al-Zawiya: singular: *zawiya*, an Arabic word that means a corner of the house, then it came to be called the place that was established to house the ascetics and the cut off. Al-Maqrizi, *Al-Suluk*, Vol. 1, 182; Al-Hajji, *Pictures from Civilization*, p. 162.

(25) Ibn Habib, *Tadhkirat al-Nabih*, vol.3, p. 110; See: Ibn QaziShahba, *History*, Volume 2, Part 1, p. 546; Ibn TaghriBardi, *Al-Nujoum Al-Zahira*, Vol. 10, p. 201; Ismail, the Ayyubids and the Mamluks, p. 217; Ashour, the Ayyubids and the Mamluks, p. 254; Atta, *Economic Crises*, p. 77; Qassem, *The Nile and the Egyptian Society*, pg. 64.

(26) *Tablakhana*: A Persian word that means army music, and it means the royal musical band, and it was their custom to ring every night after the Maghrib prayer, and the Emir of *Tablakhana* has forty slaves in his service. Ibn Shaheen Al-Zahiri, *ZubbatKashf Al-Mamluk*, p. 113 Dahman, *Dictionary of Historical Terms*, p. 106.

(27) Al-Dakak: its singular is *Dhak*, an Arabic word that means the bench, Dahman, *Dictionary of Historical Words*, p. 76.

(28) Ibn Kathir, *The Beginning and the End*, vol. 14, p. 226; *The Journey of Ibn Battuta*, Volume 1, p. 116; Ibn QaziShahba, *History*, Vol. 2, vol. 1, p. 546; Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani, *Bdl Al-Ma'un*, p. 381; Ibn TaghriBardi, *Al-Nujoum Al-Zahira*, vol. 10, p. 195.

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