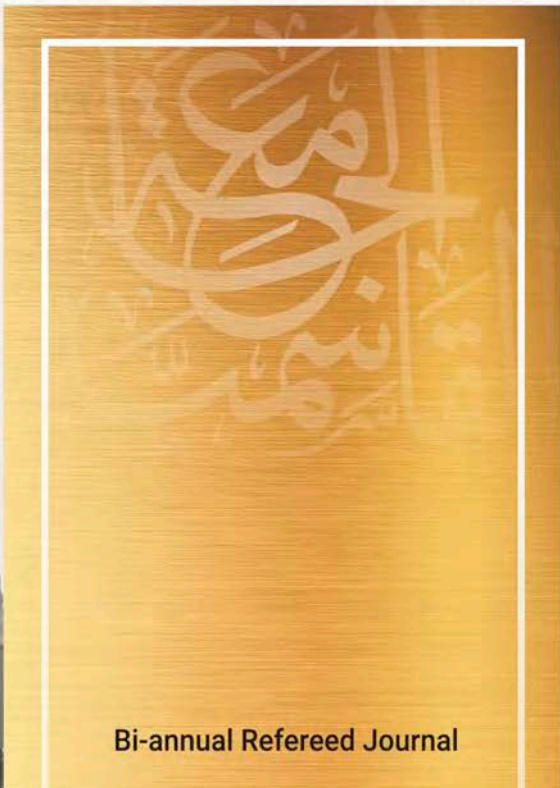
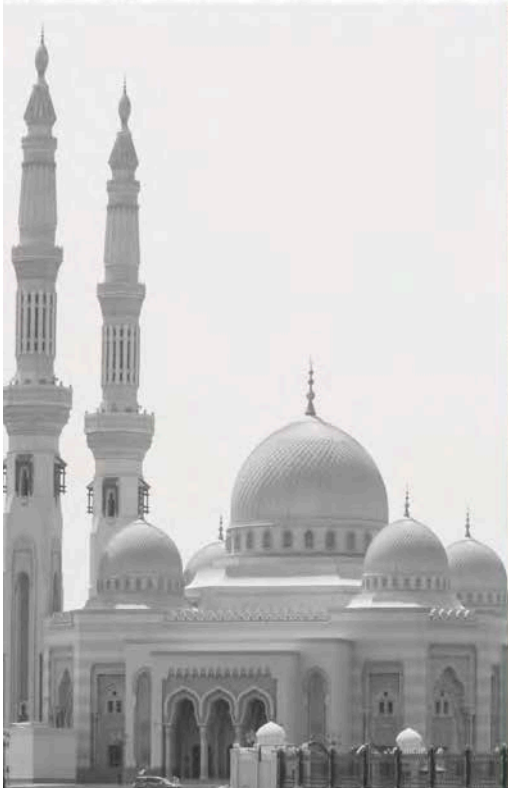


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## مساهمة المقرزي في تطور الفكر الاقتصادي وتقدمه

# CONTRIBUTION OF AL-MAQRIZI TO THE DEVELOPMENT AND ADVANCEMENT OF ECONOMIC THOUGHT<sup>1</sup>

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### الملخص

تبحث هذه الورقة البحثية في مساهمة أحد العلماء المسلمين الأوائل البارزين والشهيرة، تقي الدين أحمد بن علي المقرزي (1364-1442) في تطوير النظرية الاقتصادية السائدة والفكر الاقتصادي الإسلامي والذي سبق ما يسمى بأب الاقتصاد آدم سميث (1723-1790) بأكثر من ثلاثمائة عام. تعرض الورقة وتحلل وتناقش سيرة المقرزي وتعليمه ومهنته وكتاباتاته ومنشوراته ومساهمته في بعض نظريات الاقتصاد السائد. وتقييم الدراسة أيضا أهمية بعض القضايا الاقتصادية ذات الصلة التي طرحها المقرزي، والتي تركت تأثيرا كبيرا وجديرا بالملاحظة على تطور الفكر الاقتصادي بشكل عام، والفكر الاقتصادي الإسلامي على وجه التحديد. تتبع هذه الورقة البحثية عملا بحثيا نوعيا وصفيًا يعتمد على أبحاث المكتبات والنهج التاريخي والتحليل الفني وتحليل المحتوى (المناهج الوصفية والاستقرائية والاستنتاجية والتاريخية). يتم ذلك من خلال مراجعة عدد كبير من المراجع والمصادر ذات الصلة، والتي يتم من خلالها استنتاج بعض الأفكار الاقتصادية للمقرزي واستقراءها وتحليلها ومناقشتها،

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من أجل الوصول إلى نتائج هذا البحث واقتراح بعض التوصيات. وجد أن المقريري (1364-1442) هو أحد أوائل علماء المسلمين المشهورين، الذين ساهموا بشكل كبير، ليس فقط في علم التوحيد والتاريخ والجغرافيا وعلم الاجتماع ولكن أيضا في الفكر الاقتصادي. على سبيل المثال، من المنظور الاقتصادي، سبق المقريري توماس جريثام (1519-1579) في نظريته أو قانونه "المال السيئ يدفع المال الجيد" وكتب عن العديد من القضايا الاقتصادية بما في ذلك الفساد والتضخم والمال والضرائب، من بين العديد من الموضوعات والموضوعات الأخرى. من المؤكد والواضح أن هناك حاجة إلى مزيد من البحث لتسليط الضوء على المزيد من أفكار المقريري ومساهمات العديد من علماء المسلمين الأوائل الآخرين، الذين ساهموا بشكل كبير في مجال الاقتصاد بشكل عام والاقتصاد الإسلامي بشكل خاص، قبل وقت طويل من العديد من الاقتصاديين الغربيين المعروفين، الذين يدعون أنهم توصلوا إلى العديد من النظريات الاقتصادية.

## Abstract

This research paper examines the contribution of one of the eminent and renown early Muslim scholars, Taqiyuddin Ahmad ibn Ali Al-Maqrizi (1364-1442) to the development of mainstream economic theory and Islamic economic thought and who preceded the so-called 'father of economics' Adam Smith (1723-1790) by more than three-hundred years. The paper presents, analyses and discusses Al-Maqrizi's biography, education, career, writings, publications and contribution to some of the theories of mainstream economics. The study assesses also the relevance of some of the relevant economic issues that Al-Maqrizi propounded, which have left a significant and noteworthy impact on the development of economic thought generally, and of Islamic economic thought specifically. This research paper follows a descriptive qualitative research work based on library research, historical approach, technical analysis and content analysis (the descriptive, the inductive- deductive and the historical approaches). This is done by reviewing a large number of related references and sources, out of which some of Al-Maqrizi's economic ideas are inferred, extrapolated, analysed and discussed, in order to

reach the findings of this research and suggest some recommendations. It is found that Al-Maqrizi (1364-1442) is one of the early renown Muslim scholars, who contributed significantly, not only to Islamic theology, history, geography, sociology but also to the economic thought. For instance, from the economic perspective, Al-Maqrizi preceded Thomas Gresham (1519–1579) in his theory or law of “bad money drives out good money” and wrote about many economic issues including corruption, inflation, money and taxation, among many other topics and themes. Further research is surely and obviously needed to highlight and expose more of Al-Maqrizi ideas and the contributions of many other similar early Muslim scholars, who contributed significantly to the field of economics generally and Islamic economics especially, long before many of the known Western economists, who claim to have come up with many of the economic theories.

الكلمات الدالة: المقريري، الفكر الاقتصادي، الفساد، التضخم، الضرائب.

**Keywords:** Al-Maqrizi, Economic Thought, Corruption, Inflation, Taxation.

## 1.0 Introduction

Taqiyuddin Al-Maqrizi (1364-1442), is one of the renown early medieval Muslim scholars, who lived in the second half of the fourteen and the first half of the fifteenth centuries. He left behind a large number of writings, historical records and publications that give a clear idea and a good picture about his life, surroundings, circumstances, career, issues he encountered during his lifetime and some of the solutions he suggested to solve some of those issues. He covered in his various writings many themes and topics such as famine, corruption, inflation, money, taxation, etc.

The purpose of this study is to shed some lights on the life and Contributions of Al-Maqrizi (1364-1442) to the development of mainstream economic thought and theory and to point out that he preceded many western economists like Adam Smith (1723-1790) and

William Gresham (1519–1579) who is credited with the so-called Gresham's law, which states that "bad money drives out good money" by more than hundreds of years.

This paper is divided into five sections. After this brief introduction, section two presents a review of the literature about some of the main writings about Al-Maqrizi from various angles, themes and perspectives. Section three gives a brief profile of Al-Maqrizi, highlighting some information on his biography, education, profession, career and publications. Section four, presents, exposes, highlights and discusses Al-Maqrizi's main writings and contributions to economic thought, focussing on the relevant concepts such as money creation, rampant inflation, administrative corruption and excessive taxation. Finally, section five concludes the paper and presents some recommendations.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

Although almost six centuries have passed since Al-Maqrizi (1364-1442) lived and wrote on many topics, themes and issues. Unfortunately, until recently, his writings and publications have been ignored or overlooked. It is only recently (19<sup>th</sup> Century) that his writings have been translated, studied and analysed by western as well as some scholars of Islamic history and Islamic economic thought for many years. In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, some of his writings were translated from Arabic into some European languages, and hence Al-Maqrizi became known to a wider audience worldwide.

In recent decades, there has been a renewed interest in Al-Maqrizi's work, and there have been a number of new studies that give very useful information from different angles of his life and work, confirming that he was a polymath, who made significant impactful contributions to various fields, including history, geography, theology, economics, and other fields of knowledge.

There are some authors, who focussed on the biography of Al-Maqrizi, pointing out at many of his features, attributes and positions that he held and/or assumed. Many authors covered various themes from different angles such as his biography, his studies and travels, his

treaties on inflation, money and taxation, his work as a market inspector, his geographical and historical records on Egypt, etc.

Among the authors, who concentrated on the life and biography of Al-Maqrizi, the following authors may be mentioned: Sharon (1984) who discussed Al-Maqrizi's theory of history. Richard and Bulliet (1990) who delved into the writing of Al-Maqrizi on the city of Cairo. Rabbat (1996, 2003 and 2023) who gave a lucid and concise historical biographical sketch on the life of Al-Maqrizi, his city of Cairo, and Egypt, where he spent most of his life. Reuven (2003) who questioned whether Al-Maqrizi was a real historian of the Mamluk dynasty or a historical villain. Islahi (2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2014, 2015,) who wrote about the life and biography of Al-Maqrizi, his career as a Market inspector, his environmental circumstances (corruption, famine, inflation, financial crises), and his contribution the development of Islamic economic thought.

There are those who studied the writings of Al-Maqrizi from a Historical and geographical points of view. These include Cobb (2002) who wrote about the contribution of Al-Maqrizi in writing about the history of the Ayyubids and the Sultans of Egypt and Syria. Wintere (2004) who wrote about the rise and fall of the Ftimis Empire referring to the perspective of Al-Maqrizi. Rosenfield (201) who discussed Al-Maqrizi and the history of the Mamluks. Beauden (2022) who discussed some of the writing of Al-Maqriz and extracted some lessons from his dealing with topography and historical remains. Goldshmidt (2008) who wrote about a brief history of Egypt, citing Al-Maqrizi as one of the earliest historians, who wrote about the history of Egypt, especially the city of Cairo, where he spent most of his life. Guy (2015) who wrote about the brigands, outlaws and thugs that were around during the rule of the Mamluks in Egypt, citing some of the historical records by Al-Maqrizi Al-Enezi and Jaber (2023) who delved in Al-Maqrizi social and scientific biography.

Among those who studied Al-Maqrizi's, wrote about him and focussed on his economic ideas and career as a Muhtasib (Market Inspector and Controller), the following may be mentioned: Siddiqi (1982) who surveyed the works of early Muslim scholars, who contributed towards the development of Islamic economic thought that he managed to reach and included Al-Maqrizi among them. Chapra

(1990) who mentioned Al-Maqrizi, as one of those, who left a significant influence on the development of Islamic economics, when he wrote about how Islamic economics developed over the centuries. Ghazanfar (1995) who mentioned Al-Maqrizi among the early Muslim scholars who lived during the period of the so-called “Great Gap” coined by Joseph Schumpeter (1954) and delved into the Arab Islamic legacy that refutes the idea of a “great gap” in the first place. El-Ashkar and Wilson (2006) in writing a brief and concise history of Islamic economics. Kato (2012) who discussed Al-Maqrizi’s view on money in Medieval Egypt, when it was decided to print money in copper, which became used everywhere in Egypt, and caused the decline in the usage of gold and silver. Wan and Yaakub (2013) who reviewed the accounts on the Economy of Egypt as found in the writings of Al-Maqrizi and Abd Al-Basit and discussed the economic data conveyed by them. Zagha (2016), who focussed on the precedence of Al-Maqrizi (1364-1442) in writing about the fact that “bad money drives out good money” which is attributed and credited to Thomas Gresham (1519–1579) and called Gresham Law Sidi (2016) who discussed the perspective of Al-Maqrizi when writing about the role of Dinar and Dirham Dedde (2018) who studies and discussed the Theory of Money and Inflation in the Analysis of Al Maqrizi Thought. Al-Eidi (2018), who wrote about the economic crisis that hit Egypt in the form of a severe famine and used the historical records chronicled by Al-Maqrizi. Hajroni, (2019) who analysed the case of Money Problems in an ideal and real context form Al-Ghazali and Al-Maqrizi’s Perspectives. Al-Jahi (2012) who discussed in his book on Economics Analysis, the Islamic Theory of Monetary policy and referred to Al-Maqrizi’s writing about budget finance and money standards. Abdullah (2020), who in writing about the Islamic Monetary Standards: The Dinar and Dirham, referred to Al-Maqrizi and his astute observation that the minting of the copper fulus coins during the rule of the Mamlukes had the effect of debasing the value of gold and silver currencies and drove them out of the market. Rahman (2020) who analysed and discussed Riba (usury and interest) the real cause of inflation and referred to the perspective of Al-Maqrizi in this regard. Siregar et al (2020) who discussed the Inflation Theory in the Perspective of Al-Maqrizī’s Thought and its Implications in the

Modern Economic World. Suar et al. (2020) who compared the Al-Maqrizi's view on Islamic Economy and its relevance to Covid-19 Pandemic in Indonesia, drawing some lessons from Al-Maqrizi perspective and history of famine and financial crises that hit Egypt during his lifetime. Rizqon et al. 2022, who compared Al-Maqrizi's Inflation Concepts and Proof with the East Java Inflation Case 2015-2020.

Many others also discussed Al-Maqrizi's other economic ideas, thoughts and theories on money, famine, inflation, taxation, corruption, etc. But it is not possible to survey them all and present them all in the limited scope of this research paper. Therefore, this Review of Literature is not exclusive. In fact, it covers and highlights only some of the main academic works that dealt with Al-Maqrizi and that has been found, read, analysed and discussed by the author of this paper during the period of the research.

### **3.0 Biography and Career of Al-Maqrizi**

Al-Maqrizi is Taqiyuddin Ahmad ibn Ali. He was a Medieval Muhtasib (market inspector and controller), historiographer, economist, geographer, theologian and prolific writer. He was born in last days of the Bahri Mamluk Dynasty in Egypt. He witnessed the fall of the Bahri Sultans when he was 18 years old. He lived most of his life during the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, when Egypt faced severe economic crisis caused by famine and corrupt rulers' ill-governance and sometimes also by natural catastrophes, such as the over flooding of Nile or its drying up, outbreak of epidemics, crop diseases etc. (Islahi, 2009; Ghazanfar, 1995; Rahman, 2020).

Taqiyuddin was called Al-Maqrizi because of his ancestral connection with Maqarizah, a suburb of Baalabak in the Biqa' Valley in today's Lebanon. His father undertook a number of jobs within the judiciary department. His paternal grandfather, belonging to Hanbali School of jurisprudence, was a great scholar of the Prophet's traditions. Al-Maqrizi was initially trained in the Hanafi school of jurisprudence by his maternal grandfather. Later, he switched to the



Shafi'ite school of jurisprudence and finally to the Zahirite school (Islahi, 2009; Muslim Heritage Website).

Al-Maqrizi's studied at the University of Al-Azhar, which is one of the Egypt's oldest degree-granting university universities, founded as a centre of Islamic learning in 970 by the fourth Fatimid Caliph al-Mu'izz li-Dīn Allāh (932-975). He was taught various subjects, such as jurisprudence, prophet's traditions, theology, literature, Arabic and mathematics by prominent Egyptian scholars, such as Al-Burhan Al-Amidi, Abu Ishaq Al-Tanukhi and Ibn Abu Al-Majd. However, Al-Maqrizi's main teacher, who greatly influenced his ideas and way of historical writing, was Ibn Khaldoun. This was conceded by Al-Maqrizi himself, when he said that he was impressed by Ibn Khaldun and his book on history which includes the famous book *Al-Muqadimah* (The Introduction or the Prolegomena) of the voluminous book of history *Al-'Ibar wa Diwan Al-Mubtada wal Khabar* (Rabbat, 2023, Wikipedia website).

At the age of 20, after death of his father, Al-Maqrizi became a Shafi'i jurist, with an inclination towards Zahiri views. Contrary to the trend of his time, he was not strictly a follower of any particular school, which indicates his independent thinking. He first studied under the scholars in Cairo, then in pursuit of knowledge, he travelled to Makkah and Syria twice. It is reported that the number of his teachers totalled 600, his learning was a continuous process and he benefited at every stage of his life from one scholar to another. He was excellent at both poetry and prose (Guy, 2015; Bauden, 2022).

At the age of 21, Al-Maqrizi made his first pilgrimage to the sacred places in Makkah and Madinah. When he returned to Egypt, he started his career as a secretary to external affairs in 1388, as he was qualified in literature, arts, history and political affairs. He was also sometimes engaged in teaching. In the year 1397, he became a Muhtasib (Market controller and inspector). This position he occupied several times within a period of five years gained him experience of the market, the economy and public life. During this period, he married and sired only one daughter, who died at age of six during the 1403

plague. He studied multiple disciplines, such as jurisprudence, hadith, history and social sciences, including economics (Suar et al., 2013).

In 1408, Al-Maqrizi accompanied Sultan Faraj Barquq on his visit to Damascus, where he was appointed as a professor in the Iqbaliyyah and Ashrafiyyah Schools. He was also responsible for supervising the endowment on Al-Nuri Hospital. Although he was offered the position of Qadi (magistrate), he subsequently refused it. Upon his return to Cairo, he retired into private life and kept himself busy writing books. In 1430, he again went on hajj (pilgrimage) with his family and this time he stayed in Makkah for five years. He benefited from the scholars of the two Holy Cities as well as scholars visiting for hajj from around the world (Islahi, 2005; Bauden, 2022, Rabbat, 2023).

According to many historical documents and studies, Al-Maqrizi was appointed to a variety of posts, involving administrative and scholarly functions, since he possessed wide knowledge and great skill. Among the posts that he held in Egypt were Chief Administrator at the mosque of Al-Hakim Al-Fatimi, Professor in School of Al-Mu'ayyadiyya, Preacher at the Mosque of 'Amr ibn Al-'As, Market Inspector and Controller of the Cairo market. When he was in Syria he served as a professor at School of Al-Shrafiyya, A chief Financial Administrator of the Kalansiyya, Administrator of Endowment at the Great Nuri Hospital (Wan & Yakub, 2013, Petry, 2022).

#### **4.0 Writing and Economic Contribution of Al-Maqrizi**

As noticed by Siddiqi (1982), Chapra (1990); Ghazanfar (1995) Rabbat (2003); Islahi (2005); Wan and Yakub (2013); Bauden (2022) and Abdallah (2022) Al-Maqrizi was very productive, during his life, in writing a lot of treaties on various fields of science, especially Islamic history and geography of Egypt and economics. Al-Maqrizi's works are a valuable source of information on the history of Egypt during the Mamluk period. He was a painstaking researcher, and he drew on a wide range of sources, including both written and oral sources. Al-Maqrizi is best known for his historical works, which include *al-Mawa'iz wa-l-I'tibar fi Dhikr al-Khutat wal-Athar* (The Admonitions and Lessons in the Remembrance of Topography and Monuments), *Al-Khitat* (Exhortations and Useful Lessons in Dealing

with Topography and Historical Remains) which is one of the best known historiography works on Egypt and gives information about sources of government income, *Al Suluk li Ma'rifat Duwal Al Muluk* (The Conduct in the Knowledge of the Dynasties of Kings), and *Itti'az Al-Hunafa Bi-Akhbar Al-A'immah Al-fatimiyin Al-khulafa* (The Lessons to be learnt by the Sunnis from the News of the Fatimid Caliphs).

He also wrote a number of biographical and historical works, including *Taghrīd al-Tawhīd al-Mufīd* (The Compendium of the Useful Monotheism) and *Ighathah al-Ummah bi-Kashf al-Ghummah* (The Rescue of the Nation Through Plight Eradication). Al-Maqrizi was a great historian specialized more on Egypt, where some scholars call him as 'the historian of Egyptian territory'. His writing he did not cover only the luxurious lives of kings or sultans but also the ordinary people, the traders, the workers of different fields, the foreigners, and so on, thus, covering all aspects and classes of the Egyptian society (Goldsmidt. 2008; Wintere, 2004; Guy, 2015).

Even though he is considered as a historian, he has made huge contributions on economy as well. His works are mainly notable for their insights into the social and economic history of Egypt. He wrote several books that study some aspects of pure science or history of some social and economic elements in the Muslim World in general, based on his observations in Egypt, such as the book of *Shudzur Al-Uqud fi Dzīkr Al-Nuqud*, the book of *fi Al-Nuqud Islamiyyah* (The Islamic Money), the book *Ighatsah Al-Ummah bi Kashf Al-Ghummah* (The Rescue of the Nation Through Plight Eradication) (Islahi, 2009).

As pointed out by Rabbat (2023) Al-Maqrizi is considered as an Islamic economic thinker, who carried out numerous studies on money, financial crises and Inflation. Equipped with plenty experiences as a *Muhtasib* (Market Controller and Inspector), Al-Maqrizi, put forward many thoughts about economic concepts and principles especially about money through the historical study of currencies used by humanity in general and by Cairo residents in Egypt. He discussed the problem of Inflation and the role of money in causing it, a discussion that were very rarely done by Muslim and Western thinkers (Nabi, 2013; Dedde, 2018; Suar *et al.*, 2020).

Al-Maqrizi was one of the medieval Muslim scholars, to observe the problem while correlating it with the inflation that hit Egypt during his lifetime. He argued that the behaviour of the Mamluk Burji rulers who deviated from religious and moral teachings has resulted in an extremely severe economic crisis dominated by inflationary trends, which was further triggered by the outbreak of infectious diseases that plagued Egypt for some time. This dismal situation in Egypt, inspired Al-Maqrizi to present his various views and impression on the causes of the crises in his work *Ighatsah Al-Ummah bi Kashf Al-Ghummah* (The Rescue of the Nation Through Plight Eradication) where he exposed and vividly described the economic issues facing Egypt, their causes and suggested some solutions (Chapra, 1999; Islahi, 2011; Al-Eidi, 2018; Abdullah, 2020; Suar *et al.*, 2020; and Rabbat, 2023).

#### 4.1 *The Concept of Money*

Al-Maqrizi views and impressions include the history and function of money, the implications of creating a wrong coin from copper instead of gold and silver, and the purchasing power of money. For Al-Maqrizi, the coin has a significant role in the life of humankind because, by using money, humans can meet the needs of life and facilitate life activities. He revealed the history of the use of coin by humankind, from ancient times to his lifetime under the rule of the Mamluk dynasty. According to him, both in the period before and after the arrival of Islam, currencies were used by human beings to determine various prices and labour costs to achieve this goal, the money used only consisted of gold and silver.

However, in Al-Maqrizi's view, chaos began to emerge when the influence of the Mamluks grew more influential among the court, including the policy of printing a mixed dirham coin. While talking about economic crisis in Egypt, Al-Maqrizi spent most of his effort on explaining the negative effect of the circulation of copper as money. It was that time that the sultan decided to print money in copper and it became used everywhere in Egypt, and the usage of gold and silver was declining day by day until it was removed from the usage as money (Islahi, 2009; Kato, 2012, Suar *et al.*, 2020; Harjoni, 2019)

Although Al-Maqrizi stressed the urgency of using gold and silver currencies, he realized that money was not the only factor influencing price increases. He argued that printing a coin must be accompanied by more considerable attention from the government to use the coin in further business. Neglecting this, resulting in an unbalanced increase in writing money with production activities, can cause the purchasing power of real money to (Kato, 2012; Islahi, 2014; Ghazanfar, 1995; Al-Eidi, 2018).

Distressed by Egypt's acute economic and financial crises, in the early years of 15<sup>th</sup> century, al-Maqrizi authored his famous work *Ighatha al-Umma bi-Kashf al\_Ghumma* (The Rescue of the Nation Through Plight Eradication) in the year 1405. The main theme of the book is the high price (*Al-Ghala'*) and economic fluctuations of prices witnessed by Egypt in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century. It is said that Al-Maqrizi spent about 35 years writing and revising this work. It presents a few cases of famine in Egypt during the past from ancient days that caused high prices and starvation.

However, the main themes of the book are the high prices and economic disturbances of the early fifteenth century in Egypt arising from the erroneous political, economic and monetary policies of the Mamluk sultan. He attributes these economic issues and financial crises to be arising out of wrong political, economic and monetary policies of the Mamluk Sultan. He criticized the excessive coinage of copper *fulus*, the cessation of gold and silver coinage and the adoption in 1403 of the *dirham* of *fulus* as a unit of account. He believed that the Egyptian ruler deliberately stopped the minting of silver.

Al-Maqrizi stated that the creation of a bad quality coin that would destroy a good quality coin (known today as the Gresham's law). During the reign of Sultan Saladin Al-Ayyubi, the printed money had a deficient quality compared to the coin that was already in circulation. According to Al-Maqrizi, it was also inseparable from the influence of the change of rulers and dynasties. Each of which set different policies in printing the form and value of the dinar and dirham. (Chapra, 1990; Nabi, 2013; Kato, 2012; Islahi, 2013; Al-Eidi, 2018; Harjoni, 2019; Abdullah, 2020; Rabbat, 2023).

#### 4.2 *The Concept of Inflation*

During 15<sup>th</sup> century, especially in its first half of it, Egypt faced a terrible economic crisis caused mainly by rulers' misgovernance and by corruptions and sometimes by natural catastrophes such as the over flooding of Nile or its drying up, outbreak of epidemics, crop diseases, droughts, etc. According to Al-Maqrizi inflation occurs when prices generally experience a continuous increase for some time. He classified Inflation based on its causal factors into two things, namely Inflation caused by natural elements and inflation caused by human error. The natural inflation is usually caused by various natural factors that cannot be avoided by humanity, such as during natural disasters when scarcity occurs and where a variety of foodstuffs and other crops experience crop failure and the supply of these items experiences a very drastic decline. As for the inflation that is due to human error, Al-Maqrizi identified three things that both individually and collectively could cause this type of inflation. These three things are: (1) Corruption and poor administration; (2) Excessive taxation and (3) Uncontrolled money circulation. These human error factors, which include high levels of corruption, high interest rates, excessive taxes, and large amount of money in circulation are positively correlated to inflation (Dedde, 2018; Abdullah, 2020; Rahman, 2020, Suar *et al.*, 2020, Rizqon *et al.* 2022).

Al-Maqrizi also argued that the appointment of government officials based on corruption and bribery and not capability would place people without credibility in various essential and respected positions, both in the legislative, judicial, and executive circles. As a result, when they took office, government officials tried to collect as much wealth as possible by justifying all means. Al-Maqrizi noted the extravagance and misappropriation of public treasury by the rulers. Silk Carpets were laid down for the sultan to walk over from his residence to the fort while people were suffering from hard living. Al-Maqrizi blamed the Sultan for negligence of land development and irrigation facilities which badly affected the farming and agricultural produce and also major portion of arable lands was granted to army and ruling elites who exploited the tenants (Islahi, 2005; Suar, *et al.*, 2013; Al-Jarhi, 2021; Rahman, 2020).

### *4.3 The Concept of Trade, Corruption and Excessive Taxation*

Another theme of relevance, that runs through the writings of Al-Maqrizi, is that he believed that trade and commerce were essential for the development of a prosperous society. He argued that trade allows people to specialize in the production of goods and services that they were good at, and that this specialization leads to increased productivity and economic growth. He also argued that trade helps to create a more equitable society, as it allows people to exchange goods and services with each other, regardless of their social status, unless excessive taxation is imposed on the poor sections of the society to pay for the luxury of the corrupt officials in a government. This kind of situations causes the State expenditure to increase dramatically and therefore, as a compensation, the corrupt officials implement and impose a taxation system that is excessive and oppresses the people by imposing various new taxes and raising the current tax rate. Besides making bribes to gain a strategic position, people who bribe the government also aim to obtain agricultural land rations, which brings out a system of feudalism, with many landlords controlling much agricultural land. The landlords then rent out the agricultural land that they control to farmers at high rents, which could even reach 10 times the previous price. As a result, the cost of agricultural production increases significantly, and agricultural products become very expensive and the scarcity of food is unavoidable (Islahi, 2011; Al-Eidi, 2018, Al-Jarhi, 2021).

Al-Maqrizi historical works do not only document the corrupt lives of Sultans (rulers) but also present the common man as well, providing a complete picture of society and the economy of his lifetime. His works are more of everyday observations of the facts, occasions and situations of the society in Egypt. Schultz (1995) points out that Al-Maqrizi's works are well known to the historians of Mamluks, and his writings have attracted much interest due to his frequent criticism to the ruling elite. He blamed Mamluks for the Egypt's economic problems, saying that early crisis was as a result of natural factors, but current economic crisis is as a result of ruling elite's negligence of the public good and misuse of the resources.

At the time of economic crisis, Al-Maqrizi identified seven social classes in the Egyptian society:

1. Those who hold the reins of power.
2. The Rich merchants
3. The Cloth merchants and small shopkeepers
4. Those who cultivate and plough the land
5. The Lawyers and students of theology
6. Those who possess a skill, salaried persons, transporters
7. The needy and poor

Al-Maqrizi wrote his famous book *Ighatha al-Umma bi-Kashf al-Ghumma* (The Rescue of the Nation Through Plight Eradication) in the year 1405. The main theme of the book was the high price (Al-Ghala'), famine and economic fluctuations of the early 15th century in Egypt arising out of wrong political, economic and monetary policies of the Mamluk Sultan. His intention was to discuss the factors behind this worsening of the Egyptian economy and its ruinous effects and to prescribe remedies (Chapra, 1999; Islahi, 2005; Kato, 2012; Rahman, 2020).

Al-Maqrizi is distinguished as one of the first scholars to write exclusive treaties on money in Islam. He criticized the cessation of gold and silver coinage and the adaption in 806/1403 of the *dirham* of *fulus* as a unit of account. He wrote *Shudhur al-uqud fi dhikr al-nuqud* (The Limits of Contracts in Mentioning Money) and *al-Nuqud al-Islamiyyah* (The Islamic Money) (Siregar et al., 2020; Abdallah, 2022).

Al-Maqrizi also touched upon many other economic problems and issues in his writings and records, such as Market Regulation and Price Controls, insisting on the Islamic economic principles, which emphasize, moderation, fairness and social justice in economic transactions. He wrote about Taxation and Fiscal Policy which he observed and recorded during the rule of the Mamluks. His observations on taxation focused on its impact and effects on and the people and the economy, considering its fairness and its burden on the population. Al-Maqrizi was also concerned with issues of wealth distribution and social justice, encouraging the equitable distribution of wealth, and rejecting tax farming and over-taxation (Islahi, 2005, Ghazanfar, 2015, Abdallah, 2022).



## 5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

From the review, analysis and discussion of some of Al-Maqrizi's ideas and thoughts in this research paper, it is found that Al-Maqrizi, like many other early Muslim scholars, such as Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (1058-1111), Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328), Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406), and others, preceded Adam Smith (1723-1790), the so-called "father of economics", and those who came after him, like David Ricardo (1772-1823), Thomas Malthus (1776-1834) Thomas Gresham (1519–1579), Irvin Fisher (1867-1947) and others by a number of centuries, in contributing significantly to the consolidation, analysis and discussion of many economic concepts and principles in their various multidisciplinary writings, even though their contributions were not noticed, overlooked or ignored until very recently when they became recognized by Western economists and non-western economists.

Al-Maqrizi's insight into some economic concepts like debasement and over-circulation of bad money, the over-taxation and the corruption that resulted in inflation and financial crises are but a few of the themes he wrote about, centuries before even the birth of the so-called father of Economics, Adam Smith. Al-Maqrizi was one of the forerunners of some economy theories, like Gresham (1519–1579)'s law, Irvin Fisher (1867-1947)'s theory of quantity of money, Amartya Sen (1933-)’s Entitlement Theory and theories of famine. He contributed significantly to the development of economic thought by not only criticising the mismanagement of the economy but suggested solutions.

Further research is needed to highlight the contributions of many other Muslim scholars, such as Al-Maqrizi, who contributed significantly to the field of economics generally and Islamic economics especially. This is needed for many reasons, the least of which, is to refute the idea that Adam Smith (1723-1790) is the father of economics, and the idea of the "Great Gap" suggested by Joseph Schumpeter (1883-1950) who proposed a "Great Gap" thesis of 500 years by saying that economic analysis begins only with the Greeks and was not revived until the rise of European Scholasticism starting with St Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274).

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