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Basrah Heritage Center

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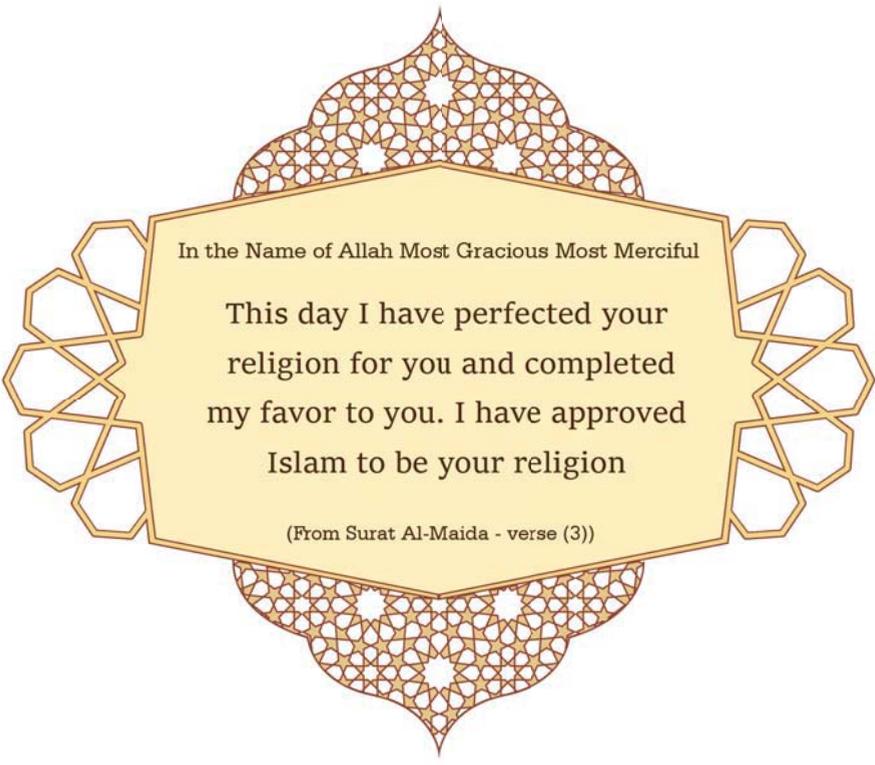
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In the Name of Allah Most Gracious Most Merciful

This day I have perfected your
religion for you and completed
my favor to you. I have approved
Islam to be your religion

(From Surat Al-Maida - verse (3))

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1- The paper should cope with the interests and goals of the journal(Basrah Heritage issues).

2- Research papers or studies to be published should strictly be according to the globally-agreed- on standards.

3- The paper should be printed on (A4). Three copies and a (CD) having ,approximately, 5000-10000 words using simplified Arabic or Times New Roman font and in pagination should be delivered to the Journal Editor in Chief.

4- An abstract in Arabic or English, not exceeding one page,150 words, with the research title, should be delivered with the paper.

5- The front page should have the title, the name of the researcher/researchers, occupation, address, telephone number and email. Name(s) of the researcher / researchers in the context should be avoided.

6- All sources used in the research paper should be fully

documented in the endnotes, taking cognizance of the common scientific procedures in documentation including the title of the book, editor, publisher, publication place, version number, publication year and page numbers. Such procedure is used in the first reference to the source. But if it is used again, documentation should include only the title of the book and the page number.

7- In the case of having foreign sources, there should be a bibliography apart from the Arabic one, and such books and researches should be alphabetically ordered.

8- Printing all tables, pictures, graphs and charts on attached papers, and making an allusion to their sources at the bottom of the caption. There should be a reference to them in the context.

9- Attaching the curriculum vitae. If the researcher contributes to the journal for the first time, it is necessary to manifest whether the research paper was submitted to a conference or a symposium for publication or not. There should be an indication to the sponsor of the project, scientific or nonscientific, if any.

10- The research paper presented should never have been published before, or submitted to any means of

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To secure success, a scholarly journal has to work professionally and industriously to attain the required objectives. One main reason for this orientation is the large number of academic journals and bulletins that cover various aspects of knowledge. Recognizing this fact, Basrah Heritage Journal is always keen to attain qualitative additions in different scholarly fields. It also seeks to avail itself of the manifold viewpoints and diverse methodological approaches in reading Basra heritage more closely, directly and precisely.

The diversity of approaches would definitely renew the relationship with heritage, uncover its phenomena and facts and promote our awareness of the present, and so helps us to revive and develop it. This is in harmony with the idea that spatial marks (monuments, for example) have their significance together with the memories, events, and situations connected with them. Scientific, literary, and

other works of heritage are vital due to their links with the present influenced by the various expected perspectives of researchers.

It is worth mentioning that Basra still motivates more and more research work that tackles various aspects of the city. Studies on the city seek to investigate ignored or unfamiliar topics or explore the salient and important phenomena from new angles. This Number of the Journal is a vivid example as it has disparate topics and studies, all related to one specific place, namely Basra.

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Department of History, College of Education for Human Sciences, University of Basra

Security and Economic Role of the
North of Basra (Jaza'er of Basra) During
the Ottoman Era (1546 - 1869)

الدَّورُ الأَمْنِيُّ والاِقْتِصَادِيُّ لِشَمَالِ البَصْرَةِ
(جَزَائِرِ البَصْرَةِ) فِي العَهْدِ العُثْمَانِيِّ
(١٥٤٦ - ١٨٦٩ م)

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أ.د. حسين عليّ عبّيد المصطفى

جامعة البصرة / كَلِيَّةُ التَّربِيَةِ لِلعُلُومِ الإِنْسَانِيَّةِ / قِسمِ التَّارِيخِ

Abstract

The area situated at the north of Basra is of vital importance to Basra Province since the beginning of the Ottoman Era. This is primarily due to its strategic, economic and religious importance. The names of cities of the area have been known since the beginning of the 16th Century. Most famous of these cities are Qurna and Mdaina.

This research paper focuses on the security and economic roles of these two cities and the residential areas affiliated to them, and their influence on the center of Basra. The security role is so important to secure the center of the Province which can be considered as the first defense line of Basra. Consequently, no military campaign targeting the center of Basra from the north or east can be carried out successfully unless it crosses the north of Basra. For this reason, the Ottoman authorities were sometimes obliged to order some rulers, together with their troops, to launch

their military campaigns from the north of Basra.

The economic role of the area, on the other hand, is connected with Qurna being a center for collecting taxes from the ships heading from the south of Basra, passing by Qurna, and then sailing to Baghdad and vice versa. The big sums of money levied from ships go to the rulers. There was also the internal trade that focused on transporting agricultural and animal products from that area into the center of Basra.

The paper is divided into an introduction, a preface, and two sections: the first tackles the security role and the second tackles the economic role, followed by a conclusion.

ملخص البحث

تُعدّ شمال البصرة منطقة مهمّة لولاية البصرة منذ بداية العهد العثمانيّ؛ لأهمّيّتها الاستراتيجية والاقتصاديّة، وحتىّ الناحية الدّينيّة. وكانت تسمية مدنها معروفة منذ بداية القرن السّادس عشر، وأشهر تلك المدن القرنة والمدينة. يركّز البحث على الدّور الأمنيّ والاقتصاديّ لهاتين المدينتين، وما تبعهما من مراكز سكنيّة، وانعكاساته على مركز ولاية البصرة، ويصحّ القول إنّ الدّور الأمنيّ لهما كان مهمّاً للحفاظ على مركز الولاية، بحيث يمكن عدّهما خطّ الدّفاع الأوّل عن البصرة؛ ولذا لا يمكن أن نتصوّر نجاح أيّ حملة عسكريّة على مركز البصرة من الشّمال أو الشّرق إلّا بعد اجتيازها لشمال البصرة، ما اضطرّ العثمانيّين إلى الطلب من بعض الولاة القادة مع قوّاتهم ومسؤوليهم في بعض الأوقات أن يكون انطلاق حملاتهم من شمال البصرة. وتجلّى الدّور الاقتصاديّ لشمال البصرة في كون القرنة مركز استحصال الصّرائب على السّفن المارّة فيها من جنوب البصرة إلى المدن في نهر دجلة حتّى بغداد، وبالعكس، وما يدرّ ذلك من مبالغ ماليّة للولاية. فضلاً عن التجارة الداخليّة التي تنشط بنقل المنتوجات الزراعيّة والحيوانيّة منها إلى مركز ولاية البصرة. فسّم البحث على مقدّمة وتمهيد ومبحثين، الأوّل تناول الدّور الأمنيّ، والثاني الدّور الاقتصاديّ، والخاتمة.

1. Introduction

'North of Basra' is a geographic name covering all places and residential areas situated to the north of Basra center. This could go back to the Islamic era or to the following eras including the Ottomans where the Jaza'er of Basra was predominant at that time.

This research paper focuses on the security or military role of that area, in addition to the economic role of Basra center at that time. The paper seeks to answer the following questions: When was that area first mentioned in historical sources? What security role did that area play during the Ottoman rule for Basra center? Did that area have any economic importance?

This paper uses the historical sources that cover the period (1546 - 1869) in Basra. Of special importance are the books of the travelers that tackle the location of the area under study focusing on Qurna being the meeting place of the Tigris and the Euphrates where travelers pass through on their way from Baghdad to Basra, or during their trips from the Gulf area to Baghdad. The military events have

been covered by general and more specific sources that mainly deal with Iraq, Basra, and the Arab Gulf.

The events that took place in Basra were related to the Al-Jaza'er with a lot of details. The researcher therefore tended to sum up these events and focused on Al-Jaza'er.

The term 'North of Basra', however, is not mentioned in the Ottoman historical documents. Instead, the nomination 'Al-Jaza'er of Basra' is mentioned to point to the expansive marshes including areas such as Bani Mansour, Bani Hameed, and Antar River, being the biggest places in the north of Basra. That broad area included more than 300 rivers such as Salih River, Banu Asad, Al-Fathiyya, Al-Kila' and many other rivers. Each river represented a residential area. Al-Jaza'er itself included many villages, all were annexed to Amir Ali Pasha Afrasiab's Emirate.⁽¹⁾

Qurna is mentioned in travelers' books since mid-Sixteenth Century. Traveler Fedrici mentions, before arriving at Basra in 1563, that he has passed by a castle or a fort named Qurna, the meeting-place of the Tigris and the Euphrates forming a big river named Shatt Al-Arab⁽²⁾, not

mentioned by this traveler. Traveler John Eldred reported the same information in 1583, adding that the Turks had a castle located at the meeting place of both rivers where merchants had to pay a small tax.⁽³⁾ On his part, the French traveler Tavernier gave a more detailed information in 1652. He said that Qurna had three fortresses, the most fortified of which was built at the meeting-place of both rivers where the son of the Amir of Basra Hussain Pasha Afrasiab used to live. The second and third fortresses were close to this one where one was a place for collecting customs duties from passing ships. The customs officers were friendly, yet keen in their inspections of the ships.⁽⁴⁾ During Italian traveler Sebastiani's trip to Basra in 1666, he reported names of villages of the north of Basra including Mansuriyya, Al-Mdaina, Al-Fathiyya, Qurna, etc, located at the meeting-place of the Tigris and the Euphrates. In this place, he mentions, customs officers collect taxes. Qurna, as he states, is apparently a big city surrounded by mud walls.⁽⁵⁾

When Swedish traveler Jean Oher arrived at Qurna in

1739, he found it a city, but in fact it was big village having a customs office, an old mud castle guarded by Janissary soldiers, and a state official appointed by Wali (ruler) Ahmad Pasha.⁽⁶⁾ German traveler C. Nippur cites interesting details on Basra in 1765. The information given on 1765 on Qurna is not quite useful except that Ali Pasha Afrasiab fortified it. His son Hussain Pasha built a second wall, increased fruit orchards and wheat fields in Qurna. He also described other areas of Al-Jaza'er of Basra and mentioned that Qurna was rather badly built having a newly-built twofold wall to check out any Ottoman aggressions. Five Janissary battalions stationed there. Qurna geographic situation was described as good with limited trade. Al-Mansuriyya was a big village where taxes were paid to the Ottomans. In Kut Mu'ammarr village, taxes were paid to the Pasha of Basra while in Al-Arja',⁽⁷⁾ taxes were paid to Aal Saleh of Al-Mintifig. The areas there were full of streams, and people were proficient farmers.⁽⁸⁾ The Scottish traveler A. Parsons in 1774 described Qurna as a big city surrounded by beautiful green plains with many populated villages.⁽⁹⁾ The rulers paid

due attention to the area at that time.

2. Security Role of the North of Basra

Transition from first Basra (established in 14th of Hijra) to second Basra incarnated in the movement of big well-known families into places such as Al-Mishrag and Al-Qibla. Most important among those families are Aal Mghamis (of Mintifig) and Aal Abdul Salam (Bash Ayan) later on, and Rifa'y Family.⁽¹⁰⁾

Basra, at that time, was directed by Aal Mghamis Family that could extend its authority northward. But it soon collided with the powerful Aal Elayyan Emirate.⁽¹¹⁾ They therefore sought to ally with the Portuguese by offering economic facilities against Aal Elayyan in Al-Jaza'er. That alliance did not lead to positive results, and the Portuguese themselves did not have the desire to take risk in this concern.⁽¹²⁾

At that time, Baghdad wali Ayas Pasha sent a message to Amir Ali bin Elayyan, shortly before the occupation of Basra. In a diplomatic manner, he asked him for help and

cooperation with the Ottoman army to expel the infidels (the Portuguese) from that area. The message referred also to the religious bonds between the two adding that he would meet them in Qurna and then continue to control Basra. This is, in fact, the first Ottoman reference to the importance of the north of Basra as a strategic area. ⁽¹³⁾ Recognizing the real intentions of the Ottomans, Aal Elayyan decided to line up with Aal Mghamis irrespective of their differences, not allowing the Ottomans, as strangers, to occupy Basra.

Sultan Sulaiman Al-Qanuni conquered Baghdad in 1536. Wali of Basra Rashed bin Mghamis offered loyalty to the Ottoman Sultan, but he did not show complete obedience. However, as the Ottoman policy was aiming at extending its hegemony up to the Arab Gulf, the Ottomans thus decided to annex Basra. For this purpose, a big army was sent to carry out this mission. To be sure, the military campaign had to come from the north of Basra across the Tigris passing through both Qurna and Al-Mdaina. Mani' bin Rashed Aal Mghamis, on his part, thought of coordinating with

Aal Elayyan to work together against the Ottoman army, ignoring all past discrepancies. He thought that the north of Basra was of utmost importance to protect the center of Basra, and that repelling the military campaign there would prevent the invaders from occupying the city. Acceding to such a request, Aal Elayyan prepared themselves to face the Ottoman troops in cooperation with Aal Mghamis men. The Ottoman troops, however, were much bigger in number and equipment. The battle ended with the occupation of Basra. The fighters of the wali of Basra withdrew to the west desert of Basra while Aal Elayyan men withdrew into Al-jaza'er. ⁽¹⁴⁾

The Ottoman annexation of Basra ushered the beginning of problems. The tribes of the north of Basra continued to attack the Turkish castles and entrenchments. According to Longrigg, ⁽¹⁵⁾ the rebellious tribes were not defeated despite the Ottomans' occupation of Basra and the tribes withdrawal into the marshes.

The north of Basra area became under the Ottoman hegemony in 1550. As a result, Basra was divided into 8

districts and 3 counties in 1552. The area had originally 4 districts, namely Al-Sharesh, Al-Garraf, Sadr Al-Suwaib, and Al-Shamal.⁽¹⁶⁾ During 1552 also disturbance increased. The Wali of Basra Qubad Pasha could not repress tribal activities in the city. This led decision-makers in Constantinople to order the Wali of Baghdad Ali Pasha to transform Al-Mdaina specifically into a province, and that Basra should be a district affiliated to it following Basra occupation by the Wali of Baghdad. In accordance with this, a decree was issued to appoint Qubad Pasha Wali of Al-Jaza'er and Al-Mdaina. His son was appointed as an amir of a district of Basra.⁽¹⁷⁾ The other districts had to support him financially. There were also orders to build a mosque for Friday prayers, in addition to a number of forts in the area.⁽¹⁸⁾ In spite of all these high orders and preparations, there is no mention in references of setting up a headquarters in Al-Jaza'er or Al-Mdaina.⁽¹⁹⁾ It is thought that the Ottoman stance in this respect is mere a political attempt to delude the population of the north of Basra that they were highly respected and that they were qualified to be leaders. The reality is that

the Ottoman government wanted to be very close to the center of events in the north of Basra to be able to handle any emergency promptly. All these procedures, however, came to an end following the murder of Wali Qubad Pasha in 1533 and the appointment of Mustafa Pasha as the Wali of Basra in the district center in Al-Mishraq and not in Al-Jaza'er or Al-Mdaina.⁽²⁰⁾

The Ottomans tried in 1554 to prevent the tribes from launching new attacks. They therefore sent the Marine Force Commander Seedy Ali Rayyes to support Wali Mustafa Pasha to attack Aal Elayyan. Such an attempt failed to attain any result as the Arab tribes constituted a constant threat to the routes leading to Basra. Traveler Cezar Fedrig described these Arab tribes' courage. The tribal attacks against Ottoman troops continued up to 1565 where the Arab tribes in Al-Jaza'er decided to attack Basra and to besiege the city center.

Later developments witnessed tribal armed protests against the heavy taxes imposed on them by the Ottomans. On their part, the Ottomans sent an army to face those

tribes, but the army was defeated.⁽²¹⁾ Due to the continued attacks of Aal Elayyan and their allies on the Ottoman troops, the Ottomans decided to send a massive military campaign led by the Wali of Baghdad Eskandar Pasha with the aim of subduing these tribes. They have already undertaken preventive procedures such as banning military materials and foodstuff from going into Al-Jaza'er and closing up checkpoints in that area. Preparations for this campaign started in 1565⁽²²⁾ by building up a fleet consisting of 450 war ships with 2000 Janissaries, 200 cannons, and 6000 fighters chosen from the tribal gatherings supporting them. On 12 July 1567, the campaign headed for the strategic Zartuk Castle nearby to Qurna. A garrison from Basra backed up the campaign. The Arab tribes, however, could not face the heavily-supplied Ottoman troops after losing large numbers of their fighters.⁽²³⁾ Recognizing the critical situation, Ali bin Elayyan resorted to the diplomatic option in order to reorganize his fighters. He, therefore, sent a delegation to the Commander of the Ottoman army with very precious gifts requesting peace. Eskandar Pasha

received them cordially and accepted their offer for peace as he knew well that war would be useless. Yet, he asked them to pay a yearly tax amounting to 50.000 florins to Basra treasury. He also said that he would take a number of sheikhs' sons as hostages to ascertain their loyalty! In spite of all these procedures, and the Ottoman victory, some tribes did not show compliance.⁽²⁴⁾

Resistance of the Arab tribes in Al-Jaza'er continued after this campaign. All Ottomans attempts to intimidate them were useless. Prior to his return to Baghdad, Eskandar Pasha sent a letter of threat to bin Elayyan on late 1567. Bin Elayyan responded with a strongly-worded message.⁽²⁵⁾ Eskandar Pasha later on appealed for the help of Sultan Saleem II (1566-1574) who sent a letter in Arabic addressed to bin Elayyan expressing his desire for peace, security and settlement in Al-Jaza'er, though it had an implicit threat to Bin Elayyan.⁽²⁶⁾ Such a move clearly shows how important Al-Jaza'er was to the strategy of the Ottomans in Iraq and the Arab Gulf.

It is noticeable, however, that the first three decades

of the 16th Century did not witness developments in Al-Jaza'er region. It seems that the Ottomans could not impose their full control on the north of Basra. For instance, traveler John Neobre, who visited Basra in 1583, showed that the Ottomans were unable to subjugate those Arab tribes due to their special techniques of fighting that prevented the Ottomans from achieving any victory. ⁽²⁷⁾

At that time, Sultana Safiyya, wife of Sultan Murad II (1574 - 1595), sent a message to Queen Elizabeth I of England in which she boasted of her husband's invasion of Al-Jaza'er. The message, however, did not mention big cities like Cairo or Damascus as part of the Ottoman empire. ⁽²⁸⁾

3. Al-Jaza'er of Basra During Afrasiab Emirate

The political conditions in Basra deteriorated during the last decades of the 16th Century. These conditions were the result of the repeated attacks of Arab tribes on Ottoman troops, and the Ottomans' involvement in continuous wars against European states and Persia. The Ottomans, therefore, did not pay due attention to Basra. As a result of

all this, Ali Pasha, the last Wali in Basra ⁽²⁹⁾, realizing that Basra financial resources were continuously declining, decided to sell the city to Afrasiab for a small sum of money ⁽³⁰⁾ on condition that Afrasiab should go on mentioning the name of the Sultan in Friday sermons.⁽³¹⁾

After Afrasiab Emirate could establish itself well in Basra, its hegemony expanded to include other areas including Al-Jaza'er where Ottoman repeated military campaigns could not subjugate it. During Abdul Amir Ali Pasha era, various areas, including Kut Mu'ammara and Kut Al-Zakiyya were conquered.⁽³²⁾ All through that, the Arab-supported policy, the administrative methods which were away from overpower and despotism, and the respect shown to Aal Al-Bayt doctrine motivated the people of Al-Jaza'er to join them.⁽³³⁾ The rulers of Basra paid due attention to the north of Basra region especially Ali Pasha Afrasiab who set up a big castle in Qurna in 1639 and called it Al-Aliyya, a nomination that covered Qurna as a whole. ⁽³⁴⁾

In 1625, the Persians launched a new attack on Basra. Qurna was the main battlefield where the troops of Ali

Pasha Afrasiab were mobilized there to counter the Persian troops. Abdul Salam Al-Abbasi, from the family of Aal Pasha Ayan, mobilized fighters to support Aal Afrasiab, together with Sabean fighters. But the Persian troops withdrew quickly because of their dire need to face the Portuguese in Hormuz Strait or defend Baghdad against the Ottomans. ⁽³⁵⁾

The Arab tribes in Al-Jaza'er exploited Pasha Afrasiab's involvement in facing the Persian threat and rebelled against Aal Afrasiab. One main reason is that the Arab tribes in Al-Jaza'er, especially Aal Elayyan, used to have power over their region. They were therefore not ready to submit to Aal Afrasiab to be subject then to taxes and orders. In 1624, Abdulla bin Mani', the leader of Al-Mintifig, allied with Ni'mat Alla bin Elayyan. Essa bin Mohammad Al-Huwaishy, the Amir of Antar River Castle and Nasser El-Din Al-Zubaidy, the Amir of Qurna castle, who have already allied with Ali Pasha Afrasiab in fighting the Persians, joined this alliance. Ali Pasha, however, put a plan to fight each one of them separately. He first attacked Al-Huwaishy and Al-Zubaidy by besieging their strongholds. Recognizing the supremacy

of Ali Pasha troops, they asked for his pardon. Ali Pasha agreed, but Al-Huwaishy moved to Al-Sharesh and violated his promises. Ali Pasha's troops, then, attacked the fighters of Al-Huwaishy and defeated them. His troops took after them up to Saleh River where Al-Huwaishy was killed with his followers. ⁽³⁶⁾

Ali Pasha Afrasiab focused on facing Abdulla bin Mani', the Amir of Al-Mintifig who tried to delude Ali Pasha that he proceeded along to Al-Dair to fight there. But he soon went back to Basra center. Realizing this, Ali Pasha sent special forces to pursue bin Mani' fighters. In Basra at that time, there were troops ready to defend the city. Abdulla bin Mani' was forced to retreat to his headquarters in Kwaibda castle. The troops of Ali Pasha moved to fight Ni'mat Alla bin Elayyan. Bin Elayyan sought the mediation of some notable personalities including Taha bin Abdul Salam, from Pasha Ayan Family. These mediations succeeded in forgiving the two. ⁽³⁷⁾

Ali Pasha Afrasiab could later on consolidate his control over Al-Jaza'er. This shrank the rule of Aal Elayyan at that

area. Some developments happened later on as some sheikhs encouraged bin Elayyan to breach his pledge towards Ali Pasha. He responded positively to their requests and therefore fortified his castle in Saleh River in 1628. Ali Pasha, on his part, sent a land and marine military campaign. A fierce battle broke out where the castle was destroyed, and many fighters of bin Elayyan were killed. Bin Elayyan himself escaped north to Al-Arja' ruled at that time by Hassan Agha. Bin Elayyan's movement represented the most dangerous threat to Basra.⁽³⁸⁾

The enmity between the Afrasiab Emirate and Persia continued. In 1628, Persia sent a new military campaign against Ali Pasha rule under the leadership of Emam Qali Khan. This massive campaign reached Basra western borders. Basra, however, escaped this danger again as Shah Abbas died at that time. The Persian leader of the campaign ordered his army to withdraw from Basra. When Shah Safeyyeddin ascended the throne, the relationships between Persia and the Afrasiab Emirate improved for the period (1629 -1642). A treaty was concluded between Ali

Pasha and the Ruler of Shiraz where gifts were exchanged.

(39)

When the tense relationships between Persia and the Afrasiab Emirate ended, Ali Pasha turned to control Al-Jaza'er. He could get rid of his enemies in 1629 by killing bin Mani' and subjugating Hassan Agha. Even more important was bin Elayyan's defeat and his escape outside Al-Jaza'er which was ruled by the Afrasiab Emirate.⁽⁴⁰⁾

in 1651, Amir Ali Pasha Afrasiab died. His son Amir Hussain Pasha assumed power.⁽⁴¹⁾ Hussain Pasha started his career by mistreating his relatives including his two uncles Ahmad Beg and Fathi Beg. He then imposed taxes on people. This motivated his two uncles, incited by Aal Pasha Ayan Family, to seek protection with the Ottoman state. Al-Azzawi states that Basra tribes and troops were ready to follow Ahmad Beg due to their love for him. As a result, he and Murtadha Pasha, the Wali of Baghdad, led a military campaign and could occupy Qurna first and then headed for Basra. Feeling perplexed and frightened, Hussain Pasha did not dare to resist and so he fled to the borders of Persia.

Ahmad Pasha therefore became the ruler of Basra in 1653. Honoring Murtadha Pasha, he offered a big amount of money to him as a gift. But Murtadha Pasha, greedy and avid as he was, did not feel satisfied, and he took hold of Hussain Pasha and his Family's money. Then he took hold of the fortunes of rich people in the city. When Arab tribes knew of all those acts of Murtadha Pasha, they decided to fight him. The battle took place in Al-Sharesh where the tribes could defeat the Ottoman troops, preventing their ships in Al-Dair to sail to Al-Sharesh to support the Ottoman soldiers. The Ottomans were besieged and were then forced to withdraw to Baghdad.⁽⁴²⁾

The people of the city were obliged to write to Amir Hussain Pasha Afrasiuab requesting him to come back and be the ruler again after realizing that the Ottoman rulers intended to impoverish the people of Basra by confiscating their money and imposing taxes. Hussain Pasha headed for Basra and expressed his sadness publicly for the murder of his two uncles. He continued to rule Basra without noticeable problems up to 1665 where Al-Ahsa' Battle

broke out and ended in annexing Al-Ahsa' to Basra.⁽⁴³⁾

At that time, the decision-makers in Istanbul decided to suppress the Afrasiab Emirate. For this purpose, Ibrahim Pasha was committed to carry out this mission in 1665 and bring back the ruler of Al-Ahsa' to his former position. An army of about 50.000 soldiers was prepared to move to Basra. Hussain Pasha was forced to be ready for war. Al-Jaza'er people expressed their support for Hussain Pasha due primarily to their hatred for the Ottomans. Ibrahim Pasha besieged Qurna for two months, but he could not burst into the defenses of Basra fighters owing to Hussain Pasha's effective preparations for war.⁽⁴⁴⁾

Ibrahim Pasha got ready again to invade Basra in the same year. He led his troops from Baghdad and brought cannons to destroy the castles. He arrived at Al-Mansuriyya and set up tents there. A fierce battle flared up where Hussain Pasha troops were forced to withdraw to Qurna. The Ottomans pursued them and besieged them there. Hussain Pasha aimed at detaining the merchant ships at Qurna and asked the merchants to go back to the Port of Basra. When they

reached the city center, they found it in turmoil. Al-Ka'bi states that Ibrahim Pasha sent them and other sheikhs a letter inciting them for rebellion. They therefore decided to disobey Hussain Pasha orders. Yet, the followers of Hussain Pasha in Qabban and the eastern bank of the Shatt Al-Arab burst into the city center and suppressed the rebellion. Ibrahim Pasha, realizing the developments in Basra, resorted to diplomacy to secure peace between the two combating sides according to certain conditions.⁽⁴⁵⁾

A number of Aal Abdul Salam sheikhs (Pasha Ayan) decided to travel to Istanbul to meet the Ottoman Sultan. Their aim was to complain of the conditions in Basra under Hussain Pasha rule. On their return to Baghdad, Mustafa Pasha consulted them on appointing Yahya Pasha as the ruler of Basra instead of Hussain Pasha. They approved such a proposal. He, therefore, asked Hussain Pasha to submit the amount of money already agreed on. Hussain Pasha could not afford to pay the money at that critical time. Mustafa Pasha consequently passed a decree appointing Yahya Pasha as the ruler of Basra instead of Hussain Pasha.

Such an order meant a new fierce battle. Military forces from Diyar Bakr, Shahrzoor, and Riqqa were mobilized. This big army moved to Basra in 1668. The Ottoman troops headed for Al-Mansuriyya, Qurna, and Bani Asad area. They engaged in a fierce battle with the tribesmen. Then they proceeded to Al-Sharesh and set up a bridge on the river to be able to mount their cannons to shell the tribal fighters. Hussain Pasha, on his part, stationed in Al-Suwaib and was in contact with his forces entrenched in Qurna. But these forces were unable to withstand the besiege. They were forced to cross Al-Zakiyya River into Al-Jazeera open land. The Ottomans therefore occupied Qurna. Hussain Pasha sought refuge in Al-Dawraq in the eastern side of Shatt Al-Arab and then fled to India. This battle heralded the end of the Afrasiab rule in Basra. A historian like Al-Ka'by called this fierce battle 'the horrors of Doomsday'.⁽⁴⁶⁾

The Ottomans consolidated their control on Basra for about two decades after they have ended the rule of the Afrasiab Emirate. In 1690, The Sheikh of Mitifig allied with Al-Jaza'er tribes to attack Basra. The Wali of Basra Ahmad

Pasha forced them to retreat. They, however, reattacked Basra with fighters outnumbering his troops. The Wali was defeated and then killed. The allied fighters advanced towards Basra center led by Mani', Sheikh of Al-Mintifig. But the sheikhs and dignitaries of the city convinced him to go back to his stronghold in Suq Al-Shiyukh. He responded to their appeals and appointed Sheikh Hassan Al-Jamal ruler of Basra.⁽⁴⁷⁾

It is worth mentioning that Al-Jaza'er and Aal Elayyan were not mentioned in the historical sources since the beginning of the 18th Century. Focus, instead, centered on Al-Mintifig Emirate which played a noticeable military and political roles in the southern part of Iraq at that time. Even Al-Jaza'er and Qurna fell under its control until the Era of Medhat Pasha (1869 - 1871) who could rid Al-Jaza'er and Qurna, administratively, of Al-Mintifig control.⁽⁴⁸⁾

4. The Economic Role

A majority of Arab-Muslims resided in Al-Jaza'er area. There lived also a minority of Mandeian Sabeans, and less

number of Jews who worked as money-changers and money lenders. The Sabeans excelled in producing silver pots, working as goldsmiths, and building up boats known locally as mashhoof.

It is clear from the available data that the population who lived in Al-Jaza'er area and its suburbs were more than those who lived in the south of Basra. That area had agricultural and animal fortunes. It also represented an export point for the center of Basra, some Arab states, and Persian ports.⁽⁴⁹⁾

When the Ottomans occupied Basra in 1546, they set up a big castle in Qurna to collect the customs duties from the ships sailing between Basra and Baghdad. A Janissary garrison was stationed in Qurna. Ali Pasha Afrasiab built up a big impenetrable castle and Qurna name was changed to Al-Aliyya. Hussain Pasha later on built up three more military castles making Qurna thus the first defense line for Basra.

⁽⁵⁰⁾ In 1655, Al-Jaza'er became a district with Qurna as its center. By the same token, Al-Iskandariyya, Al-Rahmaniyya, and Zartook became districts as well.⁽⁵¹⁾ These districts had an economic production, some of which was exported

outside the area. This is also clear from the taxes imposed by Ali Pasha Afrasiab on these districts.⁽⁵²⁾

Qurna, in fact, has been at that time a market for bringing goods from some of the Tigris and the Euphrates villages to be exported to Basra center. These goods included agricultural and animal products such as cereals, fish, dairy, cheese, fat, animals leather and wool. The date-palm trees were huge in number in Al-Jaza'er since the beginning of the 16th Century.⁽⁵³⁾ People used to plant barley and wheat in huge quantities at the beginning of the 19th Century. Wheat production amounted to 14.750 tons, barley 8.250 tons, and rice 2000 tons.⁽⁵⁴⁾

Al-Jaza'er marshes were proper places for breeding buffalo, the most important animal for producing milk and other dairies. There was also rice cultivation and production of cane mats which were sold in various parts of Basra to meet people's needs of building up their houses.⁽⁵⁵⁾

Qurna has become an important place for producing boats. Materials necessary to build up these boats such as wood, tar, and nails were brought from outside Qurna. The

local boats were used to carry papyrus and canes to feed animals inside the marshes, to transport animal products to Qurna, to fish, or to hunt birds.⁽⁵⁶⁾

It is clear that Al-Jaza'er of Basra had an outstanding economic importance. It assumed the second rank, after Ashar, in collecting taxes which represented a significant source for the treasury of Basra district. Besides that, it provided the center of Basra with cereals, animal products, and materials used for constructing houses.

5. Conclusion

Al-Jaza'er of Basra has been the whereabouts of a number of Arab tribes. These tribes outnumbered people who used to live in Basra city center. They used to gather near the rivers. Qurna and Mdaina were most notable among other populated areas. The foreign travelers who passed by these two cities gave detailed accounts of their nature and their powerful people. Those tribes' attitude was not to yield to regional or local powers. They were instead keen to fight them especially the Ottomans. When the Ottomans

decided to occupy Basra, Aal Elayyan in Al-Jaza'er joined Aal Mghamis who were ruling Basra to counter the Ottomans. Although the Ottomans could occupy Basra in 1546, the tribes of Al-Jaza'er did not obey and continued to attack them.

The Ottomans then attempted to subjugate Al- Jaza'er politically. A decree was issued in 1552 to transfer Basra city center from Al-Pasha Quarter to Al-Mdaina to beguile the population of Al-Mdaina that they are qualified to be the leaders of Basra. What actually happened is that the Ottoman ruler has moved to Al-Mdaina to be close to the activities of Aal Elayyan and curb their power. Such a situation continued for two years only.

Aal Elayyan attacks continued against the Ottoman troops. The Ottomans, as a result, decided to send a massive military campaign against them. Aal Elayyan, however, were not defeated; instead, they resorted to 'the attack and retreat strategy' against the Ottomans up to 1567.

The Ottoman administration in Basra became weak at the end of the 16th Century. The Ottoman ruler of

Basra Ali Pasha behaved strangely by selling Basra to an Ottoman official known as Afrasiab who was a relative of some people of Al-Dair. A semi-independent emirate was thus established in Basra (Aal Afrasiab Emirate). Ali Pasha succeeded in attracting Aal Elayyan and other tribes.

It is concluded from this survey how important Al- Jaza'er was to the center of Basra. It represented the first defense line of the city against the Ottoman and Persian threats. It is important for agricultural and economic reasons. It also served as a center for collecting taxes from ships sailing between Baghdad and Basra.

Footnotes

1. Fathalla bin Alwan Al-Ka'by, *Traveler's Provisions* (in Arabic). Baghdad, 1924, p. 38.
2. *Trips between Iraq and Sham Desert during the 16th Century*. Trans. and comments by Anees Abdul Khaleq Mahmood. Beirut, 2013, p. 74.
3. *Ibid*, p. 135
4. *Tavernier's Travel to Iraq in the 17th Century*. Trans. by Basheer Francis and Gorgis Awwad. Baghdad, 1944, pp. 93-94
5. *Father Jose de Santa Maria Al-Kirmily. Sabastiani Trip*. Trans. and comments by Father Butris Haddad. Beirut, 2006, pp. 42-43
6. *Iraq and the Arab Gulf in John Otter's Trip (1736-1743)*. Trans. Khaled A. Hussain. Beirut, 2015, p. 121
7. Al-Arja' was a center of a county within Baghdad district. It flourished for a time then disappeared. It was located on the right bank of the Euphrates north of Nasiriyya. See: Yacoub Sarkis, *Iraqi Studies*, Vol. 3, Baghdad, 1981, pp.170-174
8. See Carston Nippur, *A Trip to Arabia and Other Neighboring Countries*. Trans. Abeer Al-Mundher, Vol. 2, Beirut, 2007, p. 184
9. *Abraham Parsons' Tour (1774-1775)*. Trans. and comments by Anees A. Mahmood. Beirut, 2013, p. 115

10. Hussain Ali U. Al-Mustafa. Formation of Modern Basra (in Arabic). Karbala, Basra Heritage Center, 2016, pp. 43-44
11. An Arab Emirate established in Al-Jaza'er of Basra. It belongs to Shammar Tribe.
12. Hussain Ali U. Al-Mustafa. Basra at the Beginning of the Ottoman Period, 1546-1668 (in Arabic). Damascus, 2012, p. 46.
13. Fadhel Bayat, Studies of the History of the Arabs in the Ottoman Period (in Arabic). Beirut, 2003, p. 41
14. For more details, see Abbas Al-Azzawi, History of Iraq between Two Occupations, Vol. 4, pp. 46-47; Saleh Ozeran, Ottoman Turks and the Portuguese in the Arab Gulf (1534-1581). Trans. Abdul Jabbar Naji, Baghdad, 1979, pp. 29-32.
15. See Stephen H. Longrigg, Four Centuries of Modern History of Iraq. 5th ed., Translated into Arabic. Baghdad, n.d., p. 48
16. Ali Sh. Ali, "Administrative Arrangements in Basra Province During the Second Half of the 16th Century" (in Arabic). Gulf and Arab Peninsula Bulletin, No. 35, 1983, p. 129.
17. Fadhel Bayat. Arab Studies in the Ottoman Documents (in Arabic), Vol. 2, Istanbul, 2011, p. 119
18. Ibid, p. 120
19. Ibid, p. 296
20. Abbas Al- Azzawi, op cit, p. 73. For more details, see Hussam T. Nasser and Mushtaq E. Ubaid, Al-Mdaina (Al- Jaza'er of Basra) in the Ottoman Period (1546-1718). Karbala, Basra Heritage Center

Publications, 2015, pp. 55-65.

21. Trips between Iraq and Sham Desert during the 16th Century. op cit; see also Tareq N. Al-Hamdany, Basra Province: A Study of its Political, Administrative and Economic History (1534-1638) (in Arabic). Baghdad, 2017, pp. 55,61, 63-65

22. Fadhel Bayat, Arab Studies in the Ottoman Documents, op cit, Vol. 3, pp. 194-195, 261; Hussam T. Nasser and Mushtaq E. Ubaid, op cit, pp. 73-79.

23. Tareq N. Al-Hamdany, op cit, p. 65

24. Ibid. pp. 65-66

25. Ni'mat Alla Al-Jazaiery, Flowers of Spring (in Arabic). Najaf, 1954, Vol.2, pp. 126-129

26. Tareq N. Al-Hamdany, op cit, p. 67

27. Trips between Iraq and Sham Desert, op cit, p. 109

28. Tareq N. Al-Hamdany, op cit, pp. 67-68

29. He is known as Darwish Ali Pasha by some sources.

30. See Abbas Al-Azzawi, History of Iraqi Money Following the Abbassid Period (in Arabic). Baghdad, 1958, p. 143

31. Writers give different opinions about his descent. Some consider him as an Arab. In fact, the policies he has adopted with his sons were based, to a large extent, on Arab values and traditions. He, for instance, called himself emir instead of pasha. Some sources called him Afrasiab. See Hussain A. Ubaid Al-Mustafa, Basra in the Early Islamic Era (in Arabic), pp. 155-158; Abed Ali bin Rahma Al-Huwaizy, History of the

Afrasiab State. Study and investigation by Sa'doon J.A. Al-Azzawi.

32. Tareq N. Al-Hashimy, op cit, p. 40
33. Abed Ali bin Rahma Al-Huwaizy, op cit, p. 364
34. Hussain A. Ubaid Al-Mustafa, Basra in the Early Islamic Era, pp. 157-158
35. Abed Ali bin Rahma Al-Huwaizy, op cit, p. 407
36. For more details on the Persians' attempt to invade Basra, see Della Valley's Trips to Iraq during the 17th Century. Trans. Butris Haddad. Beirut, 2006, pp. 124-129
37. For more details on these events, see Abed Ali bin Rahma Al-Huwaizy, op cit, pp. 243-167
38. Ibid, pp. 269-283
39. Ibid, pp. 327-344; Tareq N. Al-Hamdany, op cit, p. 86
40. Ibid, p. 87
41. Abed Ali bin Rahma Al-Huwaizy, op cit, p. 327, p. 334
42. Al-Azzawi thinks that Hussain Pasha's assumption of power followed his father Ali Pasha's death. Yet, Al-Ka'by thinks that Hussain Pasha assumed power in 1647 during his father's period. See Abbas Al-Azzawi, op cit, p. 44
43. Fathalla bin Alwan Al-Ka'by, op cit, pp. 19-20; Abbas Al-Azzawi, op cit, Vol. 5, pp. 47-50
44. Abbas Al-Azzawi, ibid, Vol. 5, pp. 75-76
45. Ibid, pp. 78-80

46. Ibid, pp. 81-86
47. Al-Azzawi, op cit, pp. 90-95; Trip of Father Parthemly Cavay in Iraq , the Arab Gulf, and Sham Desert (1669-1674). Trans. Anees A.K. Mahmood and Khaled A.L. Hussain, Beirut, 2014, pp. 40-66
48. Al-Azzawi, op cit, Vol. 5, p. 133
49. Al-Azzawi, ibid, Vol. 7, p. 193
50. ibid, p. 142
51. Hussain A. Ubaid Al-Mustafa. Basra in the Early Ottoman Period (in Arabic), p. 77, p. 137
52. Al-Ka'by, op cit, p. 39
53. Hussain A. Ubaid Al-Mustafa, Basra in the Early Ottoman Period, p. 71
54. Sa'ad Kh. Jabur, Qurna District (1869-1918). Unpublished M.A. thesis, College of Arts, University of Basra, p. 94
55. Ibid, p. 82
56. Ibid, p. 96; Longrigg, op cit, p. 132

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