

The Arab Emirate of Ahwaz: A Study of its Location and Historical Developments up to 1914 CE.

Prof. Dr. Mohammed Resan Damman¹, Asist. Lect. Hayder Abduladheem

Khudhair², Lect. Dr. Osama Nadim Jawad³

¹ College of Basic Education, University of Babylon, Iraq.

Email: basic.mohammed.resan@uobabylon.edu.iq

² College of Basic Education, University of Babylon, Iraq.

³ College of Basic Education, University of Babylon, Iraq.

Abstract:

This study explores the history of Ahwaz from ancient times until 1914 CE. Ahwaz was part of the empires that arose in ancient Iraq, including the Akkadian, Babylonian, and Assyrian empires. It was also the land where the Elamite state was established before Christ. Later, it became part of the Arab Islamic state during the Umayyad and Abbasid eras. Ahwaz served as a base for many revolutionary and rebellious movements within the Abbasid Caliphate, such as the Qarmatian movement, the Zanj Rebellion, the Kharijite movement, and others. The Arab Musha'sha'i Emirate was established (1436-1724 CE), with its capital in the city of Hawizeh in Ahwaz. This state ruled southern and central Iraq, parts of the Arabian Peninsula, and Al-Ahsa. Ottoman-Safavid treaties, particularly the Treaty of Zuhab in 1639 CE, recognized Ahwaz's independence. After the collapse of the Musha'sha'i state, the Arab Bani Ka'b Emirate (the Ka'bi State) was established in Ahwaz. (1690-1925 CE), which exploited the weakness of the Qajar state and expanded its borders. The first Treaty of Erzurum in 1823 CE established the Zagros Mountains as the dividing line between the Ottoman and Qajar states. Ahwaz retained its sovereignty without interference. In October 1837, the governor of Baghdad, Ali Reza al-Laz, launched a campaign that succeeded in restoring Ottoman control over Mohammareh, subduing it, and withdrawing to Basra. This led to a diplomatic crisis between the Ottoman and Qajar states, prompting British and Russian intervention to resolve the border disputes between the two countries. In the second Treaty of Erzurum in 1847 CE, the Ottoman state ceded Ahwaz to Persia, granting it the right to intervene in the affairs of the Arab emirate. Ahwaz became a destination for European powers that reached the Arabian Gulf, both politically and economically, including the Portuguese, Dutch, and French invasions. British influence and interests were heavily concentrated in Ahwaz to protect trade routes with India. Relations transformed into economic and strategic ones after the discovery of oil in the region. The Emirate of Ahwaz at the beginning of the twentieth century, and it turned into an alliance with Sheikh Khazal al-Kaabi, and Britain sent its forces to protect Ahwaz to ensure control and protect the oil wells

Keywords: History of Ahwaz • History of Iraq • Arabian Gulf Emirates • Ka'ab Emirate • Arabs of Ahwaz..

INTRODUCTION

The history of the Ahwaz region is an important part of the history of the Arabian Gulf, closely intertwined with it from ancient times until the beginning of the 20th century. All powers that came from the north or east to control the Arabian Gulf began by controlling the Ahwaz region before extending their control to the Gulf itself. Similarly, powers that came from the south and from the southern Arabian waters completed their control of the Arabian Gulf after controlling the Ahwaz region and its ports on the Gulf. This demonstrates the region's geographical unity with the wider Arab world. Examples include the Portuguese invasion of the Arabian Gulf in the 16th and 17th centuries, Ottoman (1546-1915) and Safavid (1508-1733) rule, and British influence and occupation of the Arabian Gulf until 1914. The history of Ahwaz is intertwined with the history of Iraq since ancient times. It was part of the ancient Mesopotamian civilization, encompassing the Akkadian, Babylonian, and Assyrian empires. It was also part of the first Arab kingdom established in southern Iraq, the Kingdom of Mesene, founded in the 3rd century BC with its capital in the city of Maysan. With the rise of the Islamic Arab state, Ahwaz became part of it, serving as a passage for Arab armies into South Asia..

Ahwaz witnessed the control of numerous rebellious powers and groups, particularly during the Abbasid era. Its remoteness and difficult terrain, surrounded by waterways and canals that made access extremely challenging, along with its proximity to Basra, made it a focal point for various movements. These included rebellions against the Abbasid Caliphate such as the Zanj Rebellion (869-883 CE), the Qarmatian movement, and the Azariqa Kharijite movement. Ahwaz also served as the capital of the Musha'sha'i state (1436-1724 CE), which ruled Ahwaz and parts of southern and central Iraq. The nature of the research required dividing the research into an introduction, two main axes, a conclusion, and a list of sources. The first axis studied the geographical location of Ahwaz and its name, and the history of Ahwaz from the earliest times through the Islamic eras, the later Islamic eras, the Mongol invasion, the Jalayirid state, and the Safavid control, and the administrative and political conditions of Ahwaz until 1546 AD. The second section studied Ahwaz for the period 1546-1914 AD, which was characterized at its beginning by the Safavid-Ottoman conflict, and after that by the Ottoman conflict with the Qajar state to annex Ahwaz. It included the position of the Ottoman-Persian treaties on Ahwaz, the most important of which were the Treaty of Zuhab 1639 AD, the First Treaty of Erzurum 1823 AD, and the Second Treaty of Erzurum 1847 AD. This axis studied British influence and interests in Ahwaz until 1914 AD.

The history of Ahwaz until the Ottoman control of Basra in 1546 AD:

Firstly / Ahwaz (Name - Location and Borders)

1- Name:

The Arabs used to call this region Ahwaz. Ahwaz is the plural of the word Hawz, which is derived from the verb Haza, meaning possession and ownership. The Arabs used the word as a sign of possession and ownership (1). Later, Ahwaz became known as Al-Ahwaz, meaning the land of the Arabs. Non-Arabs used this name for the Arab lands adjacent to them, which were inhabited by Arabs (2). Foreign and Arab historical sources indicate that the earliest Arabs set foot in the land of Ahwaz centuries before the Islamic conquest. The date of their migration is unknown, but it extends from the arrival of the Arabs in Iraq or is linked to that (3).

2- Borders

Ahwaz enjoys a strategic location that has made it a center of trade and a destination for merchants since ancient times. Therefore, Ahwaz is considered one of the most important regions for every merchant, and its name is prominent among cities and regions. This importance stems from its location on the coast of the Arabian Gulf and its proximity to Iraq(4). Ahwaz is bordered to the west by the Republic of Iraq, to the north by the provinces of Lorestan, to the east by the provinces of Isfahan and Fars, and to the south by the Arabian Gulf. This region lies between latitudes 30-33 degrees north and longitudes 48-51 degrees east(5).

3- The Population and Origins of Ahwaz:

There were no accurate statistics on the population of Ahwaz in the past. However, the population was estimated only after Ahwaz was annexed to Persia in 1925. Before the 20th century, the population was estimated at around 6,000 in the late 19th century. The major cities of Ahwaz, Abadan, Mohammareh, and Shushtar had populations ranging from 50,000 to 100,000. The rural population was unregistered. The Arab population traces its origins to Arab tribes who migrated to the Ahwaz region from the Arabian Peninsula in successive waves and settled there before Islam. After their arrival, the waters began to recede from the third millennium BC, and the land began to form from the sedimentary deposits carried by the Tigris, Euphrates, Shatt al-Arab, Karun River, and their tributaries. Thus, the land of this region is Arab, and its people are Arab(6).

4- The Economy of Ahwaz:

Its strategic location overlooking the northern coasts of the Arabian Gulf has given it a major economic role in the region. The economic life of Ahwaz rests on three main pillars:

1- Oil: First discovered in 1908 in Masjed Soleiman, a city in Ahwaz located 150 kilometers from the head of the Arabian Gulf, oil pipelines were laid in Ahwaz in 1912, connecting its oil fields to Abadan. A dedicated ship pier was constructed to transport crude oil abroad. By the beginning of World War I, more than two hundred oil wells had been discovered, leading international oil companies to concentrate in the region and dedicate significant attention to these fields and the area in general.

2- Agriculture: Agriculture is the primary resource for the people of Ahwaz and their main occupation. The Karun and Karkheh rivers and their tributaries are the main source of irrigation in the

region. Ahwaz is renowned for its date palm cultivation, particularly between Khorramshahr, Abadan, and Fallahiyah, as well as for the cultivation of wheat, barley, sugarcane, beets, rice, cotton, and other crops. 3- Trade: Due to the location of both Mohammareh and Abadan, they became the two main ports for receiving goods to Ahwaz and exporting them from it, and modern and advanced docks were built for them to receive ships of different sizes (7).

Secondly: A Historical Overview of Ahwaz:

1- The History of Ahwaz Before Islam:

When the waters began to recede from Ahwaz in the third millennium BC, a Semitic people began to settle there. Initially, they were subject to the authority of the Akkadian Empire in Iraq, but this subjugation was not permanent or stable due to the revolts of the Elamites, who controlled Ahwaz and launched intermittent raids on some Akkadian cities. Eventually, the Elamites were able to sweep through the Akkadian Empire, occupy its capital Ur, and establish the Elamite Empire, which extended its rule over the Semitic peoples inhabiting the Ahwaz region. Then came the Babylonians, who subjugated the Elamite Empire to their rule during the reign of Hammurabi in 2094 BC. Later, the Assyrian Empire emerged, occupying the region's capital, Shushtar, in 646 BC. However, Assyrian rule over the Ahwaz region did not last long. The Chaldeans and Medes were able to defeat the Assyrians, and Ahwaz fell under Chaldean rule. When the Achaemenid Empire emerged and conquered the Ahwaz region in 539 BC, they did not change the system of government in this region, allowing the Semites to continue enjoying their autonomy and Babylonian laws. The Achaemenids did not attempt to impose their Zoroastrian religion on this region, but rather left its inhabitants free to abide by their own laws. The region then fell under the rule of the Seleucid and Parthian dynasties. When the Sasanian dynasty emerged, it extended its control over Ahwaz in 241 AD, but it was unable to fully subdue the region due to continuous revolts(8).

This necessitated military campaigns to quell these uprisings until the Sasanian kingdom realized the difficulty of ruling the Arabs and allowed them to establish emirates with autonomy. Shafiq Arshidat states that throughout the Sasanian era and until the early fourth century AD, Ahwaz was purely Arab land, linked to Persia by military defense and trade cooperation. During this period, the people of Ahwaz were an Arab people governed by their Arab customs and traditions, and their connection to the Persian Empire was nominal authority and symbolic loyalty(9).

2- The Kingdom of Maysan's Control over Ahwaz:

The Kingdom of Maysan, also known as Mayshan, was an ancient Arab state that emerged in southern Iraq and the Arab region of Ahwaz in the 2nd century AD and lasted until the 3rd century AD. It was founded around 129 AH (740-741 AD) after the collapse of Alexander the Great's empire. Its founder was the Arab king Hyspaosines, and its capital was located in Charax, present-day Khorramshahr (formerly known as Mohammareh). The Kingdom of Maysan's control was not limited to southern Iraq; its influence extended eastward to the Karun River within Ahwaz. It controlled vast areas of ports used by eastern merchants and dominated trade between Mesopotamia and the Arabian Gulf. The Kingdom of Maysan was an important trading center linking the Shatt al-Arab waterway to the Karun River, which gave it control over maritime and land trade routes. Its trade with India also contributed significantly to its importance. The Kingdom of Maysan possessed a large military force that was able to conquer and occupy Babylon(10).

They also managed to control many areas, defeated the Elamites, and occupied the city of Elam itself. The kingdom remained until it was swept by the Parthian king Mithridates IV, who occupied the capital of Mesene (Karkha) and transferred the inhabitants of the city of Mesene, who were on the Euphrates River, to the south in the city of Mohammara. Christianity entered Mesene during that period, and the kingdom was ruled by about 26 kings until it fell at the hands of the Sasanians by King Ardashir I, the king of Persia, in the year 222 AH. Sources indicate that the inhabitants of the kingdom of Mesene were the original Arab inhabitants whose origins go back to the Assyrian Empire, who had migrated from the Arabian Peninsula to the Levant. They had also penetrated and established cities and states in the lands of Sumer and Akkad in southern Iraq and were able to form independent states (11).

Third: Ahwaz after the Rise of Islam

The clash between the Sasanian Empire and the Islamic state began when King Yazdegerd III, son of Shahriyar, not only rejected the Prophet Muhammad's invitation to Islam but also ordered his governor in Yemen to march against the Muslims. As a result, the early Muslims in Iraq began attacking Persian military garrisons. However, these campaigns failed to achieve their intended purpose and yielded no significant success. Therefore, Caliph Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (may God be pleased with him) sent some

mujahideen to Iraq under the command of Khalid ibn al-Walid. Later, when the caliphate passed to Umar al-Faruq, he dispatched the Muslim army under the command of Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas to fight the Persians. The Muslim army was able to defeat the Sasanian army in 636 AH (1238 CE) at the Battle of al-Qadisiyyah. Following this defeat, the Sasanian king Yazdegerd fled to the Ahwaz region, where he was able to seize control after subjugating the Semitic (Arab) emirates that had been semi-independent under his rule(12).

The Arab conquerors did not neglect the eastern shore of the Gulf, which was inhabited by a non-Arab majority. Some argue that a significant number of Arabs also resided there, having migrated and settled due to proximity, trade, work, or other reasons. The Battle of Qadisiyah in the year 16 AH (711 CE) between the Arabs and Persians was the first step taken by the Arab conquerors to control this shore. It ended in a resounding victory for Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas, who pursued the defeated Sasanian armies until he reached their capital, Ctesiphon, where the famous palace of Chosroes stood. He entered the city and raised the banner of Islam on its walls. Following this battle, the Arab conquerors completed the liberation of Iraq and incorporated it into the new state, whose borders were expanding ever wider. The Arab Islamic armies did not rest but continued their eastward advance, penetrating deep into Central Asia and relentlessly pursuing conquest. However, the liberation of the eastern region of the Gulf and its annexation to the Arab state was not completed until 92 AH (711 CE). (M) At the hands of Muhammad bin Al-Qasim Al-Thaqafi, his uncle Al-Hajjaj bin Yusuf, the governor of Iraq for Abd Al-Malik bin Marwan, gave him a banner and sent him at the head of a military campaign that continued to march from (Wasit, the capital of Iraq at that time, to Balochistan, sweeping across the entire eastern bank). It can be said that the first Islamic century did not end until the Gulf was transformed from the far north to the far south, becoming a naval and economic base, one of the largest bases of the Arab state (13).

1- Al-Ahwaz in the Umayyad Era (42/132 AH)

Al-Ahwaz remained part of Basra, meaning the governor of Basra oversaw its affairs. The Umayyads paid great attention to Al-Ahwaz because it was a border region with Persia and rich in resources and agriculture. Al-Ahwaz was an important agricultural region thanks to the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. The Umayyads also imposed taxes and tribute on the Al-Ahwaz region, which were sent to the Umayyad state. Due to its economic importance, Al-Ahwaz became an arena for conflicts during the Umayyad era(14). Many revolts occurred, including those of the Kharijites, who were numerous in Al-Ahwaz due to the presence of some rugged areas they inhabited. During the time of Al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf al-Thaqafi (75-95 AH), he was forced to send armies to suppress the Kharijite rebellions there. The Kharijites were led by Shabib ibn Yazid al-Shaybani, who entered Al-Ahwaz several times until he was defeated near the Dujail Bridge(15).

2- Al-Ahwaz in the Abbasid Era (132 AH/656 AH)

The rise of the Abbasid state did not signify a change in Arab Islamic rule, but rather the disappearance of one dynasty and the emergence of another. During the Abbasid era, Baghdad became the capital of the Abbasid state, replacing Damascus. The Abbasid state implemented changes to the administrative divisions and provinces, an inevitable consequence of its expansionist policies. The state was divided into a number of provinces, including Kufa, Basra, the Hijaz, Medina, Yemen, Al-Ahwaz, Fars, Khorasan, the Levant, and other regions. It is noteworthy that Al-Ahwaz became an independent province after having been subordinate to Basra during the Umayyad era. This indicates the importance of Al-Ahwaz and its strategic location within the eastern Arab world. Furthermore, Al-Ahwaz's significance is underscored by the revenues it contributed to the Abbasid treasury during the reigns of Al-Ma'mun and Al-Mu'tasim. Taxes were levied on the region, including wheat and barley. The Zanj (Eastern Zanj) continued to be present in the Al-Ahwaz region. They fought the Abbasid state in the land of Ahwaz, and its cities had been subjected to harm and persecution from the Zanj until the Abbasid state was eventually able to eliminate the Zanj movement, and Ahwaz remained under Abbasid control until the fall of the Abbasid state in 656 AH(16).

Fourthly - Ahwaz under the Musha'sha'i State

The Musha'sha'i State was established in 1436 CE after Muhammad ibn Falah ibn Hibatullah assumed power in Ahwaz. Muhammad ibn Falah had emerged in Wasit, southern Iraq, and began by proclaiming himself the awaited Mahdi. He succeeded in defeating the governor of Ahwaz after his call gained traction. During the reign of Isban, the ruler of the Black Sheep State (Qara Qoyunlu), Ahwaz's independence was recognized under Muhammad ibn Falah's rule, and the city of Fallahiyah was built. In 1458 CE, Muhammad ibn Falah died and was succeeded by his son, Muhsin, who built a capital city for himself called al-Muhsiniyah. During his reign, the Musha'sha'i currency was minted, and he strengthened

his relationship with the White Sheep State (Aq Qoyunlu), the Turkish state that succeeded the Black Sheep State in ruling Baghdad. In 1497 CE, Muhsin died, and his sons, Ali and Ayyub, ruled until they were killed in 1506 CE, after which their brother, Falah, succeeded them. Shah Ismail Safavi killed them in a battle between them during this period. Shortly before, the Safavid state began to emerge, a state whose origins were a blend of Sufism and Shi'ism. This state forcibly imposed Shi'ism on Persia, thus creating enmity between it and the Ottoman Empire. Naturally, as a result of the ongoing conflict, both states attempted to dominate Ahwaz and Iraq. During the reign of the Musha'sha'i prince Badran ibn Fallah, the Safavid state attacked the cities of Dezful and Shushtar, occupying them briefly. After the death of Shah Ismail, they withdrew, and Sajjad ibn Badran assumed power, ascending the throne in 1540. The Musha'sha'i state continued to resist the Safavid attempts to control Ahwaz. In 1541, the Musha'sha'i state became a refuge for the enemies of the Ottoman Empire(17).

The Ottoman Empire engaged in a battle with the Musha'sha'i state after the occupation of Baghdad in 1541. The Ottomans were defeated in the Shush region, and their influence extended to the outskirts of Basra surrounding the city. At this time, the Safavid Shah asked the Shiite Imam, Nurullah, to intervene to prevent the Musha'sha'i state from advancing and occupying areas in northern Ahwaz. The Imam wrote a letter to Sajjad on this matter, addressing him as the King of Hawizeh and all of Ahwaz. As a result, the Musha'sha'i state stopped attacking Fars. In 1583, Sajjad died, and his son Zanbur took over the throne. During his reign, his brother Falah rebelled and became independent in Hawizeh in 1585, but Zanbur was able to kill his brother (), and imposed his control over Hawizeh in 1588 AD. Mubarak bin Badran took advantage of the conflict between the two brothers to seize the throne of the Musha'sha'i state after killing Zanbur in 1588 AD(18).

The rule of Mubarak bin Mutallab is considered the golden age of the Musha'sha'i state, during which he was able to impose his control over the entire Ahwaz region. Then, Nasir bin Mubarak succeeded his father in ruling the Musha'sha'i state in 1615 AD, but he did not remain in power for long because his uncle, Rashid bin Salim, killed him in 1619. Nasir was succeeded by Mansur bin Mutallab until Abdullah, Mansur's brother, seized the throne. Mansur soon regained the throne again in 1625 AD (19).

1- The Safavid State and its Relationship with the Musha'sha'i State:

The beginning of the 16th century CE witnessed the emergence of the Safavid State in 1501 CE. It was named the "Safavid State" because Persia was not a state at that time, even in the Middle Ages. It later became a large state. This state was founded by Shah Ismail ibn Haydar, who relied on religion and the Turkmen tribes to establish it. With the support he garnered, Shah Ismail was able to conquer Azerbaijan and remove its ruler, Alvand ibn Mirza ibn Yusuf ibn Hasan al-Tawil. In 1490 CE, he attacked Transoxiana, Khorasan, Diyarbakir, and Iraq. He also decided to conquer Baghdad, marching his forces towards it, which caused Sultan Murad ibn Ya'qub ibn Hasan al-Tawil to flee(20).

Shah Ismail entered Baghdad in 1508 as a conqueror, thus seizing it from the Turkmen tribes and imposing Persian rule on them without significant resistance. After organizing Baghdad, Shah Ismail decided in 1508 to occupy Ahwaz, including Al-Hawizeh, the capital of the Musha'sha'i tribe, which became subject to the Safavid state and remained nominally subject to the Safavid state. He sought to remove their influence from the entire Ahwaz region, requesting military assistance from Sayyid Mubarak. He hastened to their aid and marched with an army to Shushtar (Shushtar) and Dezful, and fought alongside them against the Safavid army sent by the Shah, led by I'timad al-Dawla and the Minister of State (Farhad Khan). However, things did not go as planned, as this battle resulted in a victory for the Safavid army. This caused Sayyid Mubarak to withdraw to Al-Hawizeh. Despite Sayyid Mubarak's stance towards the Safavid state and Shah Abbas in particular, the Shah agreed to negotiate with Sayyid Mubarak when the Musha'sha'i prince requested it. In these negotiations, the Shah tried to appease him by sending a delegation of several dignitaries from the state.

To Ahwaz, and the negotiations resulted in an exchange of ambassadors between them. Shah Abbas ordered the ruler of northern Ahwaz, Mahdi Qoli Khan, not to interfere in the affairs of Sayyid Mubarak and to leave the Arab tribes to their own devices. Thus, relations between the two countries improved, and the emirate imposed its respect on Shah Abbas and his deputies. Mubarak began exchanging ambassadors, and three of his sons (Badr, Nasser, and Muhammad) represented the emirate at the Safavid court. These ambassadors were able to consolidate their relations with the Safavid princes and their leaders. Shah Abbas also pursued a policy of appeasement to gain the loyalty of Sayyid Mubarak and secure it. He made a covenant with one of his sons (Nasser) to govern the city of Saveh. It is worth mentioning that the Musha'sha'i emirate reached a great degree of influence and prestige of the sultan during the reign of Sayyid Mubarak.

He controlled all the regions of Ahwaz and obtained the title of ruler of Ahwaz from among his ancestors. He also expelled the Persian army from the cities of northern Ahwaz. The reign of Sayyid Mubarak bin Mutallab is considered the golden age of the emirate(21).

2- The Afsharid State and its Relations with Ahwaz 1736-1747 AD

One of the tribes (the Afsharids) lived in a region of Khorasan and was subject to the Safavid state. From the ranks of this tribe emerged a figure who played a significant role in the history of modern Iran: Nader Qoli. Tahmasp had fled to Qazvin when the Afghans attacked Isfahan and began gathering fighters to expel the Afghans and reclaim the city. Nader Qoli was the most prominent commander at that time. He led the armies and succeeded in liberating Isfahan from Afghan control, restoring Tahmasp as Shah of the country, succeeding his father. After sensing the Sultan's weakness, Nader Qoli began to wait for an opportunity to seize power. The rise of Nader Shah to power had a profound impact on the Musha'sha'i Emirate. Its princes, fearing his tyranny, attempted to avoid it. The Musha'sha'i prince gathered a delegation of notables from Hawizeh and led them to Isfahan to congratulate Nader Shah on his ascension to the throne. However, this proved futile, as Nader Shah resolved to eliminate the Musha'sha'i princes' authority in Hawizeh(22).

He proceeded to appoint Persian governors to this and other regions. In 1737, he appointed one of his associates as governor of Hawizeh, thereby removing the Musha'sha'i prince from his position. He also appointed one of his associates, Abu al-Fath Khan, as governor of Shushtar, and Sheikh Faris as governor of Karahluyeh. Ultimately, he inflicted heavy losses on many Arab tribes in the Ahwaz region. Nader Shah, through his policy of violence and sowing discord among the Arab tribes of Ahwaz, managed to restore relative calm to the region, albeit temporarily. Some Arab tribes attempted to unite their efforts in a single front to expel the Afshar ruler from the region. Sheikh Salman, head of the Ka'ab tribe, launched an attack on the military garrisons, managing to seize control of the city of Dorq and bring it back under Arab control, establishing it as a second capital after Kaban. Other Arab tribes also rallied around the Musha'sha'i prince, Mawla Mutallib ibn Mawla Muhammad ibn Faraj Allah, who provided valuable assistance to the Ka'ab tribe in the capture of Dorq(23).

In 1747, uprisings erupted in Fars, Shirvan, Mazandaran, and other regions against the Shah's oppressive policies. Mulla Mutallib declared his rebellion from the city of Dorq and attacked the city of Hoveyzeh, which the Afsharids had established as the administrative center of the Ahwaz region. He captured its governor, Mohammad Khan, and Hoveyzeh fell under Mulla Mutallib's control. The tribal leader, Ibrahim Khan, and the governor of Shushtar, Mohammad Reza Khan, joined forces to confront Mulla Mutallib. A fierce battle ensued near Dezful, in which the Musha'sha'i army emerged victorious, and Ibrahim Khan, the tribal leader, fled(24).

As for Mohammad Reza Khan, the governor of Shushtar, he returned to Shushtar after the defeat, pursued by Mulla Mutallib, who besieged the city for two months. Shushtar finally surrendered upon receiving news of Nader Shah's death. Its governor, Mohammad Reza Khan, then surrendered to Mulla Mutallib. After Nader Shah was killed, his nephew Ali Qoli Khan, who was nicknamed Adil Shah, took over in 1747 AD. He was forced to recognize the Emirate of Mawla Mutallab over Ahwaz, so he issued an order to that effect. As for Adil Shah, he neglected the country and was preoccupied with pursuing the family of his uncle Nader Shah, until he eliminated them all, and only his grandson, the child Shah Rukh, remained. After Adil Shah died, the child Shah Rukh took over the throne. Then Muhammad Mirza, one of Nader Shah's commanders, arrested Shah Rukh and took power in his place. Then one of the army commanders arrested Muhammad Mirza and brought Shah Rukh back, but he left the throne and lived far away in the city of Khorasan. Thus, the Afsharid state came to an end, and Iran became the ambition of another state led by Karim Khan Zand, and it was called the Zand state (25).

3- Ahwaz's Relations with the Zand State (1775-1779)

The Zand state was descended from a Persian tribe called the Zand. It rose to prominence after the assassination of Nader Shah. Karim Khan, the Zand tribal leader, seized the opportunity and formed a military force from his tribe, enabling him to seize power. During this period, Iran was gripped by chaos, making it difficult for Mardan Khan Bakhtiari to restore order. He was forced to seek the assistance of Karim Khan Zand to stabilize the situation and subsequently divide the country between them under the rule of a member of the Safavid dynasty. Karim Zand agreed to this request, but events took an unexpected turn. They soon clashed due to personal ambitions, leading to protracted battles that resulted in the death of Ali Mardan Khan(26).

With this, all of southern Iran fell under Zand's control. He then extended his influence to northern Iran after defeating Asadullah Khan, the ruler of Azerbaijan. Finally, Mohammad Hassan Khan, the leader of the Qajar tribes in the city of Mazandaran, was eliminated after fierce battles, and thus all of Iran came under his control. He took the city of Shiraz as his capital in 1763-1779 AD. The relationship between the Musha'sha'i state and the Zand dynasty was initially characterized by coolness and estrangement. This was due to the fact that Karim Khan, the founder of the Zand dynasty, was determined to fight and eliminate the Musha'sha'i emirate. This was because the Musha'sha'i prince, Mawla Mutallab, had participated in most of the events in Ahwaz and led a number of tribes there in a war against Zand control. He then sided with Zaki Khan, Karim Khan Zand's cousin, against Ali Muhammad Khan, Karim Khan's nephew, and led most of the military campaigns against him. This forced Ali Muhammad Khan to kill him in 1176 AH (1762 CE). However, these hostile relations between the Musha'sha'i emirate and the Zand dynasty gradually improved, especially during the reign of Mawla Judullah, who began sending gifts to the Zand Shah on the occasions of Nowruz and Mihrgan, as well as sending annual payments. In return for these payments and gifts, the Musha'sha'i prince received a decree from Karim Khan Zand appointing his son, Ismail, as his successor. These friendly relations between the two countries continued until the death of Karim Khan in the year (1193 AH - 1779 AD), after which Murad Khan Zand took over the rule (27).

4- Ahwaz's Relations with the Qajar State (1796-1925)

During this period, a new state emerged, belonging to the Qajar tribe, renowned in the Astarabad region and northern Iran. Among the prominent figures of this tribe was Mohammad Qajar, the son of one of its notables. Mohammad, through his intelligence, gained favor with Karim Khan Zand. When Karim Khan died, Mohammad fled Shiraz and settled in Tehran, where he attempted to gain independence from the Zand state. He clashed with Lotf Ali Khan Zand and sought the support of his fellow Qajars, who rallied around him(28).

With their help, he expanded his territory, sometimes through war and sometimes through cunning, until he established the Qajar state. He died in 1212 AH (1797 CE), and was succeeded by his nephew Fath Ali Shah, then Mohammad Shah, then Naser al-Din Shah, and finally Muzaffar al-Din Shah. The policy of the Musha'sha'i dynasty towards the Qajar state was essentially no different from that of the Zand dynasty before them. The Qajar state followed a policy of issuing decrees appointing Musha'sha'i princes, and the military assistance provided by Faraj al-Musha'sha'i to the Qajar commander in Ahwaz had a significant impact on the steadily improving relations. The book "Bansad Saleh" states that Mawla Faraj Allah al-Musha'sha'i rendered considerable services to the Qajar commander Mu'tamad al-Dawla during his campaign in Ahwaz, helping him defeat Muhammad Taqi Khan. Based on this, the Shah issued an order appointing Mawla Faraj Allah as governor of all Ahwaz. This prince was warmly received during his visit to Tehran in 1846. These relations continued to improve throughout the reigns of Abdullah, Mawla Mutallab, Mawla Nasr Allah, and Mawla Muhammad ibn Nasr Allah. The reasons that prompted the states that, based on the aforementioned facts, led to the conclusion that the Zand, Afsharid, and Qajar dynasties in Iran sought to improve and strengthen their relations with the Musha'sha'i Emirate without directly controlling or administering it, stemmed from the fact that the region's inhabitants were Arab tribes who resented being ruled by non-Arab rulers. This hindered direct rule and increased the difficulties faced by the Persian ruler. Furthermore, the Musha'sha'i family was highly respected due to its social and religious standing among the Ahwaz tribes, making it easier to govern. Additionally, the region's swampy geography did not facilitate the Iranian government's occupation or seizure of the territory(29).

When Sheikh Khaz'al assumed power in Ahwaz in 1897, the Qajar dynasty held power in Iran. Their reaction was to send a warship equipped with cannons to seize Mohammareh, exploiting the developments in the emirate. However, Sheikh Khaz'al managed to prepare the necessary defenses, thwarting the Iranian move. He then sent forces to recapture the cities of Shushtar and Dezful, which had been occupied by Iran towards the end of Sheikh Maz'al's reign. He succeeded in retaking them in 1898. In April of that year, Iran was forced to recognize Sheikh Khaz'al as the ruler of Ahwaz after negotiations with Tehran conducted by the head of the merchants, Muhammad Ali al-Bahbahani, Sheikh Khaz'al's advisor. The recognition stated: "In order to preserve the borders, we decide to deposit the privileges that belonged to Maz'al Khan with Sheikh Khaz'al and confirm them for him, granting him the title of Mu'izz al-Saltanah, Amir Noyan, and ruler of all the region that belonged to Maz'al Khan." The government also presented him with an ornate sword. He adorned his stature with numerous decorations(30).

In addition to the titles bestowed upon his sons, Sheikh Khaz'al, despite outward signs of

rapprochement with Iran, refused to allow that country any influence over him. Therefore, he consistently sought to assert his complete independence. He even contacted Britain to ascertain its stance on this matter. However, Britain did not encourage his pursuit of complete independence, fearing that Iran would fall into the lap of Tsarist Russia. Sheikh Khaz'al remained independent in his rule in Mohammareh. When Reza Khan assumed power on February 21, 1921, he staged a coup in Iran in collaboration with Zia al-Din Tabatabai. The conditions in Iran were ripe for this coup; Shah Ahmad was weak-willed, and chaos reigned throughout the country without the Shah taking any initiative to stop it(31).

Ahwaz from Ottoman control of Basra in 1546 AD until World War I in 1914 AD

First: Ottoman administration and its divisions of the regions of Iraq:

Following the capture of Baghdad in 1534 AD and the direct annexation of Basra to the state in 1546 AD, the Ottoman state initiated a structured administrative division of Iraq. This was due to Iraq being one of its most important provinces, and also because it lacked a clear administrative division. The division took into account the specific conditions of the country, particularly those related to the Arab and Kurdish tribes, which constituted a large percentage of the population.

The Ottomans applied to Iraq the system of provinces used in the rest of the empire. The province, or vilayet, is the largest administrative unit and is divided into smaller administrative units called sanjaks, the singular of which is sanjak, meaning district, and its governor is known as the sanjak bey, meaning the emir of the district. Iraq was initially divided into four vilayets that took their regular form in the early seventeenth century AD, namely Baghdad, Mosul, Basra, and Shahrazur Kirkuk (32).

Then the province of Al-Ahsa was added. It is difficult to establish precise boundaries for the Iraqi provinces due to their instability, as they were subject to continuous changes, as some sanjaks were transferred from one province to another, or the number of sanjaks in the same province was increased. A good example is Erbil and Shahrazur. The Ottomans made Erbil a sanjak belonging to the province of Baghdad, and it remained so throughout the sixteenth century, then it was attached to the province of Shahrazur (33).

The center of which was the city of Kirkuk, and the rise and growing power of the Baban Emirate since the late seventeenth century, and the control of Kirkuk by its ruler, Sulayman Baba the Great (1669-1699), in 1660, and its continuation under Baban rule until 1701, led the Ottomans to abolish the Shahrazur province from the administrative divisions of Iraq at the beginning of the eighteenth century. It seems that this annexation also included Kirkuk's dependencies, including Erbil, which remained subordinate to the Baghdad province. Historical sources indicate such subordination. In 1804, the governor of Erbil was Sulayman Bey, the nephew of the Mamluk governor of Baghdad, Ali Pasha (1802-1807). In 1821, the Mamluk governor, Dawud Pasha (1816-1831), appointed his brother, Ahmad Pasha, as governor of Erbil. Another example of this administrative instability is that the Sanjak of Sulaymaniyah was administratively subordinate to the Mosul province because the Kurdish tribes enjoyed some autonomy in that year. In 1849, after it had been subordinate to Baghdad, the reason for this change was the separation of the Sanjak of Sulaymaniyah from Baghdad, which made it difficult to secure security and order there (34).

Iraq was divided into three provinces: Baghdad, Mosul, and Basra. The regional administrative organization of Iraq was practically based on the following Ottoman units:

First, a province (vilayet): governed by a governor-general called a wali.

Second, a sanjak or liwa: an administrative unit governed by a sanjak bey or mutasarraf.

Third, a qada: an administrative district governed by an official called a qaimaqam. This term is still used in Iraq today(35).

Fourth, a nahiya: an administrative unit governed by a nahiya director.

Fifth, a village: governed by a mukhtar, usually the most prominent or oldest man in the village. Therefore, the village was called a mukhtar-lek in Ottoman Turkish, or mukhtariya in Arabic. The village was the smallest unit in the Ottoman administrative organization(36).

As can be seen, the Ottoman administrative system was structured hierarchically from top to bottom: vilayet (province), sanjak (district), qada (district), nahiyya (sub-district), and finally the village. In any case, Ottoman administrative divisions were usually organized according to the Ottoman "kanunname," a book or set of laws that listed all the duties and responsibilities of Ottoman officials in the administrative units. In

addition, the kanunname included very important details about all aspects of life in the communities of the Ottoman provinces. These divisions can be clearly observed in various Ottoman sources, but the Salname (Ottoman Yearbook) is the most important among them. According to the Salname Devlet-i Osmaniye 1317(37) (Ottoman Yearbook of 1899), published in Istanbul, Iraq consisted of three vilayets: Baghdad in central Iraq, Mosul in northern Iraq, and Basra in southern Iraq. Each of these vilayets was divided into smaller administrative units called sanjaks. In 1899, Baghdad comprised three sanjaks: the Sanjak of Baghdad, the Sanjak of Diwaniyah, and the Sanjak of Karbala. Each of these sanjaks contained smaller administrative units, similar to Baghdad. The province of Mosul was also divided into three main parts: the Sanjak of Mosul, the Sanjak of Kirkuk, and the Sanjak of Sulaymaniyah(38).

The province of Basra, in 1899, comprised four sanjaks: the Sanjak of Basra, the Sanjak of Muntafiq, the Sanjak of Najd, and the Sanjak of Amarah. Each of these sanjaks was further divided into sub-districts. The administrative divisions of the provinces were smaller, and the final number of Ottoman administrative units in Iraq in 1899 was as follows: 3 provinces, 10 sanjaks, 42 districts, 93 sub-districts, and 3,565 villages. From this, we can conclude that Ahwaz was part of the Ottoman Empire but not under its direct rule due to the power and influence of the tribes in those areas. Ahwaz was part of the Basra province and enjoyed a considerable degree of autonomy and independence until it was conquered by the Persian Empire in 1925 and became known as Khuzestan. Prior to this, it had been under the administrative control of the Safavid and Qajar dynasties, but its governance remained largely autonomous until 1925(39).

The Ottoman Empire controlled parts of Ahwaz during its conflict with the Safavid Empire in the 16th century. In 1534, after the Ottomans entered Baghdad under Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, their influence extended to areas of southern Iraq and Ahwaz. From approximately 1546 to 1580, the Ahwaz region (especially Hawizeh and Mohammareh) fell under Ottoman influence, albeit intermittently. Later, Safavid control was restored over large parts of Ahwaz, and the region remained a point of contention between the two states. Thus, Ottoman control was not entirely stable but rather shifted according to the outcomes of the Ottoman-Safavid wars. Administratively, Ahwaz was not an independent province under its current name, but was administered within Ottoman Iraqi provinces, including the province of Basra, which encompassed southern Iraq and parts of coastal Ahwaz. Areas near the Shatt al-Arab and Mohammareh were administratively linked to Basra at certain times, and some areas of northern Ahwaz were administratively linked to the province of Baghdad, particularly during the expansion of Ottoman influence().

Second: The First Treaty of Erzurum between the Ottomans and Persia in 1823

Relations between the Persian and Ottoman states remained tense, marked by numerous wars, until the first Treaty of Erzurum was concluded in July 1823. This followed the Qajar victory over the Ottomans at the Battle of Erzurum in 1823, paving the way for a new phase in relations between the two states. This new phase was based on resolving their problems through negotiation and putting an end to the major wars that had lasted for nearly three centuries. However, this did not mean the end of the disputes between the two states. These disputes manifested in sporadic military attacks, stemming more from territorial conflicts and border demarcation issues than from imperial ambitions. This led to numerous understandings, especially after the Ottoman losses against the armies of Muhammad Ali Pasha(40), the governor of Egypt, and the ongoing disputes between the Ottomans and the Qajars. Among the most significant of these disputes was the Persian complaint regarding the imposition of [unclear - possibly "a tax"] by the governor of Baghdad, Daoud Pasha (1816-1831). New fees were imposed on Iranian visitors to the holy shrines in Iraq (41), and fees were levied on the burial of the dead brought from Iran for burial at these shrines. Regarding the peace agreement resulting from the recent events in Erzurum, he reinforced it immediately after his coronation by sending an embassy to the Ottoman court headed by Abdul Baqi Khan Zanganeh, carrying a letter and valuable gifts. His letter included proposals for a peace treaty.

The Treaty of Erzurum of 1823 stipulated the following:

- 1- Cessation of hostilities and establishment of peace between the two parties.
- 2- Confirmation of the borders that existed approximately before the outbreak of war, meaning no major changes to the lines of influence.
- 3- Regulation of the affairs of the border tribes and prevention of support for any rebellion or hostile tribes within the territory of the other party.
- 4- Guarantee of freedom of religious pilgrimage, allowing Iranians to visit the holy shrines in Iraq (Najaf, Karbala, Kadhimiya), and protection of the pilgrims and their property.

5- Return of property and prisoners taken during the war. 6- Affirming respect for the sovereignty of each state over its territory, especially in disputed areas such as Sulaymaniyah and Al-Muhammarah.

Following the first Treaty of Erzurum (1823), which ended the Qajar-Ottoman War (1821–1823) and largely stabilized the existing situation, the borders between the two sides remained poorly defined, particularly in the areas of Shatt al-Arab, Sulaymaniyah, Kurdistan, and Khanaqin. The treaty calmed the situation for a time, but it did not resolve the root causes of the conflict. The most prominent problems that emerged after 1823 (42) .

Third: The second Treaty of Erzurum (1847)

Tensions escalated in the 1830s and 1840s due to recurring disputes over the city of Sulaymaniyah (Ottoman occupation followed by an Iranian attempt to recapture it), clashes on the Kurdish and tribal borders, and renewed disputes over the Shatt al-Arab. These crises led to the intervention of Britain and Russia as mediators, resulting in the second Treaty of Erzurum (1847), which addressed Sulaymaniyah and most of its key provisions (43).

The treaty contains nine articles, and it has changed a lot in terms of borders, as the second article of it stipulated that (the Persian government relinquishes all its claims in the city of Sulaymaniyah and its region of Shahrazur and officially undertakes not to interfere with the sovereignty of the Ottoman government over that region or transgress against it. The Ottoman government officially recognizes the full sovereignty of the Iranian government over the city of Mohammareh and its port, Khidr Abadan Island and the anchorage and lands located on the eastern bank - that is, the left bank of the Shatt al-Arab, which is under the control of tribes recognized as belonging to Iran), it will obligate the tribes to settle on one side of the border, so that there will be no permanent crossing that disrupts security. Raids or crimes committed across the border will be punished by the authority on the side where the actions took place (44) .

The Ottomans' concession of Mohammareh did not imply a complete surrender of all lands and ports in the region. The second Treaty of Erzurum, signed in 1847 between the Qajar dynasty and the Ottomans, mediated by Britain and Russia, is considered one of the clearest legal treaties concerning the Shatt al-Arab. It stipulated that the city of Mohammareh, its port, Khidr Island (Abadan) and its anchorage, and the lands on the eastern bank (the left bank) of the Shatt al-Arab would fall under Iranian sovereignty. This treaty also guaranteed freedom of navigation for Iranian vessels in the Shatt al-Arab from its mouth to the point where the borders of the two countries meet. The Persian and Turkish sides were scheduled to sign the aforementioned agreement.

However, the disagreement over the interpretation of some of the texts contained therein and the outbreak of the Crimean War (1853-1856) prevented its signing. In 1911, the two parties returned to negotiations and agreed to send a technical committee to draw the borders in accordance with the second Erzurum Agreement. They also agreed that in the event of failure this time, they would resort to the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague. The results of this negotiation were called the Constantinople Protocol of 1911, which definitively established the borders before the First World War (45) .

1- The annexation of Mohammareh to Iran: The city of Mohammareh (later Khorramshahr) was officially considered part of Iranian territory, with the central government's authority over it being recognized.

2- The Shatt al-Arab: The principle was adopted that the eastern bank of the Shatt al-Arab belonged to Iran, while the navigation channel was closer to the Iranian bank in most sections, giving the Ottomans greater control over the river's course at that time.

3- Abadan Island: Its annexation to Iran was confirmed in the final demarcation.

4- Border Tribes: The status of tribes in the border regions was organized to prevent dual loyalties between Basra and Ahwaz.

5- Land Border Demarcation: Stone markers were established on the ground (border markers). The borders were fixed in the Hawizeh and marshlands regions. Areas of tribal overlap were legally closed, although they continued socially(46).

Third: The situation in Ahwaz before World War I (1914)

The political and administrative situation in Persia before World War I was under Qajar rule since 1796. Ahwaz, however, maintained a degree of local governance, particularly through local rulers such as tribal sheikhs. Among these figures who enjoyed autonomy was:

Sheikh Khaz'al bin Jaber:

Sheikh Khaz'al was born in 1861 in the village of Kut al-Zain, in the district of Abu al-Khasib(47). His mother was Noura, daughter of Sheikh Talal al-Alwan, head of the Bawiya tribe. Khaz'al was not Sheikh Jaber's firstborn son, but the fifth among his brothers. Sheikh Jaber married several women, daughters of princes and tribal chiefs, totaling twenty, and fathered twenty-seven sons(48) and daughters with them. Sheikh Jaber took great care of his son Khaz'al from childhood, providing him with every opportunity for education. Signs of intelligence appeared early on, making him highly regarded and loved by his teachers. His education included reading, writing, theology, grammar, morphology, memorization of the Holy Quran and Hadith, and knowledge of... The lineage of the Arabs. His mastery of the Arabic language was aided by his father's transfer of one of the libraries in Najaf al-Ashraf to al-Muhammara by Sheikh Abdul Karim al-Jazairi (49). In addition to his mastery of the Arabic language, Sheikh Khaz'al also learned Persian, in which he spoke fluently. Besides the language and its sources, Khaz'al learned the principles of horsemanship from an early age in his life, as he kept a group of Arabian horses (50).

He was also known for his love of hunting(51). In truth, opinions differ regarding the character of Sheikh Khaz'al. While one group of writers and poets praise him and describe him with the finest qualities, another group sees only his flaws. A review of the opinions of both groups suggests that impressions of Sheikh Khaz'al are largely individual. The writer and poet Abd al-Masih al-Antaki describes him as pious, devout, and kind to his subjects(52). Similarly, the contemporary historian Amin al-Rihani called him the most generous of Arab princes. The historian Ja'far Muhammad al-A'raji, another contemporary of Sheikh Khaz'al's era who frequently visited al-Muhammara, says: "He was unique in his good character, noble lineage, generosity, and magnanimity, unparalleled in his time and unmatched among all princes and rulers. Moreover, he was a learned scholar, writer, and poet. People came to him from all directions, by land and sea. Scholars, poets, and those in need never returned from his palace disappointed, just as Sheikh Khaz'al had taught." The Qur'an and jurisprudence, which was common among the sheikhs and local rulers in the region at that time, and relied on scientific expertise in governance and politics, on tribal relations, in addition to diplomatic relations with the Ottomans and the British(53).

Fourth: British Interests in Ahwaz until 1914

British policy aimed at the economic exploitation of vast areas in the Middle East, particularly those known for their fertility and potential as important agricultural regions. English capitalists like Stephen Leach believed that the primary way to develop these countries economically was to connect them to a network of railways or commercial river navigation. The British were interested in the idea of opening the rivers of Iraq, specifically the Karun River in Ahwaz, to navigation, which they considered essential for railway projects. Therefore, the British paid special attention to the Shatt al-Arab region in the late nineteenth century and began to monitor Ottoman movements there with some caution. When Britain sensed that the Ottomans were building military fortifications near Faw, the British ambassador in Istanbul lodged a strongly worded protest in August 1887 with the Turkish Foreign Minister, Said Pasha, demanding that he cease building these fortifications, as they violated the terms of the Second Treaty of Erzurum in 1847. Russia, however, refused to intervene in this matter. Britain was concerned about the mouth of the Karun River basin in Al-Muhammarah and its interests in Al-Muhammarah (54).

British interests in Ahwaz were not limited to navigation in the Karun waters; they also held another, more important concession: the oil fields. On March 28, 1901, the Ahwaz oil fields gained special attention as a primary source of oil for the British Empire. Production in those fields reached approximately 270,000 tons in 1914, rising to 900,000 tons per year by the end of the war. The most prolific well in Ahwaz was the most famous well, rivaled only by some of the largest Mexican wells. Production there suddenly increased from 33,000 to 600,000 gallons per day, and its output alone strained the capabilities of the Abadan refinery. By the start of World War I, the company had completed drilling two hundred wells, and Sheikh Khaz'al was given assurances of British support for his authority against any aggression. We cannot, no matter what it costs us, give it up(55).

We pledged to him that we would support him in everything that secures his rights in his relations with the governments of Persia and Turkey. We had strong trade ties with him, and the London Times newspaper addressed this relationship in its editorial on January 20, stating that Britain had made promises of protection to him. This discovery marked the beginning of a new era in the history of the Middle East, the era of oil, and the discovery of oil came as an opportunity to strengthen English policy. For the Government of India, represented by the Arabian Gulf School, Cox was one of its strongest supporters in promoting British hegemony over the Emirate of Ahwaz. It increased its interest in the tribes inhabiting the Emirate and

began paying money and loans to the senior sheikhs, including Sheikh Khaz'al, to whom Britain paid his share of the profits in exchange for his work in the oil fields without any disturbance. It did the same with the Bakhtiari Khans, with whom it had agreed to protect the oil pipelines and the workers in them in exchange for 2,000 pounds annually since 1905. After the discovery of oil, the concession company wanted to obtain the lands of Abadan to establish a refinery there and connect a 130-mile pipeline between the fields and the oil port in Abadan. This company tried to acquire the lands of Abadan Island secretly, but the Vice-Consul in Ahwaz, Nasiriyah Lorimer, told them that Sheikh Khaz'al would not sell any of it unless he knew the intention behind it (56).

It becomes clear to us that all that mattered to Britain was its own interest, without any concern or interest in countries or their peoples. They play with the destinies and fates of peoples as their interests dictate, betting on the horse they ride and believing it to be the winner. In 1852, one of the British Prime Ministers during the reign of Queen Victoria declared the famous phrase: "We have no permanent friends or permanent enemies. Our friendship lies where our interests lie." The entry of the British into the region was at the expense of its peoples, and this became clear after the First World War. Before the war, they portrayed to the rulers of the region that they had come to liberate them from the Ottoman and Persian states, hoping for the friendship of the Arabs. The Arabs believed their claims out of ignorance or naivety, while the British concealed one thing and did another. The Arabs were treated well by the British, who were planning at the time to prevent the establishment of a central authority, and they paid a double price at the hands of that authority. There is a difference between the British company concluding their agreements with Sheikh Khaz'al, the Sheikh of Mohammerah, to explore his land, and him being crushed by Reza Shah for the purpose of passing oil through his land, then the Arabic name being removed from that land and it gaining a Persian name. Cox, the High Commissioner in Iraq during the 1920 revolution, did not hide some apprehension about the Arabs of Iran, as he saw signs indicating that the political line that those honorable people, as he called them, were following was to establish cooperation and an alliance between Iraq and Iran, and through Iran and cooperation with the communists in the Soviet Union, British influence in Iraq would be reduced (57).

The Ottoman-German understanding had a significant impact on Britain's concerns regarding its interests in the Arabian Gulf region, especially after the emergence of signs of a world war planned by colonial powers to gain access to warm waters and control the Arabian Gulf. In order to maintain its interests in the Middle East in general and the Arabian Gulf in particular, Britain began negotiating with the Ka'ab state and seeking an alliance against the Ottoman Empire and its allies, in exchange for respecting the independence of Ahwaz. The Ka'ab state declared war on Britain's side, while the Persian state remained neutral. This forced the Ottoman Empire to enter Ahwaz and reach the outskirts of the Karkheh River in February 1915, with the help of some Arab tribes who had taken a stance against Britain. The British landed their forces in Mohammareh and established it as their headquarters with the consent of Sheikh Khaz'al, ultimately forcing the Ottomans to withdraw from the region. (This was followed by fierce battles with heavy weaponry.) (58)

To demonstrate the independence of Ahwaz, we present below some of the pledges made by Britain in this regard:

The pledge contained in the letter from the British Prime Minister to the British Governor-General of India, in which he officially affirmed Britain's opposition to Persian attempts to control Mohammerah or to allow the Russians to do so (59).

Britain's pledge on July 12, 1902, to defend and protect the Ka'ab State as long as the Emir of Ahwaz acted in accordance with the advice of British advisors.

The British promise on June 1908 to guarantee the continued independent status of the Ka'ab State and to defend its independence against any foreign attempt.

Britain's pledge in October 1910 to intervene on behalf of the Ka'ab State against any attempt to violate its territorial integrity and unity.

5- Britain's pledge in 1914 to defend and protect the Ahwaz region from any aggression as long as the Emir of Ahwaz acted in accordance with his treaty obligations with Britain and followed the advice of its official representatives. 6- The treaty concluded in 1914 between Britain and the Ka'ab State, which stipulated that the former would recognize the independence of the latter and pledge to protect and defend it in exchange for the latter's commitment in its foreign policy to the advice of the representatives of the former State (60).

As a result of the services rendered by Sheikh Khaz'al to the British government in the First World War, he received a British confirmation addressed to him by the British Consul General in the Gulf on November 21, 1914.

Conclusion and Findings

Through our study of our research topic (The Arab Emirate of Ahwaz: A Study of its Location and Historical Developments up to 1914 CE), we have reached the following conclusions:

The Ahwaz region was distinguished by its unique geographical location north of the Arabian Gulf, bordering Basra and surrounded by water. This led various powers throughout history to seek control over it, and also resulted in it being used as a base by many groups that revolted and sought refuge there.

Arab tribes were among the first to settle in Ahwaz in the 5th century BCE and built a number of cities. Ahwaz later became part of the Arab state of Maysan, which was established in the 3rd century BCE.

Ahwaz was part of the empires that were established in Mesopotamia. The Elamite state was founded on Ahwaz territory before the Common Era and later became part of the empires that occupied or ruled Mesopotamia. 4. When the Arab Islamic state was established, Ahwaz became part of it, and many revolutionary movements chose it as their headquarters due to its natural isolation and strategic geographical location.

5. After the establishment of the Musha'sha'i state in 1436 CE, Ahwaz maintained its independence, refusing to submit to the rule of either the Safavid or Ottoman states. All treaties signed between the two states affirmed Ahwaz's independence, whether under the Musha'sha'i state or the Ka'bi Emirate, which was established after the collapse of the Musha'sha'i state and continued to rule Ahwaz until 1925 CE...

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