

"The International Power Struggle over the Arabian Gulf during the period (1871 CE - 1913 CE): "Competition between the Ottoman Empire and Britain over Qatar as a model"

Abdellatif Abdellatif Abdelghani Meshref¹, Metin Şerifoğlu²

1. Assistant Professor of Modern and Contemporary "Political" History at Mardin Artuklu University.

abdellatifmeshref@artuklu.edu.tr <https://orcid.org/0009-0009-0791-9603>

2. Assoc. Prof. at Mardin Artuklu University. metinserifoglu@artuklu.edu.tr

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5828-2157>

ABSTRACT:

If the Ottoman Empire began to appear in the Gulf by reaching Basra in 1541, its actual impact on the Gulf and Qatar did not begin until the late nineteenth century, specifically since the arrival of the Al-Ahsa campaign in 1871, and until the signing of the 1913 agreement between Britain and the Ottoman Empire, which led to the Ottoman Empire withdrawing from competition for Qatar and the Gulf, leaving Britain to act alone in the region. This research study will focus on the struggle of international powers over the Arabian Gulf in a specific period between 1871 and 1913, where the study will concentrate on the competition between the Ottoman Empire and Britain over Qatar as a model for this conflict. The study indicates that the studied period witnessed intense competition between the two states regarding the Arabian Gulf region, especially the strategic importance of Qatar for both parties. The study reveals that the Ottoman Empire sought to regain its influence in the area and achieve economic gains through maritime trade, while Britain aimed to establish its colonial rule over the region and control the vital waterway of the Arabian Gulf for its trade. In this context, the study will investigate Britain's use of the policy of differentiation and control over the local sheikhs in Qatar, and how it was able to sign agreements with them to achieve its goal of controlling the region, while the Ottoman Empire during this period was unable to confront those policies and challenges. Additionally, this conflict was not only between the Ottoman Empire and Britain but also included competition between other European countries such as France for resources and trade routes in the region. The importance of this study lies in analyzing the events and linking them to the contemporary reality, to understand current conflicts and their impact on the region. Moreover, it highlights the importance of understanding these conflicts to comprehend current and future international policies in the region. In general, studying the struggle of international powers over the Arabian Gulf in a specific period is a crucial task to understand regional and international history, and it reveals many reasons and challenges faced by the region during that time.

Keywords: Gulf - Qatar - Ottoman Empire - Britain - International Powers

Introduction to the Study:

If 1971, the year in which Qatar gained independence and became sovereign over its land, was truly a year for this country to consider this year the end of one stage and the beginning of a new stage of giving and struggle, until it formulates its renaissance and the position it deserves among the peoples, as those countries faced great challenges in its long history, whether natural challenges of the place or international challenges, especially the policy of colonialism that spread in the early modern times.

Many historians have spoken about Qatar to the point that they described it as "the country that nature has forgotten," and some foreign historians have also described it as saying "Qatar is poor

in natural resources, agriculture is almost non-existent, there are no valleys anywhere in it, and there was nothing but the sea from which the people of Qatar obtained their supplies" ^[11].

Despite this harsh nature, Qatar had princes, men, and women who challenged this reality until they finally triumphed over it, and established a civilized edifice that encompassed all aspects of life. Today, we are about to write a chapter in the history of Qatar and the struggle of its emirs and people until they gain their independence, and write their new history with the sweat and struggle of their ancestors. Qatar has gone through difficult and harsh periods in its history and periods of occupation and international conflict. In this simple research, we shed light on an important and thorny period, which is the period of Ottoman-British conflict in the Gulf region, especially Qatar.

This is a research on the topic "Ottoman-British rivalry in the Arabian Gulf region - Qatar as a model". Although the Ottoman state began to appear in the Gulf with its arrival in Basra in 1541, its actual impact on the Gulf and Qatar does not begin until the last third of the 19th century, and specifically since the arrival of the Al-Ahsa campaign in 1871, until the conclusion of the 1913 agreement between Britain and the Ottoman Empire, under which the Ottoman state withdrew from the field of competition for Qatar and the Gulf, leaving Britain to work alone in the region.

To accomplish this research, the researcher divided it into four chapters. The first chapter deals with the beginnings of the Ottoman presence in the Gulf and Qatar, while the second chapter talks about the dimensions of the competition between Britain and the Ottoman Empire over Qatar. The fourth chapter deals with the position of Sheikh Jassim bin Muhammad Al Thani on the Ottoman-British competition over Qatar, while the fourth chapter presents the 1913 agreement between the Ottoman Empire and Britain. At the end of the research, the researchers will present the most important results they have reached, as well as the most important recommendations.

Importance of the Study:

The Ottoman-British rivalry over Qatar is one of the most important events in Qatari history in the modern and contemporary era, as the dimensions of this conflict have extended to all internal and external aspects related to Qatar. It also showed, on the other hand, that the Ottoman Empire was on its way to decline. The importance of this research lies in highlighting several things, namely:

- 1- Highlighting Qatar's strategic importance in the Gulf region.
- 2- Highlighting Qatar's political and economic importance and its role in the international conflict that represented a vital point for resolving these conflicts.
- 3- Clarifying an important historical period in the Gulf region, especially since there are many books that deal with the topic in general, but we want to focus in this research on the topic in particular, especially the Qatar region.
- 4- Highlighting the historical role of the emirs of the State of Qatar, especially the position of Sheikh Jassim bin Muhammad Al Thani on the competition.

Research Objectives:

This research aims to achieve a set of objectives, namely:

- 1- Presentation of the beginnings of the Ottoman presence in the Arabian Gulf.
- 2- Analysis of the dimensions of the Ottoman-British conflict over Qatar.
- 3- Interpretation of the position of Sheikh Jassim bin Muhammad Al Thani on this conflict.
- 4- The 1913 Treaty and its impact on the states affiliated with the Ottoman Empire.
- 5- Highlighting an important part of Qatari and Gulf history.
- 6- Clarifying the strategic importance of the State of Qatar and the Gulf region, and the extent of their impact on global political and economic affairs.

¹ John B. Kelly: Britain and the Gulf 1795-1870, Translation: Muhammad Amin Abdullah, Vol. 1, Isa al-Babi Press and Partners, Cairo 1979, p. 46.

1: The Beginnings of the Ottoman Presence in the Gulf Region and the State of Qatar.

1.1: The Ottoman Presence in the Gulf Region:

In the first half of the 16th century, two naval powers emerged in the Arabian Gulf:

The Portuguese naval power: The Portuguese naval power reached the western coast of India and established its influence in various strategic locations in the Indian Ocean to control and monopolize eastern trade.

The Ottoman naval power: The Ottoman naval power extended to the Red Sea and then to the Arabian Gulf after the Ottoman Empire's capture of Egypt in 1517, its control of Baghdad in 1534, and its control of Basra in 1546. Thus, the Ottoman Empire became directly connected to the Arabian Gulf. The Ottomans found themselves compelled to complete the plan laid down by the Mamluk government to occupy the Red Sea in the face of the Portuguese, who threatened the holy places from time to time after their control of Hormuz and the Omani coasts ^[2].

On the other hand, the eastern seas constituted an important strategic region for the Ottoman Empire, as they were connected to the borders of its southern possessions. Therefore, it stood against Portuguese expansion in the Arabian Gulf region ^[3].

When Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent (1520-1566) learned of the Portuguese campaigns in the Red Sea and the Arabian Gulf, and the Portuguese seizure of parts of India, Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent ordered the preparation of a large fleet in the port of Suez, which was considered the closest Ottoman naval base to the eastern seas, under the command of Suleiman Pasha Khadim. He granted him wide powers to take revenge on the Portuguese and lift the Portuguese blockade of the Red Sea. Suleiman Pasha Khadim carried out the instructions of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, so he built a hundred ships and prepared to fight the Portuguese. He set out from Suez towards Jeddah in May 1538, and then to Aden¹⁰, reaching it in July 1538, where he killed its ruler Amir bin Daoud, thus eliminating the Tahirid Shafi'i state in Yemen ^[4].

Suleiman Pasha made Aden and the ports of Yemen his naval bases to attack Portuguese stations and centers in the Arabian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. When the Indians abandoned their assistance to Suleiman Pasha, the Portuguese succeeded in resisting the Ottoman siege of Diu, and Suleiman Pasha Khadim was forced to lift the siege, return to Yemen, and then return to Cairo and from there to Istanbul. Thus, the first Ottoman attempt against the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean failed. However, after the withdrawal of the Ottoman fleet from Aden, its inhabitants cooperated with the Portuguese and handed over the city to them, due to the misdeeds of Suleiman Pasha Khadim and their ruler Amir bin Daoud ^[5].

The Ottoman Empire succeeded in the 16th century in closing the Red Sea north of the port of Mocha in Yemen to European ships, but it did not succeed in the Indian Ocean as it did in the Red Sea, which weakened Ottoman influence in the Arabian Gulf. Similarly, the weakness of the Ottoman naval power in the Red Sea since the late 16th century was responsible for the collapse of Ottoman control over Yemen and the independence of the Zaidi imams in managing its affairs. Nothing remained of Ottoman rule but the Hejaz ^[6].

In any case, the Ottomans controlled the land trade routes between Basra and Aleppo, and encouraged the flow of eastern goods across the Arabian Gulf and the Red Sea, which led to a revival of trade in Egypt and the Levant in the late 16th century. They worked hard to prevent the Portuguese from obstructing the pilgrimage and Eastern trade routes, and sought to revive the land trade route between Central Asia and the Crimea. However, Portugal's position in the Arabian Gulf began to weaken in the last quarter of the 16th century, especially after Portugal's submission to

² The Ottoman Archive: Basra Province Almanac, 1308 H., p. 163.

³ Abdul Aziz Awad: Studies in the History of the Modern Arabian Gulf, Dar al-Jeel, Beirut, Vol. 1, Ed. 1, 1991, p. 9.

⁴ Ibid, Vol. 2, p. 10.

⁵ Abdul Aziz Awad: op. Cit, Vol. 2, p. 11.

⁶ Haifa Al-Anqari: Authority in the Arabian Peninsula Ibn Saud Hussein-Britain 1914-1926, Ed 1, Dar Al-Saqi, Beirut, 2013, p. 103.

Spanish rule in 1580. Due to the shortage of supplies to the Portuguese garrisons in the Arabian Gulf, in 1581 a naval campaign from Mocha led by Ali Bey achieved a victory over the Portuguese fleet in Muscat. This was the last battle in a series of battles fought by the Ottomans against the Portuguese in the waters of the Gulf in the 16th century ^[7].

At the same time that the Ottomans were preoccupied with the dangers on the Safavid front during the reign of Sultan Murad IV (1622-1640m), Europe was torn apart by the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648m), which was fundamentally a political and religious war. When the European front regained its activity in the last quarter of the 17th century, against the Ottoman attack on the Austrian city of Vienna for the second time, and besieged it in the summer of 1683m. But the siege was not fruitful, as Polish forces arrived to help, and the German forces united and defeated the Ottomans on the outskirts of the city. The Ottoman army withdrew to Belgrade. This defeat sent feelings of joy in Europe, and at the same time put an end to the Ottomans' dreams of expansion in the Gulf ^[8].

.1.2: The Ottoman Presence in Qatar

1.2.1: A Brief Overview of Qatar:

Qatar is an Arab emirate located on a peninsula along the southern coast of the Arabian Gulf. Its population is approximately two million people. Qatar's capital, Doha, is located on the country's eastern coast. Qatar is a peninsula surrounded by the Arabian Gulf, located east of the Arabian Peninsula. It is bordered by Saudi Arabia to the south and has maritime borders with both the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. Its area is approximately 11,437 square kilometers, and its most important natural resources are natural gas and oil. It has a desert climate. Qatar gained independence from Britain on September 3, 1971. Doha emerged in the late 19th century from an old town called "Al Bidda." Before the emergence of Al Bidda, "Zubarah" was the most important city on the Qatari Peninsula. Due to its location on the northwestern coast of the Qatari Peninsula facing Bahrain, Zubarah was one of the most important trade centers in the Gulf in the 18th century ^[9].

1.2.2.: The Ottoman Presence in Qatar:

Reasons for the Ottoman Presence in the Gulf and Indian Ocean, One of the reasons that prompted the Ottomans to move into the Gulf and Indian Ocean region in the 16th century was that Bahadur Shah, Sultan of Gujarat in India, sent a messenger to the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent requesting his assistance against the Portuguese forces that had invaded his country at that time. In his letter, he stated that he would be forced to surrender to the invaders if Suleiman did not provide him with a large naval force capable of standing up to the enemy. Since the Ottoman Empire was at that time playing the role of the guardian of Islam against the Crusades, Bahadur Shah found a response from the Sublime Porte. After the Ottomans were able to establish direct rule over Basra in 1546, they established a naval base there to defend the Arabian Gulf region against Portuguese control that preceded Ottoman rule ^[10]... They were able to consolidate their position in Hormuz, which was the main center of trade from and to India ^[11].

In the early 1860s, a combination of factors led the Ottoman Empire to turn its attention to controlling the Arabian Gulf region. The dispute between the members of the Al Saud family and the request for help from Prince Abdullah bin Faisal to the governor of Baghdad, Midhat Pasha, was a motivating factor and a direct pretext for sending the famous military campaign known as

⁷ Muhammad bin Hamad Al-Shuaili: From the Ottoman Presence in the Gulf (2), Al-Watan Newspaper, Saturday, November 2, 2019 - 5 Rabi' al-Awwal 1441 AH, <http://alwatan.com/details/79302>.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Qatar Digital Library: A Brief Overview of Qatar in British-Qatari Relations History, <https://www.qdl.qa/en>.

¹⁰ The Ottoman Archive: BOA.MD 3/364.

¹¹ Muhammad bin Hamad Al-Shuaili: op. cit.

the Midhat Pasha campaign or the "Al-Ahsa campaign." He passed through the ports of Kuwait, Ras Tanura, Al-Qatif, Dammam, and Al-Uqair, which is the port of Al-Ahsa ^[12].

The Pasha carried out a series of administrative reforms in those areas, and when he arrived in Hofuf, he ordered the start of those reforms in Al-Ahsa, Al-Qatif, Qatar, and Najd, where he included them under the name "Mutasarrifiyah of Najd" (Najd Sanjak) and considered each of Al-Qatif, Qatar, and Hofuf a district ^[13].

The Ottoman Empire, which wanted to bring the coasts of Bahrain and Qatar under its control, sought to prepare the necessary political and administrative infrastructure for this purpose and to avoid events that could hinder this as much as possible. Consequently, it stood against British efforts to expand its influence and prevented any of the administrative officials or local rulers from doing anything that would give the British an opportunity to intervene ^[14].

1.3: Dimensions of the Ottoman-British Conflict

Qatar's strategic location, lying on the route connecting Europe to warm waters and extending the Indian trade routes to those areas, attracted the attention of the Portuguese in the 16th century, the Dutch in the 17th century, and the English in the 18th century. The author points to the new dimensions of the Ottoman-British conflict over Qatar and Bahrain^[15].

With the beginning of 1872, the spheres of influence between the two major powers in the region became a subject of dispute by various means, without reaching a decisive result in this regard, as the Ottoman Empire made Qatar a district affiliated with Al-Ahsa and showed its actual rule over it ^[16].

In the meantime, the British made great efforts to establish their influence in Bahrain in order to prevent the Ottoman Empire from expanding its influence there, so that this measure would not extend to other regions in the Gulf. At the same time, the British sought to achieve political results under the pretext of unrest in the region and piracy, especially after the theft of some goods belonging to British subjects in 1887^[17], after which the British Navy sent some warships to the region in a show of force to recover those goods. Britain also refused to treat Ottoman officials in Bahrain as Ottoman citizens, as was the case in Najd, Basra, and other Ottoman provinces^[18].

The Ottoman Empire also refused the mediation of British consuls in any disputes arising between Bahrainis and other Ottoman citizens, on the grounds that both parties were Ottoman subjects, which was always what raised the level of British reaction. The author mentions that on February 20, 1888, the Ottoman Council of Ministers decided to discuss the best way to administer the Najd and Al-Ahsa region (including the Qatari district) in a way that would prevent foreign interference ^[19].

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Until the mid-19th century, European travelers and mapmakers generally considered Qatar to be part of Bahrain. The British government first recognized Qatar's independence from Bahrain in 1868, when Louis Pelly, the British Political Resident in the Gulf, signed an agreement with Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed Al Thani. In the years that followed, Qatar wavered between

¹² The Ottoman Archive: BOA.KK, 213/18

¹³ Abdulaziz Al-Mansour: The Political Development of Qatar (1868-1916), Kuwait, 1975, pp. 133-143.

¹⁴ Zakaria Qorishon: Qatar in the Ottoman Era (1871-1916), Dar al-Arabiya for Encyclopedias, Beirut 2008, p. 84.

¹⁵ The Ottoman Archive: BOA.MD, 3/364.

¹⁶ Zakaria Qorishon: Qatar in the Ottoman Era, op. Cit, p. 126.

¹⁷ The Ottoman Archive: BOA, BEO 969/12.

¹⁸ The Ottoman Archive: BOA, MV 25/48.

¹⁹ Zakaria Qorishon: Qatar in the Ottoman Era, op. Cit, p. 126.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 127.

accepting British or Ottoman rule; there was an Ottoman garrison in Doha from 1871 to 1913. In 1916, following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Britain signed a formal treaty with Qatar, making it a British protectorate ^[21]. However, Britain did not appoint a political officer to Qatar until 1949, and until then its affairs were overseen by the Political Agent in Bahrain ^[22].

Oil was discovered in Qatar in 1939, after Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim Al Thani signed a concession agreement for oil exploration with the Anglo-Persian Oil Company in 1935. Before the widespread exploitation of the country's oil and natural gas reserves in the 1950s, the people of Qatar relied almost entirely on pearl fishing in the Gulf for their livelihood. Qatar gained independence from Britain on 3 September 1971 ^[23].

2: Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed Al Thani's Position on the Competition.

2.1: A Brief History of Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed Al Thani:

The founder and builder of Qatar, he was a military commander, a judge, a mufti, a knight, a poet, and a man of nobility and magnanimity. Sheikh Jassim bin Muhammad bin Thani was born around 1242 AH / 1827 AD, and grew up in Fuwairat in northeastern Qatar, where he learned the Quran and its sciences, jurisprudence and sharia, equestrian etiquette, hunting and hunting skills, and in 1876 he took over the administration of government in Qatar along with his father, who had aged. On 18 December 1878, he succeeded his father on the throne, with the support of the people of Qatar, and was able to consolidate the pillars of national rule under the leadership of Al Thani ^[24].

In the early years of his rule, Sheikh Jassim directed his efforts to unite the people of Qatar by deepening national belonging and emphasizing the importance of cohesion and harmony among the components of the people. He paid great attention to education, established katibs, brought in jurists, built mosques, gave lessons, gave fatwas and judged between people, and took care to develop seaports, build ships and promote the pearl trade, until Qatar became one of the largest sources of pearls in the region, and strengthened its trade relations with India and the East African coasts, providing job opportunities and improving living conditions, and expanding urbanization and increasing the population. On the external level, Sheikh Jassim was a strong supporter of the Islamic Caliphate and one of the most prominent leaders in its defense, despite all the pressures he faced, and his relationship with the Ottoman authority was strengthened by granting him the position of Qaim Maqam, a military administrative position, and later granted him the rank of Qabuchi Bashi, a high honorary rank, in recognition of his effective authority and leadership of the tribes of Qatar ^[25].

However, the Ottoman insistence on direct intervention in the internal affairs of Qatar, and the Sheikh's rejection of any prejudice to the interests of the country and its people, eventually led to a military confrontation that ended with a decisive victory for Sheikh Jassim in the famous Battle of Al-Wajbah in 1893. This resulted in the removal of the governor of Basra, who was the leader of the campaign, and held him responsible for what happened, and Sheikh Jassim's relationship with the Ottoman state returned to its former cordiality and serenity, and the Battle of Al-Wajbah marked a landmark in Qatar's history, and after this battle Sheikh Jassim emerged an important figure in the Gulf and an effective force for the regional policy of Qatar ^[26].

Sheikh Jassim was a brave horseman who possessed a long legacy of Arab warfare and equestrian traditions, and was recognized as a strategic political statesman and field military

²¹The Ottoman Archive: BOA, YMTV 31/31.

²² Qatar Digital Library: A Brief History of Qatar in British-Qatari Relations, op. Cit.

²³ Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed bin Thani: Amiri Diwan of the State of Qatar, https://www.diwan.gov.qa/about-qatar/qatars-rulers/sheikh-jassim-bin-mohammed-bin-thani?sc_lang=ar-QA

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵ Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed bin Thani: op. Cit.

²⁶ Tariq Nafi' Al-Hamadani: Qatar from its Inception to the Establishment of the Modern State, 1st ed., Dar Al Waraq for Publishing, Beirut 2012, pp. 8-9.

commander, especially since his reign coincided with the presence of major regional powers competing for influence. He is considered in his historical role in promoting independence, the founder of the State of Qatar, Sheikh Jassim bin Muhammad bin Thani died on Friday night, 13 Shaaban 1331 corresponding to July 17, 1913 ^[27].

2.2: Sheikh Jassim's position on the Ottoman-British conflict

As early as 1868, Sheikh Jassim's father was bound by obligations to the British government, and until his death he continued to maintain ties of friendship with the Resident. However, over the years, due to his advanced age, he relinquished the management of his personal affairs and those of his emirate to his son Jassim. In the early years the latter seemed to harbor animosity and hatred toward the British authorities, perhaps because of some actions taken on behalf of Bahrain against the Qatari sheikhs, and in a spirit of revenge he allowed the Ottoman troops to land and settle in Buda in 1872. In the years that followed, Sheikh Jassim acquired the character of an implacable opponent of the British, but his father, who was still alive, continued throughout his life to exercise enough influence to prevent any serious difficulties or troubles. In recent years, Sheikh Jassim began to show a genuine desire to regain his independence from the Ottoman authorities, and in this sense he expressed his willingness to resume closer relations with the British government ^[28].

In fact, I have every reason to believe that if he were given guarantees (of protection) against any interference, whether Ottoman or by any other authority in Qatar's affairs, he would have accepted a position and title of what is now known as "one of the reconciled sheikhs or leaders." However, a firm and reassuring promise of protection is indispensable for Sheikh Jassim, but it is a promise that cannot be given, of course.

In November 1882, Sheikh Jassim, Sheikh of Al Bidda, after being threatened with shelling his fort by the British warship Woodlark and the Arab ship, paid 8,000 rupees in compensation to Indian merchants in Al Bidda. The Ottoman government protested these actions as contrary to international law and demanded the return of the sums taken from Sheikh Jassim, who was granted the title of "General Governor" of Qatar. In response to this complaint, Lord Granville wrote a letter to Musurus Pasha, dated May 7, 1883, in which he said, "The Sublime Porte's claim and demand for sovereign rights over the Qatar coast have never been recognized by Her Majesty's Government (British)" ^[29].

In October 1887, the British Viceroy of India telegraphed that the ruler of Buda was inciting piracy on the Qatari coast and harming Indian traders in Buda. The British Political Resident held Sheikh Jassim responsible for these disturbances, and succeeded in getting him to pay compensation for losses suffered by British and Bahraini nationals, and in renewing friendly relations with the Sheikh himself. Colonel Ross had ordered an embargo on Sheikh Jassim's property in Bahrain in response to the steps taken by Sheikh Jassim against Hindu merchants in Qatar, and Colonel Ross believed that the withdrawal of the garrison from Badaa would ultimately lead to the maintenance of peace and security on the Qatari coast. As for Sheikh Jassim's personality, Colonel Ross described him as follows:

"Over the years, the Sheikh has remained stubborn and persistent in his stubbornness. In a rage against the policy of the British authority, he called on the Ottoman authority to send a garrison stationed in Badaa, a move he later regretted. As Qatar's main pearl trader, Sheikh Jassim clashed with foreign merchants, British subjects, who shared the profits of the pearl trade with Sheikh Jassim. There was a recent misunderstanding between him and the Ottoman authorities, the details of which are not yet known, but it seems that the Ottomans wanted to establish a customs center in Badaa, a project that aroused resentment there. Sheikh Jassim was also disappointed and

²⁷ Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed bin Thani: Amiri Diwan of the State of Qatar, <https://www.diwan.gov.qa/>.

²⁸ Al-Waha Magazine: The Struggle over the Qatar Peninsula between the Ottomans and the British, Issue 60 - Year 16 - Winter 2010, <https://oasisclub.kuwaitairways.com/ar/Pages/home.aspx>

²⁹ Al-Waha Magazine: The Struggle over the Qatar Peninsula between the Ottomans and the British, op. cit.

angry that he failed to recover the fine imposed on him over the issue of the Banyan merchants (Indians, British subjects) despite the Ottoman authorities' intervention in his favor, and since Jassim was annoyed by the Ottomans and other foreigners alike, he moved to a place about eight miles from Badaa, declaring that he had permanently washed his hands of its affairs and was no longer the ruler of it. However, Sheikh Jassim's move was nothing more than a maneuver. From his rural headquarters, he secretly incited the Hindus and Persians out of Badaa, and instigated disturbances, resulting in the injury of some Hindu merchants. Incidents of piracy occurred as a natural consequence of Jassim's attitudes and statements. It is certain that, without Jassim's signal, none of these events would ever have happened" ^[30].

2.3: A Brief Overview of the 1913 Agreement.

Informal negotiations began on July 29, 1911, in the form of a British memorandum sent to the Ottoman government. At that time, Kuwait was likely to be the final stop for the Baghdad Railway, which was financed and designed by Germany. Kuwait had been under Ottoman rule since 1871 and in 1875 it was administratively integrated into the newly formed Basra Vilayet. Despite this, Ottoman rule in Kuwait remained nominal, as no Ottoman officials were stationed in Kuwait. The issue of British influence in Kuwait was an important element of British foreign policy in the Arabian Gulf with regard to the commercial and strategic interests of India ^[31].

For Britain, the continued extension of railway lines meant further expansion of Ottoman influence, which was already its current administration - encouraged by the "Young Turk" regime that wanted to re-establish effective control over the south of the Ottoman state in Kuwait, the worst was the potential creep of other European powers. In the proposed memorandum, the British sought to settle the 1901 status quo agreement, with an additional amendment to define a clear definition of the borders of Kuwait in line with British interests ^[32].

Despite reaching deadlock at times, negotiations continued through ongoing memos, with the British having the upper hand. If the Ottomans accepted Kuwait's self-governing status and the proposed borders, the British would accept Ottoman sovereignty. In return, the islands of Warbah and northern Bubiyan should be part of Kuwait, and so on. Istanbul's declining influence in the Gulf forced it to make concessions without having much to gain in return. The Ottoman state had faced a number of setbacks in the past few decades - a few provinces had gained their independence, some had been annexed by other countries, and many had been lost in conflict - and for political reasons it seemed important to keep Kuwait as part of the Ottoman state, even if only symbolically. The Ottomans also felt that this treaty would ensure British support in other more pressing matters, such as dealing with the invasion of other European powers and conflicts in other parts of the Ottoman state ^[33]. Moreover, British pressure forced the Ottomans to abandon the proposed extension of the railway line to Kuwait and instead make Basra the terminus of the line. The plans to make Basra the terminus of the railway created a new series of demands from the British, including the reunification of Qatar and a role for it in the vast waters of the Arabian Gulf. Britain wanted to conclude agreements with Qatari Sheikh Jassim Al Thani on illegal arms trade and maritime peace, and also sought to establish formal hegemony in the Arabian Gulf. By 6 May 1913, Britain and the Ottoman state had initialed the treaty, and the Anglo-Ottoman Treaty was signed on 29 July 1913, exactly two years after the first memorandum ^[34].

2.4: Qatar and Bahrain in the Treaty:

Sections two and three contain articles specific to Qatar and Bahrain, respectively. The negotiations focused on the status of Qatar and Bahrain, and the British pressured the Ottoman

³⁰ Al-Waha Magazine: The Struggle over the Qatar Peninsula between the Ottomans and the British, op. cit.

³¹ David H. Finnie: Shifting Lines in the Sand: Kuwait's Elusive Frontier with Iraq, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), p.7.

³² Ibid, 32.

³³ The Ottoman Archive: BOA, BEO 192674

³⁴ Tariq Nafi' Al-Hamdani: op. cit, pp. 62-66.

government to abandon its claims to Qatar and Bahrain. If the Ottoman government retained control of Qatar and Bahrain, it would be able to continue to interfere in the affairs of the Arabian Gulf, which Britain wanted to monopolize. The Ottomans were willing to renounce all their claims to Bahrain, which they had never really controlled but had a symbolic role in, but this was not the case in Qatar. On the matter of sovereignty, the Ottomans claimed that the Ottoman state had always exercised effective sovereignty over the peninsula and could not agree to cede territories that it had never officially relinquished. Under heavy pressure, they abandoned their claims to Qatar and Bahrain (Articles 11 and 13) ^[35].

The blue line was established to define the land borders of Ottoman sovereignty. This line separates the Ottoman Sanjak of Najd from Qatar. The blue line began a few miles south of Zakuniyah (which was within the sanjak), directly south to the Empty Quarter (Article 11). The treaty did not mention that Zakuniyah should be part of the Sanjak of Najd in return for the payment of 1,000 pounds to the Sheikh of Bahrain by the British government. Regarding Bahrain, the Ottomans renounced all their claims to it while the British declared that they had no intention of annexing it (Article 13) and would not claim the right of allegiance of the Sheikh of Bahrain (protected by His Majesty's consuls) to live in the Ottoman state (Article 15) ^[27].

Conclusion :

Through their study of the topic "Ottoman-British rivalry over Qatar," the researchers have reached a number of conclusions, which can be summarized as follows:

- Britain recognized early on the importance of the Gulf region, particularly Qatar and Bahrain, in securing its communication routes to its colonies in India. Therefore, it used all diplomatic and military means, and sometimes deception, to achieve its goal of controlling the Gulf and establishing its presence in the region.
- The Ottoman Empire weakened during the 16th and 17th centuries, which negatively affected its many provinces and regions, especially those far from the central areas of the sultanate. This helped to establish relations between some Gulf sheikhs and Britain.
- British policy towards the Ottoman Empire was characterized by duality, in order to maintain the status quo. Britain stood with the Ottoman Empire against some local rulers and vice versa.
- Ottoman policy during that period was characterized by confusion and randomness, while British policy was based on well-studied plans and ideas.
- Britain's interest in the Gulf was limited to coastal areas such as Bahrain and Qatar, in order to preserve its routes and economic interests and secure its communication routes.

Appendices:

1: "The first document is a report from the Ottoman Foreign Ministry concerning the Bahrein Islands, which were disputed between the Ottoman Empire and Britain and constituted one of the issues between them. This document offers valuable insights into the diplomatic tensions between the two empires in the 19th century."

³⁵The Ottoman Archive: BOA,BEO 136057.

2:"The second document is a report from the Ottoman Foreign Ministry concerning the issue of the Qatari coast, which was also one of the most significant issues defining the nature of Ottoman-British rivalry in the 19th and 20th centuries. This document provides further evidence of the strategic importance of the Persian Gulf region and the intense competition between the two empires for influence in the area."

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