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A Historical Study on The Kingdom of Bahrain: The importance of the Site and Its Role in Bahrain's Modern and Contemporary History

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Abstract

This study highlights the important aspects of the geography of the Kingdom of Bahrain. It also shows the importance of the site, the demography of the region, the distribution of population, and the most important cities in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Firstly, the study deals with the geographical location of the Kingdom of Bahrain; secondly, it shows the importance of the site with respect to its geographical location; and thirdly, analyzes the most important geographical features, shapes and topography. The study also examines the prevailing climate and the most important natural resources found there.

The study also referred to the population census in it, the census of the indigenous population the proportion of foreigners and the percentage of Sunnis and Shiites in Bahrain. At the end of the study, the most important cities in the Kingdom of Bahrain were also summarized. The study, as a whole, talks about the most important historical features of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Keywords: Bahrain, History of Bahrain, Demography of Bahrain, Gulf region, Manama.

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Introduction

This study sheds light on important aspects of the geography of the Kingdom of Bahrain, as it shows the importance of the site, and a study of the most important terrain, demography, distribution of population and population, and the most important cities in it. This study dealt first: the geographical location of the Kingdom of Bahrain, secondly the importance with respect to its geographical location, and thirdly: the most important geographical features, shapes and topography, as well as the fourth: the prevailing climate and the most important natural resources found there. This study also referred to the population census in it, the census of the indigenous population, the proportion of foreigners and the percentage of Sunnis and Shiites in Bahrain. Fifthly, we are talking about the most important historical features of the Kingdom of Bahrain. Finally, we mentioned the most important Bahraini cities and important industrial cities in the Kingdom of Bahrain (figure 1).



Figure 1. Map of the Kingdom of Bahrain (Map of Bahrain, 2020).

Location and geographical importance

Bahrain is located in the south of the Gulf, on the western end of it, and to the east and north of it is Iran. As for the south-eastern side, Qatar is located. To the west, the Arabian Peninsula is at a distance of 30 kilometers, and at the same distance - approximately - Qatar is far from it, and 238 kilometers from the Iranian coast.

The location of Bahrain is gaining importance from the importance of the Arabian Gulf site, the excellent waterway, and the easy path for trade between East Asia and Europe, which has always made it the focus of attention in trade and political rivalries (Jordan and the World Atlas, 2006).

On the importance of Bahrain's position in the Gulf, (Durand), the British Resident in the Gulf, says: (Bahrain is in the Gulf as Cyprus in the Mediterranean). As for latitude and longitude, they are any of the Bahrain Islands, located between latitudes 25-45 ° and 25-26 ° north, and between longitudes

25-50 ° and 45-50 ° E (Al-Dweikat, 2001). Amin al-Rihani describes it in his book (Kings of the Arabs) by saying: There is no more beautiful between Muscat and Basra than the center of this island, and it is not more suitable for trade or war, as it mediates the Gulf at a certain angle from it, as if it is a barge anchored in John (Al-Hiti, and Sabri Fares, 1986, 2005) widening between Qatar and Qatif, but rather as if At the birthplace of pearls is a great jewel, it is no wonder that the ancient conquerors have raced to it. (Al-Rihani, 1987)

Geological research claims that it was part of the eastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula, and then separated from it in different geological ages. Bahrain consists of a group of 32 islands close to each other, with a combined area of 669 square kilometers. It is low in the surface in most of its parts, and some parts are about 60 meters above sea level, while the highest main point in Bahrain is the mountain of smoke, which rises from a large low point in the center of the island - about 120 meters above sea level. It extends along the northern coastal strip of Bahrain Island to the heart of the Manama region, a narrow strip of fertile land designated for cultivation, and most of it includes until now the number of palm plantations and vegetables.

Bahrain was particularly famous for its transportation and an important and excellent commercial center since ancient times, as well as for its riches of fish, pearls and palm trees, where there are no less than a million palm trees, and it remained so until the era of geographical disclosures came, and European competition for colonies intensified. Bahrain became a battleground between the Portuguese who occupied it in 1507 AD and the British (Abd al-Hakim et al., 1983).

The most famous cities in Bahrain are Manama, Muharraq, Sitra, and the capital is Manama, which is located on the island of Bahrain. History states that Manama is at its origin (Al-Munimah) and it has been changed to (Manama) after the Iranians ruled Bahrain for a period of time, and now the word Al-Munimah was difficult for them because they could not pronounce the word (Al-Ain), then they turned it into a hamza, then alpha, and it became Manama (Al-Rihani, 2002).

Geographical topography

Bahrain is characterized by unique natural features, as it consists of a group of islands between which freshwater springs are distributed on the seafloor estimated at 200 springs, and in the coast twenty-five springs. It helped make the pearls of Bahrain in the past clear and quality. Durand describes it saying: The islands are silver, the sea is pearl, and you can see coral chunks in the depths, and Bahrain has pure water springs that appear through brine water at the entrance to the port and in separate places (Khafaf and Al-Momani, 2010).

There are also fresh eyes inside the islands, which helped interest in agriculture, including, Ain Adhari, Umm Shaum, Abu Zaidan, Al Sarhan, Ain Mahza, Ain Al Raha. He remembers the British political resident in the Gulf during his visit to Bahrain in 1865 and says: We found fresh water in the Bahrain Islands, and fresh springs at sea at a depth of three to six staves (Pelly, 1866).

The terrain of Bahrain had a great impact on the quality of pearls on the one hand, and the abundance of sweet water on the other hand, which in turn led to the attention of neighboring countries and tribes, and their sights.

The Kingdom of Bahrain also has many geographical forms and features left by previous civilizations, the most important of which are (Al-Momani et al, 1999):

1- Dome tombs: It is well known to archaeologists that tombs of the Indus Valley civilization are usually found in fields and farms outside cities where people are buried or burned. As for the residents of

Wadi Al-Rafidayn in Iraq, they were burying their dead inside the houses where their graves were located. But the residents of the Dilmun civilization and the Bahrain Islands graves, in particular, took their graves beneath the vaulted hills as places of their dead in stone rooms with a distinctive pattern as described above. Perhaps the thousands of domed cemeteries that are still standing today at the village of Aali are what Dilmun specializes in, due to the civilizations that were close to them.

2- The quality of pottery: From the samples obtained by the Danish Mission for Antiquities in the Bahrain Islands, it was found that the form of pottery and pottery vessels differ in their patterns and shapes from their counterparts in the Indus and Mesopotamian civilizations. This is evidence of the originality of pottery in Bahrain. It is worth noting that this industry is still one of the local traditional industries in the Aali region as well, and where most of the ancient tombs are located.

3- Circular seals: Archeologists describe the seals of the Indus Valley as having square shapes, while the Seals of Mesopotamia have cylindrical shapes. But the unique seals found in the Bahrain Citadel at the ancient city of Dilmun in large numbers are of a special circular shape. See the image of this in addition to the distinctive graphics and symbols on it for the environment of Bahrain, the most important of which are the date palm and gazelle (Al-Momani, 2016).

Climate and Natural Resources

As for the climate of Bahrain, it is hot in summer, saturated with humidity, and in winter it is moderate, with little rain and the year can be divided into only three seasons:

1- Winter and is characterized by the northwest winds, which is the best season.

2- Mild summer.

3- A very hot summer in which a very wet east wind is blowing which the people of Bahrain call (Kos), and sometimes Bahrain is exposed to hot winds called as Suhail.

This climate has affected the activity of its residents. In the summer, it is appropriate to dive in the Gulf waters to extract natural pearls. In winter, the weather becomes suitable for doing trade with India, as the atmosphere of India in the winter is better than in the summer, as it is exposed in the summer to severe rains, which is beneficial and popular with the trade of Bahrain and India (Khafaf and Al-Momani, 1981).

The most important resources available in Bahrain are:

-Petroleum, natural gas, oils, aluminum, fish.

-Land use: good land 2%, permanent crops 2%, meadows and pastures 6%, no forest, other lands 90%.

Natural plant: Because it is a desert region, it only grows thorny plants and annual grasses that grow with the fall of rain (Al-Momani, 2016).

Population

As for the population of Bahrain amounting to 645,361 people, Belgrave states that when he made his trip to the island, they numbered 70 thousand. And that the Maliki school is the doctrine that is widespread among the Sunnis, and they constitute - a year - a sixth of the population of the island and the rest are Shiites (Khafaf and Al-Momani, 1981).

Arabs constitute the bulk of the population of Bahrain, as they trace their origins to three major Arab tribes that were pioneers before Islam, and were present in Bahrain many years before the Gregorian date. These tribes are: the Tamim tribe of Al-Mudariyah Al-Adnanyah, and the Abd al-Qais al-Rabiya al-Adnania.

The indigenous population constitutes 80%, while expatriates make up 10%. Most of them came as supporters or supporters of the Al Khalifa caliphate campaign in Bahrain in 1783. The origins of these belong to the tribes: the Muslim family, the Sudan family, the Al-Buainain family, the Al-Manna'a village, Abu al-Zaluf, the Sada and Bani Khudhair, all of whom belong to a number of tribes that inhabited the Qatar Peninsula (Khafaf and Al-Momani, 1981). As for minorities, they constitute 10% of the people of Bahrain, and are of Iranian descent in the first place, Indian and Pakistani, and Baluchi in the second degree. Some researchers believe that some of them originally descended from some Arab tribes that settled on the eastern end of the Gulf, and acquired Persian language and customs. However, political and economic transformations pushed them towards reverse migration to their home countries. At present, the population of Bahrain exceeds one million, and most of the population in the Kingdom is concentrated in the northern part of the Bahraini island, especially in major cities such as Manama and Muharraq. There is an incorrect British claim to a referendum conducted on a sectarian basis in 1941, and this referendum claims that the number of Shiites exceeds the number of Sunnis slightly, as they numbered (46,359) people, while the number of Sunnis reached (41,984) people (Derasat Report, 2018).

The total population of the Kingdom of Bahrain is 1,234,571 people, according to statistics for 2011, including the number of expatriates, and population growth reached 1.285% (Derasat Report, 2018).

There are no recent official statistics for the percentages of followers of Islamic schools of thought, except that various newspapers and books indicate that the Shi'a school is the majority in the country, but some Sunni sources question the validity of these estimates. And remember, in the last elections, the Shiite parties were able to win less than half the votes. According to the official statistics issued by the official center for statistics in 2010, the percentage of Sunnis is 51% and the percentage of Shiites is 49%. Thus, Bahrainis make up 46% of the population, while non-Bahrainis constitute 54% of the population (Al-Momani, 2016).

A historical overview of Bahrain

The island settled during prehistoric periods and in the year 2300 BC. And its geographical position enabled it to make it a commercial center between Mesopotamian civilization (presently Iraq) and Wadi Sind (a region near India at present). The beginning of the prosperity and growth of this trade during the Dilmun civilization was associated with the Sumerian civilization in the third millennium BC. Bahrain was part of the Babylonian Empire in the period before 600 BC. The name "Bahrain" refers to the fact that the country contains two sources of water, the eyes of sweet water and salty water in the surrounding seas. The Greeks knew the island as Tylos, while before the advent of Islam it was known as Awal. It was named after a fetus in the form of a bull's head, located on the present island of Muharraq, and worshiped by people from Bani Bakr bin Wael and Tamim, according to what Islamic sources say. The Awal Islands in that period were linked to the eastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula, and the islands formed in that period with the region extending from Iraq in the north to Qatar in the south, one region called Bahrain. The islands have remained politically highly associated with the rest of Bahrain since that time. The country of Bahrain fell under the domination of the Sassanid Persians during that period, and they ruled it through Arab rulers (Bahraini document, 2014).

The ruler of Bahrain at the time of the emergence of Islam was Al-Mundhir bin Sawa from Bani Tamim, based in the city of Hajar (present-day Al-Ahsa), and most of the region's residents were from the tribes of Abdul Qais and Bani Bakr bin Wael from Rabia, along with Bani Tamim. The Bahrain Islands were the center of Nestorian Christianity, then the Bahrain region became one of the first regions to convert to Islam, and the Prophet Muhammad, Ali Al-Hadrami, passed it in 629 AD (the seventh year of migration) and sent him a message that he delivered to its ruler Al-Mundhir bin Sawa Al-Tamimi. In the second edition that followed the death of the Umayyad caliph Yazid bin Muawiyah, the sect of help from the Kharijites occupied Bahrain, and then the Umayyads regained it during the time of Abd al-Malik bin Marwan. Among one of the ruins of the Umayyad period in the Bahrain Islands is the remains of the Thursday Mosque, which is one of the oldest mosques in history, and was built during the reign of the Umayyad Caliph Omar bin Abdul Aziz (Crawford, 1998).

After the Abbasids seized the caliphate in 750 AD (132 AH), they made the countries of Bahrain and Oman under the jurisdiction of Yamamah, until the Carmatian movement that seized eastern Arabia in 899 CE emerged and made its capital in Al-Ahsa. The Awal Islands were the first provinces to separate from the Carmatians, when Abu al-Bahlul al-Awam from Banu Abd al-Qais in 1058 CE and sermons to the Abbasid caliph, who was commanded by God in Friday prayers. The Carmatians attempted to restore the islands in the year 1066 AD, and Abu al-Bahlul repelled them in a naval battle, and the Bahraini Arabs swooped on the Carmatians in Al-Ahsa, as a result of that, and their state fell in the year 1076 AD at the hands of the Ayouns, using the Seljuks. With the fall of the Carmatians, he alternated the rule of the land of Bahrain by its righteousness and islands by several Arab dynasties, where Ibn Ayyash captured Qatif and Awal from Abu al-Bahlul al-Awam. This included the occupation of the Turkish Atabis of Persia to the Bahrain Islands between 1235 and 1253 CE. After the year 1330 AD, the country of Bahrain began to pay tribute to the rulers of Hormuz, and in this period it appears for the first time in historical sources the city of Manama, the current capital of Bahrain (Larsen, 1984).

Continued to dominate Hormuz until the early fifteenth century, when the Bedouin tribe of Jabour, from Bani Aqil, uprooted the Jarwans and seized all of Bahrain. And their leader, Ajwad bin Zamil, imposed the royalty on the Hormuz. It is not possible to determine the time when the name "Bahrain" receded from all the east of the Arabian Peninsula and was specialized in the Bahrain Islands, except that the Damascene traveler Ibn al-Mujawar from the people of the seventh century AH (thirteenth century AD) and the Moroccan Ibn Battuta (14th century AD) were among the oldest Who used the name "Bahrain" to refer to the islands without the rest of eastern Arabia (Smith, 2008).

In the year 1521 AD, the Portuguese arrived in Bahrain and relocated their forces. The Jabour leader Muqrin bin Zamil put them down in them, and he was killed in the battle. Thus, the Bahrain Islands fell under Portuguese rule for eighty years until the Safavid Persians occupied the island in 1602 AD. It remained under Persian domination, directly or indirectly, until the year 1783AD, during which invasions took place from Oman (1717 and 1738 AD) and periods of independence at the hands of the Huwa Arabs.

In the year 1753AD, Nasr Al-Mathkour, the Arab ruler of the Iranian city of Bushehr, seized Bahrain on behalf of Karim Zind, the ruler of Iran.

In the year 1783 AD, Al-Utub led the Al Khalifa family, the people of Al-Zubarah, in Qatar, with a naval attack on Bahrain. They defeated the aforementioned victory and became independent in Bahrain.

But they did not settle for them until after tackling a series of Omani invasions between the years 1799 and 1828 AD, and they had to pay the tribute to the Emirate of Diriyah for a few years.

Al-Khalifa made their base on Muharraq Island, while the largest metropolis in Bahrain was Manama (Crawford, 1998).

After the establishment of the second Saudi state, its ruler, Faisal bin Turki, tried to extend his control to Bahrain and was able to impose Zakat on it temporarily. Conflicts continued between the two parties, and the rule of the Al Khalifa extended at times to the Citadel of Dammam, but that period also saw the entry of the British Empire into the Persian Gulf. Britain used to regard the Gulf as a British lake and an important link on the way to its property in India. Britain was keen to keep Bahrain independent of surrounding countries, such as the Saudis. In 1859 AD, Britain informed Faisal bin Turki that it considered Bahrain an "independent emirate," and sent a naval fleet to protect it. After several treaties between Britain and the rulers of Bahrain, the Al Khalifa signed the British Protection Agreement in 1861 AD, and Bahrain remained a British protectorate until 1971. The British traveler at Al-Gharif estimated the population of Bahrain at the time of the signing of the agreement at about 70,000. In the year 1923 AD, unrest prevailed in Bahrain after the Dawasir tribe collided with Baharnah. Al-Dawasir had lived in Bahrain almost independently of the Al Khalifa family since they came to Bahrain from the east of the Arabian Peninsula in 1845 CE, so the British forced Al-Dawasir to evacuate Bahrain that year and most of them left for Dammam on the opposite coast.

Oil was discovered in Bahrain in 1932, and this discovery marked a leap in its economy. The British declared Bahrain's independence in August 1971. Iran has claimed its right to rule Bahrain since the first agreement between Bahrain and the British in the nineteenth century, and the Iranian government renewed its demands when it saw Britain's intention to leave the Gulf. However, it decided to stop its demands in Bahrain in exchange for the implementation of other demands. As a result, a referendum was held in Bahrain under the supervision of the United Nations in 1970, in which Bahrainis voted to keep Bahrain independent from Iran.

The oil boom greatly benefited Bahrain in the 1980s. Sheikh Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa became Emir of Bahrain in March 1999, succeeding his father, Sheikh Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa. Bahrain has undergone major changes, including the return to parliamentary life, which was suspended in 1975, women have been given the right to vote, political prisoners have been released, and Amnesty International has described these transformations with a historical period of human rights in Bahrain. Bahrain also turned from a country to a kingdom in February 2002 after voting for the National Action Charter (Smith, 2008).

The most important cities in Bahrain

The most important cities in Bahrain can be summarized as follows (Al-Morshid, 2011):

1. Main cities:

Manama: the capital and largest city of Bahrain and contains most of the ministries and many villages branch out of it.

Muharraq: The city of Muharraq is located east of Manama, and it has Bahrain International Airport and was the capital of Bahrain previously.

Riffa: It is divided into two regions, East and West, and has Riffa Castle.

Isa city: A modern city named after the late Prince Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa.

Hamad city: A modern city built in the early 1980s and named after King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, and distinguished by its organization, consisting of 22 roundabouts.

Zayed city: a modern city established in 2003.

2. Industrial cities:

Bahrain Industrial City: It is a newly established, and its name was (Industrial limit)

Industrial Area. : It is located on Sitra Island.

Industrial nail: An old industrial city.

The famous villages in Bahrain

Old country: Old country is located in Manama.

Al-Diraz: A Bahraini village, located in the northern governorate facing the sea between the village of Budaiya and Barbar, and is bordered to the south by the village of Bani Jamra.

Riffa: It is located in the most elevated area in Bahrain.

Hidd (Bahrain): It is located at the southeastern end of the Muharraq Peninsula.

Arad: It is located to the east of the city of Muharraq and west of the border, and it has Arad Fort.

Karzakan: the largest village in the western region, and is famous for its picturesque groves.

Al-Naeem: One of the most famous Bahraini regions and the first hospital in this region was opened.

Galali: located in the northeast of the city of Muharraq.

Samaheej: located on the northeastern coast of Muharraq Island.

Al-Deir: It is located on the northern shore of Muharraq Island and east of Busaiteen.

Jidhafs: An ancient city famous for its science, one of the most famous of which is the Jidhafs Mosque, which is the fourth administrative region in Bahrain.

Aali: It is famous for the historical high tombs and pottery factories and it is located in the heart of Bahrain.

Sitra: An island characterized by the presence of its industrial zone. And it has many villages inside this island: and religions, Mercopane, Mehzah, Al-Kharjiya, Sefalah, Abu Al-Aish.

Saar: It is one of the largest villages in the northern region, as it contains all the so-called ruins of ancient tombs and antiques (Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics, 2014).

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