

# **History of Eastern Arabia**

**The Rise and Development of  
Bahrain  
and Kuwait**

**Ahmad Abu Hakima**

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THE RISE AND DEVELOPMENT OF  
BAHRAIN AND KUWAIT

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*This book grew from my research for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (History) at the University of London. It is dedicated to the Arabs who inhabit the shores of the Gulf.*



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## *Preface*

This book deals with the 'Utbī States in Eastern Arabia in the second half of the eighteenth century. The rise of the 'Utūb, the ancestors of the present influential families and the rulers of Kuwait and Baḥrain, have so far been neglected.

Chapter One describes the position in Eastern Arabia and the Persian Gulf in the first half of the 18th century and how certain factors paved the way for the rise of the first 'Utbī settlement of Kuwait.

Chapter Two deals with the origin of the 'Utūb and reflects an attempt to answer various questions relating to the growth of Kuwait and the rise of Āl-Ṣabāḥ as the first 'Utbī rulers in that town, in 1752.

In 1766, Āl-Khalifa, the cousins of Āl-Ṣabāḥ, accompanied by other 'Utbī families, migrated to the south and established Zubāra in Qaṭar. The rapid growth of the 'Utbī trade that followed its establishment and other aspects of the 'Utbī history are discussed in Chapter Three.

The commercial success of Kuwait and Zubāra provoked the jealousy of other Arab tribes in the area, especially those on the Persian littoral of the Gulf. As a result of military operations between the 'Utūb and the latter, Baḥrain Islands were conquered in 1782 and by now the 'Utūb had become the strongest Arab maritime power on the Persian Gulf. This rise in the 'Utbī power until 1790 is treated in Chapter Four.

By the 1780's the Wahhābīs had conquered most parts of Central Arabia and started their wars against the Banī Khālid,

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rulers of al-Ḥasā and the barrier of the coastal 'Utbī States. Wahhābism, Wahhābī-Khālidī struggle, and Wahhābī relations with the 'Utūb are dealt with in Chapter Five.

Chapter Six deals with the commercial aspect of the 'Utbī history and shows how they succeeded in almost monopolizing the trade of Eastern Arabia.

'Utbī relations with the European and other forces in the area are treated in various other chapters of this book.

## *Introduction*

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries form a neglected period in the history of the Middle East. The Western orientalist mainly interested in classical Islamic civilization in its Arabic, Persian or Turkish phases, has tended to concentrate on the periods of greatness and originality, and to neglect those of decay and eclipse. The Middle Eastern historian too, not unnaturally, has preferred to lavish his interest and attention on the times of ancient greatness and recent revival, and to turn away from the ages of decline and apparent inaction that lie between them.

These attitudes have led to the neglect of much that is important and valuable. Every epoch, said the great German historian Leopold von Ranke, is immediate to God. All periods, the dull and the brilliant alike, are significant in themselves, and deserving of study. There are in any case good reasons for not neglecting the time of eclipse.

In the Middle East as elsewhere, the living and the active past is that of yesterday and the day before, not of a resplendent but remote antiquity. Its dullness and quiescence, moreover, are more apparent than real, and the excitement of many discoveries still awaits the historian.

It has become customary among historians to date the modern history of the Middle East from Bonaparte's expedition to Egypt. Yet much that is interesting and significant was already stirring in the 18th century — the first Westernizing reforms in Turkey, the spread of the revivalist Naqshbandi order and its ideas in the Hijaz, in Syria and in Iraq, the nascent intellectual revival in

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Egypt, encouraged by the Indian scholar Muhammad Murtada al-Zahidi, author of the *Taj al-'Arus* and mentor of the historian al-Jabarti, the rise of the Wahhabi movement, and, in a different way, the emergence of new centres of power in the Arabian peninsula.

It is with some aspects of this last problem that Dr. Abu Hakima deals in the present work. His theme is the rise, in the 18th century, of the 'Utub, the ancestors of the present ruling and other leading families of Kuwait and Bahrain. To throw light on this hitherto obscure corner of history, he has been able to assemble a great mass of information from Arabic chronicles, many of them unpublished, from local traditions, and from Western travellers and records, showing great skill and acumen in the discovery, collation and exploitation of these disparate materials. The resulting monograph constitutes a significant addition to our knowledge of Arabian and indeed of Middle Eastern History.

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JULY, 1963

## *Transliteration*

The system of transliteration used in this book is that generally agreed upon and followed by the Orientalists in the new Encyclopaedia of Islam. However, mechanical limitations of the press will account for some deviations.

## *Abbreviations*

B.S.	Bombay Selections.
B.M.	British Museum.
E.I./1	Encyclopaedia of Islam, first edition.
F.R.P.P.G.	Factory Records, Persia and the Persian Gulf.
J.I.H.	Journal of Indian History.
Sec. Com.	Secret Committee.
C. of D.	Court of Directors





## THE SOURCES

Materials for writing the history of the 'Utbi States in Eastern Arabia in the second half of the eighteenth century were traced from both Arabic and European sources. The rise of the 'Utūb is historically treated here for the first time. Little of their history during that period has been competently reported, principally because those who dealt with it were either Arabs who did not consult European sources, or Europeans who did not consult the relevant Arabic sources. In this work those two sources have been combined.

Some of these resources were used by writers dealing with Arabia and the Persian Gulf when needed for their narratives; however, they have never before been used in writing the history of the 'Utūb. In fact, many of the Arabic manuscripts, to the author's knowledge, have never before been used.

Therefore it is necessary to evaluate the most important sources in regard to the light they throw on the history of the 'Utūb in particular, and Eastern Arabia in general.

It seems advisable to divide these sources into the following groups:

- A. Arabic sources.
- B. Local traditions.
- C. India Office Records.
- D. European travellers.
- E. Late European Compilations.

### A. ARABIC SOURCES.

Most of the Arabic contemporary or semi-contemporary sources are still in manuscript. The few that have been published appear either in abridged forms or are as rare as the manuscripts.

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It is necessary to state that these sources do not deal specifically with Eastern Arabia or the 'Utūb, but events relating to them.

The Arab writers of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, whose works throw light on Eastern Arabia, come mostly from Najd and 'Irāq. Those from Najd chronicled the Wāhhābī Islāmic revolution, while the writers in 'Irāq were influenced by the Ottoman rule of that country.

Ḥusayn b. Ghannām was the first Wāhhābī chronicler. His work *Rawḍat al-Afkār wal-Afhām*<sup>1</sup> is in two volumes. In the first volume the author explains the situation in Najd and neighbouring countries and relates that people at that time, i.e. the eighteenth century, "were not *Muslims* at all." In Chapter II the author details the genealogy of Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wāhhāb, his successes and his effect on contemporary shaikhs. The remaining three chapters describe the Wāhhābī creed as seen from various dispatches of Shaikh Muḥammad to Wāhhābīs and other people. Because Ibn Ghannām was one of the disciples of Shaikh Muḥammad, this volume is of extreme importance in explaining the Wāhhābī doctrine. The Wāhhābī creed, with the teachings of Shaikh Muḥammad, were of great consequence in Eastern Arabia and other parts of the peninsula.

The second volume, entitled *Kitāb al-Ghazwāt al-Bayāniyya* etc.<sup>2</sup>, is the earliest chronicle of Wāhhābism. The author states at the beginning of this volume that it his intention to chronicle the spread of the new doctrine which he followed. He starts with the year

<sup>1</sup> For the title in full see bibliography. This book is in both manuscript and printed forms. Two manuscript copies are in the British Museum, Nos. Add. 23, 344-5 and 19,799, 19,800. EL-BATRIK in his *Turkish and Egyptian Rule in Arabia* (1810-1841) (thesis, London University 1947) used a manuscript copy owned by "Fawzān al-Sābiq, late Sa'ūdī Minister to Egypt" (see p. xv of his thesis). *Rawḍat al-Afkār* was published in lithograph print at Bombay, 1919. The work of Ibn Ghannām and other British Museum manuscripts were either bought from their owners or given to the Museum. Most of those manuscripts were bought by the British representatives in the Persian Gulf, many of whom were acquainted with the Oriental languages.

<sup>2</sup> See bibliography for full title.

1159/1746, when Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb was obliged to leave al-'Uyayna town in Najd and seek refuge at al-Dir'iyya, the stronghold of Āl-Su'ūd. He was driven out by Sulaymān b. Muḥammad Āl-Ḥamīd of the Banī Khālid,<sup>1</sup> and this incident influenced the history of the following fifty years. The Wahhābīs waged war against the Banī Khālid, the protectors of the 'Utūb and other smaller tribes in Eastern Arabia,<sup>2</sup> until their defeat in 1795. As Wahhābism influenced the history of that era, Ibn Ghannām's works are invaluable for tracing the Wahhābī expansion towards the east of Najd. He is important because he was contemporary with the events he described and he knew his material and people personally.

In his writing, he portrays the spirit of a true Wahhābī. Therefore he describes his opponents as "infidels, treacherous enemies of God," etc. Yet his chronicle is invaluable for giving, in almost all events, the results of skirmishes and battles, whether won by the Wahhābīs or not. In fact, his description of those encounters is more detailed and informative than that of the second Wahhābī chronicler, Ibn Bishr. Indeed, modern writers hold his work in great esteem.<sup>3</sup> *Kitāb al-Ghazwāt* ends abruptly with the events of 1212/1797,<sup>4</sup> although Ibn Ghannām lived thirteen years after that date.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For the Banī Khālid tribe, their territories and rule in Eastern Arabia, see Chapter I, pp. 38-41. For their struggle with the Wahhābīs, see Chapter V, pp. 121-144.

<sup>2</sup> By protectors, the author refers to the Arab custom of *himāya* or *dakhl*. The 'Utūb first settled at Kuwait, in Eastern Arabia, with permission from the Shaikh of the Banī Khālid. They stayed under his protection till his authority was weakened. Thus they enjoyed a state of independence in the 1750's.

<sup>3</sup> PHILBY, *Sa'ūdi Arabia*, London, 1955, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Ibn Ghannām's work was used extensively by Rentz when compiling his thesis on *Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb and the Beginnings of the First Unitarian Empire in Arabia*. B. WINDER, in *A History of the Sa'ūdi State from 1233/1818-1308/1891*, used Ibn Ghannām frequently. Both used the Bombay printed copy. AL-RAYḤĀNĪ, in his *Ta'rikh Najd al-Ḥadīth Wa Mulḥaqātuh*, used the Bombay copy.

<sup>5</sup> IBN BISHR in *'Unwān al-Majd*, Vol. I, p. 149, reported the death of Ibn Ghannām in the events of 1225/1810.

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'Uthmān b. 'Abd Allāh b. Bishr (d. 1288/1871), in his work *'Unwān al-Majd fī Ta'rikh Najd*, records the Wahhābī movement from its earliest phase until 1268/1851. His manuscript, dated 1270/1853 at the end, is now in the British Museum (Or 7718). It is one of the earliest copies extant.<sup>1</sup> Ibn Bishr intended to compile the history of Najd under the Wahhābī-Su'ūdī rule (I, pp. 1-4). His history is a year-by-year account of the current affairs of the Su'ūdī rulers; their triumphs and defeats were both recorded. Those rulers were highly esteemed by him, so their successes are mentioned in detail, while their defeats or withdrawals are not. Close examination of both texts reveals that Ibn Bishr modelled his work on Ibn Ghannām's *Ghazwāt*. He quotes other historians (pp. 4-5), but does not mention the History of Ibn Ghannām, though he quotes his poetry (I, p. 95).<sup>2</sup> The events are the same and the wording is similar; therefore the main difference is that Ibn Bishr does not digress to religious matters as does Ibn Ghannām.<sup>3</sup> The actual struggle with the Banī Khālid, rulers of al-Ḥasā, is fairly well described. The writer offers much information on the Banī Khālid's rule in what he calls "earlier event or antecedent" (*Sābiqa*) in his History. These contain the only dated events from which a chronology for the Banī Khālid rulers was drawn.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century piracy was a great danger in the area. Ibn Bishr is invaluable as an authority on the subject, since he expresses the Wahhābī attitude towards piracy. The Qawāsim pirates were adherents of Wahhābism (I, p. 146).

<sup>1</sup> There may be other manuscripts of the same work in the possession of Su'ūdīs. It was published in Baghdād in 1328/1911 in one volume, and in Makka in two volumes. The references here are made to the Makka edition. Rentz and Winder used the Makka edition, while Batrik used the Baghdād edition.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Ghannām composed long poems to commemorate Wahhābī victories. On pp. 98-99, Vol. II, he rejoices over the reduction of al-Riyāḍ, and on pp. 214-17, Vol. II, he expresses the relief the Wahhābis felt on the death of Thuwaynī.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, the events of the years 1167/1753 and 1210/1795.

As a Wahnābī authority Ibn Bishr recorded their occupation of Bahrain and the ever-existing Wahnābī threat to 'Umān and Masqaṭ. There the ruling Āl-Bū-Sa'idīs encountered both Wahnābism and piracy in the Persian Gulf (I, 142-146).

Both Ibn Ghannām and Ibn Bishr are important sources in the history of the 'Utbī States because they recorded the Wahnābī-Khālidī relations. The Banī Khālid were, for some time, the protectors of the 'Utūb, and their barrier against the Wahnābīs. These writers also recorded the Wahnābī raids on the 'Utbī States in the 1790's, and the 'Utbī counter-attacks.<sup>1</sup> Both were Wahnābī believers and were contemporary with the events recorded by them.

Ibn Ghannām and Ibn Bishr were contemporaries who represented the Wahnābī interests, while 'Irāqī historians of the same period shared the Ottoman viewpoint.

Chief among these was Yāsīn b. Khayr Allāh al-Khaṭīb al-'Umārī,<sup>2</sup> who wrote *Al-Durr al-Maknūn fī Ma'āthir al-Māḍiya min al-Qurūn*. Al-'Umārī was born in 1158/1745 in al-Mūṣil, and was already quite old when the Wahnābīs started raiding 'Irāq at the beginning of the nineteenth century. He compiled several historical works.<sup>3</sup> *Al-Durr al-Maknūn* starts with the first year of the Hījra and ends in 1226/1811. The length of time covered by this work made the chronicling of events necessarily brief. Though the relevant material is not abundant when compared to that of Ibn Ghannām or Ibn Bishr, it is of special importance because it reflects the Ottoman

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter V, pp. 144-148.

<sup>2</sup> Yāsīn belonged to a distinguished 'Ulamā' family. His father, grandfather and his son were also authors. See their works in BROCKELMANN, *Suppl.* II, 781-782.

<sup>3</sup> His work *Gharā'ib al-Athar* was published in al-Mūṣil by Maḥmūd Ṣiddīq al-Jalīlī in 1369/1940. See 'ABBAS AL-'AZZĀWĪ, *Ta'rikh al-'Irāq bayn Ihtilālāyīn*, Baghdād, 1954, Vol. 6, p. 208. There are two manuscript copies of *Al-Durr al-Maknūn* in the British Museum. Add. 23, 312-3. For other works by the same author see BROCKELMANN, *Suppl.* II, pp. 781-782. These manuscripts are kept in Berlin, Cairo, Paris and al-Mūṣil. Another manuscript copy is in Paris, 4949, BROCKELMANN, *Suppl.* II, 781.

attitude towards the Wahhābīs.<sup>1</sup> It also expresses the feelings, in the author's words, of the Shī'as on every "event of Wahhābī barbarism," displayed during their sudden and frequent raids. The Wahhābīs are called "treacherous and damned fellows" and Su'ūd, their leader, is indicted as a "villain" (f. 387). Unfortunately al-'Umarī does not give a detailed account of the Ottoman reaction to those attacks.

This reaction can be found in the work of 'Uthmān b. Sanad al-Baṣrī, <sup>2</sup> *Maṭāli' al-Su'ūd Biṭayyib Akhbār al-Walī Dawūd*,<sup>3</sup> which was compiled at the request of Dawūd Pasha, the *Walī* of Baghdād, in 1241/1825.<sup>4</sup> The work gives no separate history of Dawūd Pasha, but it portrays the history of Ottoman 'Irāq and its relations with the neighbouring countries from 1188/1774, Dawūd Pasha's birth, until 1242/1826, the death of the author.<sup>5</sup> The reigns of the preceding pashas of Baghdād are described and important events recorded. This contemporary work is invaluable for the siege and occupation of Baṣra by the Persians (1775-1779) and for information on the Muntafiq and other Arab tribes of 'Irāq, plus their relations with Eastern Arabia. It also deals with the expeditions of Thuwaynī of the Muntafiq against the Wahhābīs in 1788 and 1797, and the expedition of 'Alī Pasha, the Kaya of Baghdād, against them in 1798-1799. The author's anti-Wahhābī sentiments are revealed frequently. An example is seen in his long poem commemorating

<sup>1</sup> The same Ottoman outlook is represented in the contemporary Syrian work, *Kitāb Miṣbāḥ al-Sārī wa Nuzhat al-Qārī*, by IBRAHĪM KHALIL AL-DAYRĀNĪ, Bayrūt, 1272/1855.

<sup>2</sup> Shaikh 'Uthmān b. Sanad is a Najdī of the 'Anaza tribe. He was born in Najd in 1180/1766 and later migrated to Baṣra. He died at Baghdād in 1242/1826. He was *Mālikī Sunnī*. See the article "Al-Shaikh 'Uthmān b. Sanad al-Baṣrī" in *Lughat al-'Arab*, III, 1913, pp. 180-186, by KĀZIM AL-DUJAYLĪ.

<sup>3</sup> On the Berlin MS. the title of the work is given as *Ta'rīkh Baghdād al-Musammā Maṭāli' al-Su'ūd fī Akhbār Dawūd*. The title given in the text is taken from the author, f. 14.

<sup>4</sup> See *Maṭāli'*, f. 13.

<sup>5</sup> BROCKELMANN, *Suppl.* II, 791, gives his death in 1250/1834, after AMĪN ḤASAN AL-ḤULWĀNĪ's *Mukhtaṣar Maṭāli'*.

Thuwaynī, chief of the Muntafiq, who was assassinated by the Wāhhābīs in 1797 (ff. 79-80).<sup>1</sup> This work is also important as the earliest source of quoted letters between 'Alī Pasha and Su'ūd on the former's withdrawal from al-Ḥasā in 1799.<sup>2</sup> Events in this work are arranged chronologically and it also contains biographies of many contemporary literary figures and Arab tribal chiefs. The author left Baṣra for Baghdād in 1241/1825 (f. 13), to write the book especially for Dawūd Pasha.

Ibn Sanad's *Sabā'ik al-'Asjad fī Akhbār Aḥmad Najl Rizq al-'As'ad* is of special importance to the historian of Eastern Arabia in the eighteenth century. This is a monograph dealing with Aḥmad b. Rizq, a rich 'Utbī merchant. According to Ibn Sanad, he established Zubāra with Khalīfa b. Muḥammad, the founder of the Āl-Khalīfa ruling family of Baḥrain. This work was published in Bombay in 1315/1897,<sup>3</sup> and in it Ibn Sanad gives short biographies of forty-two men connected with Ibn Rizq. They represent a cross-section of the people of Baṣra and the 'Utbī towns. A brief note is made of Shaikh 'Abd Allāh Āl-Ṣabāḥ, the second ruler of Kuwait, and of Khalīfa b. Muḥammad, the first 'Utbī ruler of Zubāra. The author's style is full of *saḥ* (rhyming) and poetic expressions.

This is the earliest mention of the 'Utūb as the founders of Zubāra.<sup>4</sup> It is the only Arabic source, though without statistics, on the 'Utbī trade and the attitude of Khalīfa b. Muḥammad towards

<sup>1</sup> He praises Thuwaynī for contradicting Ibn Ghannām's poem extolling the assassin, the Wāhhābī slave Ṭu'ayyis.

<sup>2</sup> The work was abridged by Amin b. Ḥasan al-Ḥulwānī and printed in Bombay in 1304/1886 under the title *Mukhtaṣar Ta'riḥ al-Shaikh 'Uthmān b. Sanad al-Baṣrī al-Musammā Maṭāli' al-Su'ūd Biṭayyib Akhbār al-Wālī Dawūd*. The copy used by the author is the Berlin manuscript which is incomplete, as it ends with the events of 1231/1815. AL-DUJAYLI, in *Lughat al-'Arab*, III, p. 184, mentions other manuscript copies in the Murjāniyya Library and in the Library of the Carmelite Fathers in Baghdād. AL-'AZZĀWĪ, in his customary way of quoting verbatim, in his chronological history of 'Irāq, refers to another copy owned by him. See *Ta'riḥ al-'Irāq*, Vol. 6, p. 63.

<sup>3</sup> A manuscript copy is kept in the British Museum, No. Or 7565.

<sup>4</sup> *Sabā'ik*, p. 19.

relieving merchants from paying duties (p. 20).<sup>1</sup> Ibn Sanad, when speaking of the 'Ulamā' and merchants, appears to have known most of them very well. He was a student of Ibn Fayrūz, whose biography he gives. Although the author does not state the reason for writing the book, it may be concluded from the biographies of Ibn Rizq's five sons at the end, that it was written on the request of the eldest son. The latter, Muḥammad, was a rich 'Utbī merchant who migrated with his father from Zubāra to Baṣra after the surrender of Zubāra to the Wahhābis in 1798. Aḥmad b. Rizq continued to be a prominent figure in 'Irāq after his emigration from Zubāra.<sup>2</sup> The book was written after the death of Aḥmad b. Rizq.<sup>3</sup> The book is familiar to those interested in the history of Kuwait and Baḥrain. It is referred to in al-Qinā'ī and al-Rashīd<sup>4</sup> when they fixed an approximate date for the rise of Āl-Ṣabāḥ and Āl-Khalifa. Shaikh 'Abd Allāh b. Khālīd Āl-Khalifa, reflecting the tendency among Āl-Khalifa, does not agree with Ibn Sanad's statement that the fathers of Aḥmad b. Rizq and Khalifa b. Muḥammad were the founders of Zubāra. Shaikh 'Abd Allāh told this writer that Ibn Sanad was the *Imām* of the Āl-Khalifa mosque at Zubāra during the reign of Aḥmad b. Khalifa. Although information about 'Uthmān b. Sanad's life cannot be traced, his wide knowledge of the important people in al-Ḥasā and the 'Utbī States is clear from the forty-two biographies in *Sabā'ik al-'Asjad*, and the comments made in his exact chronology in *Maṭāli' al-Su'ūd*. Ibn Sanad's works gain in importance because of his familiarity with the 'Utūb.

Much valuable information on Eastern Arabia during the

<sup>1</sup> He might have been comparing the position of the merchants at Zubāra with those of the neighbouring ports of al-Qaṭīf and al-'Uqair where import duties were collected.

<sup>2</sup> CORANCEZ in his *Histoire des Wahabis* (Paris 1810), pp. 57-59 and p. 190, note No. 23, speaks of the wealth of Aḥmad b. Rizq and how in 1804 he intervened between the Mutasallim of Baṣra and the Sultān of Masqaṭ in a financial dispute.

<sup>3</sup> He died in 1224/1809. See *Sabā'ik*, p. 103.

<sup>4</sup> Two Kuwaiti historians, see p. 48.



period under consideration here, was found in the work of another historian. Since 1860 his identity has remained unknown in the catalogue of the manuscripts in the British Museum<sup>1</sup> when his manuscript, *Lam' al-Shihāb fī Sīrat Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb*,<sup>2</sup> arrived there.

It is necessary to give a brief analysis of its contents, as no proper introduction or study of this book has yet been made.

*Lam' al-Shihāb* details the history of the Wahhābīs from the start of their movement until 1233/1817.<sup>3</sup> It is divided into five chapters plus a conclusion.

Chapter One deals with the biography and subsequent rise of Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb.

Chapter Two explains how Muḥammad b. Su'ūd accepted the new doctrine.

Chapter Three gives the genealogy of Muḥammad b. Su'ūd.

Chapter Four is a detailed account of the rule of the Wahhābīs, beginning with Muḥammad b. Su'ūd and ending with 'Abd Allāh b. Su'ūd, also the spread of their influence in 'Umān, Qaṭar, 'Irāq, Syria, etc.

In Chapter Five the author explains how the Wahhābīs won parts of the Ḥijāz, Yaman, Tihāma, and offers some account of the local Arab tribes.

The Conclusion illustrates some teachings of Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb and how other Muslims refuted them.

The writer is no mere chronicler of events, as were Ibn Ghannām and Ibn Bishr. He analyses the historical facts, and

<sup>1</sup> Efforts to discover the identity of the author have not, so far, proved successful. No one interested in history in Kuwait, Baḥrain and Su'ūdī Arabia, could give any information, since the book was unknown to them. The British Museum manuscript may, therefore, be the only known copy.

<sup>2</sup> Bound with the same manuscript is another manuscript of *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* by MUḤAMMAD B. 'ABD AL-WAHHĀB.

<sup>3</sup> It is interesting to note that this manuscript was written, according to its copyist, Ḥasan b. Jamāl b. Aḥmad al-Rubkī, in the same year of its compilation by its unknown author, in 1233/1817. See f. 280.

tries to establish truth from these facts by contact with shaikhs from Zubair and Kuwait (ff. 20-21). Although not a Wahhābī, he had no prejudices against them; furthermore, he respected the teachings of Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb. However, when the Wahhābīs committed a crime he could not condone it.<sup>1</sup>

He is the only Arab historian to give a fairly detailed account of the Banī Khālid, noting their admirable characteristics (ff. 222-226). A satisfactory genealogical account of the Banī Khālid can be found in *Lam'* in spite of the fact that this account lacks dates.<sup>2</sup> His analysis of their fall is remarkable. According to him, the Banī Khālid could have resisted the Wahhābī attacks, if their chiefs had not begun their internal struggle for the shaikhdом, influenced by Wahhābī conspiracies (ff. 79-81).

When he discusses the Wahhābī and Ottoman expeditions sent to al-Ḥasā, he attempts an accurate estimate of the distances between towns. He gives various estimates and selects the one most reasonable. His historical statistics are plentiful. He estimated the income of the Wahhābī states in 1232/1816, from the different parts of Arabia, at 2,210,000 riyals (ff. 236-237) and the population of the state, numbering about 2,300,000 (ff. 237-238).

He also states that Shaikh 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb, an important Wahhābī religious figure, regarded piracy as a supreme religious duty (ff. 247-248). He points out that the Wahhābīs used the Qawāsīm as their tools in many piratical instances (ff. 96-109). His account of 'Alī Pasha's expedition against the Wahhābīs in 1213/1798 is unrivalled by any other Arab account,<sup>3</sup> for he offers reasons for the expedition's failure not

<sup>1</sup> An example of this according to *Lam'* was the attitude of the Wahhābīs towards 'Alī b. Aḥmad, a Khālidī chief, who was killed in cold blood after he had been offered safe conduct by Su'ūd (ff. 86-87).

<sup>2</sup> The Banī Khālid shaikhs can be traced in IBN BISHR's *Unwān al-Majd*, Vol. I, but not in orderly fashion. Ibn Bishr is useful in dating the various routes of those shaikhs.

<sup>3</sup> IBN SANAD in his *Maṭālib* gives an account of this expedition, but his account is not so detailed as *Lam'*'s and it lacks the reasoning on the failure

found elsewhere. He had been an eyewitness to the expedition somewhere near Baṣra.

In the author's opinion, his only defect is that many of his events give no dates, and consequently these must be calculated by reference to other works. However, it is a rich source of information and can boast a moderate and unbiased attitude in recording the history of the struggling forces in the area. This factor is notably lacking in most other contemporary Arab works.<sup>1</sup>

Another work comparable to *Lam' al-Shihāb* in its moderation is '*Unwān al-Majd fī Bayān Aḥwāl Baghdād wa Baṣra wa Najd*'<sup>2</sup> by Ibrāhīm b. Faṣīḥ al-Ḥaydarī al-Baghdādī. Ibn Faṣīḥ, before writing his history, travelled, as he states in his introduction, to Syria, Egypt and Turkey to become acquainted with the countries he wrote about. His grandfather As'ad al-Ḥaydarī was the Ḥanafī Muftī of Baghdād, making Ibn Faṣīḥ a Sunnī Moslem.

He wrote at Baṣra in 1286/1869 while working as a government official there. In the introduction he explains how his work is divided into three chapters and a conclusion. The first chapter deals with the history of Baghdād, the second with Baṣra, the third with Najd.

The chapter on Baṣra is of interest, as the author shows its connection with other towns on the Arabian Gulf coast. He states the names of mercantile families with members living in three or more of those towns (ff. 91-92).<sup>3</sup>

Ibn Faṣīḥ, in the chapter on Najd, gives the texts of letters

of the expedition given by *Lam'*. Ibn Bishr records the expedition from the Wāḥḥābī point of view, but there again the reasoning is lacking. According to Ibn Bishr, the Wāḥḥābīs were victorious because they were stronger and better fighters.

<sup>1</sup> The date 1233/1817 is given at the end of the book by the copyist. This copy in the British Museum may be the earliest, should other copies be found.

<sup>2</sup> British Museum MS. Or. 7567.

<sup>3</sup> An example of that is al-Qinā'āt or Āl-Badr family, whose members were in Kuwait, Baṣra and Bahrain.

by Wahhābī rulers to their subjects. At times he criticises the Wahhābīs (f. 113). The letters, as well as extracts from the main work, were quoted without acknowledgement, by Maḥmud Shukrī al-Ālūsī, a late 'Irāqī historian, in his *Ta'rikh Najd*. This aroused the anger of Shaikh Sulaymān al-Najdī, who thought al-Ālūsī contradicted himself, since the latter had praised the Wahhābīs at the beginning of his book. Actually, towards the end of *Ta'rikh Najd*, al-Ālūsī was literally quoting Ibn Faṣīḥ.

Despite the criticism of Shaikh Sulaymān and other Wahhābī writers, Ibn Faṣīḥ tried to be impartial. His work remains an authentic account of Najd and the Arabian littoral of the Gulf during the early nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

Another short, but invaluable, manuscript which throws light on the area during this time is Shaikh Muḥammad al-Bassām's *Kitāb al-Durar al-Mafākhir fī Akhbār al-'Arab al-Awākhir* (British Museum Add. 7358). This work was compiled by the author at the request of Mr. C.J. Rich, the political Resident at Baghdād.<sup>2</sup>

Al-Bassām was a soldier in the Wahhābī army which fought Ṭūsūn Pasha, the son of the Walī of Egypt, Muḥammad 'Alī Pasha (f. 14). The main value of this work is the detailed study of the Arab tribes inhabiting Arabia, 'Irāq and Syria towards the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries. The author states the number of fighters in each tribe.<sup>3</sup> His account of the Qawāsīm, whose territories came to be known as Trucial 'Umān (ff. 38-39), tallies with other contemporaries. His chapter on al-Ḥasā (ff. 39-40) is important for the geographical study, and im-

<sup>1</sup> The work of Ibn Faṣīḥ is still in manuscript in the British Museum, Or. 7567. Other copies, Berl. Olt. 1806 and 2985; See BROCKELMANN, *Suppl.* II, 791.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. C. J. Rich, born in 1787, died at Shirāz in 1821. He was the Resident of the East India Company at Baghdād from 1808-1821. His collection of MSS, medals and antiquities is placed in the British Museum. His own MSS are in the India Office Library.

<sup>3</sup> These numbers are given on various pages, with the cavalry and infantry included, numbering 1,079,488 troops.

plications of names of towns and places at a time when there were no adequate maps for that area.<sup>1</sup>

'Umān's relations with the 'Utūb and Eastern Arabia under the Āl-Bū-Sa'id dynasty<sup>2</sup> are given in the works of a native from 'Umān, Ḥamīd b. Muḥammad b. Razīq. His work, *Al-Faṭḥ al-Mubīn al-Mubārḥin Sirat al-Sāda al-Bū-Sa'idiyyin*, became known to Western scholars through Badger's translation in 1871.<sup>3</sup> Two other manuscripts of Ibn Razīq were consulted and the data relating to 'Umān's relations with the Gulf is the same as that given in *Al-Faṭḥ al-Mubīn*.

These two works have not been consulted by writers on the Persian Gulf, Eastern Arabia and 'Umān. The one in the University Library at Cambridge (Add. 2893) called *Al-Sira al-Jaliyya al-Musammāt Sa'd al-Su'ūd al-Bū-Sa'idiyya*, is a short summary on which *Al-Faṭḥ al-Mubīn* was based. This book bears the date 1271/1854, while *Al-Faṭḥ al-Mubīn* is dated 1273/1856. To *Al-Faṭḥ* is added the history of Āl-Bū-Sa'idīs, starting from Aḥmad b. Sa'id and comprising one hundred folios, with the first part in 156 folios. *Al-Sira al-Jaliyya* is in thirty folios.

The other work is *Ṣaḥīfat al-Qaḥṭāniyya*.<sup>4</sup>

The importance of those works is that they present the 'Umānī

<sup>1</sup> Al-Bassām wrote his work in 1813, according to Mr. Rich.

<sup>2</sup> This is the dynasty that succeeded the Āl-Ya'āriba dynasty in the *Imāmate* of 'Umān, in 1154/1741. The first Bū-Sa'idī Imām was Aḥmad b. Sa'id (1154/1741-1188/1775).

<sup>3</sup> The title given to the work by Badger is *History of the Imāms and Seyyids of 'Omān*. The work deals with the history of 'Umān under the 'Ibāḍī (Khārījī) rule (for 'Ibāḍiyya see *Ibid.*, pp. 385-398) beginning with Julanda b. Mas'ūd 135/751 as the first Imām and ending with Thuwaynī b. Sa'id (1273/1856). It should be noted here that the first name of the author is not Salīl, as Badger gives it, but Ḥamīd b. Muḥammad. The word *Salīl* used by the author (f. 155) means the son of (see IBN DURAYD, *Kitāb al-Istiqḍāq*, Cairo, 1958, pp. 359-60). Nevertheless, the author gives his first name and his full family name in more than one place (for example, see f. 124).

<sup>4</sup> This work was presented to Rhodes House, Oxford University, by the Sultān of Zanzibār in November 1929. At the end of this work the author, Ibn Razīq, signs it and states that the manuscript was executed in his handwriting. The date of writing is given as 1269/1852.

point of view in affairs concerning the Gulf and Eastern Arabia. They were also written at a time not far removed from events under consideration here.

Other Arabic sources dealing with Eastern Arabian history do exist and reference to them will be made where used in this text. Except for translations of Ibn Ghannām, Ibn Bishr and *Al-Fath*, these works to the author's knowledge, have not been used before in dealing with the history of the 'Utūb of Kuwait or Bahrain. Even the three used were not recorded in that context.

## B. LOCAL TRADITION.

The rise of the 'Utūb is treated here for the first time. Since it does not go back more than 250 years, it was necessary to heed local legends of the shaikhdoms of Kuwait and Bahrain. To investigate these traditions, the author questioned local authorities and consulted all available books dealing with 'Utbī history.

The author's research in Kuwait was the result of five years' stay in that country (1953-1958). During that period much was learned about the present ruling families, many of whom have been there from the beginning. Unfortunately, members of those few families who had documents would not permit access to them.

Fortunately, local tradition in Kuwait was recorded in two books in 1926 and 1954. The authors are two shaikhs or '*Ulamā*' who did their best to write the history of Kuwait from a hearsay point of view.

The first is 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Rashīd; his work is *Ta'rikh al-Kuwait*.<sup>1</sup> In volume one of his history, al-Rashīd portrays the social life of Kuwait in the early twentieth century. Social life there underwent no important changes until after the discovery of oil there in 1946. Indeed, the Kuwaitis represented in the work are almost the same as those of the eighteenth century. An example of this is seen in his description of Kuwaiti pearl fishing. The same portrait

<sup>1</sup> This book was published in Baghdād in two volumes in 1926.

is repeated in any of the eighteenth century works of European travellers.

In Volume Two, which deals with Kuwaitī history, the author repeats local tradition concerning the rise of Kuwait and the Āl-Şabāḥ as rulers.<sup>1</sup> The publication of this history in 1926 had its effect on the Arab intelligentsia. Father Anistās Mārī al-Karmalī was disappointed that the first volume contained no detailed political study of the shaikhs and the shaikhdom. However, he said the second volume contained more historical information. He ended his comments by requesting that the author write the history of the other Arab Gulf ports.<sup>2</sup> Copies of this book are rare since its circulation was prohibited by the Shaikh of Kuwait. In it, the author gave a factual account of the murder in 1896 of Shaikhs Muḥammad and Jarrāḥ Āl-Şabāḥ by their half-brother, Shaikh Mubārak.

The other Kuwaitī historian, Shaikh 'Isā b. Yūsuf al-Qinā'ī, gave his version of the establishment of Kuwait and the rise of the Āl-Şabāḥ as its rulers.<sup>3</sup> His work, *Şafahāt min Ta'rikh al-Kuwait*, which appeared in 1954, is a short history of Kuwait beginning with the rule of Şabāḥ I and ending with Mubārak Āl-Şabāḥ, who died in 1915.

The author is considered, by Kuwaitīs, to be the leading living authority on the history of Kuwait. He is now an old man of about ninety years and his family is held in great esteem by the people and shaikhs of Kuwait.<sup>4</sup> His book, written for the Kuwaitī government schools, is a condensed history of Kuwait, with valuable information on its rise, families, social life and trade.

<sup>1</sup> For his hypothesis on the rise of Kuwait and the Āl-Şabāḥ see Chapter II.

<sup>2</sup> See his article in *Lughat al-'Arab*, IV, 1914, p. 89. See also other comments made by Yūsuf As'ad Dāghir in *Al-Adīb* literary magazine VII, July 1958, pp. 19-20.

<sup>3</sup> In the author's copy of al-Rashid's work, Shaikh 'Isā wrote his notes on that History in the margin. The author is uncertain of the date when he made those marginal notes.

<sup>4</sup> For some details about his family see p. 51.

It too, was banned from circulation on the same grounds as its predecessor. However, these two works are important because they were written by Kuwaitis who were thoroughly familiar with their local history. Many of the relevant facts given by these authors were considered wherever they were deemed relative to this book.<sup>1</sup>

In Baḥrain, where the Āl-Khalifa family rules, local tradition was recorded in Shaikh Muḥammad al-Nabhānī's *Ta'rikh al-Baḥrain*, which is Part One of his *Al-Tuhfa al-Nabhāniyya fī Ta'rikh al-Jazīra al-'Arabiyya*. Al-Nabhānī, after staying some time with the ruler of Baḥrain, wrote his *Ta'rikh* which presents the entire history of Baḥrain from earliest times to the present.

Here we are chiefly concerned with the local tradition of the history of Baḥrain under Āl-Khalifa.

What al-Nabhānī says about Āl-Khalifa checks with what Shaikh 'Abd Allāh b. Khālid Āl-Khalifa told this writer in August 1959 in London, during several meetings. Shaikh 'Abd Allāh, who is a judge in Manāma courts, kindly showed the author the manuscript history of Baḥrain which he is compiling for future publication. Several of Shaikh 'Abd Allāh's observations have been included in this narrative.

Shaikh 'Abd Allāh echoes the Āl-Khalifa's point of view on certain historical events of the 'Utūb. An example of the conflict between Āl-Ṣabāḥ and Āl-Khalifa may be seen when we deal with the emigration of the latter from Kuwait, in about 1766, and their subsequent settlement at Zubāra.

Local 'Utūbī tradition was accepted when there was no other source of information. The fact that the 'Utūb have no written records of their history makes it difficult for us to fix the date when their first shaikh rose to power in Kuwait.

<sup>1</sup> The works of al-Rashīd and al-Qinā'i were used in various books written after 1950 on Kuwait. These books are of no historical value for this present work but do contain information on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries which might be useful to future generations.



### C. INDIA OFFICE RECORDS.

Some of these dates may be checked with the records of the English East India Company kept in the Commonwealth Relations Office, London. Here, both manuscript and printed records were used.

1. *Manuscript documents* : Of the manuscript sources, those Factory records were consulted that related to Persia and the Persian Gulf in the second half of the eighteenth century. These comprise the volumes dealing with the period from 1703-1801.<sup>1</sup>

In this period the East India Company had Factories at Bandar 'Abbās (Gombroon), Abū Shahr and Baṣra. The Company's agents included in their reports letters to their superiors in London and Bombay, giving accounts of conditions in the Persian Gulf area. Even before the temporary establishment of the Baṣra Factory at Kuwait in 1793, these reports revealed information about Eastern Arabia. However, this information is limited when compared to that available on Persia and 'Irāq. This may be because of the limited Company commerce with eastern and central Arabia. The commerce, described in Chapter VI of this work, was in the hands of Masqaṭī and 'Utbī merchants.

Because of the relations of Arab tribes of southern 'Irāq and the Persian littoral of the Gulf with those of Eastern and Central Arabia, we have some information in the Company's records concerning the 'Utūb and Eastern Arabia.<sup>2</sup> One striking feature of those records is the lack of information on Baḥrain. Here again, this may be because of the lack of the Company's commercial interests in the area.

<sup>1</sup> These volumes have no index and are unpublished. Reference to them is indicated in this work by the date of letters and their numbers. The use of numbers makes it easier to locate the dispatch referred to.

<sup>2</sup> In spite of the fact that the Wāhhābīs started building their power in the 1740's, they are mentioned for the first time only in the dispatches of 1787. The only report on the Wāhhābīs which the writer could trace is by Harford Jones Brydges, dated 1st December 1798.

However, this hypothesis of Kuwait's rise to power after the 1770's rests considerably on the sporadic but valuable information which those records contain. Perhaps Kuwait's geographical position near Abū Shahr and Baṣra, the Company's centres of commercial activity in the second half of the eighteenth century, drew the attention of the Company's agents.

2. *Printed documents and works*: A clearer picture of affairs in Eastern Arabia, from the British point of view, is revealed in two works:

The first is: *Selections from the Records of the Bombay Government* — No. XXIV — New Series.

In this compilation we find "historical and other informations" concerning the Arabs of the Persian Gulf. These data are from reports of officers of the Bombay Government in the first half of the nineteenth century. The importance of these reports is that the authors were officers who were officially asked to report to their government. They wrote at first hand, having visited the area. True, there are some errors in dating earlier events in Arabia, but, on the whole, their work is valuable for revealing the British point of view in Gulf affairs during the period mentioned and also for the lists of dates which they offer, as well as information on Arab tribes.<sup>1</sup>

Another compilation on the Persian Gulf is: *Selections from State Papers, Bombay, regarding the East India Company's Connexions with the Persian Gulf*, 1600-1800. In this work, Saldanha selects various letters relating to the history of the Persian Gulf from 1600 to 1800. His selections of eighteenth century material come mostly from the Factory Records of Baṣra and Abū Shahr. At the end of this work are appended two extremely important reports on the Gulf trade. The first was compiled by the Agent and Factor at Baṣra in 1789, and the second by John Malcolm in 1800. These two

<sup>1</sup> Reference to these reports and the names of compilers are given when appropriate.

reports represent contemporary witnesses to the growth reached by the 'Utbī States towards the end of the century.

**D. EUROPEAN TRAVELLERS' ACCOUNTS.**

European travellers, in whose works original information on Eastern Arabia was traced, may be classified into three sections:

1. East India Company servants.
2. Travellers, other than officials.
3. Early nineteenth century travellers.

1. *East India Company servants.* Of this group little need be said here, because their works are described in Chapter Six. However, the narratives of their journeys up and down the Gulf and across the great Syrian desert, are the primary source of trade-route information during the period under consideration.

2. *Other travellers.* C. Niebuhr and A. Parsons belong to this group of travellers.

Niebuhr (1733-1815), who became the best European authority on eighteenth century Arabia, needs little introduction. He was the mathematician in the scientific expedition sent in 1760 by the King of Denmark to Arabia and adjacent countries. Niebuhr was the only survivor of this five-man expedition.<sup>1</sup> On his way back from Bombay to Europe he chose the route via the Persian Gulf. From December 1764 to June 1765 he remained in the Persian Gulf area. During this time he recorded details of the Arabian tribes inhabiting both coasts of the Gulf and southern 'Irāq.<sup>2</sup> This is important to our study because there have always been relations between the Arabs of both shores, and from other works little can be gathered. Invaluable information on the Banī Khalid, Banī

<sup>1</sup> For the life of Niebuhr and the origin of the expedition, see G. N. NIEBUHR, *The Life of Carsten Niebuhr*, English translation by Prof. Robinson (Edinburgh) 1838, pp. 11-14.

<sup>2</sup> Niebuhr's works first appeared in German in 1772. A French translation appeared a few years later in 1774, 1778 and 1780.

## *History of Eastern Arabia*

Ka'b, the Muntafiq, the Arabs of Bandar Rîq and of Abū Shahr, is given in Niebuhr's works *Description de l'Arabie* and *Voyage en Arabie*.

In Niebuhr's *Description* the earliest information concerning Kuwait can be traced (p. 296). Although he did not visit the town, his method of collecting information where he was unable to visit, supplies us with useful material. In the case of Kuwait he is the first writer to give the two names by which the town was known, Kuwait and Qurain.<sup>1</sup>

Niebuhr's chart of the Persian Gulf was the best one drawn before the end of the century. It is of great historical value because on it he located the various Arab tribal territories.<sup>2</sup> Niebuhr failed to collect material of historical value on the Wahhabîs. However, the latter were little known then in either Abū Shahr or Baṣra, although both places were visited by Niebuhr during his Gulf travels. He was and will continue to be invaluable to all historians of eighteenth century Arabia.<sup>3</sup>

Another traveller whose work proved an invaluable aid is Abraham Parsons.<sup>4</sup> Parsons travelled from Aleppo to Baṣra by the desert route in 1774, and was in Baṣra during the 1775 Persian siege. His treatment of events and their consequences is important for two reasons. First, he was an eyewitness to and a participant in the events he describes. In the siege, the English Factory sided with the Ottomans against the Persians, and Parsons, being on the spot, played his role in the war. The siege, its effects on the 'Utūb

<sup>1</sup> See below, pp. 47-48.

<sup>2</sup> Zubāra is not placed on the map, merely because it came into existence a year after the compilation of the map in 1765.

<sup>3</sup> Almost all those who wrote on Arabia after the publication of Niebuhr's works until the present century depended on Niebuhr's investigations.

<sup>4</sup> "In 1767 Parsons was appointed, by the Turkey Company, Consul and Factor Marine at Scanderron, in Asiatic Turkey, a situation which, after a residence of six years, he was obliged, from the unhealthiness of the country to resign, when he commenced a voyage of Commercial speculation." See the Preface to his *Travels*, p. iii.

and their conduct, as portrayed by Parsons, are examined in Chapter Four of this book.

3. *Early nineteenth century travellers.* Of the early nineteenth century travellers, Dr. Seetzen, Burckhardt, Buckingham, Stocquer and Wellsted give valuable, though limited information concerning the 'Utbī States. These, and other travellers, are quoted in various parts of this work, where the information is pertinent.

Important too, is Sir Harford Brydges' account in *The Wahauby*. In this work Brydges records events which he witnessed, or in which he participated. He also relates events which he did not observe, but his historian's ability to select and reject is excellent. He is almost always conscious of judging the material he presents. Where he feels there is a better authority on a particular subject, he does not hesitate to quote the source.

Harford Jones joined the Baṣra Factory in 1784 and stayed in that area until 1794. During this period he remained in Kuwait for a short time in 1790 for "a change of air" after falling ill in Baṣra. In 1793 he joined the Baṣra Factory in its temporary establishment at Kuwait. In 1798 he was appointed representative of the British Government to the Court of the Pasha of Baghdād. With this career as a background, a work by Brydges on this particular area is bound to be of special significance.

Therefore, his *Wahauby* reflects the author's experience. He knows the area and its inhabitants. When treating Wāhhābism as a creed, he refers the reader to Burckhardt's *Notes on the Bedouins and Wahabys* as the best authority; he quotes the latter instead of giving his own account.<sup>1</sup>

As a matter of fact it is not his history of the Wāhhābīs that interests us as much as his appended *Notes*. In them he gives valuable information on the rule of Shaikh 'Abd Allāh Āl-Ṣabāḥ, the second 'Utbī ruler of Kuwait. His account and criticisms of the

<sup>1</sup> See BRYDGES, *The Wahauby*, pp. 110-114.

expedition of 'Alī Pasha, the Kaya of Baghdād, against the Wahhābīs in 1798 are equalled only by those of *Lam' al-Shihāb*.

There is only one riddle which remains unanswered by Brydges in the delicate affair of the Wahhābī attacks during the Factory's residence there. Brydges makes the Shaikh and the people of Kuwait the heroes of the Wahhābī repulsion and clearly states that neither the Factory's sepoys nor the Company's cruiser at the port played any part in the affair. On the other hand, John Lewis Reinaud, an official of the Factory, told Dr. Seetzen in Aleppo in 1805 that the Factory's role in repelling the attackers had been decisive, that the Factory's relations with the Wahhābīs suffered and that he was sent by the Factory to al-Dir'iyya, the Wahhābī capital, to restore relations.<sup>1</sup> Possibly Brydges in giving his account, kept the Company's policy of neutrality in struggles among the Gulf Arabs and held to non-interference as long as the Company's mail and flag remained unmolested.<sup>2</sup>

Only in Brydges' work do we find an explanation of how the Baṣra Factory learned of the arrival in Kuwait in 1778 of the French emissary, Captain Borel de Bourg. The Factory Records relate only the story of his capture.<sup>3</sup>

#### E. LATE EUROPEAN COMPILATIONS.

Two valuable works on the history of the Gulf are yet to be considered. The first is Sir Arnold Wilson's *The Persian Gulf*, first published in London in 1928. It is a general study of the region since ancient times. The second is J.G. Lorimer's *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf*, published by the Government of India (Calcutta, 1915), unavailable to the public until recently.

<sup>1</sup> For a rather detailed account of this affair, see below, pp. 162-163.

<sup>2</sup> For this policy of neutrality see Mr. FRANCIS WARDEN's "Extracts from "Brief Notes Relative to the Rise and Progress of the Arab Tribes of the Persian Gulf" in *Bombay Selections*, XXIV, p. 57, and p. 433.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix, pp. 101-104.

## *The Sources*

The *Gazetteer* (used in this book) is a remarkable compilation,<sup>1</sup> based primarily upon selections from the records of the Indian Governments. For material on eighteenth century Arabia, the author depends mostly on *Bombay Selections* No. XXIV, Western travellers and Brydges' *Wahauby*. However, Lorimer neglected to consult any Arabic source, and this led him to the erroneous conclusion that information on certain periods of Arabia was lacking. Concerning al-Ḥasā, he says, "Nothing is known of al-Ḥasā before 1795." Had he consulted Ibn Ghannām, Ibn Bishr, *Lam' al-Shihāb* or other Arabic works, he would have learned much about al-Ḥasā.

However, the *Gazetteer* still remains an exceedingly important source of information on the Persian Gulf, especially during the nineteenth century.

Except for the above-mentioned chronicles, Arabic sources give most of their accounts without dates. With European sources the case is different, and when possible the author used them to determine dates. The Factory Records give not only the year but the day and month. The Arab chroniclers were exact and their dates corresponded to those of the Factory Records.<sup>2</sup>

The Company's Records helped to develop a picture of 'Utbi sea power and trade, while the description of the internal relations between the Arabs of Eastern Arabia was based on the information contained in the Arabic sources.<sup>3</sup>

Local tradition supplies material for the rise of the 'Utūb in Kuwait, their origin, emigration and final settlement there with permission of the Shaikh of the Banī Khālid.

<sup>1</sup> This work is in two volumes, each containing two sections.

<sup>2</sup> An example is Thuwayni's expeditions of 1786 and 1797 against the Wāhhābis and 'Alī Pasha's expedition of 1798/9. The Arabic chronicles date these correctly.

<sup>3</sup> An example of that is the continuous struggle between the Banī Khālid and the Wāhhābis throughout the whole period and the Wāhhābi attack on Zubāra.





## CHAPTER I

### CONDITIONS IN THE PERSIAN GULF IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

A preliminary study of conditions in the Persian Gulf countries during the first half of the eighteenth century, is necessary to understand the rise and development of the 'Utbi States in Eastern Arabia<sup>1</sup> in the last half of the century. The histories of the Persian Gulf states were interrelated, and the 'Utbi migration and

<sup>1</sup> Historical research on Eastern Arabia in the eighteenth century is scarce. The prominent event in that century was the emergence of the Wahhābī movement, which reached its zenith in the last decade of the eighteenth and the first decade of the nineteenth centuries. The two major sources of information on the Wahhābī movement are *Rawḍat al-Aṣḥār wal-Aḥām limurtādi Ḥāl al-Imām wa Ta'dād Ghazwāt dhawī al-Islām*, two vols. (Bombay, 1919) by ḤUSAIN B. GHANNĀM, and 'UTHMĀN B. 'ABD ALLĀH B. BISHR's *'Unwān al-Majd fī Ta'rikh Najd*, two vols. (Makka, 1349/1930). They give little information on Eastern Arabia in the first half of the eighteenth century, mainly because the authors, being Wahhābī believers and chroniclers, were interested in the period of the spread of Wahhābism. Ibn Bishr clearly stated that the previous period was not of equal importance to the years following the beginning of Wahhābī propagation (see IBN BISHR, Vol. I, pp. 5 and 6).

Recent research on Wahhābism, when referring to Eastern Arabia, derives mostly from these two chroniclers. Reference here should be made to 'ABDEL ḤAMĪD M. EL-BATRİK's *Turkish and Egyptian Rule in Arabia, 1810-1841*, Ph. D., 1947, Modern Islamic History, London University, and G. S. RENTZ's *Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb (1703/4-1792) and the Beginnings of Unitarian Empire in Arabia*, Dissertation for Ph. D. degree in History, Univ. of California 1948 (microfilm copy), and ṢALĀḤ AL-'AQQĀD's *Le Premier État Sa'ūdite (1744-1818), Essai sur son histoire politique et religieuse*, Thèse pour le Doctorat d'État, Université de Paris, Faculté des Lettres (1956).

See also Ch. V on Wahhābī relations with Eastern Arabia.

settlement took place at the beginning of the eighteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

This interrelation may be attributed to several factors. The Arab tribes living along the Gulf, were very influential then. They were ruled by shaikhs who rarely acknowledged authority in any government there. The same interrelation was shown by the European companies, who supported Factories and commercial relations in all countries surrounding the Gulf. However, the three outstanding indigenous spheres of dominion in the Persian Gulf through the eighteenth century, were the Persians in the northeast, the Ottomans in Mesopotamia, and the Arabs in the west and south. These circumstances made it possible for the 'Utūb to build their independent state, first at Kuwait in about 1716, then to establish Zubāra in Qaṭar in 1766, and finally to conquer the Baḥrain Islands in 1782.<sup>2</sup>

Worthwhile noting is that the 'Utūb built their states in the above-mentioned places on the coast of Eastern Arabia when three factors aided them. The first was the sea-transport to and through the Persian Gulf by European trading companies. The second was the lack of any power in the Gulf of Arabia strong enough to interfere with the establishment of these 'Utbī settlements. The third was the location of Kuwait in the Banī Khālid territory. The Banī Khālid's rule was most favourable to trade; at the same time they protected the thriving town.<sup>3</sup> Here an attempt is made to explore

<sup>1</sup> See "Chronological Table of Events connected with the Government of Muskat, 1730-1843; etc.", in *Selections from the Records of the Bombay Government, No. XXIV, New Series*, (Bombay, 1856), pp. 140-141. See also "Historical Sketch of the Uttoobee Tribe of Arabs (Bahrain) from the year 1716 to the year 1817; prepared by Mr. Francis Warden, Member of Council at Bombay; etc.", in *Ibid.*, pp. 362-363.

For the local tradition respecting the rise of Kuwait, see chapter II.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter III for the establishment of Zubāra, and Chapter IV for the conquest of Baḥrain.

<sup>3</sup> It is still related by Āl-Ṣabāḥ that their ancestors paid homage to the Shaikh of the Banī Khālid whenever he came to Kuwait in summer. The author was told of this by Shaikh Ṣabāḥ al-Sālim Āl-Ṣabāḥ. The kind of the tribute paid by Āl-Ṣabāḥ varied according to the property of the ruler. However, there is no evidence of the kind or amount of tribute.

## *Conditions in the Persian Gulf*

how these conditions made it possible for the 'Utūb to build their states in Eastern Arabia.

### A. EUROPEAN TRADING COMPANIES IN THE PERSIAN GULF.

The English East India Company's trade relations with the Persian Gulf may be viewed from two aspects. The first was competition with other European nations trading in the Gulf. It is known that the English were not the first European nation to form relations with the Persian Gulf. The second was the East India Company's relations with the local powers.

European nations trading in the Gulf were Portuguese, Dutch, English and French. The Portuguese were the first to establish their influence, but they soon weakened, and in 1602 Bahrain slipped from their grasp, then Hurmuz in 1622. Their last fortress in Masqaṭ capitulated to the Arabs of 'Umān in about 1651.<sup>1</sup> This political and military deterioration was followed by a decline in trade. However, Portuguese ships and merchandise continued to frequent the Gulf for trading purposes. Until 1721 their Factory at Kung was visited by merchant ships belonging to "Indians, both Hindus and Muhammadans."<sup>2</sup>

The English and the Dutch, represented by their East India Companies as early as the first half of the seventeenth century<sup>3</sup>, cooperated to drive out the Portuguese. They fought a joint battle against the Portuguese in the Gulf until the latter were finally dislodged.<sup>4</sup>

The French entered the competition after the formation of a French East India Company in 1664,<sup>5</sup> but early in the eighteenth

<sup>1</sup> F. C. DANVERS, *Report on the India Office Records Relating to Persia and the Persian Gulf* (London), p. 12. See also LORIMER, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf*, (Bombay, 1915), Vol. I, part i, p. 836.

<sup>2</sup> See J. G. LORIMER, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf*, Vol. I, part i, p. 68.

<sup>3</sup> A. WILSON, *The Persian Gulf* (London, 1954), p. 160.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 161.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 166.

century their Factory at Bandar 'Abbās closed. It was not until 1755 that they re-established their Residency at Baṣra, although during the first half of the eighteenth century, French ships called there and at other Gulf ports.<sup>1</sup>

Holland and England were the two major European trading nations in the Gulf during the first half of the eighteenth century. Both had factories in more than one town and ports in countries bordering the Persian Gulf.<sup>2</sup> Relations between the Dutch and the English seem to have been cordial during that period. The Factory Records of the English Company tell of packets and letters being conveyed from their factory at Gombroon to Baṣra in Dutch ships.<sup>3</sup> This friendship soon ended in hostilities early in the second half of the eighteenth century, when England became the largest European trader in the Gulf.

A brief discussion of British interests in the Gulf during the first half of the eighteenth century helps to illustrate how their relations with the 'Utbi States developed. These interests are reflected in the dispatches of the English factories' agents in Gombroon, Iṣfahān, Baṣra, and in other places in Persia and Ottoman Mesopotamia. There were two main reasons for the establishment of factories. The first was to found centres to distribute English materials and other goods<sup>4</sup> carried by English ships to and from countries bordering on the Persian Gulf. The second was to use these factories, especially the one at Baṣra, as centres for the English

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Houssaye, Agent of the Baṣra Factory, to C. of D., Baṣra, 29th July, 1726, in *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 14. Dispatch No. 1571.

<sup>2</sup> Both had factories at Bandar 'Abbās and Baṣra.

<sup>3</sup> Gombroon Factory to the C. of D. dated Gombroon, 7th May 1737. See also E. IVES, *A Voyage from England to India in the year 1754*, also *A Journey from Persia to England by an Unusual Route in 1758 and 1759* (London, 1773), p. 206.

<sup>4</sup> For two lists of goods carried to the Factories of the Persian Gulf see *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 14, letter from Gombroon to the C. of D., dated 25th March 1727. The following articles are listed: From Bombay: pepper, sugar, rice, betel nut, cotton piece goods. From India: Bengal and Mangahore rice, sugar, ginger, turmeric, pepper and piece goods. From Gombroon, ships carried fruit and rose water. European woollens and Persian silks head the list of trading commodities.

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Company's dispatches, going east or west.<sup>1</sup> The English Company could depend on two fast and safe routes to convey their dispatches, either from India through the Red Sea to Europe, or the safer and more practical overland or desert route through Basra and Aleppo. The overland route was safer since the only danger was from Arab tribes, whose friendship was easily bought with regular presents of money and goods.<sup>2</sup> The overland route proved valuable not only for the Company's trade in the Persian Gulf, but also for swift contact between Bombay, Surat and other places in India and the Court of Directors in London. The overland route became increasingly important in the second half of the eighteenth century, before and after the Seven Years' War (1756-1763).<sup>3</sup>

The first duty of the trading companies' representatives was to expand trade; however they were unable to remain isolated from local events. As a matter of fact, the English East India Company "in less than half a century after its incorporation by the Royal Charter of 31st December 1600, assumed a political aspect."<sup>4</sup> Therefore politics followed trade, at least until the end of the eighteenth century, when the French attempted to dominate Egypt.

In 1708 the old and new English companies merged under the new name "The United Company of the Merchants of England

<sup>1</sup> Though the purposes of establishing these Factories can be traced in most of the dispatches of the first half of the eighteenth century, a very clear reference to that was made in a letter from Mr. Latouche on his handing over the responsibilities of the Basra Factory to his successor, Mr. Manesty. See a letter from Latouche to Manesty, Basra, 6. xi. 1784, *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 18, dispatch No. 1299.

<sup>2</sup> For the desert threat to the mail and packets of the East India Company, mentioned in many dispatches from Basra in the first half of the eighteenth century, cf. *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 14, Nos. 2330, dated Gombroon, 2nd March 1724, 571, Basra, 29th July, 1726, and Vol. 15, No. 670, Basra, 19th May 1741.

<sup>3</sup> For the desert route, see Chapter VI, pp. 168-173 and pp. 173-174 for the advantages the Persian Gulf had over the Red Sea.

<sup>4</sup> See WILSON, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

trading to the East Indies.”<sup>1</sup> Their residents had Consular power and rank from then on.<sup>2</sup>

Consular power was given to a Resident who not only represented the Company, but who had also invested his personal fortune in trade. Thus it was necessary for him to consider his own interests as well as those of the Company. More than once the Residents quarrelled with local governments and the solution of those disputes was undertaken by the Governor at Bombay and H.M. Ambassador in Istanbul.<sup>3</sup> Since factories existed on both Ottoman and Persian territories, the governors of both countries attempted to use the Company's war vessels against each other in times of crisis. In addition, both Ottomans and Persians sought the Company's help in strengthening their naval power in the Gulf.<sup>4</sup> The Company shifted its activity between them. Early in the 1720's the English East India Company decided that Baṣra, an Ottoman territory, might prove more prosperous for its commercial interests. Gombroon, therefore, was abandoned, mainly because of the Persian anarchy resulting from the Afghāns' invasion. The transfer of commercial activities from Persian to Ottoman territory was taken as a sign of enmity by the Persian Government, although the repeated transfer of the Company's chief residency seems to have been dictated by necessity. The Company wanted to show each government that the factory could do its job in either place, and it also wished to avoid oppression by local governors.

In both situations the intended results were not always achieved. The Mutasallims of Baṣra were no less oppressive than the shaikhs of Abū Shahr and Gombroon. To please both powers at

<sup>1</sup> The name of the English East India Company will be used throughout this work.

<sup>2</sup> WILSON, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Samuel Manesty's dispute with the *Mutasallim* of Baṣra and the Pasha of Baghdād in 1792, led to the removal of the Factory from Baṣra in 1793, and its establishment at Kuwait till 1795. Kuwait was not as satisfactory a centre as Baṣra, for the Company's trade.

<sup>4</sup> See below, Nādir's policy in the Gulf, pp. 35-36.

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the same time was almost impossible. However, the Residents did their best, and managed to keep the Company's trade flourishing in the Persian Gulf,<sup>1</sup> although wars and the disturbed internal state of affairs worked against the Company's interests. Mr. Martin French of the Basra factory wrote to the Court of Directors in London in 1732, telling them that:

"The War with Persia has put so effectual a Stop to Business here that a Bale of Goods has not been sold in many Months. We do not think it advisable to unlade the Ships now here till we see how Things are likely to go."<sup>2</sup>

The European companies received favourable terms from the Ottoman capitulations on the one hand, and favourable *roqoms* from the Persian Shāhs on the other. In Basra and Gombroon, the English East India Company collected the consulage from English ships.<sup>3</sup> This yielded a large profit in peace-time, but during the wars or because of local intervention, the Factories were often unable to collect consulage.

In addition to threats from local governors, the companies had to beware of sea depredations, or what the Reports call piracy.

<sup>1</sup> Early in 1726, difficulties arose with the Pasha of Basra, who hindered the progress of the Factory. In a letter from Basra, Mr. Houssaye, "Basra, Chief for the Company's affairs in the Gulf of Persia", wrote to the Court of Directors in London saying that the Pasha wanted to levy customs on goods before their sale. *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 14, Basra 10th April 1726, and Vol. 15, No. 2384 from Gombroon speak of the same difficulty. The latter is dated Gombroon 25th March 1727.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Martin French to the C. of D., Basra 19. iii. 1732/3, *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 15. Another letter dated the 25th June 1732 from Basra, signed by Mr. French, is written to the same effect.

<sup>3</sup> The consulage was collected at a rate of 2%. The consulage of the year 1725 at Basra amounted to 17,195 *shāhees*. *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 14, dispatch No. 559. Accounts of the Factories in the Persian Gulf were given in Indian rupees or Persian Mamoodies (*maḥmūdīs*) or Persian *shāhees*. Though the value of the Ottoman and Persian currency was inconsistent, some valuation can be drawn from accounts given in the Factories' records. Every Indian rupee was nearly equal to five *maḥmūdīs*. (*F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 15, No. 649, dated Basra 22nd February 1736). In one pound sterling there were 80 *shāhees* (*F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 15, dispatch 2578).

Factories were fortified and garrisoned by sepoy and trading ships carried guns. There was an almost continuous demand from the factories for war vessels to be kept ready for emergencies.<sup>1</sup> Thus the companies kept trade active in the Gulf, bringing wealth to many towns in the area.

Kuwait and Bahrain are hardly mentioned in the reports of the English East India Company in the first half of the eighteenth century. There is little doubt that trade by European and Muslim ships from India and Masqaṭ initiated the rise of 'Utbī maritime power in the 1750's,<sup>2</sup> as illustrated in the following chapter.

## B. AFFAIRS OF PERSIA AND OTTOMAN MESOPOTAMIA (1700-1750).

The absence of a centralized power worked in favour of the rising 'Utbī States, along with the trading activity. The only two powers that might have exercised such authority, the Ottomans and the Persians, were in no position to do so at that time.

### 1. *The Affairs of Persia.*

The first half of the eighteenth century was a period of constant change and unrest in Persia. The country was successively invaded by the Afghāns, Ottomans and Russians.<sup>3</sup> It was natural for the Persian Gulf to remain free from the impact of Persia. Not until after 1726, when Nādir Shāh rose to power, did the Gulf begin to play a role in Persian policy.

As for Nādir Shāh's interests in the Gulf, "it is no mean testimony to his genius and to the wide range of his ambition, that while for a brief moment he elevated Persia to the rank of the first military power in Asia, he also dreamed of creating naval resources which

<sup>1</sup> See Factory Report from the Council at Gombroon to the Court of Directors, London, dated Gombroon 25th March 1727, *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 14, dispatch No. 2384.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Ives, *op. cit.*, pp. 207, 222-223.

<sup>3</sup> For the troubled state of Persia see L. LOCKHART, *Nadir Shah, A Critical Study based mainly upon Contemporary Sources*, (London, 1938), pp. 1-17.



should ensure her dominion over the shores of both the northern and the southern seas, i.e. over the Caspian and the Persian Gulf.”<sup>1</sup> The lack of strong Persian naval power in the Gulf made it impracticable for any ruler of Persia to establish authority over the unruly Arab populace.<sup>2</sup> Though “Nādir Shāh deserves the credit for being the first monarch of Persia who realized the value of a fleet,” he fought against “the influence of physical conditions which gave the Persians invincible repugnance to the sea.”<sup>3</sup> This aversion is best exemplified by Nādir’s Admiral of the Coast, “a Persian who had never seen a ship.”<sup>4</sup> The Persian fleet was manned by Indians and Portuguese.<sup>5</sup> A Persian naval attack on Baṣra took place in 1735, but the “Ottoman Governor” forced two ships belonging to the East India Company to fight the Persians who were driven back.<sup>6</sup> In 1739 the Persian fleet in the Gulf was reported to consist of “three ships, one Brigantine, one three Mast, and one two Mast Grabs, beside several Trankeys.”<sup>7</sup> As early as 1734, Abū Shahr was selected as a suitable base for the fleet, and shortly after it was renamed Bandar Nādiriyya.<sup>8</sup>

Persian occupation of Baḥrain in 1736 was an important part of Nādir’s naval policy in the Gulf. Baḥrain, during the first half

<sup>1</sup> G. N. CURZON, *Persia and the Persian Question* (London, 1892), two vols., Vol. II, p. 390.

<sup>2</sup> See a letter from Mr. Martin French, Agent of the Baṣra Factory, to the C. of D., dated 20. v. 1732, *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 15, dispatch No. 630.

<sup>3</sup> P. SYKES, *A History of Persia* (London, 1921, two volumes), Vol. II, p. 271.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, and CURZON, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 392, where he, commenting on that selection, quoted Hanway: “But there cannot be a stronger ignorance of the Persians in regard to maritime affairs than that of Myrza Mehtie (i.e. Mirza Mehdi) who was appointed Admiral of the Coast before he had ever seen a ship.”

<sup>5</sup> See CARSTEN NIEBUHR, *Descriptions de l’Arabie sur des observations propres et des avis recueillis dans les lieux mêmes* (Amsterdam, 1774), pp. 269-70, and CURZON, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 392.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. a letter from Mr. French to the C. of D. dated 5. vi. 1735, in *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 15, dispatch No. 647.

<sup>7</sup> A letter from the Gombroon Agency to the Court of Directors dated 31.iii.1739, *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 15, dispatch No. 2456.

<sup>8</sup> LOCKHART, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

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of the eighteenth century apparently changed hands between the Sultān of Masqaṭ and the Huwala Arabs of the Persian coast of the Gulf.<sup>1</sup> In 1782 it became an integral part of the 'Utbī dominions.

The opening of the eighteenth century saw Shaikh Jubāra of the Huwala Arabs ruling Baḥrain completely independent of the Shāh of Persia. This state of affairs was due to the disturbed conditions in Persia.

In about 1718<sup>2</sup> a landing was made on Baḥrain by the Arabs of Masqaṭ, then governed by Sultān b. Saif II, an *Imām* of the Ya'āriba dynasty. However, the Huwala Arabs impelled the Sultān's forces to leave the island, "by the voluntary removal from their houses of the indigenous population, who emigrated to other places in order to escape the 'Umāni oppression."<sup>3</sup>

The Persian campaign of 1736 seems to have been strongly supported by the Huwala Arabs of the Persian coast and Abū Shahr. Nādir appointed as governors in Baḥrain, Shaikh Ghaith and his brother Shaikh Nāṣir al-Madhkūr of the Maṭārish Arabs. Their authority lasted till 1782, when the 'Utūb captured the islands.<sup>4</sup>

The motives behind the conquest of Baḥrain would appear to have been the following: The islands were coveted for their pearl fisheries, since these were the richest in the entire Gulf, indeed the world. They yielded an annual income of a half million Indian rupees.<sup>5</sup> Baḥrain, in the first half of the eighteenth century was not an important commercial centre, consequently the trading companies had no factories there.

<sup>1</sup> NIEBUHR, *Description de l'Arabie*, pp. 284-286.

<sup>2</sup> MUHAMMAD B. KHALĪFA AL-NABHĀNĪ, *Al-Tuḥfa al-Nabḥāniyya fī Ta'rīkh al-Ja'ira al-'Arabiyya, Ta'rīkh al-Baḥrain* (Cairo, 1342/1923), p. 112.

<sup>3</sup> LORIMER, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, i, pp. 836-7. Wilson gives the date a year earlier, 1717, *The Persian Gulf*, p. 172.

<sup>4</sup> For the conquest of Baḥrain by the 'Utūb see a letter from Latouche to C. of D. dated Baṣra 4.xi.1782, *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 17. See also NABHĀNĪ, *Ta'rīkh al-Baḥrain*, pp. 114-115.

<sup>5</sup> "Report on the Trade of Arabia, etc." in SALDANHA, *Selections from State Papers*, p. 407.

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The method in which Nādir formed his fleet merits consideration. The Dutch and English East India Companies offered their help, either by selling ships to the Persians or by facilitating the construction of those ships in India or elsewhere. This question of a Persian fleet was felt by the Arabs on both coasts of the Gulf. Those on the Persian littoral were ordered to hand over to the Persians a certain number of ships. These Arabs, mostly of the Huwala tribe, had been used to trading with their kinsmen of the Arabian littoral. The maritime Arabs of the Gulf, when oppressed, customarily took to their boats with their families; they abandoned their ports and resorted to their kinsmen to await the day of revenge.<sup>1</sup> Thus it was not later than 1741, during Nādir's lifetime, that the Huwala Arabs succeeded in capturing the Persian fleet, a fact which made "the Persians very pressing for ships." Their demand for ships from the English East India Company was granted and the vessels were ordered from India.<sup>2</sup>

Nādir felt that only the Arabs of the Gulf were knowledgeable enough to be his navigators, and so he transferred some of them to the Caspian in his attempt to create a Persian naval power.<sup>3</sup> He built a dockyard at Abū Shahr, and, at a terrible cost in human suffering, transported timber across Persia from Māzandarān to be used by his shipwrights. The only tangible results of this project were the rude ribs of an unfinished vessel, which were visible at Abū Shāhr soon after Nādir's death.<sup>4</sup> Yet the use of naval power by Persian monarchs later in the eighteenth century continued. Karīm Khān Zand, sending his forces under the leadership of Šādiq Khān against Baṣra in 1775, employed the Arab shaikhs of

<sup>1</sup> See above.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Dorrill, *Baṣra Factory*, to C. of D., London, Baṣra, 16.xii. 1741, *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 15, dispatch No. 671.

<sup>3</sup> NIEBUHR, *Description*, p. 270; CURZON, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 392.

<sup>4</sup> CURZON, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 392; SYKES, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 372. Niebuhr made a similar remark on those remains as early as 1765, when he was at Abū Shahr (*Description de l'Arabie*, p. 273).

Abū Shāhr. These were of the Maṭārish tribe, of Bandar Rīq, and of the Banī Ka'b, the most powerful forces in the Gulf.<sup>1</sup>

2. *The Affairs of Ottoman Mesopotamia.*

The second power, bordering the Persian Gulf, which might have exercised a strong control over its affairs, was Ottoman Mesopotamia. But here, as in Persia, the Governor's authority<sup>2</sup> was limited to Baghdād, and did not actually extend south as far as Baṣra. With this handicap, the *Wālī* of Baghdād, as well as other governors in Mesopotamia, were in a state of almost continuous warfare with the Persians since the Ottoman occupation of Mesopotamia in the 1530's. In Baṣra,<sup>3</sup> however, where the *Mutasallim* was ruling almost independently of the Pasha of Baghdād, he depended on the Arabs for defense of the towns and transportation of goods.

The authority of the *Mutasallim* extended beyond the town walls to the Arab tribes. The Muntafiq tribe occupied the area west of the town, while the Banī Ka'b occupied the area to the east and southeast. The Muntafiq Arabs, during the eighteenth century, were usually loyal to the Mutasallim of Baṣra, but the Banī Ka'b frequently changed their allegiance from the Ottomans to the Persians, sometimes paying homage to both.<sup>4</sup> To these two Arab tribes bordering Baṣra, may be added the al-Ẓafīr tribe, which was usually loyal to the Pasha of Baghdād and his *Mutasallims* in Baṣra.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter IV, p. 93.

<sup>2</sup> The *Wālī* of Baghdād.

<sup>3</sup> Baṣra capitulated to the Ottomans in 1546. See S. H. LONGRIGG, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq* (Oxford, 1925), p. 31.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. C. NIEBUHR, *Voyage en Arabie et en d'autres pays circonvoisins* (Amsterdam 1780), Vol. II, pp. 187-188. These Arabian tribes are dealt with in Chapter III.

<sup>5</sup> Al-Ẓafīr, or al-Ḍafīr, originally Najdī Tribes, migrated to 'Irāq, where they lived in the neighbourhood of Baṣra. See 'ABBĀS AL-'AZZĀWĪ, *'Ashā'ir al-'Irāq* (Baghdād, 1365/1937), Vol. I, pp. 295-304. Al-Muntafiq Tribes came

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Relations between these Mesopotamian Arab tribes and those of Eastern Arabia during the first half of the eighteenth century were peaceful, but this was replaced by strife during the second half of the century.<sup>1</sup> The permanent aim of the Pasha's policy was to be friendly with those Arabs, or to have them under the direct rule of his *Mutasallims*. When those tribes were free from his control, the Baṣra trade suffered. Baghdād also felt the loss of trade that travelled between Baṣra and Baghdād, by water and desert caravan.<sup>2</sup>

The Ottomans concentrated on Baṣra in the sixteenth century as the center for attack on the Portuguese. The same interest continued to exist in the absence of the Portuguese threat during the two following centuries. The Pashas of Baghdād considered the flourishing trade of the English East India Company, and the Dutch, most important in the early years of the seventeenth century.<sup>3</sup>

However, the standard, amount and prosperity of the Baṣra trade was controlled by several factors. The *Mutasallim's* greed, wisdom, and attitude towards the trading groups was of the greatest importance.<sup>4</sup> Secondly, trade needed peace, and this was never dependable, even when there was no Persian aggression. The Arab tribes could always disturb and affect the state of trade within

from Najd and settled between Baṣra and Baghdād. See IBRĀHĪM IBN ṢABGHAT ALLĀH AL-ḤAYDARĪ, *Unwān al-Majd fī Bayān Aḥwāl Baghdād wa Baṣra wa Najd*, B.M.M.S. OR 7567, f. 58r. See also MUḤAMMAD AL-BARRĀM, *Al-Durar al-Mafākkir fī akhbār al-'Arab al-Awākhir*, B.M.M.S. Add. 7358, f. 43.

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter IV, pp. 92 ff.

<sup>2</sup> The trade by the Tigris and Euphrates rivers was always great. See A. PARSONS, *Travels in Asia and Africa* (London, 1808), p. 154. Also WILSON, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-8.

<sup>3</sup> The East India Company's Factory at Baṣra was established in 1643. See LONGRIGG, *op. cit.*, p. 108, and WILSON, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. M. French, the English Agent at Baṣra, wrote, April 10th, 1726, to the Court of Directors at London, saying that the Factory's relations with the Pasha of Baghdād were bad because the latter wanted his customs fee before the Factory could sell the goods. *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 14, dispatch No. 561.

Baṣra, the transit trade to Syria, or even the internal trade with Baghdād and other cities of the *Pashālik*.<sup>1</sup>

Since time immemorial, these tribes, as well as those south of Baṣra, had depended upon the caravans travelling from central and eastern Arabia to Mesopotamia. Desert routes passed through Jahra village<sup>2</sup> for water, and the newly established 'Utbī town of Kuwait benefitted greatly from this desert route. Jahra and other villages south of Baṣra were under the control of the Banī Khālid tribe.

### C. EASTERN AND CENTRAL ARABIA.

The Banī Khālid tribe was the strongest power in Eastern Arabia, on the Persian Gulf, in the first half of the eighteenth century. Their influence was spreading from Kuwait in the north to Qaṭar in the south, and some of their tribes settled in 'Umān al-Šīr.<sup>3</sup> The depth of their influence in Najd will be discussed later.<sup>4</sup>

Although the history of the Banī Khālid's rule in al-Ḥasā began earlier, it was not until the second half of the eighteenth century that their power was strongly established. As early as 1581, they were powerful enough to hold off the *Sharifs* of Makka, when the latter tried to raid Eastern Arabia and encroach upon the Banī Khālid at al-Ḥasā.<sup>5</sup> Throughout the sixteenth century, the Banī Khālid probably crossed Arabia from Qaṭar in the south, to Baṣra in the north. Relations with the Ottomans seem to have been hostile. The latter were accompanied by the Muntafiq Arabs when

<sup>1</sup> Cf. a report from the Council at Gombroon to the Court of Directors, London, dated 25th March 1727, in *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 14, dispatch No. 2384.

<sup>2</sup> Jahra lies between Kuwait and Baṣra.

<sup>3</sup> NŪR AL-DĪN 'ABD ALLĀH B. ḤUMAYD AL-SĀLMĪ, *Tuhfat al-A'yān Bisīrat Ahl 'Umān*, in two volumes, Vol. I, 2nd edition (Cairo 1350/1931); and Vol. II (Cairo 1347/1928), pp. 11, 12.

<sup>4</sup> For details relating to the Banī Khālid's early power, origin, and sphere of influence, IBN BISHR's *Sawābiq* supplies the chronology, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 80, 154, 183, 211, 218. *Lam' al-Shihāb* gives information but no chronology, *op. cit.*, ff. 223-228, 235.

<sup>5</sup> IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 24-25.

they occupied al-Ḥasā,<sup>1</sup> then ruled by Āl-Jabrī of the Qays Arabs. The country remained under Ottoman control until 1080/1670, when it was occupied by Barrāk b. Ghurair Āl-Ḥamid of the Banī Khālīd.<sup>2</sup> Barrāk established the Banī Khālīd in al-Ḥasā after the Ottoman Pasha was driven out, thus ending the first Ottoman rule in al-Ḥasā. Four Ottoman Pashas had governed there: Fātiḥ Pasha, who was the first Governor, 'Alī Pasha, Muḥammad Pasha, and 'Umār Pasha, who surrendered to Barrāk.<sup>3</sup> Barrāk continued to rule till his death in 1093/1682. Subsequently his brother Muḥammad b. Ghurair assumed leadership.

The history of the Banī Khālīd rulers of al-Ḥasā is of special importance to the historian of eighteenth century Arabia. Their suzerainty extended to Baṣra in the north and to some parts of Najd in the east, bringing them into contact with the Ottomans of Mesopotamia and the petty provinces of Central Arabia. Many people from Najd owned farms in towns of the more fertile al-Ḥasā, which led to complications with the Governors of that territory. For example, 'Uthmān b. Mu'ammar, the Shaikh of 'Uyayna in the province of al-'Āriḍ, owned a palm-tree grove in al-Ḥasā which yielded an annual profit of 60,000 golden *riāls*. When he sheltered Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb, Sulaymān b. Muḥammad Āl-Ḥamid, ruler of the Banī Khālīd, threatened to prevent the Shaikh from taking his profit if he continued to protect Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb. This resulted in the expulsion of Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb, who sought refuge at al-Dir'iyya with Muḥammad b. Su'ūd,<sup>4</sup> which in turn led to a series of raids and severe fighting, ending in the occupation of al-Ḥasā in 1795.

<sup>1</sup> IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Longrigg gives the name of Barrāk in an attack on al-Ḥasā by the Pasha of Baṣra in 1632-34. This Barrāk may be an ancestor of the present Barrāk.

<sup>3</sup> Ottoman rule in al-Ḥasā, was only nominal, for "there were no fiefs there", and the Governors in fact were ruling without authority. "Briefly, a baseless and unreal claim to al-Ḥasā was maintained, in the Turkish manner, unsupported by history or present power." LONGRIGG, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

<sup>4</sup> *Lam' al-Shihāb*, ff. 32-33, and IBN GHANNĀM, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 3-4.

The Banī Khālid not only occupied the fertile oases of al-Ḥasā, but also controlled<sup>1</sup> trade to Central Arabia from the Gulf. Al-Qaṭif and al-ʿUqair were Central Arabian harbours through which sugar, coffee, spices and other goods from India and the Yaman passed.<sup>2</sup> Kuwait was in a position to participate in this trade, but did not gain importance till the second half of the eighteenth century.

The Banī Khālid were divided into settlers and nomads. As it was customary for the townspeople to ask the nomads for protection, the Banī Khālid could do both tasks, eliminating the help of other Bedouins. The tribal center of the ruler was at al-Ḥasā Oasis. From there the Banī Khālid raided Central Arabia<sup>3</sup> and moved north to the gates of Baṣra, where they clashed with the al-Zafīr tribe.<sup>4</sup>

The Banī Khālid are extremely important to this narrative. It was in their territory that the ʿUtūb built their states. Kuwait, as we shall see, gained its early importance as a summer residence of Barrāk, the Banī Khālid shaikh. The establishment of al-Kūt, or the fortress, after which the town was named,<sup>5</sup> is attributed to him. It was not only Kuwait that began and flourished under the Banī Khālid rule, for Zubāra, in Qaṭar, the second ʿUtbi settlement, was also under their protection.<sup>6</sup> The progress of Kuwait, Zubāra and other towns of the eastern littoral of Arabia indicates

<sup>1</sup> Fertility is, of course, limited to the oases, or centres where water can be drawn from wells. Most of al-Ḥasā territory is desert.

<sup>2</sup> "Report on the Trade of Arabia etc.," in SALDANHA, *Selections from State Papers*, pp. 405-409. These pages contain much information on the part played by these ports in distributing goods to Central Arabia.

<sup>3</sup> IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 183-4.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> YŪSUF B. ʿISĀ AL-QINĀʿI, *Ṣafahāt min Taʾrīkh al-Kuwaīt* (Damascus, 1954), p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> Al-Khalifa and other ʿUtbi families migrated to Zubāra in 1180/1766. Cf. ʾUTHMĀN IBN SANAD, *Sabāʾik al-ʿAsjad fī Akhbār Aḥmad Najl Rizq al-Asʿad* (Bombay, 1315/1897), pp. 18-19. See also "Sketch of the Uttoobee Tribe," etc. in *Bombay Selections*, p. 363.



that Khālidi rule was peaceful and favourable to trade.<sup>1</sup> Although the Banī Khālīd were in control of the trade carried into Central Arabia, as well as most of the harbours of Eastern Arabia, they do not seem to have been a seafaring tribe like al-Qawāsīm of Rās al-Khayma,<sup>2</sup> or the 'Utūb of Kuwait or the Arabs of Masqaṭ.<sup>3</sup> The peaceful Khālidi control of Eastern Arabia was necessary to give Kuwait in its early years, a chance to rise unhindered by other tribes.

## Najd

This peaceful condition was lacking in nearby Najd, where

<sup>1</sup> See "Report on the Trade of Arabia etc." in SALDANHA, *Selections from State Papers*, p. 408.

<sup>2</sup> In the English texts of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries al-Qawāsīm are referred to as "Joasmees", while all the Arabic texts give "Qawāsim". See *Lam' al-Shihāb*, ff. 96-104, and "Historical Sketch of the Joasme Tribe of Arabs; from the Year 1747 to the Year 1819", in *Bombay Selections*, pp. 300-359.

<sup>3</sup> "The ascendancy of the Arabs of Muskat in the Gulf of Persia may be dated from the year 1694-5, where they became so powerful as to excite an alarm that they would obtain the command of the Persian Gulf. The navigation of the Gulf became more difficult in the following year from the increase of their power, of which the Agent at Gombroon predicted that they would prove as great a plague in India as the Algerines were in Europe." — ("Historical Sketch of the Rise and Progress of the Government of Muskat, etc." *B.S.*, xxiv, p. 168).

This supremacy led to further occupation on the Persian coast and to many acts of piracy (see *Ibid.*). Neither the English nor the Portuguese could oppose the rising power of Masqaṭ. Nor was Persia in the first three decades of the eighteenth century in a position to stop the Masqaṭi depredations. Nādir Shāh directed his fleet and forces against Masqaṭ and succeeded in occupying it and invading other parts of 'Umān, yet the Persians were driven out of 'Umān during his lifetime by Aḥmad b. Sa'id, who became Imām in about 1744 (*Ibid.*, p. 169, and "Chronological Table of Events connected with the Government of Muskat, etc.", *op. cit.*, p. 122. See also ḤUMAYD IBN MUḤAMMAD b. RAZIḤ, *Al-Faṭḥ al-Mubīn al-Mubārḥin Sīrat al-Sādāt al-Bū-Sa'idiyyīn*, M.S., Cambridge University Library, Add. 2892, ff. 153-155; and *Al-Sīra al-Jaliyya al-Musammāt Sa'd al-Su'ūd al-Bū-Sa'idiyya*, Cambridge University Library, MS., Add. 2893, ff. 19-23). However, Masqaṭ's fleet during the eighteenth century was the greatest local sea power, proving formidable not only to local fleets, but also to foreign ones. So strong did Masqaṭ feel that it tried to impose certain fees on local ships crossing the straits of Hurmuz.

petty chiefs exercised unrestrained power over their towns or tribes. Not until 1745 did these towns and the *Amirs* feel the overwhelming power of the Su'ūdī family of al-Dir'iyya.<sup>1</sup> From time immemorial, occasional droughts in some regions of the desert, forced large sections of the population to the rich outskirts of Syria and Mesopotamia.<sup>2</sup> Modern recorded history suggests that such expulsions took place more recently. It was customary for the Bedouins to travel with their cattle to the neighbouring fertile oases when attacked by drought. Al-Ḥasā, with its rich oases was the refuge of the people of Najd. Ibn Bishr points out different years, in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, when the people of Najd moved east towards al-Ḥasā after a severe drought.<sup>3</sup> The drought of 1135/1722 was so disastrous in Najd, that al-Ḥasā lacked space for the emigrants, and many had to travel to Baṣra or other fertile areas in Mesopotamia.<sup>4</sup> The attitude of the settlers and Bedouins of al-Ḥasā towards the immigrants seems to have been friendly. This might have been because Najd and al-Ḥasā were inhabited by 'Adnānī Arabs, and the Banī Khālīd, rulers of al-Ḥasā, belonged to Rabi'a, an 'Adnānī tribe. However, this attitude might be attributed to Arab hospitality. As we shall see, their blood link with 'Adnāniyya did not prevent the Banī Khālīd from later attacking the rising Su'ūdī power, which was primarily located at Dir'iyya in central Najd. The Wāhhābīs were on the defensive for over twenty years (1745-1765), but changed to the offensive against the Banī Khālīd till they finally defeated them in 1208/1793 and 1210/1795.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This year marks the beginning of the Wāhhābī activities in Najd. Cf. IBN GHANNĀM, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 4 and IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> See next chapter, pp. 49-50.

<sup>3</sup> IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 62, 75, 164, 218, 223.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 223. Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wāhhāb might have been among others who travelled to Baṣra in this year; cf. *Lam' al-Shihab*, ff. 5-9, where the author speaks of Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wāhhāb's journeys.

<sup>5</sup> See IBN GHANNĀM, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 185-192. IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 100-102. *Lam' al-Shihab*, ff. 85-93.

## *Conditions in the Persian Gulf*

### CONCLUSION

Thus three main factors allowed the 'Utūb to establish themselves in Kuwait during the first half of the eighteenth century. The first was the conveyance of trade through the Persian Gulf and the desert route. The 'Utūb seem to have participated in this and also apparently found a beginning for their trade by land and sea. The second was the confused internal state and consequent lack of centralised power in Persia, Ottoman 'Irāq and Arabia. This confusion, unrest and constant change in the area allowed small communities to live relatively free from external interference. The third was the position of Kuwait in Banī Khālid territory. The latter's reign was favourable to trade, which was an additional advantage for the thriving 'Utbī town.



## CHAPTER II

### THE RISE OF KUWAIT

(1700-1762)

The emigration, during the first half of the eighteenth century, of Arab tribes of the 'Anaza group, including the 'Utūb and their settlement at Kuwait,<sup>1</sup> marks the rise of the 'Utbī States in Eastern Arabia.

Kuwait was situated in the Banī Khālid's territory, whose protection the 'Utūb had previously acquired. Trade in the Gulf and the disturbed conditions in the above-mentioned areas helped the town to develop. The geographical position of the town with its natural bay harbour, was also a factor of vast importance.

These aspects of the rise of Kuwait, the choice of Āl-Ṣabāḥ for its shaikhs, plus its early administration, all form the subject of this chapter.

The town of Kuwait is about eighty miles south and slightly east of Baṣra, almost 180 miles west by north of Abū Shāhr and nearly 280 miles northwest of Baḥrain. It faces the northwest and is situated on the southern shore of Kuwait Bay, about one-third of the way from its entrance at Rās al-Arḍ to its foot at al-Jahra village.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kuwait town is the capital of the present State. The present borders of the State were fixed after the 'Uqair conference of 1921; ḤAFIZ WAHBA, *Jazīrat Al-'Arab fi'l Qarn al-'Ishrīn*, (Cairo, 1935), p. 88. The territory under the authority of the Shaikh in the eighteenth century is discussed later.

<sup>2</sup> J. G. LORIMER, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf*, (Calcutta, 1915), Vol. II, i, p. 1048.

The bay is a large inlet of remarkable form, leading out of the northwest corner of the Persian Gulf, with a west and east length of over twenty miles, and a maximum width of about ten miles. It is crescent-shaped with the convex side to the north and the horns pointing to the southwest. The bay proper is an indentation in the true Arabian coast line, which is represented northwards by the western shore of Khōr al-Ṣabiyya and southwards by the coast below Rās al-Arḍ. Its shore is prolonged on the side next to the mouth of the Shaṭṭ al-‘Arab by a mud-flat extending twenty miles southeast from the mouth of Khōr al-Ṣabiyya, on which stands the island of Failaka. The entrance to the bay, between the mud-flat and Rās al-Arḍ, is about four miles wide and open to the southwest and southeast. There are three coves: In the southern shore of the bay, the easternmost, between Rās al-Arḍ and Rās ‘Ajūza, is shallow, and vessels are advised not to enter. The middle cove, between Rās ‘Ajūza and Rās ‘Ushairij on its eastern side, shelters the town of Kuwait. A dead coral reef covered with mud and sand, forms the innermost recess of the entire bay. It is known as ‘Akāz in the centre, the island of Qurain or Shuwaikh on the southern margin of ‘Akāz, and the island of Umm al-Naml near Rās ‘Ushairij and Rās Kāzima. Near its foot stands the village of Jahra.

The land surrounding the bay is low except on the north side, where the Zōr hills, parallel to the shore, reach a height of 150 to 400 feet. A flat of mud extends some distance off-shore on the northern side of the bay, making communication difficult between sea and land at low tide. In most parts of the bay, water is deep enough for anchorage, and there is good holding-ground.<sup>1</sup>

Neither Kuwait nor its environs boast of any agricultural

<sup>1</sup> In a report, dated 1845, by one of the Bombay Government officials, Kuwait's harbour was said to be able to berth the whole British fleet. See "Memoranda on the Resources, Localities, and Relations of the Tribes inhabiting the Arabian Shores of the Persian Gulf" by Lieutenant A. B. KEMBALL, Assistant Resident at Bushire — *Bombay Selections*, Vol. XXIV, p. 109.

## *The Rise of Kuwait*

resources. There are no date plantations, no fields, hardly even a kitchen garden. Forage and vegetables were mostly brought from Jahra village or from abroad.<sup>1</sup> Drinking water usually came from wells a mile outside the town and it was, in the words of Sir Harford Jones Brydges, "sweet, bitter and salt at the same time."<sup>2</sup> The water of these wells usually becomes sweet immediately after rainfall, but it quickly turns brackish after the rain.<sup>3</sup> The climate of Kuwait is often cool when the northwest wind, the *shamāl*, is blowing. During the summer, a cool west wind blows from the desert all through the night. Kuwait is well-known for having the mildest summer of any town on the Arabian littoral of the Gulf. Indeed, the shaikhs of the Banī Khālid chose it as their summer resort soon after its establishment.<sup>4</sup>

The name Kuwait is the diminutive of the Arabic *kūt* or fortress. This indicates the insignificant origin of the town, which later became the capital of the present State of Kuwait.<sup>5</sup> Kuwait

<sup>1</sup> Al-Jahra lies near the foot of Kuwait Bay, twenty miles by road west of Kuwait town. It is the chief, and almost the only seat of agriculture in Kuwait territory, and caravans to Basra and Burayda via Hafar pass through it. The permanent inhabitants are chiefly cultivators of Najdī extraction. Admiralty War Staff, Intelligence Division, (London, 1916), *A Handbook of Arabia*, Vol. I, pp. 296-297.

<sup>2</sup> Harford Jones Brydges, *An Account of the Transactions of His Majesty's Mission to the Court of Persia in the Years 1807-1811, to which is appended a brief History of the Wahabys*, Two Vols., (London, 1834), Vol. II, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> AL-QINĀ'Ī, *Ṣafahāt min Ta'rīkh al-Kuwait*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Father Anistās al-Karmall, commenting on the origin of the denomination of Kuwait, says that "al-Kuwait is the diminutive of Kūt. The word 'Kūt' in the language of southern 'Irāq and its neighbouring countries in Arabia and parts of Persia is the house that is built in the shape of a fortress or like it so as to be easily defended when attacked. This house is usually surrounded by other houses. The name 'Kūt' is given to such a house only when it lies near water, whether it is river, sea, a lake or even a swamp. Then it was applied to the village built on such a site." He gives the examples Kūt al-Ifranji, Kūt al-Zayn, Kūt al-'Amāra and Kūt Bandar. See the article "Fī Tasmīyat Madīnat al-Kuwait," *Al-Mashriq*, X, (Bayrūt, 1904), pp. 449-458.

was also named Qurain, which is the diminutive of *qarn*, a horn or a hill.<sup>1</sup>

Lack of historical data makes it impossible to ascertain the exact date when Kuwait was founded. However, local tradition preserved by Kuwaiti historians, states the late seventeenth century. Al-Qinā'i reports that Kuwait was first established by an *amir* of the Banī Khālid,<sup>2</sup> and thinks this was done by *Amir* Barrāk, their ruler<sup>3</sup> in 1100/1688. Al-Rashīd, another Kuwaiti historian, could only say that Kuwait was founded in the late seventeenth century.<sup>4</sup> According to al-Nabhānī, quoting oral tradition, it was established as early as 1019/1611.<sup>5</sup> 'Uthmān b. Sanad, writing in 1800, says that Kuwait gained importance in the early eighteenth century.<sup>6</sup>

All these agree that Kuwait was established before the eighteenth century. Al-Qinā'i suggests 1100/1688 because Barrāk was the founder. This date must be earlier if we recall that Barrāk ruled from 1080/1669 till his death in 1093/1682.<sup>7</sup>

However, Kuwait might have been a small fishing centre in the seventeenth century, where some Bedouins settled around the *kūt* built by the *Amir* of the Banī Khālid.

The date of the arrival of the 'Utūb, a collection of Arabian

<sup>1</sup> An island a short distance to the west of Kuwait is called Qurain. The author was told by Shaikh 'Abd Allāh b. Khālid Āl-Khalifa that *qurain* or little hill is a common name in Qaṭar and al-Ḥasā. It is worthwhile noting, in Eastern Arabia, that diminutives occur not only in the names of places but also in names of rulers. The Banī Khālid give a clear example where the names Dujayn, 'Uray'ir and Sa'dūn were very common.

<sup>2</sup> The authority of the Banī Khālid in the seventeenth century extended to the north as far as the neighbourhood of Baṣra, see above, Chapter I, p. 38.

<sup>3</sup> *Ṣafahāt min Ta'rīkh al-Kuwait*, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Ta'rīkh al-Kuwait*, Vol. I, pp. 10-11.

<sup>5</sup> AL-NABHĀNĪ, *Al-Tuhfa al-Nabhāniyya, Al-Kuwait*, p. 126.

<sup>6</sup> *Sabā'ik al-'Asjad*, p. 18. Ibn Sanad was speaking of Kuwait in the context of the arrival there of Rizq al-'As'ad, a well known and rich Kuwaiti merchant of the 18th century. His statement is as follows: "It (Kuwait) had not been populated before the arrival of his (Aḥmad's) great father except for a very short period."

<sup>7</sup> IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 65-80.



families, is also controversial. Both their name "‘Utūb" and the path they followed are by no means certain. This federation of Arab families was sometimes referred to as Banī ‘Utba,<sup>1</sup> and often as ‘Utūb,<sup>2</sup> Uttoobee or Banī ‘Attaba.<sup>3</sup> All these words derive from the Arabic root ‘ataba, meaning to travel from place to place.<sup>4</sup> During the second half of the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth, Arabic sources refer to them as ‘Utūb,<sup>5</sup> the name used throughout this book. Lieutenant-Colonel Dickson<sup>6</sup> also feels that the name ‘Utūb comes from the verb ‘ataba; he adds that the present Shaikh ‘Abd Allāh al-Sālim Āl-Ṣabāḥ informed him that his forefathers were called by that name after they moved north, "‘atabū ila al-Shamāl".<sup>7</sup> Whatever the origin of their name may be, all authorities writing on Kuwait agree that the ‘Utūb belong to ‘Anaza, an ‘Adnānī Arab tribe, inhabiting Najd and North Arabia. Āl-Ṣabāḥ, as well as other ‘Utbī families, claim to be a division of ‘Anaza. The tradition upheld by Āl-Ṣabāḥ and Āl-Khalifa<sup>8</sup> states that they belong to Jumayla, a sub-division of ‘Anaza, and that they originally inhabited Haddār in al-Aflāj in Najd, before they migrated to Qaṭar and then sailed to Kuwait. Though the tradition when the migration to Qaṭar took place is not clear, it may have been a part of the great ‘Anaza migration late in the seven-

<sup>1</sup> *Sabā’ik al-‘Asjad*, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Lam’ al-Shihāb*, ff. 95, 101, 107.

<sup>3</sup> FRANCIS WARDEN, "Historical Sketch of the Uttoobee Tribe of Arabs, (Bahrein) etc." in *Bombay Selections*, pp. 362-372.

<sup>4</sup> JAMĀL AL-DĪN IBN MANẒŪR, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, (Bayrūt, 1374/1955), Vol. I., p. 579.

<sup>5</sup> *Lam’ al-Shihāb*, ff. 95, 101, 107, 176; IBN RAZIŪQ in *Al-Sīra al-Jaliyya*, f. 186, and *Al-Faṭḥ al-Mubīn*, ff. 193, 197.

<sup>6</sup> H. R. P. DICKSON, *Kuwait and her Neighbours* (London, 1956), pp. 26-27.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> See AL-RASHĪD, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 12 for the origin of Āl-Ṣabāḥ. Āl-Khalifa claim the same descent. The author was told this by Shaikh ‘Abd Allāh b. Khālid Āl-Khalifa and that they were also the descendants of the same Jumayla division of the ‘Anaza.

teenth century.<sup>1</sup> This great migration of the 'Anaza in the eighteenth century accounts for the arrival of the Ruwala in Syria.<sup>2</sup> They were originally related families who moved from Central Arabia either together or separately. They settled temporarily in various places on the eastern coast of Arabia before establishing themselves permanently at Kuwait. No definite date can be given for the migration of the 'Utüb. As pointed out in Chapter I,<sup>3</sup> the second half of the seventeenth century and the early years of the eighteenth were drought years in Central Arabia. For this reason the 'Utüb must have been among the tribes that moved to Eastern Arabia.<sup>4</sup> Local tradition says that the 'Utüb lived in al-Aflāj district in Central Arabia until the drought drove them eastward to Qaṭar which was then under the suzerainty of the Banī Khālid. It is not known how they finally assembled in Kuwait. They must have learned seafaring in Qaṭar or in al-Ḥasā. This would explain the local authorities' theory that they sailed north. In fact, tradition affirms that they had scattered into various Persian Gulf ports before coming to Kuwait.<sup>5</sup> However, tribal lore suggests three possible places, from which the 'Utüb must have arrived at Kuwait.

The first implies that they lived near Khōr al-Ṣabiyya, south of Baṣra. They were driven there by the Ottoman *Mutasallim* of Baṣra, because they raided desert caravans coming to Baṣra, and

<sup>1</sup> Oppenheim could not fix a date for that emigration, but states that the Jumayla are still at al-Aflāj. See M. VON OPPENHEIM, *Die Beduinen*, (Leipzig, 1939), vol. I, p. 62. He states that the 'Utüb were among them and that they migrated to Kuwait, but does not give any date for this migration. See *Ibid.* and ASHKENEZI, "The 'Anaza Tribes," in *South-Western Journal of Anthropology*, New Mexico, 1948, pp. 222-239.

<sup>2</sup> 'Anaza is usually divided into two groups, northern and southern. The Ruwala belong to the first. To the southern group belong Āl-Su'ūd, Āl-Ṣabāḥ and others. Cf. A. MURIL, *The Manners and Customs of the Ruwala Bedouins*. (New York, 1926), p. 46.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 42.

<sup>4</sup> DICKSON, *Kuwait and her Neighbours*, p. 26.

<sup>5</sup> *Ṣafaḥāt min Ta'rikh al-Kuwait*, p. 9; AL-RASHID, *Ta'rikh al-Kuwait*, Vol. I, pp. 15-16.

because they attacked the shipping of the Shaṭṭ-al-‘Arab.<sup>1</sup> Another alternative is that those families lived on the Persian coast until they sailed to Kuwait, fleeing from the oppression of the Arab tribes.<sup>2</sup> Others are inclined to believe they sailed from Qaṭar to Kuwait as a result of quarrels with Āl-Musallam Arabs of Qaṭar.<sup>3</sup>

Al-Qinā‘ī resolves the dilemma by saying that the ‘Utūb originally inhabited Qaṭar after their departure from al-Aflāj. From Qaṭar the families scattered into the various ports of the Persian Gulf littorals, and eventually they all settled at Kuwait. He cites his own family, Āl-Qinā‘āt,<sup>4</sup> which came to Kuwait about 200 years ago from the Persian littoral, ‘Irāq and the south, i.e. Qaṭar. Thus it is probable that the ‘Utūb spent not less than half a century in the south after arriving from al-Aflāj. During this time they became seafarers.

The date of the ‘Utūb’s arrival at Kuwait is not certain. Here we must distinguish between the coming of Āl-Ṣabāḥ, whose chief Ṣabāḥ b. Jābir became the Shaikh of Kuwait in the 1750’s, and the other ‘Utbī families. Mr. Warden and other officers of the Bombay Government<sup>5</sup> reported that about 1716 Āl-Ṣabāḥ, with two

<sup>1</sup> AL-RASHID, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 16, and AL-NABHĀNĪ, *Al-Tuḥfa, al-Kuwait*, p. 128.

<sup>2</sup> Qays Island, ‘Abadān and other places are given as their settlements before moving to Kuwait. Cf. *Ṣafahāt min Ta’rīkh al-Kuwait*, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> This is the local tradition, told to the author by Shaikh ‘Abd Allāh b. Khālīd Āl-Khalīfa. The Āl-Khalīfa tradition states that Āl-Khalīfa branch of the ‘Utūb inhabited Kuwait earlier than the Ṣabāḥ, cf. NABHĀNĪ, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

<sup>4</sup> AL-QINĀ‘Ī in his *Ṣafahāt* speaks of the Qinā‘āt at Kuwait, Zubāra, Baṣra and Najd. It is not quite clear from where they came to Kuwait. According to him (p. 100), they might have come from northern ‘Irāq, where they were for some time before. Genealogically, they originally belonged to the Suhūl Arabs.

It seems also that some of them migrated to Zubāra during or after the emigration of Āl-Khalīfa in 1766. Soon after the desertion of Zubāra by its inhabitants in 1213/1798, some of the Qinā‘āt migrated to Baḥrain Islands and others to Persia (see *Ibid.*, pp. 99-100). At Manāma town in Baḥrain there is a quarter called after them (*Ibid.*).

<sup>5</sup> See “Historical Sketch of the Uttoobee Tribe of Arabs etc.” in *Bombay*

important branches of the 'Utūb, namely Āl-Khalīfā and Āl-Jalāhima, occupied Kuwait and undertook to direct local affairs. There is a good bit of conjecture in the statement, since all the 'Utūb did not arrive simultaneously.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, it is an anachronism; for in the year 1716 neither Ṣabāḥ nor Khalīfā were the chiefs of their families, as he states.<sup>2</sup> However this does not mean that the predecessors of Ṣabāḥ b. Jābir were not in Kuwait at the beginning of the eighteenth century.<sup>3</sup>

Nothing definite is known about the rulers of Kuwait during the first half of the century from the consulted records of the English East India Company, the writings of travellers, or local tradition. It appears that until the early 1750's Kuwait was under the direct rule of the Banī Khalīd *Amīr*. Sa'dūn b. Muḥammad b. Ghurair Āl-Ḥamīd ruled at the beginning of the eighteenth century.<sup>4</sup> After the death of Sa'dūn, his brother 'Alī occupied the seat of government, after a struggle with Dujayn b. Sa'dūn and Munayyi'.<sup>5</sup> Sulaymān, a third brother of Sa'dūn and 'Alī became the ruler of Eastern Arabia the same year.<sup>6</sup>

The ruling family's struggle for the shaikhdом, that started

*Selections*, XXIV, p. 140. This article, by Lieutenant Kemball, depends on previous articles written by Mr. Warden in 1817. Kemball wrote it in 1844.

<sup>1</sup> *Ṣafahāt*, p. 9, and AL-RASHID, *Ta'rikh al-Kuwait*, I, pp. 14-16.

<sup>2</sup> The statement is as follows:

"About A.D. 1716, three considerable tribes of Arabs, called the Bani Sabah, Al Yalahima, and Al Khaleefa, urged by motives of interest or ambition, entered into a compact, and took possession of a spot of ground on the north-western shore of the Persian Gulf, called Kuwait. The Bani Sabah were subject at this time to Shaikh Soleyman bin Ahmed: the Bani Yalahima to Jaubir bin Uttoobee; and the Bani Khaleefa to Khaleefa bin Mahomed." "Historical Sketch of the Uttoobee Tribe of Arabs, etc." in B.S., p. 362.

<sup>3</sup> According to what Shaikh 'Abd Allāh b. Khālid Āl-Khalīfā told the author, local tradition among the shaikhs of Āl-Khalīfā says their family came to Kuwait earlier than Āl-Ṣabāḥ, and the head of the 'Utūb was the ruler of Kuwait. Perhaps this is why Āl-Khalīfā migrated in 1766 to Zubāra when 'Abd Allāh Āl-Ṣabāḥ became the Shaikh of Kuwait. See below, p. 66.

<sup>4</sup> IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 218.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 27.

after the death of Sa'dūn in 1722, seems to have given other tributary tribes of the Banī Khālid some form of local independence. At the same time they remained loyal to the Banī Khālid. Indeed, Kuwait's independence was not achieved until after the 1750's. Mr. Warden, in his 1817 sketch of the 'Utūb, names Sulaymān b. Aḥmad as the Shaikh of the Ṣabāḥ family as early as 1716.<sup>1</sup> Since no source except Mr. Warden's gives the name of any Sulaymān as the first ruler of the 'Utūb in Kuwait of the Ṣabāḥ family, the Āl-Khalifa tradition is helpful here. Otherwise the Governor may have belonged to the Banī Khālid. The Āl-Khalifa tradition states that one of them ruled in Kuwait prior to Āl-Ṣabāḥ. Khalifa, after whom the family was named, and who migrated to Zubāra in Qaṭar in 1766, was the son of Muḥammad b. Faiṣal. The Khalifa version of their rule in Kuwait gives the names Muḥammad and Faiṣal as their chiefs in Kuwait before their departure to Zubāra. These two names could not be mistaken for the Sulaymān of Mr. Warden's report.

In this writer's opinion, Sulaymān b. Aḥmad, whom Warden believed to be the ruler of Āl-Ṣabāḥ, is Sulaymān b. Muḥammad or Sulaymān Āl-Ḥamīd, ruler of the Banī Khālid tribes from 1736-1752.<sup>2</sup> This theory may be supported, as one may give the name Aḥmad for Āl-Ḥamīd when mentioning the ruler's family name, so long as his first name is given, in this case Sulaymān. In the second place, the 'Utūb, according to local tradition, arrived in Kuwait with permission from the Banī Khālid ruler.<sup>3</sup> The power of the Banī Khālid remained strong and centralised in the hands of one shaikh until the death of Sulaymān b. Muḥammad Āl-Ḥamīd in 1752. Family disputes after the death of Sa'dūn in 1722 only gave the 'Utūb a chance to practice some sort of independence.

<sup>1</sup> "Historical Sketch of the Uttoobee Tribe of Arabs," etc., in *Bombay Selections*, p. 362.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> *Ṣafahāt min Ta'riḫ al-Kuwait*, p. 9; AL-NABHĀNĪ, *Al-Tuḥfa al-Nabhāniyya, al-Kuwait*, pp. 122-129.

Chances for complete independence became greater from 1752 onwards, not only because of the Āl-Ḥamīd family quarrels, but also because of the growing Wahhābī power in Central Arabia and its impact on the Banī Khālid territories.

Thus Sulaymān must be the *Amīr* of the Banī Khālid, who was finally driven out of al-Ḥasā by 'Uray'ir b. Sa'dūn, and who died in exile at al-Kharj in southern Najd in 1166/1752.<sup>1</sup>

Local traditions, though not certain of the date, relate that Ṣabāḥ was chosen by the inhabitants of Kuwait in the tribal manner to administer justice and the affairs of the thriving town.<sup>2</sup> Before Ṣabāḥ, his family apparently was not famous, and his father, Jābir, was not included in contemporary traditions.<sup>3</sup> Ṣabāḥ's name was not given by the earliest European travellers. They said only that Kuwait was ruled by a shaikh.

As early as 1758, Ṣabāḥ's authority seems to have been well established in Kuwait and vicinity. Because of its commercial success, Kuwait became an important port-of-call for desert caravans from Aleppo. These caravans carried goods imported from India by Kuwaitī vessels and passengers who wanted to travel from the Persian Gulf, via the desert, to Aleppo in Syria.<sup>4</sup> The story of Dr. Ives and his fellow travellers with the Shaikh of Kuwait is worth recalling here, for it is the first instance where Kuwait is mentioned in the report of a European traveller.

In March 1758 Dr. Ives, with other travellers, anchored at

<sup>1</sup> IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> AL-RASHĪD, *Ta'rikh al-Kuwait*, Vol. II, p. 2, and SAIF MARZŪQ AL-SAMLĀN, *Min Ta'rikh al-Kuwait*, (Cairo, 1959), pp. 116-117.

<sup>3</sup> Shaikh Muḥammad b. 'Isā Āl-Khalifa, when asked by al-Shamlān about the father of Ṣabāḥ I, answered that he was named Jābir. Shaikh Muḥammad quoted a verse that was sung by Āl-Bin 'Alī on their departure from Kuwait to Qaṭar in the 1750's, the translation of which is: "O for him who could tell the most generous Ṣabāḥ b. Jābir how we are directing our sails to our end strongly." AL-SAMLĀN, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

<sup>4</sup> IVES, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

## *The Rise of Kuwait*

Khārij Island on their way from India to Europe.<sup>1</sup> When they asked Baron Kniphausen, head of the Dutch settlement at Khārij, the fastest route to Aleppo, it was suggested that they should travel by *felucca* (boat) to Kuwait. The Shaikh at Kuwait was "a man greatly obliged to him and in some measure under his influence," and could help the travellers join the caravan proceeding through the desert to Aleppo. The desert route could be covered in twenty-five to thirty days. This would save two to four weeks compared with the time required by boat to Baṣra and Baghdād.

"That desert route the Baron knew it to be a road frequented by people of trade and that an European, attended only by a single servant, had safely travelled over it."<sup>2</sup>

Arrangements were made for a *felucca* to be sent from Khārij to Kuwait to fetch the Shaikh on March 31st. It returned the 14th of April, bringing "the long expected Arab."<sup>3</sup> The Shaikh and Baron Kniphausen set the amount the English travellers should pay for their journey from Kuwait to Aleppo. The Shaikh wanted 2,000 piastres, while<sup>4</sup> the Baron offered from 1,000 to 1,100. Negotiations failed and the Shaikh returned home, while the travellers proceeded by vessel to Baṣra.<sup>5</sup>

"The Shaikh," writes Dr. Ives, "after negotiation was broken off, waited upon the Baron, and remonstrated after this manner, 'You use me very unkindly, Sir. Pray what are these travellers to you? I and my tribe have been in friendship with you for a long time, and I could not have expected that you would thus have given the preference to strangers.'"<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For an account of Khārij Island, see Dr. Ives, *Voyages*, pp. 207-216; NIEBUHR, *Voyages en Arabie*, II, pp. 149-166; PARSONS, *op. cit.*, pp. 190-198.

<sup>2</sup> Ives, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 222.

<sup>4</sup> 800 piastres make 1,000 rupees, or £ 125. See *Ibid.*, p. 223.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 222-224.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 224.

Lorimer, when trying to prove that the Shaikh was "under the influence" of the Baron, seems to be affected by the wording of Dr. Ives' narrative.<sup>1</sup> In fact, the Shaikh and Dutch were on equal footing. The Baron and Shaikh Ṣabāḥ benefitted from a trade route that avoided Baṣra; the Baron, because of hostilities with the Pasha of Baṣra that subsequently led him to prison, and the Shaikh because he gained financially from merchandise carried through his town.

This sea and desert trade route must have put the Shaikh in direct contact with his neighbours. Though it is difficult to define the area under the Shaikh's control during the first half of the eighteenth century, his influence might have extended outside the walls of his town. From his dealings with Dr. Ives and because he promised the traveller a safe arrival at Aleppo, it appears that the Arabs of the desert route from Kuwait to Aleppo were on good terms with the Shaikh.

There is no written evidence to show the boundary of the 'Utūb suzerainty north of Kuwait, but it must have extended to Jahra village where the wells were superior to those of Kuwait. Off the mainland, nearby islands like Qurain, Umm al-Naml and Failaka were ruled by the Shaikh.<sup>2</sup> The wealth of the Shaikh (and consequently of the town) may be judged by his refusal of the Baron's offer of 1,000 piastres when he had asked for 2,000, despite the fact that bargaining was not undesirable.

This rapid growth of the 'Utbī town may be attributed to the bulk of trade carried by the merchants of Kuwait and others who used that port as a station for caravans carrying goods from southern and eastern Arabia to Syria.<sup>3</sup> Pearl fishing was another source of wealth for which, according to Niebuhr, they kept a fleet of over

<sup>1</sup> *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf*, Vol. I, i, p. 1000.

<sup>2</sup> NIEBUHR, *Description de l'Arabie*, pp. 286, 296.

<sup>3</sup> The caravan by which Dr. Ives and his companions planned to travel consisted of 5,000 camels and 1,000 men. See his *Voyage*, p. 222.



800 small boats.<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that the 'Utūb sailed south for pearl fishing because the Baḥrain vicinity was the richest in pearls in the Banī Khālīd territory.<sup>2</sup>

Other 'Utbī families besides Āl-Ṣabāḥ, the ruling family, shared the wealth brought by these occupations. Among the first families mentioned in local traditions and in the records of the Bombay Government are: Āl-Jalāhima, Āl-Khalīfa, Āl-Zāyid, Āl-Ghānim, Āl-Badr, Āl-Rūmī, Āl-Khālīd, Āl-Qinā'āt, Āl-Saif and others.<sup>3</sup> Apparently these families settled in such a way that made every section of town take one family or more. The town was thus divided into *Ḥayy-Sharq* (People of the East), *Qibli* or *Jibli* (the West, because this is the direction of Makka), and the *Wasaṭ* (center). Āl-Ṣabāḥ lived in the central quarter.<sup>4</sup>

Local tradition states that the town was not walled from the beginning because the Banī Khālīd authority was respected by other Bedouin tribes. Kuwait was walled when the Banī Khālīd lost their influence because of internal struggles between members of the ruling branch;<sup>5</sup> this was during the reign of Ṣabāḥ. Local authorities give no date for the building of the wall, but we can roughly say that it was begun about 1760, i.e. about eight years after the Banī Khālīd had lost much of their influence among the Arab tribes. The East India Company records clearly state that the town was walled as early as the 1770's.<sup>6</sup> Although the wall was built of mud and heavily damaged by rain, it still served as

<sup>1</sup> NIEBUHR, *Description*, p. 296.

<sup>2</sup> For pearl fishing, see Chapter VI, pp. 176-177.

<sup>3</sup> *Ṣafahāt min Ta'rikh al-Kuwait*, p. 67; *Min Ta'rikh al-Kuwait*, p. 115, "Historical Sketch of the Uttoobee Tribe, etc." p. 362. Some of these families are living today in both Baḥrain and Kuwait, e.g. Āl-Jalāhima, who are called in Kuwait Āl-Nisf. See AL-RASHID, Vol. I, p. 18.

<sup>4</sup> The 'Utūb and other newcomers to the town kept those divisions till the last ten years, when new town planning moved people out of Kuwait town. The wall was demolished in 1956.

<sup>5</sup> *Ṣafahāt min Ta'rikh al-Kuwait*, p. 13.

<sup>6</sup> *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 17, dispatch No. 1152.

an adequate defense against Bedouin raids as recently as the early twentieth century.

The town's lack of protection forced the local shaikh, Ṣabāḥ, to govern more strictly. Local tradition states that Ṣabāḥ was chosen by the different families,<sup>1</sup> so that his rule may not have been as despotic as expected. This was because the 'Utūb, from the beginning, were settlers and not nomads. The nomadic stage ended after their departure from Qaṭar early in the seventeenth century. Although the Arab shaikhs were powerful at that time in Arabia, the Shaikh of Kuwait consulted his people occasionally, especially regarding commercial interests.<sup>2</sup> If we may judge from what happened in about 1775, we can conclude that the merchants of Kuwait had a voice in their politics.<sup>3</sup> Then Baṣra was occupied by the Persians and many merchants moved to the 'Utbī settlements of Kuwait and Zubāra.

The Arabian shaikh saw to it that justice was evenly distributed among his people. In making judgment he was expected to abide by the Qur'ān and Sharī'a law, or the traditional '*urf*' or *sālifa* (custom). The two Kuwaitī historians who tackled this problem, al-Qinā'ī and al-Rashīd, write that the Sharī'a law was not used in Kuwait during the entire eighteenth century and even later.<sup>4</sup> It was not necessary in this case to ask the ruler to intervene. It was the custom to ask any man with the required wisdom to settle conflicts.<sup>5</sup> In the case of 'Utbī rule in Kuwait and later in Zubāra, it may be assumed that the customs at al-Ḥasā applied to the 'Utūb. In other words, there must have been a judge (*qāḍī*) at Kuwait from the start. '*Ulamā*' or learned men were in abundance at al-Ḥasā in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. 'Uthmān b.

<sup>1</sup> AL-QINĀ'Ī, *Ṣafahāt*, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> The ruler's family shares in the trade of the town today, a situation which Āl-Ṣabāḥ worked into as their number grew.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. AL-RASHĪD, Vol. I, pp. 75-76, and AL-QINĀ'Ī, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-35.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

## *The Rise of Kuwait*

Sanad, in his work *Sabā'ik al-'Asjad*, gives the biographies of twenty 'Ulamā' who were mostly his contemporaries, i.e. late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Their influence on the people and their rulers was great, and almost every town in al-Ḥasā and Najd had its school of 'Ulamā'. Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb, the great Wahhābī reformer, was the son of Shaikh 'Abd al-Wahhāb b. Sulaymān, the *Qāḍī* of 'Uyayna. Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb fought hard against the other 'Ulamā' to convince them of his teachings. He had travelled to various towns in Najd and Ḥijāz in the 1720's where he listened to the 'Ulamā' in Makka, Madīna and other towns of Ḥijāz.<sup>2</sup>

Among the biographies 'Uthmān b. Sanad lists in the above-mentioned work is that of Shaikh Muḥammad b. Fayrūz<sup>3</sup> and his son Shaikh 'Abd al-Wahhāb b. Muḥammad b. Fayrūz.<sup>4</sup> Local tradition of Kuwait gives the name of the former as its first judge.<sup>5</sup> The date given by al-Rashīd and al-Qinā'i for the death of Muḥammad b. Fayrūz is 1135/1722. They write that Ṣabāḥ was the first ruler and Ibn Fayrūz was the *Qāḍī* during his reign.<sup>6</sup> Since Ṣabāḥ could not have come to power before 1752, both al-Qinā'i and al-Rashīd must be mistaken in giving Shaikh Muḥammad b. Fayrūz's death in that year. 'Uthmān b. Sanad gave the year 1146/1733 for Ibn Fayrūz's birth and 1216/1801 for his death.<sup>7</sup> He added that he was born in Hajar (al-Ḥasā) and buried in Zubair, a town between Baṣra and Kuwait.<sup>8</sup> It was natural for these 'Ulamā' to travel from one town to another. However the dates 'Uthmān b.

<sup>1</sup> 'Uthmān b. Sanad died in 1242/1826. See KĀZIM AL-DUJAYLI, article on "al-Shaikh 'Uthmān b. Sanad al-Baṣrī" in *Lughat al-'Arab* (Baghdād, Dhul Qa'da 1331/October 1913), pp. 180-186.

<sup>2</sup> IBN GHANNĀM, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-31; *Lam' al-Shihāb*, ff. 6-7.

<sup>3</sup> *Sabā'ik al-'Asjad*, pp. 93-94.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96.

<sup>5</sup> *Ṣafahāt min Ta'rīkh al-Kuwait*, pp. 35-36; AL-RASHĪD, *Ta'rīkh al-Kuwait*, Vol. I, pp. 75-76.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Sabā'ik al-'Asjad*, p. 96.

<sup>8</sup> *Sabā'ik al-'Asjad*, p. 96.

Sanad gives are more likely to be correct, while the year 1135/1722 is not.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, from the facts about Ibn Fayrūz and his duties as *Qāḍī*, and from the dates given by Ibn Sanad for his birth, and death, it is probable that Ibn Fayrūz was the first *Qāḍī* of Kuwait under Shaikh Ṣabāḥ.

Local sources do not agree on when Ṣabāḥ was chosen as ruler, and they also differ greatly on the date of his death. Only one authority gives it as 1190/1776, which is not correct.<sup>2</sup> Ṣabāḥ left five sons: Salmān, Mālīj, Mubārak, Muḥammad and 'Abd Allāh, the youngest. All local historians agree that the latter was chosen as his successor for his qualities of bravery, justice, wisdom, and generosity, qualities an Arab admires in his shaikh.<sup>3</sup>

Lorimer, basing his chronicle on the East India Company records, writes that 'Abd Allāh became ruler about 1762.<sup>4</sup> 'Uthmān b. Sanad, though giving no exact date, shows that 'Abd Allāh was in power before 1188/1774.<sup>5</sup> Al-Qinā'ī<sup>6</sup> and al-Rashīd<sup>7</sup> give the year 1229/1813 for 'Abd Allāh's death. Al-Qinā'ī adds that he ruled about seventy years, which means he became shaikh in 1159/1746. As this is inconsistent with the rise of Ṣabāḥ as shaikh in 1752, the date 1762 may be fixed as the year of his rise to power. This date explains one of the main reasons for the emigration of the

<sup>1</sup> Al-Qinā'ī gives the following list of *Qāḍīs* in Kuwait:

1. Muḥammad b. Fayrūz.

2. Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-'Adsānī (1170/1756-1179/1765).

3. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-'Adsānī, (1179/1765-1208/1793).

4. Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ al-'Adsānī, (1208/1793-1225/1810).

They were all *Qāḍīs* in the town of Kuwait during the 18th century. It is worth noting that three of them were of the Āl-'Adsānī family who originally came from al-Ḥasā. (See AL-QINĀ'Ī, *op. cit.*, p. 36, and AL-RASHĪD, *op. cit.*, p. 76). The dates in the list are given according to al-Qinā'ī.

<sup>2</sup> AL-RASHĪD, *Ta'riḥ al-Kuwait*, Vol. II, p. 2, gives this date. 'Abd Allāh ruled 50 years; he died in 1813.

<sup>3</sup> *Ṣafahāt min Ta'riḥ al-Kuwait*, p. 10; AL-RASHĪD, *Ta'riḥ al-Kuwait*, Vol. II, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf*, Vol. IV, Table 9.

<sup>5</sup> *Sabā'ik al-'Asjad*, p. 18.

<sup>6</sup> *Ṣafahāt*, p. 10.

<sup>7</sup> *Ta'riḥ al-Kuwait*, Vol. II, p. 9.

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Āl-Khalīfa from Kuwait to Zubāra in Qaṭar four years later. Local tradition gives as one reason for their emigration the fact that ‘Abd Allāh, and not one of his cousins, succeeded his father. These cousins were the Āl-Khalīfa, shaikhs of the ‘Utūb at Kuwait before Ṣabāḥ b. Jābir.<sup>1</sup> The emigration was in 1180/1766, so ‘Abd Allāh must have become ruler before then.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, during the first half of the eighteenth century, the ‘Utūb were establishing themselves in Kuwait. In about 1750 they chose their Shaikh Ṣabāḥ, after whom the present ruling family is named. Ṣabāḥ was succeeded by his son ‘Abd Allāh in the 1760’s. It was during his early rule that the Āl-Khalīfa division of the ‘Utbi coalition emigrated to Qaṭar where they established Zubāra, the second ‘Utbi settlement.

<sup>1</sup> Reported by Shaikh ‘Abd Allāh b. Khālid Āl-Khalīfah to the author.

<sup>2</sup> See *Sabḍ’ik al-‘Asjad*, p. 18; and “Historical Sketch of the Uttoobee Tribe of Arabs etc.” in *Bombay Selections*, p. 362.



## CHAPTER III

### THE GROWTH OF KUWAIT

#### THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ZUBĀRA (1766)

#### THE BEGINNINGS OF 'UTBĪ NAVAL POWER (1762-1775)

This chapter illustrates the progress of the 'Utbī settlements of Kuwait and Zubāra until 1775. Developments in Kuwait led to the emigration of Āl-Khalīfa to the south, followed by other 'Utbī families, such as the Āl-Jalāhima. Various questions concerning the 'Utbī movement and their relations with the different influential powers will be discussed subsequently.

The 'Utbī settlement of Kuwait flourished rapidly after the 1750's. By the 1760's it drew the attention of rival Arab powers in the Gulf. The position of other powers, the Persians, the Ottomans and the English East India Company, did not hinder that growth. The Persians, as stated, had neither the sea-power nor the internal peace to control even their own coast of the Gulf. The Ottoman Pasha in Baghdād and the *Mutasallim* of Baṣra were in the same position as the Persians. Neither was ready to challenge the Banī Khālid predominance on the eastern shores of the Gulf.

So far the East India Company had no trouble from the 'Utūb. Piracy, until then, was not one of their characteristics.<sup>1</sup> The only force that could directly affect the 'Utūb was the Wahhābī power, which was not yet consolidated. The 'Utūb had no direct contact with the maritime Arab powers in the Gulf until

<sup>1</sup> See "Historical Sketch of the Jawasmi," etc. in *Bombay Selections*, XXIV, p. 307.

1766, when some of the tribe settled south to Zubāra, in Qaṭar.<sup>1</sup> The most powerful Arabs on the Persian littoral were the Banī Ka'b, whose stronghold was at Dawraq,<sup>2</sup> the Arabs of Bandar Rīq and those of Abū Shāhr.<sup>3</sup>

The Arabs on the northern and eastern shores showed no interest in Kuwait until the 1760's. At that time the growing trend towards piracy among the Ka'b hindered the increasing 'Utbī sea trade.<sup>4</sup> Banī Ka'b also threatened the East India Company's trade destined for their Factory at Baṣra. Karīm Khān Zand, the Vakīl of Persia, tried unsuccessfully to subdue Shaikh Sulaymān in 1759, and an Anglo-Ottoman expedition against the capital, Dawraq, in 1765, proved fruitless.<sup>5</sup>

In the west, the Wahhābīs worked hard to consolidate their power in Central Arabia and began to expand eastward at the expense of the Banī Khālid. Events in the late 1750's and early 1760's showed that the Wahhābīs were no match for the Banī Khālid. The two Wahhābī chroniclers, Ibn Ghannām and Ibn Bishr, clearly point this out in relating the events of 1171/1757 and 1172/1758.<sup>6</sup> However 'Abd al-'Azīz, the Wahhābī *Amīr*, raided al-Ḥasā in 1176/1762,<sup>7</sup> and two years later 'Ar'ar b. Dujayn b. Sa'dūn,

<sup>1</sup> IBN SANAD, *Sab'ik al-'Asjad*, p. 18. "Historical Sketch of the Uttoobee Tribe of Arabs," in *Bombay Selections*, p. 362.

<sup>2</sup> Banī Ka'b originally came from Najd in the seventeenth century and established themselves east of Baṣra on the Persian-Ottoman borders. See NIEBUHR's *Description de l'Arabie*, pp. 276-277.

<sup>3</sup> The last two tribes came originally from 'Umān. The Shaikh of Bandar Rīq was Mīr Muhanna, from the Banī Ṣa'b tribe. The ruler of Abū Shahr, Shaikh Naṣr, belonged to the Maṭārish, a 'Umānī tribe. There were also other Arab tribes in the area under the domination of these two Shaikhs, cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 273-80.

<sup>4</sup> Local tradition in Kuwait states that the enmity between the Banī Ka'b and Āl-Ṣabāḥ started when Shaikh 'Abd Allāh Āl-Ṣabāḥ refused to give his daughter (some say his sister) in marriage to Shaikh Sulaymān of the Banī Ka'b. See *Ta'rikh al-Kuwait*, Vol. II, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> *The Persian Gulf*, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

<sup>6</sup> IBN GHANNĀM, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 64; IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 42.

<sup>7</sup> IBN GHANNĀM, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 72; IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 46.



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the Shaikh of Banī Khālid, tried twice in 1178/1764 to occupy al-Dir'iyya, the Wāhhābī capital.<sup>1</sup> The author of *Lam' al-Shihāb* states that because the Wāhhābīs demanded peace, 'Ar'ar did not molest them for seven years.<sup>2</sup> In 1764, however, 'Ar'ar broke the pact by attacking the Wāhhābīs who were fighting two strong enemies, Dahhām b. Dawwās, the chief of al-Riyāḍ, and the 'Ajman tribes of the Yaman.<sup>3</sup>

The turmoil in Arabia, Persia and Ottoman 'Irāq made it possible for a large division of the 'Utūb to leave Kuwait and establish a new settlement at Zubāra in Qaṭar. 'Utbī historians from Kuwait give the disputes with the Banī Ka'b as a major reason behind the emigration of Āl-Khalīfa. These eventually led to the defeat of Āl-Ṣabāḥ and the other settlers of Kuwait. Āl-Khalīfa either refused to come to terms with the Ka'b, or would not adhere to the policy of Āl-Ṣabāḥ, the ruling family, and migrated to Zubāra.<sup>4</sup> This sounds convincing, but it is not the only explanation for the emigration.

Mr. Francis Warden, in *Historical Sketch of the 'Utūb*, states that Kuwait attained a high degree of prosperity in its first fifty years (1716-1766). He continues that "the accumulation of wealth rendered the mercantile branch (Āl-Khalīfa) desirous of seceding from the original league, that they might singly enjoy to add to their acquired riches." He adds that Āl-Khalīfa, then under the leadership of Khalīfa b. Muḥammad, "were obliged to have recourse to dissimulation to effect their purpose." Khalīfa told Āl-Ṣabāḥ and Āl-Jalāhima<sup>5</sup> that great wealth could be theirs if they went to the shores of the Persian Gulf where pearl-beds were located and

<sup>1</sup> IBN GHANNĀM, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 77.

<sup>2</sup> *Lam' al-Shihāb*, ff. 43-44.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, ALOIS MUELL, *Northern Najd*, (New York, 1928), p. 259.

<sup>4</sup> YUSUF B. 'ISA AL-QINĀ'I, *op. cit.*, p. 11; AL-RASHID, *Ta'rikh al-Kuwait*, Vol. II, p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Jalāhima are known today as Āl-Nisf, and are represented both in Kuwait and Baḥrain by rich merchants.

engaged in the lucrative pearl fishery themselves. Āl-Şabāḥ agreed to this plan. Thus Khalifa and a great part of his family left for the south.<sup>1</sup>

To these reasons given for the emigration of Khalifa<sup>2</sup> and his family, it is worth adding the story told by Āl-Khalifa. It relates that Khalifa's grandfather ruled at either Kuwait or the place inhabited by the 'Utūb before Kuwait. The grand-father, Faiṣal, gave his daughter in marriage to Jābir, the father of Shaikh Şabāḥ. When Shaikh Şabāḥ was chosen as ruler, his uncles did not object, hoping that the next ruler would be chosen from Faiṣal's branch. However, the choice of 'Abd Allāh, the youngest son of Şabāḥ, irritated Khalifa, who planned to succeed Şabāḥ; he therefore forced 'Abd Allāh to leave Kuwait.<sup>3</sup>

Khalifa and his followers undoubtedly left in ships. The 'Utūb had already established their sea-power and were familiar with Gulf navigation. They shared the pearl fishery seasons<sup>4</sup> by sending boats to the shores of the Gulf near Baḥrain and Qaṭar. Everyone was free to indulge in this trade, except for paying fees to the ruler of either Baḥrain or Qaṭar. The 'Utūb had already gathered experience in the shipping of merchandise to the different ports of the Gulf, thus apprenticing themselves for future sea ventures. On their way south, before landing at Zubāra, the emigrants stopped at Baḥrain where they hoped to settle, having formerly touched at

<sup>1</sup> "Historical Sketch of the Uttoobee etc." *Bombay Selections*. Vol. XXIV, pp. 362-363.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Qinā'i mistakenly gives the name of Muḥammad b. Khalifa instead of Khalifa, *Şafaḥāt*, p. 11, while Ibn Sanad, who is more authoritative, being contemporary with the events described, gives the name of Khalifa with the title of "*Ashraf Banī 'Utba*", the noblest among the 'Utub; *Sabā'ik al-'Asjad*, p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> This may explain why Ibn Sanad refers to Khalifa as "*Ashraf Banī 'Utba*", see above. The author was told of this tradition by Shaikh 'Abd Allāh b. Khālid Āl-Khālifa.

<sup>4</sup> Pearl fishing takes place in the hot months of the summer. See CARSTEN NIEBUHR, *Description de l'Arabie*, p. 286; "Reports on the Trade of Arabia, etc." in SALDANHA, *Selections from State Papers*, pp. 407-408.

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the place. However, the rulers of Baḥrain, the Banī Madhkūr Arabs, would not permit them to stay. Baḥrain was then under the suzerainty of the Shaikh of Abū Shahr, who recognised the authority of the Shāh of Persia and paid irregular tribute on behalf of Abū Shahr and Baḥrain.<sup>1</sup>

The coming to Zubāra was not a sudden decision. It was well known to the 'Utūb, from their former experience on land when they first came to Qaṭar before settling at Kuwait, and also because they carried trade to and from Baḥrain, Qaṭar and al-Ḥasā, by both sea and land.<sup>2</sup> For these reasons the emigrants chose Zubāra as a settlement.

Before describing the settlement, it is important to examine the local powers that could affect it. Although information on Zubāra is scarce, much is known about its environs. A strong Arab tribe, Āl-Musallam, controlled the Qaṭar peninsula. They were there when the 'Utūb left Qaṭar for Kuwait early in the eighteenth century. Āl-Musallam paid tribute to Banī Khālid, who ruled al-Ḥasā and the east-coast of Arabia from Qaṭar to the vicinity of Baṣra. Relations were still friendly between the 'Utūb and the Banī Khālid, and the former met no resistance when they landed on the western coast of Qaṭar in Banī Khālid territory. North of Zubāra lie the Baḥrain Islands, called Awāl by the Arabs;<sup>3</sup> they were then under the direct rule of the Arabs of Abū Shahr. Their inhabitants were a mixture of Arab tribes, primarily of Huwala extraction.<sup>4</sup> Baḥrain was coveted for its pearl fisheries and its vast palm plantations that produced an annual income of

<sup>1</sup> CARSTEN NIEBUHR, *Description de l'Arabie*, pp. 284-286.

<sup>2</sup> Desert caravans used to come from 'Umān in the south of Arabia to Baṣra and Aleppo in the north, cf. IVEs *op. cit.*, p. 222; CARSTEN NIEBUHR, *Description de l'Arabie*, p. 295; "Report on the Trade of Arabia bordering on the Persian Gulf", p. 408-9. For the 'Utbi trade, see Chapter VI.

<sup>3</sup> CARSTEN NIEBUHR, *Description de l'Arabie*, p. 284.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 286.

"a lakh of rupees,"<sup>1</sup> most of which was spent on maintaining its garrison.<sup>2</sup>

The emigrating 'Utūb, prevented from landing at Awāl, sailed east to Zubāra. It is impossible to give a detailed description of Zubāra at that time, because no reference to it was made prior to 1766, and its prosperity lasted only forty-four years. Then (1810-11) it was attacked and damaged by the Sultān of Masqaṭ.<sup>3</sup> However, a picture of Zubāra may be drawn from later accounts by officers of the English East India Company,<sup>4</sup> and from local sources.

Zubāra, now ruined and deserted, lies on the western side of the Qaṭar promontory, about five miles south of Khōr Ḥassān.<sup>5</sup> It stands at the foot of a deep bay by the same name, of which the western point is Rās-'Ushairij, containing a small island also called Zubāra.<sup>6</sup> From the different descriptions of Zubāra, it is possible to picture the town in the 1760's and after. Captain Robert Taylor in 1818 stated that Zubāra had 400 houses and its people were

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter VI on Pearl Fishery, p. 176.

<sup>3</sup> "Chronological Table of Events" in *Bombay Selections*, XXIV, pp. 124, 141; "Historical Sketch of the Uttoobee Tribe, etc" p. 368 in *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Two of these reports were compiled, the first in 1818 by Captain Robert Taylor, Assistant Political Agent in Turkish Arabia, the second by Captain George Barnes Brucks of the Indian Navy in 1822-29. Captain Brucks was one of five officers of the Indian Navy who worked on a survey of the navigation of the Persian Gulf from 1821 to 1829.

<sup>5</sup> This town was the resort of the Jalāhima, an 'Utbi division, who became pirates after the establishment of Zubāra in 1766 and the conquest of Bahrain in 1782. See "Sketch of the Proceedings (from 1809-1818) of Rahmah bin Jaubir, Chief of Khōr Hassan", prepared by Mr. Francis Warden, Member of Council at Bombay; with Continuation to the Period of that Chief's Death in 1826; "A Brief Sketch of the Proceedings (down to the year 1831) of Shaikh Busheer bin Rahmah, son and successor of the above Chief"; by Lieutenant S. Hennel, Assistant Resident in the Persian Gulf, in *Bombay Selections*, Vol. XXIV, pp. 521-529.

<sup>6</sup> It is interesting to note that Qurain (Kuwait), the early 'Utbi settlement, also has an island named Qurain; and Rās 'Ushairij is common to two promontories both at Kuwait and Zubāra. Zubāra was described at the beginning of the present century by J. G. Lorimer, who visited various sites of the Persian Gulf in 1904, before compiling his authoritative work, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf*.

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related to those of Khōr Ḥassān, i.e. Āl-Jalāhima.<sup>1</sup> Captain G.B. Brucks wrote in 1824<sup>2</sup> that "Zubara is in latitude 26° N., long. 51° 8' 30" E. It is a large town, now in ruins. It is situated in a bay, and has been, before it was destroyed, a place of considerable trade." He added that it had few inhabitants, and that it was "originally the principal of the Uttoobee Tribe, until they separated."<sup>3</sup> Lorimer gave more detailed information of the town's fortifications when he wrote that "the town was the stronghold of Āl-Khalifa, the ruling family of Bahraïn"; and that it was "walled and some ten or twenty forts stood within a radius of seven miles round it, among them Furaiḥah, Ḥalwān, Līsha, 'Ain Muḥammad, Qal'at Murair, Rakaiyāt, Umm al-Shirwail and Thaghab. All of these are now (1904) ruinous and deserted, except Thaghab, which the people of Khōr Hassān visit to draw water. Murair is said to have been connected with the sea by a creek, which enabled sailing boats to discharge their cargoes at its gate, but the inlet is now silted up with sand."<sup>4</sup>

Zubāra, the new 'Utbī settlement, like its predecessor Kuwait, had no water, although the Qaṭar peninsula contained a plentiful supply. The nearest water supply of Zubāra was a league (*farsakh*) and-a-half from the walls of the town.<sup>5</sup> Apparently the emigrants were so accustomed to a water shortage in Kuwait that they tolerated it and the sparse vegetation, so long as their chosen site

<sup>1</sup> "Extract from Brief Notes, containing Historical and other Information connected with the Province of Oman, Muskat, and the Adjoining Country; the Islands of Bahrein, Ormus, Kishm, and Karrack; and other Ports and Places in the Persian Gulf", prepared, in the year 1818, by Captain ROBERT TAYLOR, in *Bombay Selections*, Vol. XXIV, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> See note on map facing p. 531 of the *Bombay Selections*, Vol. XXIV.

<sup>3</sup> Captain GEORGE BARNES BRUCKS, "Memoir descriptive of the Navigation of the Gulf of Persia; with Brief Notices of the Manners, Customs, Religion, Commerce, and Resources of the People inhabiting its Shores and Islands", in *Bombay Selections*, Vol. XXIV, p. 562.

<sup>4</sup> J. G. LORIMER, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 1533-34.

<sup>5</sup> *Lam' al-Shihāb*, f. 95.

offered a suitable harbour to continue the trade which they began in Kuwait.<sup>1</sup>

The newly arrived 'Utūb settled down quickly at Zubāra and dealt prudently with the two major powers in the area. The dominant power was the Banī Khālid, under whose patronage the 'Utūb established their first settlement at Kuwait. There is no indication that the 'Utūb of al-Zubāra were oppressed or vexed by the Banī Khālid; there was no reason for dispute. The relations between the 'Utūb and the second power, Āl-Musallam, on the other hand, were not altogether cordial. Contemporary authorities do not explain the nature of these relations, but it may be judged that they were unfriendly, because the 'Utūb immediately built a wall and forts to defend their town.<sup>2</sup> It has already been stated that local shaikhs in the Banī Khālid territories began to develop some local independence following the death of Sulaymān b. Muḥammad, the Shaikh of the Banī Khālid, in 1752.<sup>3</sup> Āl-Musallam in Qaṭar apparently had some form of independence as did the 'Utūb of the north at Kuwait. The 'Utūb of Zubāra found it necessary to depend upon their own resources to defend the town.<sup>4</sup> They realized that the Shaikh of the Banī Khālid was not likely to protect them, due to his quarrels with chiefs of his ruling family, and the struggle with the rising power of the Wahhābis. The local Āl-Khalīfa historians state that Āl-Musallam wanted the 'Utūb of Zubāra to pay them tribute. The 'Utūb refused and prepared to defend their town against Āl-Musallam by rapidly constructing the wall and fort, Murair, by 1182/1768, just two years after their arrival.<sup>5</sup> These tribes did not

<sup>1</sup> The lack of water in the town gave the Wahhābis towards the end of the century, the chance to seize it by cutting it off from its water supplies. See Chapter V, p. 134 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Lam' al-Shihāb*, f. 95.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 53.

<sup>4</sup> *Lam' al-Shihāb*, ff. 80-84.

<sup>5</sup> AL-NABHĀNĪ, *Ta'rikh al-Baḥrain*, p. 121. Āl-Musallam, like the Banī Khālid, belonged to Rabī'a. While Banī Khālid were living in al-Ḥasā, Āl-Musallam lived in Qaṭar at Furaiḥa and Fuwairiḥ, and could muster 2,000

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alarm the 'Utūb when they first settled at Zubāra, because of the awe in which they held the Banī Khālid. The tribes, however, turned against the 'Utūb and endangered Zubāra when the Wahhābīs besieged that 'Utbi town in the 1790's.<sup>1</sup>

The first 'Utbi port, Kuwait, took about fifty years to develop from a fishing centre into a town of consequence.<sup>2</sup> Zubāra quickly rivalled the other ports on the Persian Gulf, inviting attacks from the Persian coast Arabs.<sup>3</sup>

The rapid growth of Zubāra was due to the participation of the 'Utūb in the pearl fishery on the rich coasts of the Banī Khālid. Trade in pearls, especially in Baḥrain, was carried on for centuries. However, Zubāra's small share in the pearl trade gradually increased.<sup>4</sup>

One of the earliest settlers in Zubāra was Rizq al-As'ad. He was a well-known Kuwaitī merchant, said to have accompanied Khalifa, the founder of Āl-Khalifa dynasty, on his journey from Kuwait to Zubāra in 1766.<sup>5</sup> To show the great wealth Rizq accumulated in a short time, Ibn Sanad relates that he started trading in pearls with three *dinārs* which he borrowed from the Governor (*Wālī*).<sup>6</sup> Soon those three *dinārs* multiplied. 'Uthmān b. Sanad thinks that Rizq was the first of the 'Utūb to choose the site of

men. *Lam' al-Shihāb*, f. 235. Two other tribes lived in Qaṭar, less important than Āl-Musallam and of Rabi'a extraction. The first was Āl-Abī Ḥusain, who lived in al-Yūsufiyya and had 1,500 fighters, the second al-Ma'ādiyya, numbering 3,000 fighters and inhabiting al-Ruwayḍa and al-Muṭaybikh. Besides these, other tribes inhabited Qaṭar who could collect 5,000 fighters. *Ibid.*, f. 236.

<sup>1</sup> See *Ibid.* ff. 94-95, 101-103; IBN BISHR. *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 106; IBN GHANNĀM, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 198.

<sup>2</sup> "Historical Sketch of the Uttoobee Tribe of Arabs", *Bombay Selections*, XXIV, pp. 362-63.

<sup>3</sup> J. G. LORIMER, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, i, p. 787.

<sup>4</sup> IBN SANAD, *Sabā'ik al-'Asjad*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Though Ibn Sanad does not state clearly who the *Wālī* was, one assumes he means the ruler of al-Ḥasā, 'Uray'ir b. Dujayn, since the author says that Rizq left Kuwait for al-Ḥasā. *Sabā'ik al-'Asjad*, p. 18.

Zubāra. Khalīfa joined him in building the town,<sup>1</sup> and encouraged merchants to settle and share in building up its trade. The two friends, Khalīfa and Rizq, thought it wise not to charge trade duties.<sup>2</sup> This is confirmed in the "Report on the Trade of Arabia," which states that "The Government of Zeberra (sic) does not collect Duties of any Kind on mercantile Articles."<sup>3</sup>

There can be no doubt that this newly established free-trade harbour affected the trade of the two already existing ports of the Banī Khālid — al-Qaṭif and al-'Uqair. In these ports the import duties were not high when compared to those in other Gulf ports as:

"the Government of Catiffe is extremely favourable to Merchants who there enjoy complete Protection in their Persons and Property, and the Duties collected at that Place are very moderate, and are confined to Imports. A Zirmaboob<sup>4</sup> is levied on a Bale of Coffee, or a Robin<sup>5</sup> of Pepper and about one per cent is levied on all other Articles, except Provisions."<sup>6</sup>

Al-'Uqair was the harbour through which al-Ḥasā, the residence of the Banī Khālid Shaikh, received its provisions and other merchandise for the Banī Khālid tribes of the interior.<sup>7</sup> Through al-Qaṭif, the interior towns of Najd, such as al-Dir'iyya, al-Riyāḍ,

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> IBN SANAD, *Sabā'ik al-'Asjad*, p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> See "Report on the Trade of Arabia" in SALDANHA, *Selections from State Papers*, p. 409.

<sup>4</sup> This is Ottoman currency. According to Ives, who was in Baṣra in 1758, one *Zirmaboob* of Baṣra currency was equal to 19 *Marmoodas* and 75 *Flucs*. Each *Marmooda* was equal to 100 *Flucs*. See his *Voyage*, p. 236.

<sup>5</sup> *Robin*, or *Robbin*, a term used in Malabar for a measure of grain. An anonymous authority makes it a fourth of a *Khandy* or *Candy*. In that case it may be a barbarism for the Arabic *Raba* or *Arba*, four, a fourth. See WILSON, H.H., *A Glossary of Judicial and Revenue Terms .... of the Govt. of the British India, etc.* (London, 1855), s.v. Robin.

<sup>6</sup> See "Report on the Trade of Arabia etc." in SALDANHA, *Selections from State Papers*, p. 409.

<sup>7</sup> Captain G. FORSTER SADLER, *Diary of a Journey across Arabia from el-Khatif in the Persian Gulf, to Yambo in the Red Sea, during the Year 1819* (Bombay 1866), p. 30.



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and Manfūḥa, were supplied.<sup>1</sup> This 'Utbī policy of free trade at Zubāra did not apply to Kuwait, where the government "collected Duties on mercantile Importations similar to those collected by the Government of Catiffe."<sup>2</sup> These were trifling when compared with duties collected by the Government at Masqaṭ, which amounted to "6 1/2 per cent on all Importations, even Provisions not excepted."<sup>3</sup>

Heavy duties were collected by the Government of Baṣra on all imported goods by sea from Baghdād, plus all goods exported by sea or through Aleppo. Exceptions were made only on provisions and European goods.

"Importations of fine Goods from Sea and from Baghdad pay 7 1/2 per cent duties and Importations of gruff Goods from Sea and from Baghdad pay 8 1/2 per cent Duties, Exportations to Aleppo pay similar Duties and Exportations to Sea for all Kinds pay 5 1/2 per cent Duties."<sup>4</sup>

As a result of this trade policy in the Gulf ports, the merchants favoured the 'Utbī ports when carrying goods from India and Arabia to Syria and other Ottoman territories. This resulted in the rapid growth of the new 'Utbī settlement, and consequently large numbers from Kuwait migrated to Zubāra to share in the accumulating wealth. Among the emigrants were Āl-Jalāhima, another large 'Utbī family who were famous as the best mariners among the 'Utūb.<sup>5</sup> Nothing has been written about the numbers of Āl-Jalāhima and other new-comers; indeed, they were so numerous that the early settlers, fearing competition, soon drove them away.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, see also "Report on the Trade of Arabia etc." in SALDANHA, *Selections from State Papers*, p. 408.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 409.

<sup>3</sup> "Report on the Trade of Arabia etc." in SALDANHA, *Selections from State Papers*, p. 407.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 411.

<sup>5</sup> The name Jalāhima is not used today by the descendants of that 'Utbī family. They are called Āl-Niṣf, and are numerous in Kuwait and Bahrain.

<sup>6</sup> "Historical Sketch of the Uttoobee Arabs", etc., *Bombay Selections*, XXIV, p. 363.

Āl-Jalāhima did not move to Qaṭar till their cousins, the Khalīfas, had established themselves strongly at Zubāra. This encouraged the 'Utūb of Kuwait to join them.<sup>1</sup> By the 1760's the influence of three leading 'Utībī families was established among the other 'Utūb. We have already mentioned Āl-Ṣabāḥ, the shaikhs of Kuwait, and Āl-Khalīfa, the shaikhs of Zubāra. The third family was that of Āl-Jābir, later known as Āl-Jalāhima. This family gained much notoriety later in the eighteenth century as pirates.<sup>2</sup>

Why the Jalāhima<sup>3</sup> emigrated to Zubāra seems less puzzling than why the Khalīfas did. Āl-Jalāhima were described as mariners early in the eighteenth century; this, no doubt, gave them knowledge of the best sites for pearl fishing. Āl-Khalīfa had succeeded earlier in persuading Āl-Ṣabāḥ and Āl-Jalāhima to leave Kuwait, hoping to increase the profits from pearl fishing for the entire 'Utībī tribe. This hope was not fulfilled, and Āl-Jalāhima went only to increase their personal wealth. Soon after the departure of Āl-Khalīfa quarrels appear to have taken place between Āl-Jalāhima and Āl-Ṣabāḥ. Matters were further complicated by the subsequent discovery that Āl-Khalīfa's monopoly of the pearl trade caused financial difficulties for the remaining 'Utūb. Obviously there was not enough room for both Āl-Ṣabāḥ and Āl-Jalāhima in Kuwait. As a result

"The more powerful clan of the two, the Al Subah, soon felt the absence of their commercial brethren (Āl-Khalīfa), in a deficiency of their finances; and, following the example of their renegade brethren, first refused the Al Yalahimah their share

<sup>1</sup> IBN SANAD, *Sab'ik al-'Asjad*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>2</sup> See "Sketch of the Proceedings (from 1809 to 1818) of Rahman bin Jaubir, Chief of Khor Hassan", etc. *Bombay Selections*, Vol. XXIV, pp. 522-529.

<sup>3</sup> Since the *Jim* is usually pronounced *Yā* among the 'Utūb of Kuwait and Bahrain, the word Jalāhima is always pronounced Yalāhima; and thus the officers of the Bombay Government in their reports use "Yalāhimah", cf. "Historical Sketch of the Uttoobee Tribe of Arabs etc.", *Bombay Selections*, Vol. XXIV, pp. 362-365; "Sketch of the Proceedings of Rahman bin Jaubir", etc. in *Ibid.*, pp. 522-529.

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of the revenue, and ultimately expelled them from the port and town of Koweit.”<sup>1</sup>

Shaikh Jābir directed his clan towards Zubāra, where they were kindly received by their kinsmen, who assigned “to each . . . according to his rank, an adequate income.” A few years later, Āl-Jalāhima asked for a larger share, which Āl-Khalifa denied them.

“Urged by necessity, and a sense of wrong, the Al Yalahima quitted Zabara, and took up their residence at Reveish, a barren spot at a short distance eastward of Zabara, and turned their attention to the increase, equipment, and preservation of their fleet, contemplating the object of revenging themselves on their proud and perfidious neighbours.”<sup>2</sup>

Khalifa, in attempting to strengthen his new settlement despite the fears of Āl-Musallam, faced a grave danger from his cousins, Āl-Jalāhima. The latter began an extensive system of maritime depredation and, by capturing his property and that of his clan, “created in the mind of Āl-Khalifa fears for their existence, and such a thrust for the punishment and destruction of the Jalāhima Chief, that, adding to their own force all the mercenaries their pecuniary resources could obtain, they environed the marauders on every side.” A desperate contest developed for the treasures which Āl-Jalāhima had amassed, and which they were determined to defend, plus the feelings of animosity that existed between them. Because the Jalāhima Chief was killed early in action, the overwhelming superiority of their enemies resulted in a complete victory. Only a few infants and females survived the massacre that ensued.<sup>3</sup>

This decisive victory resulted in the establishment of the

<sup>1</sup> “Historical Sketch of the Uttoobee Tribes, etc.”, in *Bombay Selections*, XXIV, p. 363.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> “Historical Sketch of the Uttoobee Tribes, etc.”, in *Bombay Selections*, p. 363.

suzerainty of Āl-Khalifa over all the other 'Utbī clans in the vicinity of Zubāra. In 1775 Āl-Jalāhima and Āl-Khalifa buried their hostilities, when a common enemy threatened them. At that time the Arabs of Abū Shahr, Bandar Rīq and Dawraq joined forces to defeat Zubāra, the thriving 'Utbī settlement. The aggression ended with the 'Utbī occupation of Baḥrain in 1782. Thus the spread of 'Utbī influence brought them into direct contact with the Persians, or, more accurately, with the Arabs of the Persian littoral of the Gulf, whose shaikhs reluctantly admitted the suzerainty of the Shāh of Persia.<sup>1</sup> In that struggle all 'Utbī clans joined hands and successfully attacked and occupied Baḥrain, although the reward of Āl-Jalāhima was not what they had expected.<sup>2</sup>

The state of affairs in countries bordering the Persian Gulf facilitated the growth of the two 'Utbī settlements of Kuwait and Zubāra. On the Arabian mainland there were four conflicting powers whose internal strife offered an excellent opportunity for the 'Utbī towns to add to their rapidly increasing prosperity. The first two powers that directly affected the 'Utūb were the Banī Khālid and the Wahnābīs. The struggle between these two opponents entered a serious stage when 'Uray'ir, the *Amir* of the Banī Khālid, in 1178/1764 besieged al-Dir'iyya, the capital of the Wahnābīs, which had previously been attacked by the 'Ajmān tribe of Najrān.<sup>3</sup> Although 'Uray'ir failed to capture al-Dir'iyya, this battle proved to the Wahnābīs that the Banī Khālid would seize any opportunity to destroy them. Thus they learned to distrust any truce promises that the Banī Khālid might offer. 'Uray'ir had violated an existing truce when he saw Dir'iyya being attacked by Dahhām b. Dawwās, the Chief of al-Riyāḍ.<sup>4</sup> No other significant

<sup>1</sup> See next chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Historical Sketch of the Uttoobee Tribe of Arabs etc., in *Bombay Selections*, p. 365.

<sup>3</sup> IBN GHANNĀM, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 76-80; IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, Vol. I p. 48; *Lam' al-Shihāb*, ff. 42-43.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

battles took place between the two combatants until the 1770's. The Wahhābīs consolidated their power in Najd, waiting for their chance to threaten the Banī Khālid, ignoring the 'Utūb who continued to enjoy the Banī Khālid protection.

**'UMĀN'S WARS WITH THE QAWĀSIM.**

To the south, on the mainland of Arabia, the other two powers, the Qawāsim in al-Şīr<sup>1</sup> and the Sulţān of Masqaţ, were also adversaries.

"As early as 1758 Imām Aḥmad b. Sa'īd, having consolidated his power and gained complete ascendancy over the 'Umānī tribes, was able to undertake operations in al-Şīr, generally known as the Pirate Coast, in order to reduce to subjection the Qawāsim and other warlike tribes, who had hitherto remained entirely independent."<sup>2</sup>

In 1762, Imām Aḥmad dispatched Sayyid 'Alī b. Saif with four ships and ten *dhow*s to al-Şīr, with orders to completely blockade the area. The result was recognition of the Imām's supremacy by all except Rās al-Khayma.<sup>3</sup>

In 1763 Shaikh Saqr, with his uncle 'Abd Allāh. went to Rustāq in 'Umān, where, in an interview with the Imām, it was arranged that the blockading fleet should be withdrawn and the Qawāsim port of Julfār (Rās al-Khayma) be considered independent of the Imām's authority. This political state of affairs remained unaltered for more than twenty years.<sup>4</sup> The state of hostility or suspicion that characterised relations between the Imām

<sup>1</sup> Al-Şīr is known today as Trucial 'Umān.

<sup>2</sup> "The Qawāsim are a branch of the great Huwala clan. They occupy the Persian coast from Gombroon to Ras Berdistān. They got their name from Shaikh Qāsim, the grandfather of the notorious Shaikh Rashīd bin Muttar, who ruled at this time and who resided at Julfār or Ras al-Khayma." Colonel S. B. MILES, *The Countries and Tribes of the Persian Gulf*, two volumes (London 1919), Vol. II, p. 269.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

of 'Umān and the Qawāsīm gave the 'Utbi settlements an additional chance to develop without being molested by either the Imām or the Qawāsīm until 1782. That year the 'Utūb attacked Bahrain and fought against the Arabs of Abū Shahr who had occupied those islands in 1753.<sup>1</sup>

We have noted that the position of the southern coast of Persia had always affected the Arabian littoral of the Gulf. The reasons are two-fold: it was inhabited by Arabs and migratory tribes who continued to move from the eastern shore of Arabia and to settle there among kinsmen.

When Nādir Shāh tried to consolidate his power among the Arab population in southern Persia, he relied only on Persian troops for his land operations and Persian officers for his fleet. Thus Arabs of southern Persia were banned from his army and fleet, a policy which resulted in his failure to achieve Persian supremacy in the Gulf.<sup>2</sup>

Anarchy was the order of the day in Persia from 1747, the year of Nādir's death, until 1757 when Karīm Khān Zand rose to power. With the advent of Karīm Khān and the trial of strength involved in consolidating his power over most of the Persian territory, a new era began between the Arabs of the southern coasts of Persia and Karīm. This continued until Karīm's death in 1779. Karīm, contrary to Nādir, sought the help of coastal Arabs throughout his struggle for power.<sup>3</sup> This does not mean that they co-operated with Karīm Khān; on the contrary, they gave him much trouble. Here, a brief description of the position of the major Arab tribes on the Persian littoral is in order.

Three major Arab forces were making history in southern Persia in the 1760's. They were: the Arabs of Abū Shahr (then under the rule of Shaikh Nāṣir Āl-Madhkūr of the Maṭārīsh Arabs

<sup>1</sup> MILES, *Countries and Tribes*, II, p. 269.

<sup>2</sup> As Niebuhr commented, the "Sunni sailors of Nādir's fleet killed their Persian officers and handed the fleet to the Arabs." *Description de l'Arabie*, p. 273.

<sup>3</sup> MALCOLM, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 134.

of 'Umān), the Arabs of Bandar Rīq to the north of Abū Shahr, and the Banī Ka'b of al-Dawraq. Reference has previously been made to their activities in the first half of the eighteenth century.<sup>1</sup> In addition to these major Arab forces, there were other Arab tribes of Huwala stock, who inhabited the southern parts of the Persian shore and Qishm, Qais, Hurmuz and lesser islands in the Gulf. The latter played a small role in the sequence of events during the 1760's. Their place was taken by the Qawāsim.

The Arabs of Abū Shahr had already occupied Baḥrain in 1753.<sup>2</sup> They ruled these islands when the 'Utūb came to Zubāra in 1766.<sup>3</sup> Niebuhr, on his way from Masqaṭ to Baṣra landed at Abū Shahr in February 1765;<sup>4</sup> when he spoke of the independent Arab States on the coast of Persia he included Abū Shahr. He further stated that it was the sea-port of Shirāz, the capital of Karīm Khān, the *Vakil* of Persia.<sup>5</sup> In 1763 the English East India Company established a Factory there in preference to Bandar 'Abbās (Gombroon). It was here the French fleet destroyed the English Factory in 1759.<sup>6</sup>

"The Arabs inhabiting the district of Abū Shahr were not of the Huwala tribe. There were among them three eminent families; the first two of which had been from time immemorial settled in that place. The third, named Maṭārish, had come lately from 'Umān, where they had been employed in fishing, and they soon entered into an alliance with the other two and found means to usurp the sovereign authority which they had been holding for several years before 1765."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 36-38.

<sup>2</sup> J. G. LORIMER, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, i, p. 738.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 64.

<sup>4</sup> C. NIEBUHR, *Voyage en Arabie*, Vol. II, pp. 75-78.

<sup>5</sup> See NIEBUHR, *Description de l'Arabie*, p. 273.

<sup>6</sup> See LOW, *History of the Indian Navy*, Vol. I, pp. 152-153.

<sup>7</sup> NIEBUHR, *Description de l'Arabie*, p. 273. Author's transcription.

Shaikh Nāṣir of Abū Shahr controlled not only that town and Baḥrain, but he also:

“had considerable domains in Kermasīr, which he held for Karīm Khān, with whom Shaikh Nāṣir’s children were placed as hostages for their father’s fidelity. It was a happy circumstance for Schirās (sic) that the Prince of Abū Shahr could thus be retained in the interests of Persia by means of his possessions in Kermasīr.”<sup>1</sup>

The Shaikh of Abū Shahr’s fleet allowed him to retain his sovereignty in the Baḥrain islands until their occupation by the ‘Utūb in 1782.<sup>2</sup>

North of Abū Shahr was the shaikhdом of Bandar Rīq, whose Shaikh influenced not only the neighbours of that town but also other areas in Kermasīr. Both the Shaikhs of Abū Shahr and Bandar Rīq had worked in harmony in 1753 to occupy the islands of Baḥrain. This was largely because they were originally ‘Umānī Arabs, the former belonging to al-Maṭārīsh, the latter to Banī Ṣa‘b.

In the 1760’s the ruling Shaikh of Bandar Rīq, was Mīr Muhannā, son of Mīr Naṣr. Mīr Muhannā’s grandfather, who established the rule of the family at Bandar Rīq, had been like his tribe, a *Sunnī* and not a *Shī‘ī* Moslem. Because of his relations with the Persian Shāhs, he thought it wise to become a *Shī‘ī* and marry a Persian *Shī‘ī* lady. The result was the ruling family “were no longer counted by the Arabs among their genuine nobility.”<sup>3</sup> However, Mīr Naṣr and his son Mīr Muhannā played a prominent part in the history of the Persian Gulf from 1753 to 1769. In 1753 Mīr Naṣr agreed to let the Dutch establish a Factory on Khārij Island, and in 1769 Mīr Muhannā was obliged to quit Khārij and seek refuge in Kuwait. The Shaikh of Bandar Rīq fought against the Dutch, Persians and English. Indeed soon after the Dutch were established

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 274.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> NIEBUHR, *Description de l’Arabie*, p. 274.



at Khārij, Mīr Naṣr came into conflict with Baron Kniphausen, who refused to pay him more than the agreed amount for the Dutch establishment at Khārij.<sup>1</sup> This enmity continued after Mīr Muhannā usurped power from his father, whom he strangled about 1758.<sup>2</sup> Mīr Muhannā's relations with Karīm Khān were also bad, but his dealings with the Pasha of Baghdād and the Mutasallim of Baṣra remained cordial.<sup>3</sup>

The third major Arab power which played an important part in the trade and politics of the Gulf was the Banī Ka'b. Here they interest us more than the Banī Ṣa'b and al-Maṭārish, because of their direct relations with the 'Utūb and the Banī Khālid. The original home of this tribe was Najd. In the seventeenth century some made their way from Najd:

"to the farthest point upon the side of the Persian Gulf, then occupied by the Afshār Turks. Their power rapidly increased by the middle of the eighteenth century under the reign of their Shaikh Sulaymān, whose fame reached Europe, in consequence of a quarrel he had with the English, in which he took some of their ships."<sup>4</sup>

Shaikh Sulaymān wrested Dawraq and Fallaḥiyya from the Afshārs and continued to rule till 1766. He obtained and kept his independence by playing the Ottoman and Persian authorities one against the other. His territories lay between these countries. But at the same time he withheld tribute from both countries.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> IVES, *op. cit.*, p. 213.

<sup>2</sup> NIEBUHR, *Description de l'Arabie*, p. 274. Mīr Muhannā finally occupied Khārij in December 1765 and drove the Dutch away. See letter from Mr. Wrench (Baṣra Factory) to the Court of Directors, London, dated Baṣra, 21st Aug. 1764, where he expects the Dutch to surrender soon. *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 16, Dispatch No. 819.

<sup>3</sup> Yet these cordial relations did not prevent the Pasha from ordering the Mutasallim to cut off the head of Mīr Muhannā after his arrival at Baṣra from Kuwait in 1770; cf. PARSONS, *op. cit.*, p. 198.

<sup>4</sup> NIEBUHR, *Description de l'Arabie*, p. 276; NIEBUHR, *Voyage en Arabie*, Vol. II, pp. 151, 186.

<sup>5</sup> NIEBUHR, *Voyage en Arabie*, Vol. II, pp. 187-188; WILSON, *The Persian Gulf*, p. 187.

In 1757 Karīm Khān, whose authority in Persia was then weak, attacked the Banī Ka'b with the intention of subduing them. However, difficulties in other parts of his realm prevented his doing more than extorting a tribute. The attack served merely to render Shaikh Sulaymān more aggressive. He at once set about creating a fleet, whose first vessel was launched in 1758;<sup>1</sup> by 1765 he had ten large *gallivats* and about seventy small vessels.<sup>2</sup> In the same year Karīm Khān sent a second expedition against the Banī Ka'b; the Pasha of Baghdād agreed to cooperate, but did not. Shaikh Sulaymān crossed to the west side of *Shaṭṭ-al-'Arab* and found refuge in Ottoman territory. Karīm, however, destroyed Dawraq, the Banī Ka'b's capital.<sup>3</sup> Niebuhr, who as at Baṣra in 1765 writes that the territory of the Banī Ka'b extended from the desert of Arabia to the country of Haandīan<sup>4</sup> and northward to the principality of Ḥawīsa, the latter inhabited by the Arabs.

"The territory was watered by several rivers, large and small. It abounded in dates, rice, grain, and pasture. Its principal cities were al-Dawraq, Ḥafar and Ghobān."<sup>5</sup>

Soon after the failure of Karīm's expedition, the Banī Ka'b turned hostile towards the Ottomans who had now begun operations against them. The English were drawn into the quarrel by becoming allies of the Ottomans. However, the combined attempts of the two powers to subdue the Banī Ka'b were unsuccessful. The same year the English fought two battles: the first an abortive attack on the island of Khārij when they sided with Karīm Khān against Mīr Muhannā, the second against the Banī Ka'b who, after the Persian attack on Khārij, seized three English vessels in

<sup>1</sup> NIEBUHR, *Description de l'Arabie*, p. 276.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> NIEBUHR, *Voyage en Arabie*, II, p. 188; *Description de l'Arabie*, p. 276.

<sup>4</sup> A small district north from Bandar Rīq, and bordering on the possessions of the Banī Ka'b, subject to an Arab Sovereign. — NIEBUHR, *Description de l'Arabie*, p. 277.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, Niebuhr states that Shaikh Sulaymān used to reside at Ghobān, not at Dawraq.

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the *Shaṭṭ al-‘Arab*. The Bombay Government hastily dispatched a large expedition of four vessels and a small detachment of European infantry and artillery. Concerted action of English and Ottomans followed on sea and land. An attempt was desperately made to recapture the seized vessels, but they were burnt at their moorings. The British, in attempting to storm some Ka‘b redoubts on Khōr Mūsā, met with a disastrous repulse.<sup>1</sup>

Here Karīm Khān intervened, asserting that the Banī Ka‘b were Persian subjects, and that both Ottomans and English should retire from Persian territory. The Ottomans withdrew, and the campaign again met an inconclusive end, much to the chagrin of the English, who had strong reinforcements on the way from Bombay.<sup>2</sup>

After these failures, the English maintained a naval blockade of the Ka‘b waterway for about two years. At the end of this time, the vessels of the blockading squadron fell into such a “melancholy condition . . . as well with respect to stores as men” that the blockade was raised. The Banī Ka‘b remained unsubdued and continued to be a thorn in the side of the Ottomans, Persians and English. The East India Company’s Factory at Baṣra sent such effective complaints to the Court of Directors in London, that the Court submitted an urgent request to the British Government. It urged that the latter send a strong fleet to India and the Persian Gulf “to protect the interests of the East India Company and the British nation.”<sup>3</sup>

### ‘UTBĪ RELATIONS WITH THE OTHER POWERS IN THE GULF TILL 1775.

Thus the ‘Utūb of Kuwait and Zubāra were forced to establish relations with each of the above-mentioned powers. However on

<sup>1</sup> NIEBUHR, *Voyage en Arabie*, II, p. 187; see *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 16. dispatches Nos. 893, 918, 920 and several others of the years 1765-66.

<sup>2</sup> NIEBUHR, *Voyage en Arabie*, II, p. 188.

<sup>3</sup> The address was signed by Mr. H. I. Crabb Boulton and G. Colebrooke of the East India House, London, and submitted to Lord Viscount Weymouth, dated 17th March, 1769. *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 16, dispatch, No. 9.

the mainland of Arabia there was no change in the balance of power between the Wahhābīs and the Banī Khālid. This in spite of the fact that the Wahhābīs finally consolidated their power in Najd after their conquest of al-Riyāḍ, the capital of Dahhām b. Dawwās in 1187/1773. This event made the Wahhābīs turn their hopes towards Eastern Arabia.<sup>1</sup> The Banī Khālid were still united and maintained the power to face any Wahhābī attack on their land. Soon after the death of their chief 'Uray'ir in 1774, however, war broke out between his two sons Buṭayn and Sa'dūn, ending by the murder of the former in 1777.<sup>2</sup> The Banī Khālid till then had carried the war into Najd, and thus Kuwait and Zubāra continued their flourishing trade without fear of Wahhābī intervention.

The great threat to the two 'Utbi towns came from the sea. Mīr Muhannā of Bandar Rīq had already taken Khārij from the Dutch in 1765. He continued his piracy, capturing any ship he could lay his hands on.<sup>3</sup> Baḥrain under the Arabs of Abū Shahr was the closest spot under Persian supremacy to come into contact with the 'Utūb. The latter monopolised trade from Masqaṭ to Eastern and Central Arabia. Because Baḥrain was famous for its pearl trade, the people of the Islands felt the commercial rivalry of both Kuwait and Zubāra. The Banī Ka'b, as we shall see, represented the major menace.

Since the Dutch occupation in 1753, the 'Utūb had established good relations with Khārij Island.<sup>4</sup> These continued during the rule of Mīr Muhannā at Khārij. That might explain why Mīr Muhannā, after being hard-pressed by Karīm Khān:

<sup>1</sup> IBN GHANNĀM, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 94-100. Ibn Ghannām was so greatly moved by the event that he commemorated it by a long poem. See also IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 60-61.

<sup>2</sup> IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 62.

<sup>3</sup> An address from Benjamin Jervis (Bushire Factory) to Charles Crommelin, President at Bombay, dated Bushire, 5th January 1765, *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 16, dispatch No. 901.

<sup>4</sup> See above, pp. 54-56.

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“ with a few of his favourites, and men sufficient to man a swift-sailing boat, embarked in a dark night (not forgetting to carry treasure sufficient) and next evening arrived at Grane (Kuwait) in Arabia, which is governed by a deputy of the Turkish governor of Bussora (Başra), and is about sixty miles from the island of Karak (Khārij). From thence he and his adherents went to Bussora, where he thought himself sure of finding an asylum, having strictly conformed with the treaty made with the pasha of Bagdad, in not molesting any ship or vessel going to or from Bussora. The musolem (Mutasallim) received him kindly, and entertained him as the friend of his master the pasha.”<sup>1</sup>

Though Parsons states that Kuwait was a dependency of Başra, there is no evidence to prove this. It might be assumed that relations between the Shaikh of Kuwait and the Mutasallim of Başra were friendly then, and that this was the reason Parsons jumped to this conclusion. It has always been a policy of the ‘Utbī shaikhs to remain friendly with other powers in the area, but this friendliness did not mean dependence or subjugation. What might have dictated that state of friendliness was the growing power of the Banī Ka‘b on one hand and of the Arabs of Abū Shahr on the other.

We have seen how the Banī Ka‘b caused the Mutasallim of Başra and the English East India Company great trouble, and how Karīm Khān, the *Vakil* of Persia, intervened to prevent the subjugation of the Banī Ka‘b. Shaikh Naşr of Abū Shāhr was similarly under the protection of Karīm Khān,<sup>2</sup> who made him admiral

<sup>1</sup> PARSONS, *op. cit.*, pp. 193-198. To carry the story of Mīr Muhannā to its end, Parsons added that, “After Meer Mahanah had been some time at Bussora, the musolem acquainted the pasha of Bagdad, that he solicited the pasha’s protection, and that he might be permitted to come to Bagdad to kiss his hands. The pasha having been made acquainted with his unnatural cruelties, thought him unworthy of life, and sent orders to the musolem of Bussora to put him to death on the receipt of his letter...” Mīr Muhannā was killed, but his companions were allowed to live unmolested.

<sup>2</sup> PARSONS, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

of the Persian fleet in the Gulf.<sup>1</sup> To keep away the impending danger of the Banī Ka‘b and Shaikh Naṣr, the ‘Utūb, both at Kuwait and Zubāra, sought the friendship of the English East India Company and the Ottomans in Baṣra. The ‘Utūb, who until then had not acquired the naval power to challenge the Arabs of the Persian coast, remained on good terms with the Banī Khālid. This friendship did not prevent the Banī Ka‘b in 1774 from taking and plundering al-Qaṭīf, the rich port of the Banī Khālid which was “most remarkable for its pearl commerce.”<sup>2</sup> “The Chaub” (Ka‘b) *gallivats* returned “to Doorack (Dawraq) with the plunder of Catiffe which is said to be very considerable.”<sup>3</sup> Though the Banī Ka‘b alone made the attack on al-Qaṭīf, it is worth noting that since 1770 they had worked in harmony with Shaikh Naṣr of Abū Shahr. Both were used by Karīm Khān as instruments to carry out his policy against the Ottomans and others in the Gulf, best exemplified in the Siege of Baṣra in 1775.

#### PLAGUE AT BAṢRA, 1773.

The attack on al-Qaṭīf was carried out soon after the death of ‘Uray‘ir, the chief of the Banī Khālid. At that time the town was recovering from a serious epidemic that had spread to it from Baṣra.

Early in 1773 this plague struck Baṣra, on the way south from Baghdād. In Baghdād it was so severe that all trade and activity in the city stopped.<sup>4</sup> In the months of April and May 1773 it

<sup>1</sup> As the Persians had no fleet of their own they depended, during the rule of Karīm Khān, on the fleets of the Ka‘b and Abū Shahr; (cf. MALCOLM, Vol. II, p. 141).

<sup>2</sup> An address from H. Moore, W. D. Latouche, G. Abraham (of the Baṣra Factory) to the Court of Directors, London, dated Baṣra, 13th May 1774. *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 17, dispatch No. 1074.

<sup>3</sup> Another address from the same gentlemen of the Baṣra Factory to the Court of Directors, London, dated Baṣra, 28th July, 1774. *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 17, dispatch No. 1075.

<sup>4</sup> See letter from Mr. Moore, Mr. Latouche and Mr. Abraham of the Baṣra Factory to the Court of Directors, London, dated 1st April 1773. *F.R.P.P.G.* Vol. 17, dispatch No. 1056.

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devastated Baṣra.<sup>1</sup> Members of the English Factory there had left the town before the plague reached it and went to Bombay, leaving the Factory under the care of Surgeon Reilly. Soon after the plague exploded, many inhabitants left, carrying the epidemic to Kuwait, al-Qaṭif, Baḥrain and other towns on the Arabian coast of the Gulf. Though the loss of life was less on the Arabian coast than in Baṣra, the number of deaths was estimated at two million.<sup>2</sup> However, the Banī Ka'b's territories and the Persian littoral of the Gulf did not suffer much loss because they took the necessary precautions to cease communication with the affected areas.<sup>3</sup> Baṣra's casualties, and those of the surrounding villages, were estimated at 200,000 deaths.<sup>4</sup> Mr. Moore and his colleagues of the Factory, after returning, reported thus:

"Neither will this account appear to be exaggerated when it is considered that for near a month the daily deaths in the town (i.e. Baṣra) alone amounted from 3,000 to 7,000 — at length about the 25th May when least expected the disorder suddenly ceased, leaving Bussora in particular almost destitute of Inhabitants."<sup>5</sup>

The plague greatly damaged the Baṣra trade, thus giving the rival ports on the coast of the Gulf a chance to compete. Abū Shahr, on the Persian coast, was waiting for just such an opportunity. It had been the greatest emporium of the Gulf trade until the English

<sup>1</sup> An address from Mr. Michael Reilly (surgeon at Baṣra Factory) to Mr. Charles Thomas Coggan, of the East India Company, London, dated Baṣra 17th August 1773. *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 17, dispatch No. 1060.

<sup>2</sup> See letter from Mr. Moore and colleagues of the Baṣra Factory to the Court of Directors, London, dated Baṣra 16th January 1774, *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 17 dispatch No. 1061.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* Ibn Ghannām, states that the number of deaths ran into hundreds of thousands, and adds that most of the population of Baṣra perished as a result of the plague. *IBN GHANNĀM, op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 99-100.

East India Company gave preference to Baṣra.<sup>1</sup> Kuwait and Zubāra, though on good terms with Baṣra, attracted much of the latter's trade. Their relations with the English factory at Baṣra continued to grow, and their sea-going vessels were hired by the Factory to carry dispatches to Maṣqaṭ enroute to Bombay.<sup>2</sup>

Yet the shift of the English Gulf trade from Abū Shahr to Baṣra after 1770, making Baṣra the richest port of the Gulf, did not occur without Persian resistance. Karīm Khān continued his plans to capture Baṣra from the Ottomans. The Ottoman Mutasallim of Baṣra, aware of the Persian plan, lost no time in strengthening his naval power. He knew that an attack on his walled town could not succeed unless accompanied by a strong naval force. Thus, early in 1774 "the two Ketches of 14 guns each, which the Bashaw (Pasha) requested might be built for him at Bombay some time ago, arrived with the Revenge." They were delivered to Ottoman authorities at Baṣra after their cost had been paid into the Company's treasury at Bombay.<sup>3</sup> Karīm Khān received naval support from the Ka'b and Abū Shahr fleets. His preparations ended in 1775 with the famous siege of Baṣra, in which the 'Utūb found themselves inevitably involved. As usual when war broke out between Persia and Ottoman 'Irāq, or other Gulf powers, it was difficult to keep out of the fray.

The establishment of the 'Utūb at Zubāra and the growth of their trade at Kuwait and Zubāra created jealousy among the maritime Arabs of the Gulf. Especially aroused were those on the

<sup>1</sup> In 1763 Karīm Khān Zand, by a royal grant, conferred on the English more, as the Grant stated that: "No other European nation, or other persons, shall import any woollen goods to any port on the Persian shore in the Gulf but the English Company only. Should any one attempt to do it, their goods shall be confiscated". *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 16, dispatch No. 783.

<sup>2</sup> See a letter from Messrs. Moore, Green, Latouche and Abraham, Baṣra Factory, to the Court of Directors, London, Baṣra, 9th December 1774. *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 17, dispatch No. 1085.

<sup>3</sup> See a letter from Messrs. H. Moore, W. D. Latouche and G. Abraham, of the Baṣra Factory, to the Court of Directors, London, Baṣra, 16th January 1774, *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 17, dispatch No. 1061.



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Persian littoral, chiefly the Arabs of Bandar Rīq, Abū Shahr and the Banī Ka‘b. The second were nearest to the ‘Utūb of Zubāra because Baḥrain was under the suzerainty of Abū Shahr. When in 1775 the long siege of Baṣra started the struggle between the Ottomans and Persians, the ‘Utbī towns had another chance to accumulate more wealth — and prominence — as safe centres for trade. The free trade policy of Kuwait and Zubāra was of great importance in drawing merchants and capital to trade in ‘Utbī land. Thus it was not easy for Abū Shahr to give way to Zubāra and Kuwait. The tension subsequently led to a war in which the ‘Utūb were victorious and occupied Baḥrain in 1782.



## CHAPTER IV

### STATE OF AFFAIRS IN THE 'UTBĪ STATES 1775-1790

In the period from 1775-1790, two major events took place that had an important bearing on the rising 'Utūb. The first was the siege and occupation of Baṣra by the Persians (1775-1779). Though the 'Utūb did not openly share in the fight, they shared in its consequences. The second great event, whose consequences are still felt to the present day, was the occupation of the Bahraīn Islands by the 'Utūb. An attempt will be made to trace the growth of 'Utbī sea-power that enabled them to achieve it.<sup>1</sup>

To understand the effects of the siege and occupation of Baṣra on the 'Utūb in particular and Eastern Arabia in general, it is necessary to give a brief summary of that event, which involved Ottoman, Persian and Arab forces. The British did not maintain their policy of non-interference; they fought on the Ottoman side.<sup>2</sup>

No sooner had Baṣra recovered from the devastating plague, than rumours of the proposed Persian attack began to grow. In 1775 the danger became more acute, conferences were held daily

<sup>1</sup> The study is mainly based on the unpublished Factory Records of the English East India Company and other reports of the officials of the same Company Published in Volume XXIV of the *Bombay Government Selections* in 1856.

<sup>2</sup> For a detailed account of the event see PARSONS, *op. cit.*, pp. 162-186, Low, *op. cit.*, pp. 166-172. The Arabic sources unfortunately comment only briefly on the attack and its results but give no particulars. There seem to have been no Arab historians or '*Ulamā*' in Baṣra after the devastating plague of 1773. The event did not interest the Wahhābī chroniclers. The contemporary writers Ibn Ghannām and Ibn Bishr, writing in the 1830's, gave it only one line each in their chronicles of the events of the year 1188 A.H.

between Sulaymān Aghā, the Mutasallim, the Qapṭān, the notables of Baṣra and the British Agent.

"On January 15th, 1775," says Parsons,<sup>1</sup> "advice arrived from Bushear, in Persia, that an army had left Shiras (now the capital of Persia) consisting of upwards of fifty thousand men commanded by Sadoe Khan (brother to Kerim Khan, the present ruler of Persia); and that he was on his march for Bussora, being resolved to take the city. This report caused great alarm among the inhabitants."<sup>2</sup>

Here we may point out that the prosperity of Baṣra in the 1760's, after the removal of British trading activities to their Factory there instead of Abū Shahr, was among the causes of "strained relations between Pasha and Regent."<sup>3</sup>

However, Karīm Khān, jealous of the increased importance of Baṣra, and faced with discontent in his army, decided to dispatch his expedition against it. "Seeking a pretext, he demanded the head of the *Wālī* of Baghdād as a punishment for daring to levy a tax on Persian pilgrims to Kerbela."<sup>4</sup>

On March 16th the Persian army, under Ṣādiq Khān, Karīm's brother, arrived "at the mouth of Avisā (Ḥawīza) creek in Persia, where there is a town called Swab (Suwaib)."<sup>5</sup> The siege dragged on for thirteen months, the town finally surrendered to Ṣādiq Khān in April 1776.

Arabs inhabiting the Persian littoral of the Gulf were allied

<sup>1</sup> Parsons was an eyewitness to these events and participated in the defence of Baṣra against the attacking Persians.

<sup>2</sup> PARSONS, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

<sup>3</sup> The Pasha of Baghdād and the Regent of Persia. See LONGRIGG, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

<sup>4</sup> SYKES, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 281.

<sup>5</sup> PARSONS, *op. cit.*, p. 164; LONGRIGG, *op. cit.*, p. 190. Longrigg says that the Persian army "reached the Shaṭṭ ul 'Arab near the mouth of the Suwaib river". It seems that the "Suwaib river" was then called Ḥawīza river or creek, as Parsons puts it, and as the contemporary map drawn by Niebuhr shows it. Suwaib was the name of a town. See *Voyage en Arabie*, II, map facing p. 199, and p. 202 for Ḥawīza and Suwaib.

with the Persians. The Arabs of Abū Shahr, under the rule of Shaikh Naṣr, supplied the attacking Persian army with ammunition and provisions,<sup>1</sup> without which the Persian army was expected "soon to decamp."<sup>2</sup> The Shaikh of Bandar Rīq apparently was on good terms with Karīm Khān, and assisted in the siege.<sup>3</sup>

The Banī Ka'b, whose boats were invaluable to both sides, aided the Persians. They, and the Arabs of the Persian littoral, put the greater part of their commercial and military fleets at the service of the Persians.<sup>4</sup> As previously stated, Ṣādiq Khān, with the Persian army, marched through the land of the Banī Ka'b and camped in their territory at Suwaib. It appears, therefore, that they had previously agreed to join Karīm Khān.

With the Ottomans, or rather on the side of Sulaymān Aghā, the Mutasallim of Baṣra, were the Arabs of the Muntafiq tribe under their Shaikhs Thāmir and 'Abd Allāh. They were intended to play a major part in the defence of the besieged town, and to withstand the Persian advance. During the siege, the cooperation of parties of the Banī Khālid and the Muntafiq outside, enabled caravans to reach the city.<sup>5</sup> The Masqaṭ fleet went to the rescue of the besieged town in August 1775 at the request of the Mutasallim.<sup>6</sup> The fleet was reported to have forced its way up Shaṭṭ al-'Arab to Baṣra on October 14th, 1775, and to have been a great

<sup>1</sup> Shaikh Naṣr was the admiral commanding the Persian fleet in the Gulf (Parsons, *op. cit.*, pp. 189-200). Parsons calls him "Sheik Nassah".

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 169.

<sup>3</sup> When Parsons, with the Agent and men of the Baṣra Factory, arrived at Abū Shahr on April 27th, 1775, they were received by "the governor and chiefs of the town; with them was sheik Alli, governor of Bandereick, who was here on a visit." *Ibid.*, p. 199.

<sup>4</sup> Of the sea power of Abū Shahr, PARSONS, *op. cit.*, p. 188, noted when he reached the harbour that "At present all the galliotes are employed in the siege of Bussora, as are also many of the largest merchant vessels".

<sup>5</sup> See LONGRIGO, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

<sup>6</sup> See PARSONS, *op. cit.*, pp. 206-207. Parsons was at Masqaṭ on August 3rd. He saw "the great part of" the Sulṭān's fleet "loading with provisions, for the relief of Bussora, and expect to depart in about fifteen days".

help to the besieged city.<sup>1</sup> Sulaymān Aghā also succeeded in persuading the British Agent of the Baṣra Factory to join him in repelling Persian aggression.<sup>2</sup>

“At his time a squadron of ships of the Bombay Marine was lying in the river Shatt-ul-Arab, near the creek off the city, consisting of the ‘Revenge’, a frigate of twenty-eight guns, ‘Eagle’, of sixteen guns, and ‘Success’, ketch, of fourteen guns; beside two other ketches of fourteen guns each, built at Bombay for the Pasha of Bagdat.”<sup>3</sup>

The Pasha’s ketches were “commanded by an English midshipman in the Comany’s service,” and had “on board, a few English sailors”; the remainder of the crew were “Turks,” and they carried British colours.<sup>4</sup> In fact the British “gentlemen of the Factory and the English East India Comany’s cruisers joined the Mutasallim’s forces wholeheartedly till their retreat from the field of battle.”<sup>5</sup>

Two other forces in the Gulf were expected to join the Persians or the Ottomans, namely the Qawāsīm of Rās al-Khayma and the ‘Utūb. The former were not mentioned in connection with the Baṣra affair of 1775, though they were reported to have “become more powerful than ever, both by land and sea.” The Qawāsīm’s absence might be attributed to the fact that they were then at war with the Sulṭān of Masqaṭ.<sup>6</sup> However, because of enmity with

<sup>1</sup> W. D. Latouche and G. Abraham (Abū Shahr) to Court of Directors, 2.xii. 1775, *F.R.P.P.G.* Vol. 17, No. 1109. Mr. Warden erroneously gives the date of the arrival of the Masqaṭ fleet at Basra as “early in the month of August”. See his “Historical Sketch of the Rise and Progress of the Govt. of Muskat”, etc. in *Bombay Selections*, Vol. XXIV, p. 170.

<sup>2</sup> The Agent was Mr. Green. See PARSONS, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

<sup>3</sup> Low, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 166.

<sup>4</sup> PARSONS, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

<sup>5</sup> By April 9th the British were deserting the town (PARSONS, *op. cit.*, p. 174) and by the 13th of the same month the British ships, with some of the Pasha’s, were making for Abū Shahr (*Ibid.*, p. 181).

<sup>6</sup> In 1775 the Qawāsīm were at war with the Sulṭān of Masqaṭ, but they seem to have appeared from 1775 to 1778 as traders, not raiding any of their

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Masqaṭ, one would not have expected them to join the Ottoman side in the Baṣra affair. In fact, later on, when the 'Utūb were at variance with the Shaikh of Abū Shahr and with the Banī Ka'b, the Qawāsim joined the Shaikh of Abū Shahr in his fruitless attempt to re-occupy the Bahṙain Islands in 1783. Shaikh Naṣr, as formerly stated, was an ally of Karīm Khān, then Regent of Persia.

It is not easy to identify the part played by the 'Utūb in the siege. Parsons refers to Kuwait only twice, the first time when "the pasha's two galliotes" were ordered to repair to its harbour in the afternoon of April 13th,<sup>1</sup> and the second when the 'Eagle' and one of the Pasha's ketches, which were on their way from Baṣra to Abū Shahr on April 14th, 1775, "noticed two trankeys coming from Abū Shahr and going" to Kuwait.<sup>2</sup> Parsons describes Kuwait as a town "dependant on Bussora."<sup>3</sup> What he meant by "dependant" is not clear, yet one can gather that friendly relations must have been kept up between the Mutasallim and the Shaikh, for:

"all the Turks and Arabs which were on board the Pasha's ketches (in number about two hundred and thirty) embarked on board these two galliotes, and took their departure" for Kuwait."<sup>4</sup>

In a letter to the Court Directors in London, about three months later, the Baṣra factors stated that:

"the two Turkish Galivats which were sent to Grain, were

neighbours. See "Historical Sketch of the Joasmee Tribe of Arabs", etc. in *Bombay Selections*, Vol. XXIV, p. 301. Miles too speaks of their growing power in 1775, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 274.

<sup>1</sup> PARSONS, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

<sup>2</sup> The naval forces, of which mention was made by Parsons, were two ketches of fourteen guns each, built at Bombay for the use of the Pasha, and two galliotes. The two ketches continued their journey to Masqaṭ, where they were delivered to the Sultān on August 3rd, 1775. He was then preparing his war vessels for the rescue of Baṣra. *Ibid.*, p. 206.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 181.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

demanding from the Shaikh of that Place by the Chaub (Bani Ka'b), and delivered up to him."<sup>1</sup>

The same letter added that the Shaikh sent, "though unwillingly," a party of two-hundred men "to the assistance of Sadoo Caun (Şādiq Khān)."

Though the position of the 'Utūb was vague in the Başra affair, it would not be difficult to explain their initially friendly attitude towards the forces of the Mutasallim, and their sending two hundred men to help Şādiq Khān three months later. Apparently, the 'Utūb, not sure of the winner, had to appease both. Because of earlier prejudices against the Banī Ka'b, and new hostilities with the Arabs of Abū Shahr, the 'Utūb were soon in conflict with both of these who were allies of the Persians.

The circumstances of the siege and occupation of Başra by the Persians had a far-reaching influence on Kuwait and Zubāra. In the first place, direct relations were established between Kuwait and the British East India Company's representatives in the Gulf. Kuwait became important as a centre for nearly all the caravans carrying goods between Başra and Aleppo during the period 1775-1779. Because of the enmity existing between the British and the Persians, goods coming from India, which could have been sent to Abū Shahr for conveyance to Aleppo via Başra, were unloaded at Zubāra and Kuwait.<sup>2</sup> This led to the accumulation of wealth at the two 'Utbī towns, and the jealousy of other Arab sea-powers, especially the Banī Ka'b and the Arabs of Abū Shahr. However, they were unable to prevent the establishment of 'Utbī-British relations.

"The recorded history of British relations with Kuwait," says Lorimer, "opens in 1775, when on the investment of Basrah

<sup>1</sup> Moore, Latouche, Abraham, to the C. of D. 'Eagle Snow in Bushire Road', 15. vii. 1775, in *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 17, dispatch No. 1089.

<sup>2</sup> Kuwait had always been referred to as Grain, Grane, Graine, while Zubāra was spelled Zeberra and Zebarra. This varied spelling occurs in the letters of the Başra Factory and in the works of English travellers.



by the Persians, the British desert mail from the Gulf to Aleppo began to be despatched from Kuwait instead of Zubair.”<sup>1</sup>

Although the latter town was occupied by the Persians,<sup>2</sup> not at the same time as Başra in 1776, but in 1778, by the middle of 1775 the desert mail of the English East India Company was forwarded from Kuwait.<sup>3</sup>

To the English East India Company, this desert route was of special importance, not only for forwarding mail to and from India but for trading purposes. For the former reason Kuwait was important to the English Factory of Başra. About four months after the Persian attack on Başra, dispatches were received via desert mail from Kuwait.<sup>4</sup> The Başra Factory sent the “desert express” from Zubair by hired messengers. Soon after Kuwait was selected as a mailing centre, messengers were obtained there. The mail-service, however, does not seem to have been efficient from the start. Very likely the reason was that the Factory had no representatives at Kuwait. To receive mail in Kuwait on time, and to arrange for the prompt departure of other mail, it was suggested that a civil officer of the Company should be stationed at that port. As there was none available at Başra in July 1776, Mr. Latouche asked Lieutenant Twiss, the Captain of the ‘Terrible’, to be responsible and arrangements were made at Kuwait.<sup>5</sup> The desert mail continued to be received and sent through Kuwait during the Persian occupation of Başra.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> LORIMER, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, i, p. 1002.

<sup>2</sup> Zubair was attacked and devastated by the Persians early in 1778. When Colonel Capper, on his way from Aleppo to Başra, reached Zubair on December 17th 1778, he found it destroyed. JAMES CAPPER, *Observations on Passage to India through Egypt, and across the Great Desert; with Occasional Remarks on the Adjacent Countries, and also Sketches of the different Routes* (London, 1784), pp. 81, 83.

<sup>3</sup> The letter dated July 15th, 1775, sent by Moore, Latouche and Abraham to London, may be the first desert mail sent via Kuwait.

<sup>4</sup> For the desert route to Aleppo in the eighteenth century, see Chapter VI.

<sup>5</sup> See Latouche to C. of D., 2. vii. 1776, *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 17, No. 1127.

<sup>6</sup> LORIMER, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, i, p. 1002.

Kuwait seems to have offered a solution to the difficulties of the English East India Company in exporting goods to the markets of the Middle East. In a letter to Mr. Latouche at Baṣra from the Consul at Aleppo dated June 11th, 1776, much is revealed about the situation at Kuwait and of British trade. Mr. Latouche, quoting that letter to the Court of Directors, wrote on July 24th, 1776:

"The Consul at Aleppo, in a letter to us dated the 11th June, has inserted the following paragraph:

'India and Surat Goods continue in Demand at the Metropolis. I hear two merchant Ships arrived at Bushire from those Parts — If the Town of Grain is suffered to remain neuter, Caravans may be made no doubt to and from thence to this Place, for as a long War will probably be caused by the Loss of Bussora, that City will be deserted unless Merchants can find some Method of carrying on Trade near it.<sup>1</sup> Grain seems to be well situated to serve as a Substitute to Zebere (Zubair), but that can only be whilst it remains independent for should the Persians take Possession of it, it will be dangerous for Merchants to bring Goods from thence, that will probably be prohibited by the Porte even to Europeans, therefore it is in the Interest of the Merchants Your way to represent the Necessity of Grain is remaining under Benechalid (Banī Khālid) Governors independent of the Persians'."

Mr. Latouche adds to the Consul's letter:

"We are very sensible that the thus opening a Communication with Aleppo and even Bagdat by the Way of Grain, if practicable, would be a most desirable Circumstance, especially as it might afford an Opportunity of disposing of the very considerable Quantities of Bengal and Surat goods now lying at

<sup>1</sup> The migration of merchants from Baṣra to Zubāra, and maybe other places in the area, took place soon after and during the Persian attack. See "Historical Sketch of the Uttoobee Arabs", etc., in *Bombay Selections*, Vol. XXIV, p. 363, where it is stated that a shaikh from Kuwait migrated to Zubāra with those merchants; see also WAHBA, *Jazīrat al-Qarn fī al Qarn al 'Ishrīn*, p. 96.

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Bombay from the Bussora merchants. Grain still continues unmolested by the Persians. We do not think however that the Merchants would attempt to send any goods across the desert, before Affairs are somewhat relieved from the Confusion which they are in at present.”<sup>1</sup>

It was not long before the Consul's expectations came true. Kuwait remained unmolested by the Persians and caravans carried trade from there to Baghdād and Aleppo. These caravans were unsafe in the desert. Often they were attacked by Arab tribes on orders from the Persian occupiers of Baṣra. Such a case was Shaikh Thāmir of the Muntafiq tribe, who attacked caravans from Kuwait to Baghdād in April 1777. He recognized Persian suzerainty and was encouraged by them. However, the Banī Khālid Arabs attacked the Muntafiq, and the caravan proceeded.<sup>2</sup> To reach Kuwait in safety caravans sometimes changed their route across the desert from Baghdād. “A large Sum of Goods which had been collecting some Time from Bushire and Muscat” was conveyed to Baghdād by a large caravan from Kuwait.<sup>3</sup>

In the latter part of 1777, British trade in 'Irāq and Persia was suffering very much from the burdens imposed by the governments of Abū Shahr and Baṣra on the British Factories.

“At Bushire,” says a letter from Latouche and Abraham, “we are almost as much exposed to Oppression as we are at Bus-sora. The Shaiks there interfere too much in the Trade of the Place; and the few Merchants with any Property who are there, are too much in a Combination to admit of our drawing any great Commercial Advantages from it wretched indeed as

<sup>1</sup> Latouche, Baṣra, to Court of Directors, 24. vi. 1776 *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 17, No. 1127. Mr. Latouche's letter should not imply that before 1775 there were no caravans travelling from Kuwait to Aleppo. In 1758, Ives contemplated travelling by such a caravan.

<sup>2</sup> Latouche and Abraham, Baṣra, to Court of Directors, 10. iv. 1777, *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 17, No. 1138.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

is the Situation of Bussora at Present it is much superior in Point of Trade than Bushire.”<sup>1</sup>

Now the factors at Baṣra thought of choosing another site for their Factory. Kuwait was considered but they still feared much the same treatment as at Abū Shahr and Baṣra. Also they feared being:

“too much exposed to the Persians, who there is Reason to imagine, would regard our settling there with a jealous eye and would throw all the Impediments of their power in our way.”<sup>2</sup>

The only other safe alternative was Khārij Island, where they hoped they might be free from “these Inconveniences.”<sup>3</sup>

Soon afterwards, on November 11th, 1777, Kuwait was visited by the English Company’s ship, the ‘Eagle’, to report on the site.<sup>4</sup> The harbour was found suitable for anchorage, and the town “has a slight Wall calculated for Musquetry” —

“However, it serves for the caravans for Aleppo and Bagdat to assemble with some security and free from Persian extortions.”

The Factors went on to say:

“In Future too it (Kuwait) might serve for Shipping bound to Bussora to take in Pilots for the River in case the Port of Bushire should at any Time be shut to them or the Shaiks there continue their present Impositions with Respect to the Pilots for Your Honours Cruizers, or/as we informed the honourable the President and Council in our Letter to them dated 24th December by the Eagle/ should they at any Time hence occasion to send us a Packet for Your Honours, the forwarding of which required particular Dispatch, by ordering

<sup>1</sup> Latouche and Abraham, Baṣra, 10. viii. 1777, to C. of D., *F.R.P.P.G.* Vol. 17, No. 1144.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Latouche and Abraham, Baṣra, 14.1.1778, to C. of D., *F.R.P.P.G.* Vol. 17, No. 1152.

the Vessel directly to Grain, and the Captain to dispatch the original overland from thence, particularly should the wind be unfavourable for him, we might receive it many Days sooner than we otherwise should do.”<sup>1</sup>

Messengers covered the distance between Kuwait and Baṣra in three days, while vessels on the river during the northwest winds, sometimes took twenty days or more.<sup>2</sup> In this way, Kuwait was of vast use to the desert mail and helped considerably in conveying Indian goods to the markets of the Middle East and Europe. The British, however, did not establish a factory there till about fifteen years later, in 1793, when the Baṣra Factory moved to Kuwait.

Owing to the misfortunes of Baṣra and Zubair, and the wise policy of Shaikh ‘Abd Allāh Āl-Ṣabāḥ in maintaining Kuwait’s neutrality, the town’s prosperity continued to flourish and the Shaikh’s relations with the English East India Company remained cordial. In fact, he was one of the Arab leaders who was given presents by the Factory.<sup>3</sup> However, these relations underwent strains which might have been disastrous, had it not been for the wise policy of the men at the Baṣra Factory.

Because of news received from Kuwait of the arrival of a French officer, M. Abraham, “One of the Factors from Basra,” went from Abū Shahr to Kuwait in twenty hours in the Company’s cruiser, the ‘Eagle’.<sup>4</sup> Captain de Bourge, the French officer lived

<sup>1</sup> Latouche and Abraham, Baṣra, 14.1.1778, to C. of D., *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 17, No. 1152.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Friendly relations between the Factory Residents and agents could solve nascent problems. Later in 1789 the Resident was asked to intervene in the question arising from the Mutasallim’s and Shaikh Thuwaynī’s refuge at Kuwait. It was mainly because the Resident was a friend of the Factory.

<sup>4</sup> BRYDGES, in his *Wahauy*, pp. 171-174, gives a detailed account of the event. He is there quoting Captain Capper’s version of the story. Captain Capper met M. de Bourge at Masqaṭ when the latter was on his way back to France via Baṣra. See CAPPER’s *Observations*, pp. 99-104. The same story is related by Mr. Abraham in detail. See Abraham to the C. of D., Grain, 7. xi. 1778, *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 17, No. 1161.

in Kuwait as the guest of Shaikh 'Abd Allāh Āl-Şabāḥ. The officer was carrying secret letters to the French in Pondicherry and Mauritius. He was travelling from Aleppo to the Persian Gulf when a party of Bedouin Arabs threatened him in the desert, about fifteen days journey from Baṣra. After shooting one tribesman, he was severely wounded by a sword-cut on the head. However, he saved his life by throwing himself on the "protection" of the oldest of the attackers. He promised to pay a sum equal to one hundred pounds sterling on the condition he be transported to Kuwait in safety. On his arrival there he borrowed the promised amount from an Armenian.<sup>1</sup> Then he wrote Monsieur Rousseau, the French Consul at Baṣra, asking that he be supplied with transportation for his journey to Pondicherry. Because the French Consul either refused, or hesitated to honour the request of his countryman, it was carried by an Arab messenger to the British Factory at Baṣra.<sup>2</sup> In this way the staff learned of Captain de Bourge's presence in Kuwait.<sup>3</sup>

Thus a difficult question was raised. A report had reached Baṣra that war had been declared between France and Britain,<sup>4</sup> and the Factors thought it the duty of British officials abroad to seize wandering French emissaries.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, the consequences to the British Resident, Mr. Latouche, were likely to be serious if he took action against Captain de Bourge on false rumours. The chief obstacle in the execution of the Resident's orders to Mr. Abraham, was the opposition of Shaikh 'Abd Allāh Āl-Şabāḥ. Though a friend of the British, he was strongly opposed to seizing a person enjoying his hospitality. His objections were withdrawn, principally, it seems, because of an assertion that Captain de Bourge was

<sup>1</sup> Armenian merchants were strongly established in the ports of the Gulf and Masqaṭ in the eighteenth century.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps to get money for the information.

<sup>3</sup> See Brydges, p. 175.

<sup>4</sup> Captain de Bourge seems to have said something about the war after his arrival in Kuwait. See Abraham to the C. of D., Grain, 7. xi. 1887. *F.R.P.P.G.* Vol. 17.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

a "fraudulent debtor."<sup>1</sup> Captain de Bourge and his messages were sent to the 'Eagle'<sup>2</sup> and from Baṣra he was sent as a captive to Bombay.

Mr. Latouche offered an explanation to the Court of Directors:<sup>3</sup>

"We were well aware of the Risque we ran in attempting to intercept (the French dispatches) but we thought our Duty to our Country in General at such a critical Season exacted it from us. We doubt not but that it will be of the utmost Consequence to your Affairs in India, the having thus not only sent our Honourable Superiors such early Intelligence of the War<sup>4</sup> but perhaps at the same Time laid open to them the Intentions of the French Government with respect to India..."<sup>5</sup>

While Colonel James Capper was proceeding to India via the Persian Gulf on January 24th, 1779, he met Captain de Bourge en route for Europe at Masqaṭ. Captain de Bourge had been released by the Governor of Bombay and authorised to return to France

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Abraham does not state clearly how he "gained the Shaikh to" his interest. See *Ibid.* See also BRYDGES, *Wahauby*, p. 176.

<sup>2</sup> The dispatches could not be deciphered because Captain de Bourge destroyed the key to the cypher, yet his diaries and other letters disclosed much of the French plans. For a full text of Mr. Abraham's account of the capture of Captain de Bourge and the details of his letters and diary, see Appendix, pp. 187-188.

<sup>3</sup> Sir Harford Jones Brydges' opinion of Shaikh 'Abd Allāh Al-Ṣabāh is of interest. The Shaikh refused to hand his guest, Captain de Bourge, to Mr. Abraham and refused the presents and the bribes the Factory offered him (*The Wahauby*, pp. 175-6). Brydges comments on the Shaikh's behaviour saying: "So that it was the old Shaikh's love of justice and not his avarice, that induced him to act as he did". See *Ibid.*, p. 176.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Latouche thought that the Baṣra Factory was the first to send the news of the declaration of war with the French after the seizure of M. de Bourge, but the news had arrived earlier via Suez and the Red Sea. See HOLDEN FURBER, "Overland Route to India", *J.I.H.*, Vol. XXIX, part II, August 1951, p. 125.

<sup>5</sup> In the same letter Abraham and Latouche add:

"We cannot indeed sufficiently congratulate ourselves on the good Fortune that attended the prudent Measures pursued by Mr. Abraham

overland. Capper told the story of de Bourge and the gentlemen of the Baṣra Factory in his *Observations*.<sup>1</sup>

The war between France and England brought Kuwait and Zubāra special importance. The French sent a strong fleet to the Persian Gulf to intercept the English East India Company's mail and to attack their vessels. Indeed the French attacked other ships in the Gulf for that purpose.<sup>2</sup> So it was still safer for the Company's mail to travel by the Arab vessels. Both Kuwait and Zubāra benefited from the conveyance of men and mail through the Persian Gulf and through the desert route from Masqaṭ to Aleppo. They seem to have been used by messengers and passengers as stations.<sup>3</sup>

This transfer of commercial activities from the western to the eastern shore of the Gulf did not please western trading centres. As already noted, a reason for the Persian attack on Baṣra was the transfer of the English East India Company's activity to its Factory in the latter town in preference to Bandar Rīq, Abū Shahr or Bandar 'Abbās.<sup>4</sup> We have seen that the Persians depended on the

for the obtaining of the Packets in Question. Had not particular Expedition been used by him, Monsieur de Bourg would have escaped. He had determined to leave Grain the Morning following the Night of Mr. Abraham's Arrival and had not Mr. Abraham taken the Sheik of Grain in a Manner of Surprise; had he given him the least Time for Deliberation, in all Probability, so strict are the Notions of the Arabs with Respect to Hospitality that no Consideration whatever would have induced the Sheik to suffer the Seizure."

(Latouche and Abraham to C. of D., November [undated] 1778, *F.R.P.P.G.* Vol. 17).

<sup>1</sup> CAPPER, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-104. Captain de Bourge arrived at Baṣra from Bombay on board the 'Success' after promising the authorities there not to return to India. A letter from Latouche and Abraham (Baṣra Factory) to the C. of D. dated Baṣra, 23. ii. 1779. *F.R.P.P.G.* Vol. 17. No. 1165.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Latouche to the C. of D., Baṣra, 20. vii. 1761. *F.R.P.P.G.* No. 1195.

<sup>3</sup> Latouche and Abraham to the C. of D., Baṣra, 31. x. 1778, *F.R.P.P.G.* Vol. 17, No. 1161. A French Marquis de Calern arrived by a caravan from Aleppo at Kuwait at the end of September 1778, and he was planning to go to Zubāra, whence he hoped to make the journey by sea to Masqaṭ. He seems to have been a French officer belonging to Pondicherry. See *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> See above, p. 92.



Arabs of the Persian shore for their naval operations.<sup>1</sup> With the death of Karīm Khān in 1779 and the absence of any other predominant political power in the Gulf, the opportunity for the Arab chiefs to pursue their independent policies became vast. From that time "may be dated the decline of Persian influence in the Gulf."<sup>2</sup> About the same time the Gulf gained increased importance "for orders were issued by the Porte prohibiting Christian vessels from trading to Suez."<sup>3</sup> This gave the Gulf ports new importance as outlets for goods from India and the East, to Aleppo and Constantinople. There can be little doubt that Kuwait benefited from that restriction as well.

In the second 'Utbī settlement in the south, prosperity reached a height which made her neighbours jealous and eager to attack the town at any moment.<sup>4</sup> Thus Shaikh Naṣr of Abū Shahr, who was then ruler of Baḥrain, planned an attack on the town. Early disputes between the 'Utūb of Kuwait and the Banī Ka'b<sup>5</sup> seem to have been revived. The Shaikh of Bandar Rīq, allied to both the Banī Ka'b and Shaikh Naṣr, was ready to join them in their proposed attack on the 'Utbī towns. By 1779, however, the 'Utūb seem to have had an armed fleet that could resist their aggression.<sup>6</sup> In the year 1780 the 'Utūb, both at Kuwait and Zubāra, were at war with the Banī Ka'b.<sup>7</sup> Though the circumstances of that war are not known, one can say that enmity between<sup>8</sup> the 'Utūb and the Banī Ka'b which started early in the 1760's continued to exist.

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 93.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Low, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, footnote p. 171.

<sup>3</sup> See DANVERS, *op. cit.*, p. 44. See Chapter VI, p. 174.

<sup>4</sup> See *Bombay Selections*. No. XXV, p. 140 and p. 364.

<sup>5</sup> See above, pp. 85-86.

<sup>6</sup> In a letter from Latouche and Abraham to the Court of Directors, Baṣra, 21. x. 1779, the Shaikh of Kuwait had been requested to send on board one of his gallivats two Englishmen coming from London to Maṣqaṭ, but he refused because he was expecting an attack from the Banī Ka'b. *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 17, No. 1177.

<sup>7</sup> LORIMER, *op. cit.*, I, i. p. 1003.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

The 'Utūb were expected to join the Pasha of Baghdād in his war against the Banī Ka'b later in 1780.<sup>1</sup> Yet that enmity with the Banī Ka'b was of less direct consequence to the success of the 'Utūb than the capture by the French of a "Muscat ship in 1781, the cargo of which is valued at 8 lacks of rupees." which was shared by the merchants of Baṣra, Qaṭīf and Zubāra.<sup>2</sup> The two French ships attacking other ships in the Gulf tried to intercept the English mail.<sup>3</sup>

However, the great threat to the 'Utūb did not come from the French, but from the Banī Ka'b and their allies, the Arabs of Abū Shahr and Bandar Rīq. There is no need to trace that threat earlier than 1780; suffice to say the 'Utūb found that by that time they could expect an attack from the Persian coast Arabs of the Gulf. That expected threat made the 'Utūb of Kuwait and Zubāra keep their fleet ready for emergency. The hostility between the Ottomans and the Banī Ka'b at that time, may have helped postpone an attack. This hostility was probably a result of the help offered by the Banī Ka'b to the Persians, during the 1775 attack on Baṣra. Thus the Banī Ka'b were on bad terms with the Mutasallim of Baṣra and the 'Utūb. The latter, on the other hand, were on good terms with the Mutasallim, and ready to join him if he wanted war against the Banī Ka'b. Otherwise "they wait, they say, until they see that the Bacha himself is really in earnest." They were ready for battle.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See a letter from Latouche to the C. of D., Baṣra, 25. iv. 1782, *F.R.P.P.G.* Vol. 17, No. 1214.

<sup>2</sup> See a letter from Latouche to the C. of D., Baṣra, 12. x. 1781, *F.R.P.P.G.* Vol. 17, No. 1202.

<sup>3</sup> See a letter from Latouche to the C. of D., Baṣra, 20. vii. 1781, *F.R.P.P.G.* Vol. 17, No. 1195. The attack on the Masqaṭ and other ships was a clear indication that the French knew that the English mail was carried by other vessels than the English.

<sup>4</sup> In a letter from Mr. Latouche to the C. of D. dated Baṣra, 25. iv. 1782, he speaks of "two Turkish ketches at Kuwait" which were expected to be brought to Baṣra "under the protection of the Grain Gallivats". And since the Pasha was at war with the Banī Ka'b it can be concluded that the 'Utūb sea

The rise of 'Utbī sea-power seems to have been motivated by various factors. In the first place, the 'Utūb were merchants and whenever their trade grew, they added vessels to their fleet. There can be little doubt that their trade, though its volume is not certain, grew after the siege and occupation of Baṣra in 1775-1779. This increase in the number of trading vessels must have been accompanied by buying and building armed vessels to protect the trading fleet. This was necessary after the death of Karīm Khān. Evidently he was held in such awe by the Arab pirates of Rās al-Khayma or Masqaṭ, or suppressed them so that they made no depredations. Soon after his death, the Qawāsim and the Masqaṭ tribes were at war. Depredations on Arab vessels using the Gulf became frequent and the Arab maritime states quarrelled among themselves.<sup>1</sup>

"Shaikh Abdoola of Ormus was at variance with Karrack (Khārij); the Shaikh of al Haram with the Jamia people; and the Uttoobees of Zobara and Grane with the Chaab."<sup>2</sup>

Thus the absence of a major power in the Persian Gulf gave the Arab maritime forces on both littorals the opportunity to fight each other because of old or new grievances.

power of Kuwait was in a position to defy the Ka'b's by thus escorting three ketches to Baṣra. See the letter in the *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 17, No. 1214. Shaikh 'Abd Allāh Āl-Ṣabāḥ by the 1780's was enlisted among the influential chiefs to whom the East India Company offered presents because those chiefs had it in their power to hinder the Company's trade and mail. See a list of Abstract of charges general — Baṣra Factory from 1st of May 1780 to the 31st of April 1782, in *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 17, No. 1216.

<sup>1</sup> Of the activity of the Qawāsim after the death of Karīm Khān, says Warden:

"The Ras-ool-Khyrna fleet, in consequences of the decline of the Persian ascendancy in the Gulf, being constantly on the cruise, roused almost every petty chief to fit out armed boats, manned by lawless crews, under no control, but who depended solely on plunder for their maintenance, which they indiscriminately practised. This state of affairs arose out of the war between Ras-ool-Khyrna and Muskat."

See *Bombay Selections*, XXIV, p. 301.

<sup>2</sup> *Bombay Selections*, XXIV, p. 301.

Among these was the traditional enmity of the 'Utūb and the Banī Ka'b.<sup>1</sup> The latter became the allies of the Arabs of Abū Shahr and Bandar Rīq during the Baṣra siege. Thus the power struggle between the 'Utūb and those Arabs of the Persian littoral, which became apparent after 1779,<sup>2</sup> found an expression in the Baḥrain affair. This ended in the establishment of the 'Utūb in the Islands and the collapse of power of the Arabs of Abū Shahr and consequently of the Persian Shāhs.

The conquest of Baḥrain by the 'Utūb raises certain questions that must be answered by both contemporary and later sources. First, the question of whether the 'Utūb of Kuwait or the 'Utūb of Zubāra were the first to occupy the Islands. Secondly, the problem of fixing a date for that conquest. In addition, there are the questions relating to the progress of the conquest and the reasons given for it.

On the first question contemporary documents and the local tradition clash. The local tradition preserved by Āl-Khalīfa suggests that the 'Utūb of Zubāra, the Āl-Khalīfa and others, were the only 'Utbi element in the capture of Baḥrain.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand some dispatches of the English Factory of Baṣra, and others who drew on them, state that the 'Utūb of Kuwait were the first to occupy the Islands.<sup>4</sup> There is no doubt that the contemporary documents are correct, for in addition to stating that fact, they give details of the conquest not mentioned in local tradition.

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 96.

<sup>2</sup> LORIMER, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, i, p. 839. Lorimer states that Karīm Khān Zand commissioned Shaikh Naṣr of Abū Shahr to reduce Zubāra in that year.

<sup>3</sup> The author was told of this by Shaikh 'Abd Allāh b. Khālid Āl-Khalīfa in July 1959. AL-NABHĀNĪ in his *Al-Tuḥfa, Ta'rīkh al-Baḥrain*, pp. 123-125, mentions Āl-Khalīfa and the people of Zubāra as the only attackers of Baḥrain; he does not mention the 'Utūb of Kuwait or even Āl-Jalāhima as sharers in the battle.

<sup>4</sup> See a letter from Mr. Latouche (Baṣra Resident) to the C. of D., 4. xi. 1782, *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 17, No. 1230. See also LORIMER, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, i, pp. 839, 1003; and "Historical Sketch of the Uttoobee", in *Bombay Selections*, XXIV, p. 264.

As to the date of the conquest and occupation of Bahrain, available sources vary, although generally they suggest the year 1783 for the occupation and the transfer of power in the Islands from Shaikh Naṣr of Abū Shahr to the Āl-Khalifa of Zubāra. However, after the establishment of the Āl-Khalifa at Zubāra in 1766 and with the rapid growth of the 'Utbī sea trade, Bahrain must have been a port of call for the 'Utbī trading and fishing vessels earlier than the conquest.<sup>1</sup> Lorimer, drawing on the Bombay Government records, gives the date as 1783.<sup>2</sup> But as Lorimer does not always give precise reference to his sources, in selecting that year he may have depended on Saldanha's *Selections*,<sup>3</sup> or the Bombay Government *Selections*.<sup>4</sup> Yet in the Factory Records of the East India Company there is a document dated November 4th, 1782, which clearly states that the 'Utūb had "lately taken and plundered Bahreen." This document leaves little doubt that the capture of Bahrain by the 'Utūb was before 1783.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps the event referred to was one of a series of attacks on Bahrain that began earlier than 1782. Nonetheless, the wording of the Resident, Mr. Latouche, is clear and decisive. In fact he states that the Shaikh of Abū Shahr tried to come to terms with the 'Utūb, meanwhile preparing for a retaliatory expedition against their states at Kuwait and Zubāra.<sup>6</sup>

It has been established that the 'Utūb were on bad terms with the Banī Ka'b, the Arabs of Bandar Rīq and Abū Shahr. It may have been because of rivalry for trade in the Gulf; or a feeling of

<sup>1</sup> In his attempt to legalise the Persian claim to Bahrain, Dr. Abbas FAROUGH, in his book *The Bahrain Islands*, 750-1951, (New York, 1951), pp. 70-71, states that the "Āl-Khalifa persuaded the Sheik of Bushir, who had authority over Bahrain, to lease them the island." This lease, if it had ever existed, must have taken place in the 1770's. Captain Taylor states that the 'Utūb reduced Bahrain in 1194/1779. See *Bombay Selections*, No. XXIV, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> LORIMER, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, i, p. 839.

<sup>3</sup> See J. A. SALDANHA, *Selections from the State Papers*. The author gives a selection of 1780 and leaves 1782. No. cclxxxix.

<sup>4</sup> See No. XXIV of the *Selections*, pp. 364-365.

<sup>5</sup> See the document in *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 17, dispatch No. 1230.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

contempt for the Banī Ka'b and their allies because of their inter-marriage with non-Arabs; or a clash of Sunnī and Shī'ī creeds; or a combination of all these. Indeed, the 'Utūb were always on the alert, expecting an attack from the other shore of the Gulf, especially after the Persian occupation of Baṣra in 1776.

However, the 'Utbī expansion in Baḥrain must be considered as a natural phenomenon. The 'Utbī settlement at Zubāra which rapidly grew into a fortified and walled town<sup>1</sup> could not satisfy the needs of the 'Utbī community, whose population was increased by arrivals from Kuwait and Najd<sup>2</sup> and who hoped to share in the water and plantations of Baḥrain. The 'Utūb could not think of expansion on the mainland because they were the allies and proteges of the Banī Khālid and it would not be easy to fight against the Arabs on land. On the other hand, with the help of their sea vessels they could defy other maritime forces and thus protect an island such as Baḥrain. Whether the 'Utūb at that early period were aware of the Wahhābī danger is another factor that might have driven them to the conquest. It is said that Shaikh Khalīfa b. Muḥammad Āl-Khalīfa, then the Shaikh of Zubāra, bore anti-Wahhābī sentiments.<sup>3</sup> The pearl fishery and the rich palm groves of Baḥrain may have been among the attractions of the new coveted territory.

However, by the 1780's circumstances on the Persian Gulf seem to have made an attack on Baḥrain by the 'Utūb not only desirable, but necessary. The absence of a strong Persian Shāh allowed the Arabs of the Persian coast to behave almost independently of supervision or advice from the Shāh. Thus the

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 65 ff.

<sup>2</sup> The siege of Baṣra obliged many merchants to migrate to Zubāra. This is clearly stated in contemporary writings. See Latouche to the C.of D., Baṣra, 7. xi. 1782. *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 17. About the same time and later others migrated from Najd because of the Wahhābī threat.

<sup>3</sup> See *Ta'rikh al-Baḥrain*, p. 122, where Nabḥānī quotes two verses by Shaikh Khalīfa which show that he had no high opinion of Wahhābism.

long-awaited attack of the Persian littoral Arabs became imminent and war between them seemed inevitable.

After the diversion of much of the sea trade to Zubāra, the reduction of that place became an important objective to the Persian Government. Commencing in 1777, several unsuccessful attempts were made upon the place by the Shaikh of Abū Shahr, following Persian instructions.<sup>1</sup> In 1780, the Banī Ka'b were at war with the 'Utūb of both Zubāra and Kuwait, possibly in the same connection, but more probably in consequence of piracies of the former.<sup>2</sup>

According to a tradition held by the Āl-Khalīfa, probably from about 1780, the people of Baḥrain, being Shī'as, forbade some of Khalīfas' servants to buy palm tree trunks from Sitra, an island of Baḥrain. As a result of the quarrel a servant was killed. The Zubāra inhabitants retaliated by attacking Sitra and killing five inhabitants.<sup>3</sup> The Sitra people reported the matter to their Shaikh Naṣr, who prepared for a retaliatory expedition against Zubāra.<sup>4</sup>

Whatever the reasons for the war, by 1782 the conflicting parties were ready for the decisive battle for Baḥrain. At that time it seems each party sharing in the struggle found allies in the various maritime Arab forces of the Gulf.

On the Abū Shahr side, there were the Shaikh of the Banī Ka'b, of Bandar Rīq, of Hurmuz and the Qawāsīm. On the 'Utbī side, who took the defensive in the early stages of the fight, it is not possible to ascertain any allies. However, it is related that as early as 1779 the Sulṭān of 'Umān sent a ship to Zubāra on a friendly errand.<sup>5</sup> It was expected that the Sulṭān of 'Umān would side with

<sup>1</sup> LORIMER, *op. cit.*, I, i, p. 788.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> See *Ta'rīkh al-Baḥrain*, pp. 123-124.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* Persian rule over Baḥrain was exercised through the medium of the Arab Shaikh of Abū Shahr who was by all means the lord of the Island, and his recognition of the authority of the Shāh of Persia over Baḥrain and other parts of the Abū Shahr neighbourhood was only nominal.

<sup>5</sup> See LORIMER, *op. cit.*, I, ii, p. 788.

the 'Utüb as long as his traditional enemies, the Qawāsim, were on the other side. However, the Sultān is not known to have joined any party as far as the 1782 Bahrain affair is concerned. But as early as 1779 the 'Utüb found allies in the Arabs of the Qaṭar peninsula in the defence of Zubāra against the aggressors.

Though the 'Utüb were on the defensive in the early stages of the fight for Bahrain, they were reported early in 1782 to have seized at the entrance of Shaṭṭ-al-'Arab "several boats belonging to Bushire and Bunderick."<sup>1</sup> Shaikh Naṣr of Abū Shahr was reported to have been:

"collecting a marine, as well as a military force, at Bushire, Bunderick, and other Persian ports — he gives out that he intends to revenge these hostilities by attacking Zebarra."<sup>2</sup>

He was reported also to "have wrote (sic) for a supply of money to Aly Morat Caun" at Iṣfahān.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Latouche commented on these preparations thus:

"Notwithstanding this Show of Vigor, however, it is said, that he (Shaikh Naṣr) has lately sent to Grain to request a Peace, but that the Shaik had refused to grant it, unless Shaik Nassir pays him half the Revenues of Bahreen and a large annual Tribute also for Bushire."<sup>4</sup>

Mr. Latouche goes on to say in the next paragraph:

"It is not many Years since Grain, was obliged to pay a large Tribute to the Chaub, and that the Name of Zebarra, was scarcely known. On the Persians attacking Bussora, one of the Shaiks of Grain, retired to Zebarra, with many of the principal People. Some of the Bussora Merchants also retired thither. A great Part of the Pearl and India Trade, by this

<sup>1</sup> Latouche to Court of Directors, 4. xi. 1782, *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 17, No. 1230.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Latouche to Court of Directors, 4. xi. 1782, *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 17, No. 1230.



means entered there and at Grain, during the Time that the Persians were in Possession of Bussora, and those Places have increased so much in Strength and Consequence, that they have for some Time past set the Chaub at Defiance, have gained very considerable Advantages against him, and is now under no Apprehensions from the Force Shaik Nassir threatens to collect against them.”<sup>1</sup>

However, Shaikh Naṣr found it necessary to proceed against Zubāra to avenge those 'Utbi depredations, especially after the capture of a “Bushire Gallivat that had been sent to Bahreen to receive its annual tribute” by the 'Utbi vessels.<sup>2</sup> He prepared an expedition for the destruction of his powerful rival; in this he was helped by the Shaikhs of Bandar Rīq, Ganāvuah, Dushistan and other areas on the Persian coast. The fleet sailed from Abū Shahr for Baḥrain with two thousand Arabs under the command of Shaikh Muḥammad, a nephew of Shaikh Naṣr.<sup>3</sup> This fleet —

“though deemed sufficient to attack Zobara, it appeared to be Shaik Nassir's object to bring the Arabs to terms by blockading their port, for which purpose the Persian fleet kept constantly cruising between Zobara and Bahreen.”<sup>4</sup>

#### THE SHAIKH OF THE QAWĀSIM AS MEDIATOR.

Meanwhile Shaikh Rāshid b. Maṭar, the retired Shaikh of the Qawāsim,<sup>5</sup> played the part of mediator, but his efforts failed because the most the 'Utūb agreed to concede was to return the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *Bombay Selections*, No. XXIV, p. 364.

<sup>3</sup> AL-NABHANĪ states in his *Ta'rikh al-Baḥrain*, p. 124, that Shaikh Naṣr was the Commander.

<sup>4</sup> *Bombay Selections*, No. XXIV, p. 364.

<sup>5</sup> Shaikh Rāshid retired because of old age and his son Ṣaqr succeeded him. The Qawāsim were on the Persian side because the 'Utūb were said to have captured a boat belonging to the Qawāsim and put eighteen of the crew to death. See LORMER, *op. cit.*, I, i, p. 634.

plunder they had taken in Baḥrain.<sup>1</sup> These negotiations failing, the Abū Shahr troops landed at Zubāra with the hope of storming its fort, which they expected to reduce with little opposition. The attackers, however, had scarcely landed, when they were attacked by a force much greater than they expected, which sailed from the fort. After an obstinate conflict, they threw down their arms, fled, and embarked on their boats. As a result of this battle Shaikh Muḥammad, "some men of consequence belonging to the Shaikh of Hurmuz and a nephew of Shaikh Rāshid" were killed.<sup>2</sup>

The 'Utūb of Kuwait seem not to have joined in this battle. Probably they expected to be the first to be attacked, as they were nearest to the Banī Ka'b and the territory of Abū Shahr. The news of the attack on Zubāra must have reached Kuwait late, for they were reported to have captured a vessel of Shaikh Naṣr which was carrying news of his defeat at Zubāra and which urged his son in Baḥrain to do his best to defend the island until reinforcements arrived. The Kuwaiti fleet intercepted that ill-fated vessel and thus learned of conditions at Zubāra and Baḥrain.<sup>3</sup>

The 'Utbī fleet seems to have consisted of six large vessels and many smaller boats. It was sailing towards Zubāra as a relief<sup>4</sup> to the besieged town. The information intercepted in the Abū Shahr boat was valuable and led the Kuwaiti vessels to adopt a "prompt

<sup>1</sup> Before Shaikh Rāshid, the Shaikh of Bandar Rīq tried to mediate but his efforts were not fruitful. See *Bombay Selections*, No. XXIV, p. 364.

<sup>2</sup> See *Bombay Selections*, No. XXIV, p. 364. It is worthwhile noting in this context that the 'Utūb of Zubāra were helped in repelling the besiegers by most of the tribes inhabiting Qaṭar. A special mention of Āl-Bin 'Alī of Furaiḥa town is made by Nabḥānī. See AL-NABḤĀNĪ, *Ta'rikh al-Baḥrain*, p. 125. Lorimer mentions other tribes of Qaṭar who helped in the occupation of Baḥrain. See *Gazetteer*, I, i, p. 840.

<sup>3</sup> See *Bombay Selections*, No. XXIV, p. 28. In his "Extracts" Captain Taylor suggests that Shaikh Naṣr was at the head of the besieging army and on his way back to Abū Shahr, he sent the news to his son whom he had left at Baḥrain to look after the Island. See *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> LORIMER, *op. cit.*, I, i, p. 839.

and decisive measure." They immediately sailed to Baḥrain and seized the principal forts.<sup>1</sup>

It is not clear whether the 'Utūb of Zubāra joined their cousins of Kuwait in the early stages of the battle at Manāma in Baḥrain.<sup>2</sup> Though the Āl-Khalifa tradition of the conquest attributes the achievement to Aḥmad b. Khalifa<sup>3</sup> and the Arab tribes of Qaṭar, it denies the part played by the 'Utūb of Kuwait.<sup>4</sup> Earlier accounts of the event by Mr. Warden and Captain Taylor state quite clearly that the Kuwaiti role was decisive.<sup>5</sup>

To return to the conquest of Baḥrain. The 'Utūb of Kuwait were joined there as quickly as possible, by the 'Utūb of Zubāra and Ruwais,<sup>6</sup> and by contingents from various tribes of Qaṭar. Among the latter were Āl-Musallam from Ḥuwaila, Āl-Bin 'Alī from Fuwairāṭ, Sūdān from Dōḥa, Āl-Bū 'Ainain from Wakrah, Kibīsa from Khōr Ḥasan, Ṣulūṭah from Dōḥa, Mana'a from Abū Dhalūf and the Na'im Bedouins from the interior of the promontory.<sup>7</sup> The attacking 'Utūb outnumbered the garrisons of the forts and seem to have met with no difficulty in occupying the forts of Manāma and Muḥarraḡ, the two major towns of Baḥrain. Other villages seem not to have resisted, for the garrisons of the forts were the only fighting body.

<sup>1</sup> See *Bombay Selections*, XXIV, p. 365. Lorimer, in recording the event, states that this Kuwaiti expedition ran to Manāma, the capital of Baḥrain, seized and set fire to the town and shut the Persian garrison in the citadel. See LORDMER, *op. cit.*, I, ii, p. 839. Lorimer speaks of the "Persian garrison", by which should be understood Shaikh Naṣr's garrisons who were most probably Arabs.

<sup>2</sup> Local tradition kept by the Āl-Khalifa makes no mention of any sort of Kuwaiti help in that respect, though it asserts the great help the tribes of Qaṭar gave. Al-Nabhāni gives no mention of the 'Utūb of Kuwait in the Baḥrain affair. He is most probably chronicling after the Āl-Khalifa tradition.

<sup>3</sup> He was officiating as Shaikh on behalf of his father Khalifa, the ruler of Zubāra, who was away on pilgrimage to Makka. See *Ta'rikh al-Baḥrain*, p. 122.

<sup>4</sup> Shaikh 'Abd Allāh b. Khālid Āl-Khalifa is of the opinion of his family respecting this fact.

<sup>5</sup> See their "sketches" in *Bombay Selections*, pp. 28-29 and pp. 364-365.

<sup>6</sup> Āl-Jalāhim & division of the 'Utūb had settled at the last place in Qaṭar to the north of Zubāra.

<sup>7</sup> See LORDMER, *op. cit.*, I, i, pp. 839-840.

The occupation of the islands seems to have taken place a month after the return of Shaikh Naṣr to Abū Shahr from his lost battle against Zubāra. Shaikh Naṣr, according to one report, returned to Abū Shahr on the 12th June 1782, and on the 28th July of the same year, the garrisons of Baḥrain capitulated to the 'Utūb. On the 5th August, 1782, they reached Abū Shahr on their way back from Baḥrain.<sup>1</sup> Thus by the end of 1782, Baḥrain was transformed from a Persian dependency<sup>2</sup> into an integral part of the 'Utbī states.

Neither Shaikh Naṣr nor the Shāh could reconcile themselves to the loss of the islands, and efforts were made to reconquer Baḥrain and destroy the 'Utūb of Zubāra and Kuwait. At the same time, Shaikh Aḥmad, surnamed the Conqueror by the 'Utūb<sup>3</sup> of Baḥrain just after the conquest, lost no time in consolidating his power in the Islands. In 1783 Shaikh Aḥmad became the first ruler of Baḥrain and Zubāra. That year his father Khalifa died at Makka while on the pilgrimage.

In establishing his power over the Islands Shaikh Aḥmad distributed some of the booty among those who shared in the battle for Baḥrain with the Āl-Khalifa. It is not certain what each of the partners was allotted. However, Āl-Ṣabāḥ of Kuwait seem to have returned to the town after the halt in military operations. The other important division of the 'Utūb, Āl-Jalāhima, who appear to have been helpful in the occupation of Baḥrain, expected a larger share of the booty and seem to have asked for a footing at the place.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *Bombay Selections*, XXIV, p. 365. The same source gives that Shaikh Rāshid of Rās al-Khayma accompanied the garrisons to Abū Shahr. *Ibid*.

<sup>2</sup> See below.

<sup>3</sup> Local tradition plays upon the word "Khalifa" and dates the conquest of Baḥrain by the following sentence: *Ṣāra Aḥmad fī Awāl Khalīfa*, meaning: "Aḥmad became the ruler of Awāl", i.e. Baḥrain. The calculation of the letters in the Arabic sentence gives the year 1197/1782-3 as the time when the conquest was completed. I was told of this sentence by Shaikh 'Abd Allāh Āl-Khalifa and it is given as well by Nabḥānī. See *Ta'rikh al-Baḥrain*, p. 126.

<sup>4</sup> Formerly the Āl-Jalāhima had been humiliated by Āl-Khalifa at Zubāra and driven out of that town to Ruwais.

What they really asked for is not definitely stated in any available source. However, their demands were not fulfilled, and they departed indignantly from Bahrain and settled a while at Khārij Island and at Abū Shahr.<sup>1</sup> The Āl-Jalāhima were then under the rule of four sons of Jābir. One of them, Raḥma, perhaps after a quarrel with his brothers, usurped power. Another brother, 'Abd Allāh b. Jābir, sought refuge at Masqaṭ where he hoped for aid to fight Raḥma.<sup>2</sup> The Āl-Jalāhima do not seem to have stayed long at Khārij and Abū Shahr;<sup>3</sup> they were reported to have returned to Qaṭar to settle, this time not at Ruwais, but at Khōr Ḥasan, north of Zubāra. With the ascendancy of Raḥma and his choice of piracy as a livelihood for his tribe, he soon became "the scourge of the Āl-Khalifa."<sup>4</sup>

Shaikh Aḥmad, however, apparently did not transfer the seat of government from Zubāra to Bahrain immediately after the conquest. He is reported to have returned to Zubāra, leaving one of his relatives, with headquarters at the Dīwān fort of Manāma town, to rule the Islands and guard against a Persian threat.<sup>5</sup> Shaikh Aḥmad spent summers at Bahrain and the rest of the year at Zubāra until his death in 1796; he was buried at Manāma, and succeeded by his son Salmān, who chose al-Rafā' for his residence.<sup>6</sup>

Despite the fact that the Āl-Khalifa continued to hold Zubāra as their headquarters and centre for their mercantile activities, the acquisition of the Bahrain Islands had far-reaching consequences for the political and economic development of the 'Utbī States.

<sup>1</sup> See *Bombay Selections*, XXIV, p. 522.

<sup>2</sup> *Bombay Selections*, XXIV, p. 522. also Lorimer, *op. cit.*, I, i, p. 840.

<sup>3</sup> It is not clear why Āl-Jalāhima chose Abū Shahr for their temporary settlement after their expulsion from Bahrain. Still it may have been because they thought Shaikh Naṣr might take Bahrain again and thus enable them to settle in the Islands, a better place than Qaṭar.

<sup>4</sup> See LORIMER, *op. cit.*, I, i, p. 840.

<sup>5</sup> See AL-NABHĀNĪ, *Al-Tuhfa, Ta'rikh al-Bahrain*, p. 127.

<sup>6</sup> This choice may have been based on health grounds, for al-Rafā' lies on a hill, unlike Manāma, which is rather low, being situated on a plain. The Arabic word *rafā'* means to raise.

For the geographical position of the Baḥrain Islands and their comparatively great wealth<sup>1</sup> offered any enterprising merchant a chance for rapid and steady income. The 'Utūb seem to have been aware of this fact. Add to this the confused condition of Baṣra and the unsettled state of affairs in Persia and it is easily understood how the 'Utūb benefited from the newly acquired territory. The pearl trade of the Gulf which had always been centred in Baḥrain was now theirs. Many rich merchants with large interests in the Indian trade were at Zubāra;<sup>2</sup> and the 'Utbi fleet was in a position to play a dominant role in the freight trade of the Persian Gulf.<sup>3</sup>

However, this commercial and political success brought with it many rivalries that did not exist before 1782. The conquest added Shaikh Rāshid of Rās al-Khayma, his son, and Shaikh 'Abd Allāh of Hurmuz to the old enemies, namely the Banī Ka'b, the Arabs of Bandar Rīq and Abū Shahr. A more dangerous threat to the 'Utūb at Baḥrain was from the Sulṭān of Masqaṭ, who had earlier claimed sovereignty over Baḥrain.<sup>4</sup> But the Sulṭān did not become a threat to the 'Utūb until the closing years of the eighteenth century. He was reported to have "preserved strict neutrality" towards the struggle that ensued between the 'Utūb and their enemies at and after the time of the conquest.<sup>5</sup> This attitude of the Sulṭān may be accounted for on the following grounds. Those who were struggling for supremacy in Baḥrain were the 'Utūb, who had so far no grievances against the Sulṭān, and the other Arabs of the Persian coast, including the Qawāsim, the traditional enemies of Masqaṭ, were his enemies. If he were to join the 'Utūb, he would lose his claim to

<sup>1</sup> The comparison is made with Qaṭar and other uncultivated areas of Eastern Arabia such as Kuwait itself.

<sup>2</sup> See letter from Latouche to the Court of Directors, Baṣra, 4. xi. 1782, *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 17, No. 1230.

<sup>3</sup> See "Report on the Trade of Arabia", in SALDANHA, *Selections from State Papers*, p. 409.

<sup>4</sup> See above, p. 34.

<sup>5</sup> *Bombay Selections*, p. 171.

Baḥrain as a former tributary to Masqaṭ,<sup>1</sup> and he would not join the others because they were his enemies. Aḥmad b. Sa'īd, moreover, was by 1780 too old to start a war. His death on December 15th, 1783 was followed by a struggle for the throne by his three sons.<sup>2</sup> Thus Masqaṭ was not in a position to interfere in Baḥrain.

However, the fact that the Sulṭān of Masqaṭ did not intervene did not stop the Arabs of the Persian coast from planning a reoccupation of Baḥrain, and the other 'Utbī land at Kuwait and Qaṭar. But it seems that by the 1870's the 'Utūb had a strong naval power that could withstand any attack on their territories.

"During the latter part of the year 1783 preparations were on foot for an expedition on a large scale by the Shaikhs of Būshīr and Hormuz, assisted by Persian troops and by the Shaikh of the Qawāsim, against Zubārah and Kuwait; but no armament actually sailed."<sup>3</sup>

Preparations for that purpose were renewed at the close of the following year. On 12th February, 1785, Shaikh Naṣr proceeded by land to Kungūn, and the Abū Shahr and Bandar Rīq fleets sailed for that area on the 21st; there they were to be rejoined by the Shaikhs of Hurmuz and Rās al-Khayma. A small force from Shīrāz had already arrived at Kungūn to join the expedition.<sup>4</sup>

"But the death of 'Alī Murād Khān of Shīrāz dispelled the danger which thus threatened the Āl-Khalīfa of Baḥrain during the next few years, while the Shīrāz Government laboured under domestic difficulties, the Shaikhs of Baḥrain remained unmolested."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> See MILES, *op. cit.*, II., p. 281.

<sup>3</sup> See *Bombay Selections*, XXIV, p. 365, and LORIMER, *op. cit.*, I, i, p. 840. In a letter from Baṣra to the Secret Committee dated 17th december, 1783, Mr. Latouche speaks of the Banī Ka'b's preparations for an attack on Kuwait and Baṣra. He speaks as well of Shaikh Naṣr of Abū Shahr as an ally of the Banī Ka'b. See *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 17, No. 1262.

<sup>4</sup> See *Bombay Selections*, Vol. XXIV, pp. 365-366.

<sup>5</sup> LORIMER, *op. cit.*, I, i, p. 840.

This may also be attributed to the death of Shaikh Naṣr on the 11th April, 1789.<sup>1</sup>

But in Kuwait the 'Utūb were having difficulties with Sulaymān Pasha of Baghdād. Sulaymān lost his control of Baṣra in 1787 when its Mutasallim Muṣṭafā Aghā tried to govern the town independently of orders from Baghdād. Sulaymān Pasha, who had been the Mutasallim of Baṣra before the Persian occupation of the town in 1776, still hoped to direct the affairs of the place after becoming Pasha of Baghdād in 1780. Thus he started an expedition to reduce Baṣra, when Thuwaynī, the Shaikh of the strongest Arab tribe near Baṣra, joined hands with the Mutasallim. In 1787 Thuwaynī established himself as governor of the town and sent the Muftī of Baṣra to Constantinople to persuade the authorities to install him as governor of Baṣra and its neighbourhood.

As a result of Sulaymān's expedition, Muṣṭafā Aghā, his brother Ma'rūf Aghā, Thuwaynī and many others who took part in the insurrection against the Pasha of Baghdād, sought refuge at Kuwait with its Shaikh, 'Abd Allāh b. Ṣabāḥ. The Pasha and his Kaya demanded they be turned over to them, but he refused. On the Shaikh's refusal the Pasha asked the Resident of the English Factory at Baṣra to intervene, but the latter refused to share in the expedition which the Pasha was planning against Kuwait.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Manesty in a letter to the Shaikh 'Abd Allāh b. Ṣabāḥ, dated 17th April, 1789, informed the latter of the Pasha's plan to march against Kuwait unless the refugees were handed over.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Shaikh Naṣr's death is mentioned in a letter from Manesty and Jones to the Secret Committee, dated Baṣra, 29th June, 1879. See *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 18, No. 1520.

<sup>2</sup> See a letter from Mr. S. Manesty, the Resident, and his Joint Factor, Mr. H. Johnes, to the Secret Committee, 29. vi. 1789, *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 18, No. 1532. It is interesting to note that Mr. Manesty and Mr. Jones observe that the Kaya was not really in earnest in asking the Shaikh to deliver Muṣṭafā Aghā because he deemed him a great rival, if he was pardoned by the Pasha and if he stayed in Baghdād. See *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Manesty to Shaikh 'Abd Allāh b. Ṣabāḥ, *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 18, No. 1532.



Shaikh 'Abd Allāh, in his reply to Mr. Manesty, said that he was ready to fight against the Pasha to protect his guests if war was otherwise inevitable.<sup>1</sup> In the meantime, Shaikh 'Abd Allāh assured the Resident and Sulaymān Pasha that they need not fear an attack on Baṣra as long as they remained in Kuwait under his protection.<sup>2</sup>

The fears of the Pasha were not without foundation, for —

“In the beginning of the month of July, Shaikh Twiney assembled a Force at Jarra (Jahra village), a Place in the Vicinity of the Town of Grain where he was joined by Mustafa Aga the late Mussaleem, and about one hundred and fifty Turkish Horsemen.”

Their small united army advanced towards Baṣra and

“on the 10th July encamped at Saffwan (Safwān) a hill at about 30 miles distance from it.”

They were met there by Ḥamūd b. Thāmir, the new Shaikh of the Muntafiq, and the new Mutasallim of Baṣra. Thuwaynī and Muṣ-ṭafā Aghā were defeated. The former sought refuge with Shaikh Ghuthbān of the Banī Ka'b, while the latter, accompanied by his brother and some Turks, fled to Kuwait. There they sold their horses and proceeded to Masqaṭ “with the intention of repairing to Mecca.”<sup>3</sup>

The determined behaviour of the Shaikh of Kuwait shows plainly that the power he could exert against any meditated attack on his territory was strong enough to repel any aggressor. It has already been seen how he defied the Banī Ka'b and Shaikh Naṣr of Abū Shahr in 1782, and how his fleet led the attack on Baḥrain

<sup>1</sup> Shaikh 'Abd Allāh to Manesty, 30.iv.1789, *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 18, No. 1532.

<sup>2</sup> See text of the above letters in the appendix, pp. 191-192.

<sup>3</sup> Manesty and Jones to Sir Robert Ainslie, the British Ambassador at Constantinople, Baṣra, 20.ix.1789. *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 18, No. 1537A. The story of Thuwaynī's insurrection is given in detail by IBN SANAD in *Maṭāli' al-Su'ūd*, ff. 121-125.

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at the end of the same year.<sup>1</sup> The established authority of Shaikh 'Abd Allāh b. Ṣabāḥ and his "excellent character" gained him the respect of the English Factory at Baṣra. Mr. Manesty and Mr. Jones, when difficulties arose with the Mutasallim of that town and Sulaymān Pasha, thought that Kuwait could replace Baṣra as a centre for the English Factory.<sup>2</sup> Friendship between the Factory and the Shaikh "has long subsisted."<sup>3</sup>

Before dealing with the English relations with Kuwait, let us examine their position and attitude towards the struggling Arab forces in the Gulf.

That position was one of neutrality. This neutrality was dictated mainly by orders from Bombay. What mattered to the English East India Company so far, was that her trade with the Gulf should go unmolested and her ships should not interfere with pirate ships as long as the British flag was respected. The Resident at Baṣra, after the Qāsimī attack on and capture of an English vessel in 1778, waited for the moment when he would receive orders and vessels, to destroy their power. When that power was at hand, he could do nothing without "consent from Bombay."<sup>4</sup> However, the Company's directions to the Baṣra Factory in the 1780's were to continue on friendly terms with the "several powers" of the Gulf — with the Banī Ka'b,

"with the Bunderick, the Grain people, and other tribes of Arabs on the Persian and Arabian coasts, who have it in their power to annoy our trade . . . for the security of the

<sup>1</sup> See above.

<sup>2</sup> Manesty and Jones to the Secret Committee, Baṣra, 29.vi.1789, *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 18, Nos. 1520, 1535.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> In a letter from Latouche to the Secret Committee, dated Baṣra, 17th December 1783, he expresses the Factory's hope of seizing, one day, the opportunity of destroying the Qāsimī fleet. He seems to have been a sympathiser with the 'Utūb against their adversaries. See that letter in *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 17, No. 1262.

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Company's dispatches, of the English trade, and of English travellers, passing between Basra, Aleppo and Bagdat."

The Company found that:

"timely presents are often of great use in preserving this good understanding."<sup>1</sup>

As stated, Shaikh 'Abd Allāh was on good terms with the representatives of the English East India Company. (In 1778 he had allowed the Baṣra Factory to seize the French officer, Captain de Bourge.) Those friendly relations continued through the 1780's. This appears natural because of the benefit to both. For some time past the Company had depended on Kuwait for her dispatches. The Shaikh derived substantial benefit from the traffic. We have seen in the case of Captain de Bourge how those good relations almost collapsed over the question of the "protection of the guest"; and they were again exposed to strain when Mr. Manesty tried to intervene in the question of Shaikh Thuwaynī and Muṣṭafā Aghā. However, friendship persisted and in 1790 Mr. Harford Jones (later Sir Harford Jones Brydges) because of his ill health retired to Kuwait for a change of air.<sup>2</sup> Whenever disputes became sharp between the Baṣra Factory and the Pasha of Baghdād, Kuwait was mentioned by the factors as a substitute for Baṣra.<sup>3</sup> These disputes dragged on slowly from after 1780, when Sulaymān was appointed Pasha of Baghdād, till 1792, when a final and decisive step was taken by Manesty and Jones to move the Factory from Baṣra to Kuwait.

<sup>1</sup> Latouche to Manesty, Baṣra, 6.xi.1784; a letter from Manesty to the Secret Committee, *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 18, No. 1299. For the full text of the letter see Appendix, p. 189.

<sup>2</sup> Kuwait is known for its dry air among the towns of the Eastern coast of Arabia. It is far healthier than Baṣra because almost no mosquitoes can live there.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Jones was in Kuwait for the "change of air" on 7th March 1790. See a letter from Manesty and Jones to the Court of Directors, 27.vi.1790. *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 18, No. 1551. The preference was given to Kuwait as a substitute for Baṣra, when Khārīj Island was thought of as a possible solution. See Manesty and Jones to Secret Committee, Baṣra, 29.vi.1789, *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 18, No. 1520.

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But by this time the danger that threatened the 'Utūb both at Kuwait and Zubāra, and later at Bahrain, came neither from the Arabs of the Persian coast of the Gulf nor from the Pasha of Baghdād. It came from Central Arabia. Here a new overwhelming power was forcing its way to the Arabian coast of the Gulf — the Wahhābīs.

## CHAPTER V

### THE WAHHĀBĪS IN EASTERN ARABIA

#### INTRODUCTION

In dealing with the Wahhābīs in Eastern Arabia, here we submit a brief historical study of a hitherto neglected people, the Banī Khālid. They were one of the most influential tribes who lived on and controlled the Arabian coast of the Gulf from Qaṭar in the south to Baṣra in the north, during the period we are concerned with here. Every history of the Wahhābī movement in Arabia mentions the Banī Khālid, however they are usually eclipsed by the exposition of the powerful Wahhābīs.

The name Banī Khālid was mentioned in many of the letters and reports of the representatives of the English East India Company in the Gulf, during the eighteenth century. However, no details of their rule in Eastern Arabia are given. The two Wahhābī chroniclers, Ibn Ghannām and Ibn Bishr, did not overlook the Banī Khālid's power and their stubborn resistance to Wahhābī expansion in Eastern Arabia. However, to both, the Banī Khālid represented a part of the associates (*mushrikīn*) who must be brought under Wahhābī control. Much material concerning the Banī Khālid before the expansion of the Wahhābīs comes from Ibn Bishr's *Sawābiq* (accounts of previous events).<sup>1</sup> When Ibn Bishr speaks of the Banī Khālid's rulers before that period, this may be taken as a sign of their importance in the wars against the Wahhābīs that

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 4.

occurred in Central and Eastern Arabia in the second half of the eighteenth century. So far there has been no attempt to draw a genealogical tree of the Banī Khālid shaikhs.<sup>1</sup> Such an attempt will be made here to list those rulers, based on the writings of Ibn Ghannām, Ibn Bishr and the author of *Lam' al-Shihāb*. The study of the Wāhhābī-Khālidī relations will throw light on the position of the 'Utbī States during and after the struggle. A separate section will be devoted to developments in the 'Utbī States after 1790; their relations with the Wāhhābīs in the same period will be studied in the light of Wāhhābī and other contemporary writings. Arabic rather than European writings are the main sources used here for the Wāhhābī-Khālidī struggle, while the Factory records and other European sources form the main authorities on the development of the 'Utbī States.

#### A. THE WĀHHĀBIYYA.

A brief summary of the basic doctrines of the Wāhhābiyya is essential here, because the Wāhhābī wars with the Banī Khālid were to a large extent based on the Wāhhābīs' interpretation of Islam. In their wars with the former the Wāhhābīs were aware of the fact that they were not fighting against the petty chiefs of Najd. It must be recalled that the Wāhhābīs did not carry war into the heart of al-Ḥasā till the late 1780's. They remained well aware of the power of the Banī Khālid Shaikh. However, those tribes who fought under the leadership of the Āl-Su'ūd did so primarily because of their zeal for the teachings of Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wāhhāb.

Briefly then, the Unitarianism of Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wāhhāb was founded on the concept of unimpaired and inviolate

<sup>1</sup> Oppenheim in his *Die Beduinen* gives genealogical trees for many Arab tribes, but although he describes the Banī Khālid, he does not draw such a tree for them. See Vol. III, pp. 133-142.

Oneness of God.<sup>1</sup> There was nothing original in Shaikh Muḥammad's creed, nor did he intend there should be.<sup>2</sup> Shaikh Muḥammad, as a reformer, wanted to rid his people of their sinfulness when they departed from the laws laid down in the *Qur'ān* and led a life that violated the Moslem creed, as he interpreted it. He wanted them to go back to the Word of God in the *Qur'ān* and to put into practice the Words of the Prophet and his pious companions. This was in essence the aim of Shaikh Muḥammad's preaching.<sup>3</sup>

In Shaikh Muḥammad's life one can clearly see three distinct phases. The first was his early religious education by his father, Shaikh 'Abd al-Wahhāb who was a *Qāḍī* at 'Uyayna in Najd,<sup>4</sup> and other 'Ulamā' in Najd; the second was the period of his wide

<sup>1</sup> The Wahhābis used to refer to themselves as *Muwaḥḥidīn* (Unitarians.) They were given the former name by their enemies inside and outside Arabia. See the article "Wahhābiya" by Margoliouth in *E.I.*/1, p. 1086.

<sup>2</sup> European and Moslem writings contemporary to the Shaikh are very misleading. Their erroneous statements were criticised by later European writers like Burckhardt in his *Notes on the Bedouins and Wahabys*, p. 277. Another example can be traced in Shaikh Manṣūr, the Italian physician and commander of the forces of Sayyid Sa'id, the Sultan of Masqat, in his *History of Seyd Sa'id*, p. 36.

<sup>3</sup> For a short account of the teachings of Shaikh Muḥammad see *Lam' al-Shihāb*, pp. 263-277. The author, though not a Wahhābī himself, seems to understand fully the teachings of the Shaikh and his account does not differ from Ibn Ghannām's in his *Rawḍat al-Afkār*. There were two doctrines condemned by the Wahhābis with unceasing vehemence: *shirk* and *bida'*. *Shirk* is the association of any being or thing with God, who in his Oneness can have no associate, nor can any have the powers and attributes that by right belong only to God. *Bida'* or innovations: Moslems should follow the example of the Prophet and his companions, for the innovations were, according to the Wahhābiyya, the outgrowth of ignorance. The Shaikh and his followers, the *Muwaḥḥidīn*, believed that if they stamped out *shirk* and *bida'*, so that God was acknowledged throughout Islām as the one and only God and men trod the right way He had set for them, all Moslems would indeed become brothers, peace would prevail and the world would prosper. See an account on the Wahhābī doctrine in Rentz's *Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb*, pp. 40-41.

<sup>4</sup> Brydges wrongly calls Muḥammad by his father's name: *The Wahaby*, p. 7.

travels;<sup>1</sup> and the third began with his return to 'Uyayna<sup>2</sup> where he started to propagate Wahnābism, which led to his expulsion from 'Uyayna and his final settlement at al-Dir'iyya. The man chiefly responsible for his expulsion was Sulaymān b. Muḥammad Āl-Ḥamīd of the Banī Khālid.

This was not the first instance of a Khālidī intervention in Najdī affairs. The Shaikh of the Banī Khālid had long been recognised by the inhabitants of Najd as their most powerful neighbouring chief, a man they must appease with gifts and homage.<sup>3</sup> This was the position in Najd in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. If the chiefs of the Arabian tribes withheld their presents from the Banī Khālid, the Shaikh of the Banī Khālid raided the towns of Najd and returned with the booty to his quarters at al-Ḥasā.<sup>4</sup>

Yet the authority of the Banī Khālid in Najd did not go unchallenged even before the rise of the Wahnābīs. For in 1142/1729

<sup>1</sup> Shaikh Muḥammad started his travels when he was about twenty years old. He travelled to al-Ḥasā, Baṣra, Baghdād, Kurdistān, Hamdhān, Isfahān, Qumm, Aleppo, Damascus, Quds al-Khalīl (Jerusalem), Cairo, Suez, Yanbu', Makka, Burayda, whence he returned to 'Uyayna after an absence of about twenty years. His travels must have given him a good idea of the deteriorated conditions in the Islamic world. His stay at Damascus must have given him the opportunity to study the works of the great Ḥanbālī reformer, Ibn Taymiyya. For the towns Shaikh Muḥammad visited see *Lam' al-Shihāb*, ff. 5-17.

<sup>2</sup> Others say Yamāma in Najd. *Lam' al-Shihāb* gives both versions; see f. 17. Ibn Ghannām and Ibn Bishr give 'Uyayna. See *Kitāb al-Ghazwāt al-Bayḍaniyya*, p. 30 and 'Unwān al-Majd, Vol. I, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Before the emergence of the Wahnābī power at al-Dir'iyya in the 1750's, the most powerful chief in Najd was Ibn Mu'ammār of 'Uyayna. See *Lam' al-Shihāb*, f. 41.

<sup>4</sup> Ibn Bishr's *Sawābiq* supply us with information regarding such raids in several years of the first half of the 18th century carried out by the consecutive rulers of the Banī Khalid. In 1126/1714 Sa'dūn b. Muḥammad b. Ghurair raided al-Yamāma. He was accompanied by 'Abd Allāh b. Mu'ammār, the Shaikh of 'Uyayna. See Ibn Bishr, Vol. I, p. 183. In 1132/1719, accompanied by his artillery, he attacked al-Dir'iyya. See *Ibid*, pp. 212-213. In 1140/1727 Muḥsin, the Sharīf of Makka attacked the al-Ẓafīr in al-Kharj and 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ghurair, the Shaikh of the Banī Khalid joined Muḥsin in his attack. In the following year 'Alī, having as allies some of the 'Anaza tribe made war against the al-Ẓafīr and obliged their Shaikh Ibn Suwayt to flee to al-Riyāḍ.



Sulaymān b. Muḥammad b. Ghurair, Chief of al-Ḥasā, chose one of his relatives as Amīr al-Ḥajj (the prince of the pilgrims [of Qaṭar, Baḥrain and al-Ḥasā]). Their caravan was attacked by the Muṭair tribe of Najd. They robbed the pilgrims of large sums of money and killed many notables of al-Ḥasā, al-Qaṭif and Baḥrain.<sup>1</sup> This attack might have been made on a Khālidi-protected caravan because the ruling family of Āl-Ḥamid was divided after the death of Sa'dūn in 1135/1722 and its chiefs were struggling for the succession.<sup>2</sup>

The rival parties were 'Alī and Sulaymān, the brothers of the deceased Sa'dūn, against the two sons Dujayn and Munay'. At first the brothers defeated the sons of Sa'dūn, who had sought the help of al-Zafīr and al-Muntafiq tribes.<sup>3</sup> Hostilities were renewed in 1136/1723, but Dujayn was again unsuccessful;<sup>4</sup> he returned in 1139/1726 to al-Zafīr and al-Muntafiq who attacked al-Ḥasā but were defeated by 'Alī b. Muḥammad and returned to their own land.<sup>5</sup> This internal strife among the Shaikhs of the Banī Khālīd was resumed on the death of 'Alī in 1736. Sulaymān continued to rule the Banī Khālīd from 1736 to 1752.

During the reign of Sulaymān the first clash with the Wahhābīs

<sup>1</sup> See IBN BISHR, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, f. 173, in the MS. copy.

<sup>2</sup> The following is a list of the Khālidi rulers in the second half of the 17th century and the first half of the 18th. For a full table of the Banī Khālīd Shaikhs see appendix, p. 199.

1. Barrāk b. Ghurair of the Āl-Ḥamid (1669-1682).

2. Muḥammad b. Ghurair (1682-1691).

3. Sa'dūn b. Muḥammad b. Ghurair (1691-1722).

4. 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ghurair (1722-1736).

5. Sulaymān b. Muḥammad b. Ghurair (1736-1752).

<sup>3</sup> IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, I, p. 218.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 235. The al-Zafīr were living in al-Kharj to the East of al-Ḥasā in the first half of the eighteenth century according to Ibn Bishr. Later in the century the al-Zafīr and the al-Muntafiq were inhabiting the territory near Baṣra.

occurred.<sup>1</sup> Shaikh Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb and his followers at 'Uyayna ordered an adulterous woman stoned to death. Consequently the enemies of the movement tried to suppress it before it spread to other parts of Najd. But because Shaikh Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb was under the protection of 'Uthmān b. Mu'ammār, the chief of 'Uyayna,<sup>2</sup> the chiefs of the weak neighbouring towns turned to the Shaikh of the Banī Khālid, who had the power to command Ibn Mu'ammār to do whatever those chiefs wanted. Shaikh Sulaymān's power was so great that Ibn Mu'ammār yielded instantly to his orders.<sup>3</sup> Thus Shaikh Muḥammad left 'Uyayna for al-Dir'iyya where he allied himself with its chief Muḥammad b. Su'ūd in 1158/1745.<sup>4</sup> This new alliance was destined to bring about a clash between the rising Wahhābī power in Arabia and the already established power of the Banī Khālid.

There, unlike Shaikh Muḥammad's expulsion from 'Uyayna, religion was not the only reason for war. In the Wahhābī-Khālidī struggle for power in Eastern and Central Arabia one detects religious, political and economic factors. To the Banī Khālid, the Wahhābis represented a potential danger which must be controlled before it extended beyond al-Dir'iyya. However, they were unable

<sup>1</sup> The Wahhābiyya is taken as a single continuous movement, i.e. it started with Shaikh Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb's propagation at 'Uyayna in 1745 before he was expelled to al-Dir'iyya.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Mu'ammār, by the virtue of being the chief of 'Uyayna, was the strongest among the chiefs of Najd. So no other chiefs could attack Shaikh Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb in 'Uyayna. See *Lam' al-Shihāb*, f. 32.

<sup>3</sup> See *Ibid.*, f. 33. The influence of Shaikh Sulaymān, according to *Lam' al-Shihāb*, was felt not only in al-Ḥasā and its vicinity, but also in Arabia, especially in those areas bordering on 'Iraq, in Najd itself and also the outskirts of al-Shām (Syria).

<sup>4</sup> Ibn Bishr gives this year for the emigration (*hijra*) of the Shaikh. See IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 15. Muḥammad b. Su'ūd and Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb made a compact by which the former became the political leader of the *Muwahhidīn* and the latter the ostensible religious leader. Cf. *Lam' al-Shihāb*, ff. 34-36, and see also IBN GHANNĀM, *op. cit.*, II, p. 4, and IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, I, p. 12. However, from what the author of *Lam' al-Shihāb* writes it appears that Shaikh Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb's role was supreme in all Wahhābī affairs, political and religious, throughout his life.

to take effective action because Sulaymān's leadership was always threatened by rivalry within the family, especially by Dujayn and Munay', sons of Sa'dūn. This rivalry ended in 1752 with Sulaymān's expulsion from al-Ḥasā to al-Kharj. He died there that year.<sup>1</sup>

'Uray'ir, son of Dujayn, succeeded Sulaymān in 1166/1752.<sup>2</sup> His reign lasted over twenty years. Throughout that entire time the Banī Khālid waged war in Najd. The Wahhābīs were not yet powerful enough to start raiding al-Ḥasā.<sup>3</sup> 'Uray'ir could not forget the rising Wahhābīs in Najd<sup>4</sup> and in 1171/1758 he started preparing for a campaign against al-Dir'iyya.<sup>5</sup> The effect of this news on the Wahhābīs was immediate. They promptly started fortifying al-Dir'iyya and other Wahhābī towns.<sup>6</sup>

In the following year 'Uray'ir mobilised his forces from the Banī Khālid, the people of al-Ḥasā and allied with various Najdī towns. In this campaign 'Uray'ir never reached al-Dir'iyya, because his forces failed to occupy al-Jubayla, a fortified Wahhābī stronghold.<sup>7</sup> Six years later (1178/1764) the chief of Najrān, Ḥasan al-Makramī, attacked the Wahhābīs near al-Dir'iyya and routed their forces. Nevertheless, the Wahhābīs succeeded in concluding

<sup>1</sup> See IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, I, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Bishr states that 'Uray'ir had a rival in a certain Ḥamāda of the Banī Khalid and it took him some time before he established himself as Shaikh of the Banī Khālid. See *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> Only once during the reign of 'Uray'ir in 1176/1762 did the Wahhābīs manage to raid al-Ḥasā, led by 'Abd al-'Azīz, and this raid was a very minor affair. See IBN GHANNĀM, II, p. 72; and IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, I, p. 46. The first gives fuller details than the second.

<sup>4</sup> Rentz thinks that 'Uray'ir "was not greatly concerned at first over the existence of the Unitarian community in neighbouring Najd". See *Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb*, p. 104. He does not give an explanation for that opinion. In fact, 'Uray'ir was interested but perhaps he could not strike before establishing his authority over the different sections of the Banī Khālid. All through his reign the Wahhābīs were held away from his territories and he fought more than one great battle with them. (See below.)

<sup>5</sup> IBN GHANNĀM, *op. cit.*, II, p. 61.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Lam' al-Shihāb*, ff. 42-43.

a peace with the attacking prince. Meanwhile, 'Uray'ir made an agreement with the prince to attack al-Dir'iyya jointly. This agreement was broken and 'Uray'ir tried to storm al-Dir'iyya alone but without success.<sup>1</sup>

The failure of 'Uray'ir at al-Dir'iyya and Jubayla, shows how strongly those towns were fortified and how weak were the methods of siege of 'Uray'ir. Nevertheless, 'Uray'ir continued to campaign against the Wāhhābīs. In 1188/1774 he captured Burayda on his way to al-Dir'iyya. He died at al-Khābiya and never reached his goal.<sup>2</sup>

Buṭayn, eldest son of 'Uray'ir, took command of the Khālidi army and tried to carry on the attack, but his tribe was unco-operative. He returned to al-Ḥasā, where his brothers Dujayn and Sa'dūn strangled him. Sa'dūn soon poisoned Dujayn and in 1188/1774<sup>3</sup> became Shaikh of the Banī Khālidi.

Because the chiefs of the Banī Khālidi did not all support Sa'dūn, the Wāhhābi chief, 'Abd al-'Azīz was able to play the factions of the Banī Khālidi against each other.<sup>4</sup> In 1773, before the death of 'Uray'ir, the Wāhhābīs had brought al-Riyāḍ and its vicinity under their yoke<sup>5</sup> and thus established a firm base of operations outside. They were now in a position not only to interfere

<sup>1</sup> Ḥasan al-Makramī was a Shī'ite; see *Lam' al-Shihāb*, ff. 44. *Lam'* states that 'Uray'ir tried by every means to persuade Ḥasan to join him in eradicating Wāhhābism and he promised to pay him yearly one hundred thousand pieces of gold if he agreed "to break his oath" with the Wāhhābīs, but the latter refused. See *Ibid.*, p. 48. 'Uray'ir's arrival on the battle field took place after al-Makramī had concluded peace with the Wāhhābīs.

<sup>2</sup> IBN GHANNĀM, *op. cit.*, II, p. 101; IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 61-62.

<sup>3</sup> RENTZ in *Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wāhhāb*, p. 90, puts this event in 1189, most probably influenced by Ibn Ghannām's chronicling of 1189 where he says that Buṭayn offered the chief of Najrān help in his second war with the Wāhhābīs. Ibn Bishr, who all through his work is careful to give dates for the Khālidi rulers, puts the event under 1183.

<sup>4</sup> See *Lam' al-Shihāb*, ff. 79-83.

<sup>5</sup> Dahhām b. Dawwās, the chief of al-Riyāḍ was the Wāhhābīs' stubborn enemy. It took them about twenty eight years to get possession of his town.

in the internal struggle among the Banī Khālid chiefs, but also to carry war into al-Ḥasā itself.

Nevertheless, in that year Sa'dūn consolidated his power over al-Ḥasā. Thus he could check any Wahhābī aggression against his territories. During the twelve years of his reign<sup>1</sup> Sa'dūn was invincible, at least in al-Ḥasā, and the Wahhābīs were compelled to meet him in Najd. Many towns in Najd sought his help<sup>2</sup> in their effort to overthrow the Wahhābī yoke.

Despite this, by 1780 Wahhābī rule was strongly established in Najd. 'Abd al-'Azīz Āl-Su'ūd, certain of his ability to repel any Khālidī attack, tried a new weapon in his contest with al-Ḥasā. After the struggle for the shaikhship among the Banī Khālid, at the death of 'Uray'ir, it became clear that certain chiefs did not support Sa'dūn unanimously. Consequently, 'Abd al-'Azīz, according to *Lam' al-Shihāb*, resorted to bribery as another means to achieve his end, namely the destruction of Khālidī power in Eastern Arabia. According to the same source, 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote letters to the brothers of Sa'dūn and the other chiefs of their tribe. In these, he encouraged the former to rebel and occupy the seat of government "for Sa'dūn had no more right to rule" and the claimants should share the rule.<sup>3</sup>

Thus far the Banī Khālid settled their domestic affairs without outside intervention. By 1752, after the expulsion of Sulaymān b. Muḥammad, 'Uray'ir had established himself Chief with no foreign assistance, for over twenty years. On his death, Sa'dūn also restored order without outside aid. But in time, because of

<sup>1</sup> Rentz wrongly states that they were twenty; see his *Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb*, p. 219. *Lam' al-Shihāb*, f. 30, correctly states that Sa'dūn ruled for twelve years, which tallies with Ibn Bishr's account.

<sup>2</sup> In 1192/1778 Sa'dūn attacked the Wahhābīs in al-Kharj, in 1193/1779 in al-Mujamma'a, in 1195/1780 in al-Kharj, and in 1196/1781 in Burayda. See Ibn Bishr, *op. cit.*, pp. 70, 71, 74, and 75.

<sup>3</sup> *Lam' al-Shihāb*, f. 80. The Wahhābī chroniclers Ibn Ghannām and Ibn Bishr in their works naturally would not refer to the use of guile and bribery by 'Abd al-'Azīz.

Wahhābī intrigues and the weakness of Sa'dūn's opponents, their quarrels invited their final overthrow; they sought outside help.

It was probably due to the encouragement of the Wahhābīs that 'Abd al-Muḥsin b. 'Abd Allāh of the Āl-Ḥamid led the revolt against Sa'dūn in 1200/1758.<sup>1</sup> 'Abd al-Muḥsin, feeling that his and his nephews' supporters<sup>2</sup> among the Banī Khālid could not defeat Sa'dūn, sought the help of Thuwaynī, head of the Muntafiq.<sup>3</sup> The latter joined forces with the insurgent and won the battle of Jaḍ'a<sup>4</sup> against Sa'dūn, driving him to al-Dir'iyya to seek the protection of his bitter enemy, 'Abd al-'Azīz Āl-Su'ūd. The Wahhābīs expected this to end their intrigues. Ibn Ghannām, when recording the arrival of Sa'dūn at al-Dir'iyya and the rise of Duwayḥis into power, rightly anticipated the imminent fall of the Khālidī rule in Eastern Arabia.<sup>5</sup>

According to *Lam' al-Shihāb*, Sa'dūn asked 'Abd al-'Azīz Āl-Su'ūd for forces to recapture al-Ḥasā, but the latter continued his policy of playing off the Banī Khālid chiefs against each other, till he made sure that the time was ripe for a decisive attack on their territory.<sup>6</sup> In 1198/1784, Su'ūd, the son of 'Abd al-'Azīz, raided al-Ḥasā, probably to test their response to a Wahhābī attack; the raid proved that the Banī Khālid were still powerful. With Sa'dūn in his hands, 'Abd al-'Azīz was now sure that the Banī Khālid lacked a leader; but still the whole power of the Banī Khālid was massed on the side of 'Abd al-Muḥsin and Duwayḥis. However, the Wahhābīs soon raided the territory of the Banī Khālid. In 1202/1787 Sulaymān b. 'Ufayṣān, the Wahhābī general, raided

<sup>1</sup> *Lam' al-Shihāb*, f. 81, states that Duwayḥis and his brother Muḥammad were the first to revolt and that they asked the help of their maternal uncle 'Abd al-Muḥsin after their failure to overthrow Sa'dūn.

<sup>2</sup> The nephews were Duwayḥis and Muḥammad, the brothers of Sa'dūn.

<sup>3</sup> *Lam' al-Shihāb*, f. 81.

<sup>4</sup> IBN GHANNĀM, *op. cit.*, II, p. 139.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> See *Lam'*, ff. 83-84.

parts of Qaṭar and on his way back to al-Dir'iyya attacked al-'Uqair;<sup>1</sup> earlier in the same year Su'ūd had been to the al-Dahnā desert to spy on the Banī Khālid.

With the rise of 'Abd al-Muḥsin and his nephews into power, it became clear that their family strife would continue to divide the Banī Khālid. 'Abd al-Muḥsin of the Āl-'Abd Allāh became the uncrowned prince of the Banī Khālid and his nephews of the Āl-'Uray'ir were puppets. Sa'dūn died a year after his arrival at al-Dir'iyya. During that time the Wahhābīs continually tried to enlarge the split between the Banī Khālid, by demanding the overthrow of 'Abd al-Muḥsin and his nephews and the restoration of Sa'dūn. Though their propaganda had no effect, after Sa'dūn's death they asked his tribe to pay allegiance to another brother of Sa'dūn, Zayd b. 'Uray'ir.<sup>2</sup>

The history of the accession of the Banī Khālid rulers after the death of Sa'dūn becomes complicated. The only contemporary sources by which the accession can be chronologically traced are the chronicles of Ibn Ghannām, Ibn Bishr and *Lam' al-Shihāb*. These three sources are not decisive. In fact, they sometimes clash<sup>3</sup> and it becomes very difficult to form a clear picture of the Khālidī ruling chiefs after 1204/1789.

In spite of the fact that the chiefs of the Banī Khālid were likely to be overthrown by family and Wahhābī intrigues, there were certainly three clear reigns between 1785 and the close of the century. The first, that of Duwayḥis and Muḥammad, with their uncle 'Abd al-Muḥsin as regent, lasted till 1204/1789. They were

<sup>1</sup> IBN GHANNĀM, *op. cit.*, II, p. 153, IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, I, p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> Zayd's presence at al-Dir'iyya is hard to explain. Philby suggests in *Saudi Arabia*, p. 78, that he was banished from the tribe with his followers after the revolt against Sa'dūn.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Ghannām states that Duwayḥis and 'Abd al-Muḥsin after their defeat in the battle of Ghuraymil in 1207 sought refuge with the Zubāra people while Ibn Bishr states that they sought it amongst the Muntafiq in the north. See IBN GHANNĀM, *op. cit.*, II, p. 160, and IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, I, p. 85.

followed by Zayd b. 'Uray'ir (1204/1789-1208/1793), and next by Barrāk b. 'Abd al-Muḥsin (1208/1793-1213/1796).

From 1200/1785 to 1208/1793 the Wahhābī raids on Eastern Arabia were characterised by their ferocity and terrorism. It was as if the Wahhābīs wanted the inhabitants of the towns to revolt against their rulers.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, during the reign of 'Abd al-Muḥsin and Duwayḥis, the Wahhābīs were unable to invade al-Ḥasā and reduce it to their control. The Wahhābī attacks in 1787 and 1788 were short and sharp raids.<sup>2</sup> Thuwaynī of al-Muntafiq was allied to 'Abd al-Muḥsin and Duwayḥis. Thuwaynī had an agreement with the Wahhābīs. Thus he resented the fact that Sa'dūn was offered shelter at al-Dir'iyya, and was consequently inclined to assist the ruling chiefs of the Banī Khālid. Thuwaynī failed in his revolt against the Pasha of Baghdād, in which he tried to make himself the Mutasallim of Baṣra.<sup>3</sup> In 1787, Thuwaynī's forces were beaten by Sulaymān, the Pasha of Baghdād, and Thuwaynī with a few survivors encamped at al-Jahra village to the north of Kuwait. The next year Su'ūd, the Wahhābī general, hearing of Thuwaynī's defeat, attacked him at al-Jahra and annihilated his forces. Thus the Banī Khālid in al-Ḥasā were left without Thuwaynī's help. Even so, Su'ūd lacked the power to invade al-Ḥasā and face 'Abd al-Muḥsin and Duwayḥis in open battle; he therefore continued to raid the northern and southern Banī Khālid territory.<sup>4</sup>

In 1204/1789, Su'ūd felt strong enough to invade. Accompanied by Zayd b. 'Uray'ir and his followers of the Banī Khālid, he made for al-Ḥasā oasis, the tribal centre of the Banī Khālid.

<sup>1</sup> Thus in the case of al-Fuḍūl village, the inhabitants were slaughtered like sheep. See IBN GHANNĀM, *op. cit.*, II, p. 159.

<sup>2</sup> For the nature of those raids see IBN GHANNĀM, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 158-159 and IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 83, 84 and 85.

<sup>3</sup> See above.

<sup>4</sup> In 1788 Su'ūd attacked al-Mubarraz town in al-Ḥasā, and attacked the Muntafiq forces near Safwān. See IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 84-85.



After three days of continuous combat, 'Abd al-Muḥsin and Duwayḥis<sup>1</sup> fled from the battlefield<sup>2</sup> and sought refuge at Zubāra with the 'Utūb<sup>3</sup> or with the Muntafiq north of al-Ḥasā.<sup>4</sup> However, this Wahhābī victory over the Banī Khālid was not decisive. In the first place Su'ūd was unable to extend his attack to the fortified towns of al-Ḥasā, such as al-Hufhūf, al-Mubarrāz, al-'Uqair, and al-Qaṭīf. In the second place, the shaikh he installed in place of 'Abd al-Muḥsin was unreliable. He was Zayd b. 'Uray'ir who became the ruler of the Banī Khālid, but who apparently paid no tribute to the Wahhābīs. Later Zayd joined others of his tribe and waged war on the Wahhābīs.

The Banī Khālid at this point seem to have had two recognized shaikhs: Zayd b. 'Uray'ir was shaikh at al-Ḥasā, controlling the towns from al-'Uqair in the south to al-Qaṭīf in the north; 'Abd al-Muḥsin was shaikh of the nomadic sections of the tribe in the north of the Banī Khālid territory.<sup>5</sup> Not long after, 'Abd al-Muḥsin was assassinated by Zayd in 1206/1791,<sup>6</sup> very likely on Wahhābī instigation. In 1207/1792 Su'ūd attacked and routed the Banī Khālid Bedouin forces under their new chief, Barrāk b. 'Abd al-Muḥsin, near al-Jahra.<sup>7</sup>

By now it was apparent that the Banī Khālid were divided into two main parts. The first included the nomads whose allegiance belonged to the family of Āl-'Abd Allāh, of whom 'Abd al-Muḥsin was the first shaikh. The second included the settlers and

<sup>1</sup> *Lam' al-Shihāb*, f. 86 gives the name of Muḥammad b. 'Uray'ir, together with 'Abd al-Muḥsin and Duwayḥis, among those who sought refuge with the Muntafiq after their defeat.

<sup>2</sup> See IBN GHANNĀM, *op. cit.*, II, p. 160 and IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, I, p. 85.

<sup>3</sup> IBN GHANNĀM, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 161.

<sup>4</sup> IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, I, p. 85. See also *Lam' al-Shihāb*, f. 86.

<sup>5</sup> For the borders of the Banī Khālid territory see above, pp. 38-41.

<sup>6</sup> IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 88, states that Zayd invited 'Abd al-Muḥsin to return from the north to al-Ḥasā oasis after granting him safe conduct.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

nomads now headed by Zayd b. 'Uray'ir. The hostility to the Wahhābīs of both these sections still persisted after the battle of Ghuraymil,<sup>1</sup> largely because soon after the Wahhābī attack on the Banī Khālid there was unrest in al-Ḥasā. Su'ūd directed his forces to the south, but Zayd b. 'Uray'ir seems to have pacified the area and to have persuaded Su'ūd to return to Najd. The texts of both Ibn Ghannām and Ibn Bishr are not quite clear regarding the unrest in al-Ḥasā. Ibn Bishr gives the impression that Zayd was on the Wahhābī side, that he subdued the revolt and thus Su'ūd found no grounds for interference,<sup>2</sup> Ibn Ghannām gives the impression that Zayd was among the conspirators and that he spent some time at Kuwait, probably to plan attacks on Najd.<sup>3</sup> From the statements of both chroniclers one can infer that by 1792, the Wahhābīs had not yet broken the Khālidī power.

In the years 1791 and 1792<sup>4</sup> terrorist raids were inflicted on the different towns of al-Ḥasā, but until 1793 no real military campaign was directed against them and the Banī Khālid. In that year a great Wahhābī force attacked al-Ḥasā, drawing troops not only from al-Dir'iyya but also from other Wahhābī towns. In this campaign, Barrāk b. 'Abd al-Muḥsin seems to have played an important role in serving the Wahhābīs; he is reported to have acted as mediator between Su'ūd and the Banī Khālid of al-Ḥasā.<sup>5</sup> Zayd b. 'Uray'ir who had formerly been supported by the Wahhābīs was the head of the Banī Khālid of the south. They still blocked the

<sup>1</sup> The author was told that the Banī Khālid still retain that prejudice against the Su'ūdī family and when the king goes hunting in the desert and camps near the Banī Khālid encampment, nobody goes to his camp to ask for presents or to pay homage etc. while other tribes go to his camp, eat and take presents and pay homage. This may reflect how strong and bitter was the hostility between the Su'ūdīs and the Banī Khālid.

<sup>2</sup> See IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, I, p. 98.

<sup>3</sup> See IBN GHANNĀM, *op. cit.*, II, p. 186.

<sup>4</sup> For the damage done to these towns and cultivation of al-Ḥasā and for a description of the Wahhābī raids see IBN GHANNĀM, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 173, 182; and IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 88, 97-98, 100.

<sup>5</sup> See IBN GHANNĀM, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 188-189.

way to the east. Duwayhis, Muḥammad and Mājid, the sons of 'Uray'ir, returned from Zubāra<sup>1</sup> and joined the other Banī Khālid warriors (*muqātila*) staying at the Mubarraz fort.<sup>2</sup> Here one may infer that the four sons of 'Uray'ir, the brothers of Sa'dūn, forgot their enmity<sup>3</sup> in the face of impending danger. To keep the Banī Khālid divided into two hostile sections, Su'ūd now secured Barrāk b. 'Abd al-Muḥsin on his side. Thus in the Wahhābī campaign of 1793, when the capture of the fortified towns of al-Hufhūf, al-Mubarraz and al-Qaṭīf seemed impossible, Barrāk was able to enter al-Mubarraz by a ruse,<sup>4</sup> the sons of 'Uray'ir departed and Barrāk became the Shaikh of the Banī Khālid.<sup>5</sup> So far the Wahhābīs had not succeeded in storming any fort of the Banī Khālid. True, they defeated their tribal forces near al-Jahra, but the towns near the Gulf coast were not yet conquered. Even the actual rule of the territory was left to a Banī Khālid shaikh. However, Zayd b. 'Uray'ir did not succeed in ruling al-Ḥasā for the Wahhābīs.

Barrāk developed into a dangerous enemy. He joined forces with Duwayhis and Muḥammad in an attempt to re-establish Khālidī power as the strongest in Eastern Arabia. With the defeat of the sons of 'Uray'ir and the establishment of the Āl-'Abd Allāh, in the person of Barrāk b. Muḥsin, the Wahhābīs still held to their policy of dividing the Banī Khālid for their own gains. They knew Barrāk was too weak to plot against them because of his recent defeat in the north.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See above.

<sup>2</sup> IBN GHANNĀM, *op. cit.*, II, p. 190.

<sup>3</sup> Zayd, see above, was in 1204/1789 supported by the Wahhābīs and he became the chief of the Banī Khālid.

<sup>4</sup> IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, I, p. 100 and IBN GHANNĀM, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 188-189. The trick Barrāk played is not given by either of these two chroniclers.

<sup>5</sup> It is not quite clear where the sons of 'Uray'ir went this time. IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, I, p. 100, says that they went to the north. IBN GHANNĀM, *op. cit.*, II, p. 190, simply says that they ran away. *Lam' al-Shihāb*, f. 86, says that they sought refuge at Baghdād with Sulaymān Pasha.

<sup>6</sup> IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 97-98, says that Su'ūd in 1792 directed his

Both Ibn Ghannām and Ibn Bishr date the fall of the Banī Khālid rule over al-Ḥasā from the collapse of Zayd and the rise of Barrāk.<sup>1</sup> The end of Banī Khālid power was not accomplished until 1795. At that time Barrāk and others attacked the Wāhhābī teachers (*mutawwa'a*) and troops which had been stationed in the towns of al-Ḥasā after the wars of 1792-1793. Following this, Su'ūd carried out savage attacks on all the tribes and towns of al-Ḥasā which had fought on the Khālidī side.<sup>2</sup> The Wāhhābīs were unable to send a large expedition to al-Ḥasā before 1795 because they were exposed to attacks from the west in 1790, '91 and '94 by the Sharīfs of Makka. They also feared an expedition sent from the north by the Pasha of Baghdād, who could direct the tribal forces of al-Zafīr, 'Anaza and the Muntafiq against them. True, Thuwaynī's expedition of 1796 was a failure, but these fears came true in 1796 and 1798.

The Banī Khālid were now completely overpowered by the Wāhhābīs. In 1795, 'Abd al-'Azīz Āl-Su'ūd appointed Nājīm, a man of undistinguished family, as the first non-Khālidī ruler of al-Ḥasā.<sup>3</sup> The final stage of the humiliation of the Banī Khālid ends with the choice of Nājīm as *Wālī*. The earlier phases could be summarized in three stages: The first began with the Wāhhābī raids

attack on the northern part of the Banī Khālid territory because "the head of the serpent lay there", meaning that Barrāk was the most dangerous Khālidī chief.

<sup>1</sup> Barrāk is referred to by IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, I, p. 101, as a governor (*wālī*), of al-Ḥasā put in office by 'Abd al-'Azīz Āl-Su'ūd. IBN GHANNĀM, *op. cit.*, II, p. 197, puts it thus, "*Barrāk Wālī al-Ḥasā min taht Imām al-Muslimīn*", meaning by the Imām 'Abd al-'Azīz.

<sup>2</sup> Barrāk escaped to the northern territory of the Banī Khālid where he found shelter with the Muntafiq. Later, in 1796, he took part in Thuwaynī's second expedition against the Wāhhābīs. He is reported to have repented and joined the Wāhhābī troops and was killed in one of their raids on Sūq al-Shuyūkh and Samāwa in 'Irāq in 1212/1797. See IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, I, 112.

<sup>3</sup> IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, I, p. 106, describes him as "one of the populace of al-Ḥasā, (*Wahuwa min 'ammati ahl al-Ḥasā*).". The Wāhhābī attitude towards the conquered tribes or towns was to select a new chief from the same ruling family or to keep the old one. It is clear that they tried to establish Zayd and Barrāk at various times, but neither proved to be faithful to the Wāhhābī cause.

of the 1780's,<sup>1</sup> aimed principally at frightening the towns and tribes loyal to the Banī Khālid. The second stage was to play the Khālidī ruling chiefs one against the other, weakening the allegiance of the various Khālidī families to their chiefs. The third consisted of the conquest of the towns of al-Ḥasā, the destruction of their walls, towers and fortresses, and the foundation of new Wahhābī forts inside or near these towns.<sup>2</sup> These towers were built outside al-Mubarrāz and al-Hufhūf, and played an important role in the fight against the expedition of 'Alī Pasha al-Kurjī, the Kaya of Baghdād, in 1798-1799.

The last Khālidī chief to resist the Wahhābī attacks was 'Abd Allāh b. Sulaymān of the Mahāshīr section of the Banī Khālid. He resisted from the last Khālidī stronghold at al-Qaṭīf, Sīhāt,<sup>3</sup> and also on the island of Tārūt. The only source of detailed information on the capture of al-Qaṭīf, *Lam' al-Shihāb*, states:

"when 'Abd al-'Azīz conquered the whole territory of the Banī Khālid, the settlers and the nomads, he sent an army against al-Qaṭīf, one of the strongest positions of the Banī Khālid."<sup>4</sup>

The town was walled and defended by towers. 'Abd Allāh b. Sulaymān was first supported by the settlers' chief, Aḥmad b. Ghānim al-Qaṭīfī. The attacking army, led by Ibrāhīm b. 'Ufayṣān, captured Sīhāt, a fortified village three *farsakhs* to the south of al-Qaṭīf. Hearing of the fall of Sīhāt, 'Abd Allāh b. Sulaymān left al-Qaṭīf, marched against Ibn 'Ufayṣān and forced him to

<sup>1</sup> Burckhardt gives the best description of the Wahhābī warfare in his *Notes on the Bedouins*, pp. 311-320.

<sup>2</sup> There can be little doubt that by the choice of the site of the family homes of Banī Khālid at al-Ḥasā oasis, and the demolition of those houses and building a *qaṣr* (fort), for the Wahhābī soldiers, was only meant as a humiliation to the Banī Khālid. This event took place in 1792 after one of the Wahhābī raids and is recorded by IBN GHANNĀM, *op. cit.*, II, p. 183.

<sup>3</sup> A fortified village lying to the south of al-Qaṭīf. See *Lam' al-Shihāb*, f. 87.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

retreat. However, the Wahhābis, led by Ibn 'Ufayṣān, continued to raid the neighbouring villages. 'Abd Allāh lacked the troops to withstand the Wahhābis when they returned to besiege the town. He was defeated by Ibn 'Ufayṣān on the outskirts of al-Qaṭif, and returned to the town. Its ultimate capitulation to Ibn 'Ufayṣān was probably likely by the treachery of Ibn Ghānim.<sup>1</sup> 'Abd Allāh then retired to Tārūt Island, the last hold of the Banī Khālid occupied by Ibn 'Ufayṣān.<sup>2</sup> This island also fell to the Wahhābis through treachery<sup>3</sup> but 'Abd Allāh b. Sulaymān eluded capture and sought refuge with the Muntafiq Arabs in the north, as did other chiefs of the Banī Khālid.<sup>4</sup>

With the conquest of the Banī Khalid, the Wahhābis won more than a military victory. The gains of the fight were political, religious and economic. Their expansion was one of the reasons for the overthrow of the Wahhābī power not only in Eastern Arabia, but also in Najd itself, by provoking the Ottoman expeditions sent against them.<sup>5</sup>

Politically, Wahhābī influence was established in Eastern Arabia in such a way as to make other forces who had interests in the area feel their impact. The latter resorted either to appeasement

<sup>1</sup> *Lam' al-Shihāb* commenting on the fall of al-Qaṭif says that it fell "because the people of al-Qaṭif, similar to the people of Baḥrain, are without zeal and fervour." See *Lam'*, f. 89.

<sup>2</sup> This island is separated from the land by shallow water through which men and animals could wade at low tide.

<sup>3</sup> *Lam'*, f. 92.

<sup>4</sup> See *Ibid.* for the capture of al-Qaṭif. See also IBN GHANNĀM, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 172-173. To avoid the plunder of their port, the inhabitants of al-Qaṭif paid the Wahhābis, according to IBN GHANNĀM, *op. cit.*, II, p. 173, the amount of 3,000 *zar*, and according to IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, I, p. 88, only 500 *aḥmar*. *Zar* and *aḥmar* are golden coins.

<sup>5</sup> The first expedition that was sent against the Wahhābis on Ottoman instigation was that of Thuwaynī in 1787. Thuwaynī's second expedition about ten years later, ended by his assassination at the hands of a Wahhābī fanatic, Ṭu'ayyis by name. Ṭu'ayyis was slave of Barrāk b. Muḥsin of the Banī Khālid. Ibn Ghannām, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 266-271, in a poem of 88 verses expressed his and the Wahhābī joy and blessings at the death of Thuwaynī.

or elimination. To the first group belonged the English East India Company, whose interests in Eastern Arabia were commercial. Consequently they avoided any clash with the Wahhābīs. The British cared only that their desert mail remained unmolested,<sup>1</sup> which they secured by gifts to the Wahhābī chief. Other Arab forces faced the following alternative: either succumb to the Wahhābī teachings, or else expect the same fate as befell the Banī Khālid. Here we deal only with the Qawāsīm who became adherents of Wahhābism, and the 'Utūb who did not. The Ottomans, who had occupied al-Ḥasā before the Banī Khālid and who had religious interests in Arabia, were alarmed by the spread of Wahhābī influence to the borders of Baṣra.

As for the religious gain, the Wahhābīs imposed their tenets on Eastern Arabia. According to their policy of eradicating what they considered *shirk* (idolatry or pluralism) they devastated monuments in the towns of al-Ḥasā and installed their exponents in the mosques.<sup>2</sup> It would have been easier for the Wahhābīs to promote their teachings but for the fact that certain towns in al-Ḥasā, especially al-Qaṭīf, were *Shi'ite*. This was a weak point in the Wahhābī domination and control of the area. As has been noted, it gave them considerable trouble soon after their occupation of parts of that country in 1792 and later on.<sup>3</sup>

Economically the Wahhābīs gained much from conquering territory richer than their own. Musil may be right in assuming that the Wahhābīs in their rush to the East aimed at acquiring an outlet to the sea.<sup>4</sup> But this was not the main economic outcome of the acquisition of al-Ḥasā. The house of Āl-Su'ūd did not merely divide the riches of the conquered country among their warriors.

<sup>1</sup> See BRIDGES, *The Wahaby*, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> See IBN GHANNĀM, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 197-209, and IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 98 and 106. Ibn Bishr, I, 88, speaks of the damages done to the mosques, which he calls churches, and the burning of religious treatises.

<sup>3</sup> See above.

<sup>4</sup> See *Northern Najd*, p. 260.

They acquired fabulous wealth by adding much of the Khālidi territory to their own. The farms of al-Ḥasā were known for their rich produce, and its harbours had long supplied Najd and inner Arabia with Indian and European goods.<sup>1</sup> The only places of consequence to withstand Wahhābī attacks were in the 'Utbi territory north and south of al-Ḥasā.

But before studying the relations of the 'Utūb with the Waghābis it is necessary to first study developments in the 'Utbi states between 1790 and the close of the century.

*B. Development in the 'Utbi States (1790-1800)*<sup>2</sup>

The long peaceful rule of Shaikh 'Abd Allāh Āl-Ṣabāḥ continued in Kuwait. In the south, at Zubāra and Baḥrain, Shaikh Aḥmad Āl-Khalifa ruled till his death in 1796. He was succeeded by his son, whose reign lasted until 1825.

During the 1790's the prosperity of the 'Utūb of the north continued. They were fortunate in escaping subjugation by the Waghābis, who were the real danger to all forces in Eastern Arabia. It is true that though the Waghābī impact on Eastern Arabia was strongly felt at Kuwait, various factors contributed to keep Kuwait out of danger.

We have seen how the 'Utūb benefitted from the misfortunes of other ports and states in the Gulf,<sup>3</sup> and especially from the

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 95-6 for the agricultural wealth of al-Ḥasā and see below, p. 178 for the commerce of al-Qaṭif and al-'Uqair.

<sup>2</sup> The major source of information on the development of the 'Utbi states in the 1790's, and which also throws some light on their history, is the Factory Records of the East India Company. Contemporary Arabic sources, especially the Waghābī writings, are very meagre on the subject of the 'Utūb. Ibn Ghannām and Ibn Bishr merely record two Waghābī attacks on Kuwait and others on Zubāra but no details are given about other activities in the 'Utbi states. *Lam' al-Shihāb* is invaluable for the siege of Zubāra by the Waghābis in 1798, but this work also does not give any other information on the development of the 'Utbi towns. The records themselves do not give much information on the southern part of the 'Utbi states in Qaṭar and Baḥrain.

<sup>3</sup> See above, pp. 49-50.



Persian siege and occupation of Baṣra in 1775-1779. In the early 1790's difficulties with Ottoman officials<sup>1</sup> compelled the Staff of the British Factory at Baṣra to withdraw; on the 30th April, 1793,<sup>2</sup> they established themselves at Kuwait<sup>3</sup> until the 27th August, 1795.<sup>4</sup> The head of the Factory was Samuel Manesty, assisted by Harford Jones, the Joint Factor, and John Lewis Reinaud.

The selection of Kuwait<sup>5</sup> as a place of refuge from the Ottomans implies that it cannot have been in any way an Ottoman dependency.<sup>6</sup> Various reasons dictated this choice. First, Kuwait had served well as a centre for the East India Company's dispatches during the period of the Persian occupation of Baṣra (1775-1779). Thus one of two purposes behind the maintenance of the Factory at Baṣra would not be affected by its removal to Kuwait. Moreover,

<sup>1</sup> Detailed accounts of those difficulties are given in the letters of Manesty and Jones to the Court of Directors in London and the British ambassador, Sir Robert Ainslee, at Constantinople. See *F.R.P.P.G.* in numerous dispatches of the year 1792.

<sup>2</sup> Early in 1792 Manesty and Jones left Baṣra for Ma'qil, a place about five miles to the north of Baṣra, where the Company had built a resort for its men. From there most of the letters of the Factory were sent and thus Ma'qil or Maghil, as it was called by Manesty, was the place from which they retired to Kuwait. Their stay at Ma'qil was a preliminary threat to the Pasha of Baghdād of their intention of going farther to Kuwait or Khārij if he did not come to terms with them.

<sup>3</sup> The departure took place by vessels from Ma'qil on the 30th of April and they arrived at Kuwait on the 5th of May. See Manesty and Jones to the S. Com., Grain, 18. vii, 1793, *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 19, No. 1652.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Manesty and his companions departed from Kuwait on board a Turkish vessel. See Manesty to Mr. Robert Liston (British ambassador at Constantinople), Baṣra, 13.ix.1795, *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 19, No. 1762.

<sup>5</sup> Mr. Manesty in a letter to the C. of D. dated Maghil near Baṣra, 22.xi. 1792, *F.R.P.P.G.*, 18, No. 1636, speaks of two places that could replace Baṣra, the first being Kuwait and the second Khārij Island.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. LORIMER, *op. cit.*, I, i, p. 1004. Buckingham writing in 1816 in his *Travels in Assyria*, pp. 462-3:

"The next port above El Kateef of any note on this coast is that of Graine, as it is called in our English Charts, though known among the Arabs by the name of Koete only... It seems always to have preserved its independence too... and they still bear the reputation of being the freest and the bravest people throughout the Gulf."

Manesty could safely assert "that the Charges for a Factory at Grain would be more moderate than those of the Hon'able Company's Factory here (at Baṣra)".<sup>1</sup> Shaikh 'Abd Allāh Āl-Ṣabāḥ was on good terms with the British and it is reported that he received them with great hospitality on their arrival.<sup>2</sup> The town was known to Harford Jones, who spent some time there in 1790 when he was in bad health.<sup>3</sup> Manesty may have thought that Kuwait's harbour was suitable for the Company's vessels and therefore goods could be unloaded there (although this hope, if it existed, was futile). Apart from these advantages, Manesty had virtually nowhere else to go when his threat to the Pasha of Baghdād failed. He was compelled to leave Baṣra or withdraw his threat.<sup>4</sup>

Manesty had already made known his intentions to the Bombay Governor, the British Ambassador at Constantinople and the Company's headquarters in London. Thus the India mail was dispatched from Constantinople to Kuwait on 19th March, 1793 before the Factors' departure from Baṣra, and it arrived at Kuwait before the staff.<sup>5</sup> The withdrawal of Manesty and the staff from Baṣra did not mean the closing of the Factory. An agent was retained there to look after the Company's commercial interests. At the same time Manesty was careful to inform the Captains of the English ships to call and unload their goods at Kuwait instead of Baṣra, whenever possible. Letters to this effect were sent to the

<sup>1</sup> Manesty to the Sec. Comit., Maghil near Baṣra, 22.xi.1792, *F.R.P.P.G.* 18, No. 1636.

<sup>2</sup> See Manesty to the Sec. Committee, Grain, 18.vii.1793, *F.R.P.P.G.* Vol. 19, No. 1652.

<sup>3</sup> See above.

<sup>4</sup> Manesty to the Sec. Committee, Magil near Baṣra, 22.xi.1792, *F.R.P.P.G.* Vol. 18, No. 1636.

<sup>5</sup> They arrived on May the 5th 1793, as given in a letter from Manesty to the Sec. Committee from Grain dated 18.vii.1793, No. 1692. The first letter sent from Qurain was addressed to Harford Jones and it is dated 7th May, 1793, No. 1654. In this letter Mr. Manesty asks Mr. Jones to proceed to Abū Shahr carrying important dispatches which arrived at Qurain from the British Ambassador and they were addressed to the Bombay Government.

Mutasallim of Baṣra and to Mr. Nicholas Hankey Smith, the Resident at Abū Shahr.<sup>1</sup> The Company's captains, however, were unwilling at first to risk anchoring in an unknown harbour.<sup>2</sup> Later some ships called at Kuwait<sup>3</sup> and unloaded there. Negotiations between the Pasha and Manesty continued. Manesty does not seem to have insisted that English ships unload at Kuwait while the Factory was there.

A year after the establishment of the new Factory, Manesty seems to have realised that his calculations about the facilities Kuwait had to offer as a substitute for Baṣra, were not entirely accurate. First, Kuwait was menaced by the Wahhābīs who attacked it more than once between 1793-95. Second, Shaikh 'Abd Allāh was growing too old for the responsibilities of his position.<sup>4</sup>

It was clear to Manesty that Kuwait could not replace Baṣra. As a result of negotiations with the Pasha, the Factory returned in August, 1795, after two years and four months residence at Kuwait. Mr. Manesty, in a letter to the Court of Directors dated 8th July, 1795, showed his delight at the re-establishment of the Factory "in the most Honourable Manner" at Baṣra.<sup>5</sup> On the 27th August, 1795, he embarked at Qurain on board an Ottoman vessel escorted

<sup>1</sup> See letters from Manesty to the Mutasallim and to Mr. Smith, Grain, 6.xii.1793, *F.R.P.P.G.*, 19, No. 1683.

<sup>2</sup> Captain Gay Hamilton of the Begum Shah refused to obey the instructions of Mr. Manesty (because of his responsibility for the preservation of the ship, cargo and lives on board) as he knew nothing of the port of Grain. See a letter from Captain Hamilton to Manesty dated 27.v.1793. *F.R.P.P.G.* 19, No. 1658; the place of the dispatch was Begum Shah, at the mouth of the Baṣra river.

<sup>3</sup> The earliest example is that of the ship 'Laurel' whose Captain, Alexander Foggo arrived at Failaka Island and sent a message to Mr. Manesty enquiring about further instructions. See the letter dated 18th July, 1793, *F.R.P.P.G.*, 19, No. 1659.

<sup>4</sup> See a letter from Manesty to the C. of D., dated Grain, 15.vii.1794, *F.R.P.P.G.*, 19, No. 1700.

<sup>5</sup> Manesty to the C. of D., Grain, 13.ix.1795, *F.R.P.P.G.*, 19, No. 1753. This letter is a duplicate of a previous letter dated 23 August and a triplicate of a letter dated 8th July of the same year. The present author could not trace the last two letters which may have been lost.

by other Ottoman ships and the 'Viper' of the East India Company. They arrived at Baṣra on 2nd September, and on the 4th September Mr. Manesty made his public entry into Baṣra.<sup>1</sup> From the Factory's point of view, the stay in Kuwait had the desired effect of bringing the Pasha round to the English terms. From the Shaikh's viewpoint the stay of the British Factory was of great importance to the prestige and finance of Kuwait. Nothing is stated in local tradition about the British Factory at Kuwait and Arabic chroniclers make no mention of its stay. Its importance, however, can be gathered from events recorded in the English dispatches from Kuwait and from the information related by Brydges in his *Wahauby* and Dr. Seetzen in *Monatliche Correspondenz*.<sup>2</sup>

First, the town profited greatly from ships' cargoes unloaded there. Though no exact estimates are given about the amount of this cargo, it must have been considerably more than that which had previously come to the town.<sup>3</sup>

Kuwait must also have derived profit from the Company's mail, which was usually transported by the Arab desert express.

<sup>1</sup> A description which shows the vanity of Manesty is given in two of his letters dated Baṣra, 13th September, 1795, *F.R.P.P.G.*, 19, Nos. 1752 and 1762. The first was addressed to the G. of D., and the second to Mr. Robert Liston, the British consul at Constantinople.

<sup>2</sup> In a letter from Burckhardt, the traveller, to Sir Joseph Banks, the secretary of the Association for promoting the Discovery of the Interior Parts of Africa, dated Malta, April, 22, 1809, he gives the following about Dr. Seetzen:

"Dr. Seetzen is a German physician, who was sent five or six years ago by the Duke of Saxe-Gotha into the Levant, to collect manuscripts and Eastern curiosities. He has resided for a considerable length of time at Constantinople for the last eighteen months at Cairo, from whence his letter to Mr. Barker (the brother of the English Consul at Malta) is dated on the 9th February last. After sending from Cairo to Gotha a collection of fifteen hundred manuscripts and three thousand different objects of antiquity he planned to travel to Suez and the eastern coast of the Red Sea and enter Africa to explore its interior.

See BURCKHARDT, *Travels in Nubia*, London (1822), p. vi. Burckhardt also speaks of Dr. Seetzen's travels in Syria and the Holy Land in his work *Travels in Syria and the Holy Land* (London, 1822), p. v.

<sup>3</sup> For some figures and details see the next Chapter, p. 180.

The latter consisted of camel riders chosen from the Arab inhabitants of the town, or those who lived there because of this livelihood.<sup>1</sup>

Manesty's personal contacts with the Shaikh undoubtedly strengthened. These contacts may have extended to other Kuwaitī merchants whose boats were sometimes used by the Baṣra Factory to carry dispatches to India. This was done to avoid interception of British vessels by the French fleet in the late 1790's. The Shaikh also allowed British factors to intercept French emissaries and their dispatches carried by Kuwaitī boats.<sup>2</sup>

The 1790's saw considerable French activity in the Persian Gulf area. In 1793 war was declared between England and France, and the French increased their activities in India and the Indian Ocean; at the same time they made more use of the overland route via the Syrian desert and the Gulf to India. French emissaries and dispatches became liable to interception by the British Factors' staff in the Gulf. To discuss in full detail the Anglo-French rivalry in the Persian Gulf is beyond our scope here. Suffice to say this rivalry was not without its repercussions in Eastern Arabia, and the 'Utūb became involved in it.

In their struggle against the British in India, the French attempted to render the Persian Gulf route useless to the British. At the same time they hoped to use it for conveying their own dispatches to India. To achieve this, French emissaries were sent to the various states bordering on the Gulf<sup>3</sup> to try to win them to their side.<sup>4</sup> A French fleet was also sent to police the Indian Sea

<sup>1</sup> For the desert mail see also the next Chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Several examples of this interception of French activities can be located in the Baṣra Factory dispatches of the years 1794, 1795, 1796, 1797, and 1798. There were earlier French activities such as the mission of M. de Bourge in 1778.

<sup>3</sup> See a letter from William Wickham, British minister and plenipotentiary to the Helvetic Confederacy, dated Bern, 30.vi.1796, *F.R.P.P.G.*, 19, No. 1802.

<sup>4</sup> Sir Richard Worsley, Minister Resident at Venice to the Principal Factor or Agent at Baṣra, Venice, 15.iii.1796, *F.R.P.P.G.*, 19, No. 1803.

and the Gulf.<sup>1</sup> Simultaneously the French sent several dispatches overland to Baṣra and tried to send others by Arab boats to India.

It was on this side of French activities in the Gulf that the northern 'Utūb became involved. The friendship of Mr. Manesty and Shaikh 'Abd Allāh Āl-Ṣabāḥ was used to curb French plans for 'Utbī vessels to convey emissaries and dispatches. The chief reason for using Arab boats was that neither the English nor the French had regular mail service in the Gulf and it was necessary to keep the dispatch of important information as secret as possible. That secrecy could be secured via Arab *dhow*s or *gallivats*, whose *nōkhadhas* (captains) were notable for their honesty.<sup>2</sup>

British influence in the Gulf was predominant in the second half of the eighteenth century, but the sending of dispatches was not limited to the British Persian Gulf Factories. The majority of the mail went to India, and the Indian Ocean was always endangered by French vessels during any crisis with the British in Europe or elsewhere.<sup>3</sup> It could be argued that the French and English might intercept Arab boats as well, but apparently this did not happen, except where emissaries or dispatches were reported to have been travelling by a known boat. It would have been a difficult and impracticable task for either fleet to stop every Arab vessel; also they might have encountered difficulties with the Arab

<sup>1</sup> See two letters to this effect from Manesty to the Sec. Comit., the first dated Grain, 23.viii.1795, *F.R.P.P.G.*, 19, No. 1763, the second dated Baṣra, 20.xi.1796, No. 1798. Another letter addressed by Manesty to Mr. W. Wickham, dated Baṣra, 25.xi.1796, *F.R.P.P.G.*, 19, No. 1803.

<sup>2</sup> Shaikh Ibrāhīm Ghānim on whose vessel two Frenchmen were travelling from Maṣqaṭ to Baṣra is an example of this. He refused to allow these two men to be captured by the English though he was offered a large amount of money as a bribe. He finally agreed because he was shown a letter signed by the Shaikh of Kuwait telling him to deliver the Frenchmen to the English. See the details of this event in Manesty to Reinaud, Grain, 10.vii.1795, *F.R.P.P.G.*, 19, No. 1754.

<sup>3</sup> French warships were reported to have arrived in the Gulf in July, 1793, and it was said they represented a great threat to British dispatches. See Manesty to the Sec. Comit., Grain, 18.vii.1793, *F.R.P.P.G.*, 19, No. 1652.

shaikhs who would not have allowed it. The Arab vessels of the time were well equipped with guns which would have rendered their interception difficult.<sup>1</sup>

The position of the 'Utūb in interception was not easy, although the British Factory rendered Kuwait invaluable services<sup>2</sup> by its establishment there in 1793. The Shaikh was well-disposed towards the British, but did not approve their stand towards Kuwaitī ships carrying French dispatches and citizens. This was the position in January, 1795, when Manesty directed Reinaud to seize Signor Gulielmo Vincenzo Visette, son of the Venetian Pro-Consul at Aleppo, in a Kuwaitī *gallivat* at Kuwait.<sup>3</sup> It is worth noting that Manesty, who was not sure of intercepting Visette at Kuwait, gave Reinaud letters to the Shaikh of Bahrain and Ibn Khalfān, the Governor of Masqaṭ<sup>4</sup> to facilitate Reinaud's call. What the response of both might have been to the letters remains unknown because Visette was seized earlier at Kuwait. Yet writing to Shaikh Aḥmad Āl-Khalīfa of Bahrain suggests that he was well-disposed towards the British.

Later that year, the attitude of Shaikh 'Abd Allāh towards the interception of French dispatches changed. On July 10th, intelligence reached the British Factory at Qurain that a Kuwaitī vessel sailing from Masqaṭ to Baṣra carried two Frenchmen who might have dispatches from Mauritius. Shaikh 'Abd Allāh was requested

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Manesty speaks of the substantial armament of Arab ships in general in a letter from Grain, 23.viii.1795, *F.R.P.P.G.*, 19, No. 1763, sent to the Sec. Comit. and thinks that they will be a great danger to the British trade in the Gulf. In another from Grain, 17.i.1795, *F.R.P.P.G.*, 19, No. 1723, to the Sec. Comit., he speaks of Kuwaitī vessels being highly equipped for war.

<sup>2</sup> See below, pp. 162-63 for the Factory's attitude towards the Wahhābīs who raided Kuwait during the sojourn of the Factory there.

<sup>3</sup> Manesty to Reinaud, Grain, 17.i.1795, *F.R.P.P.G.*, 19, No. 1723. The reference to the indignation of Shaikh 'Abd Allāh Āl-Ṣabāḥ is reported in another letter; Manesty to the Sec. Comit. 18.i.1795, *F.R.P.P.G.*, 19, No. 1722. Signor Visette did not have any French dispatches and he continued his travel to India.

<sup>4</sup> Manesty to Reinaud, Grain, 17.i.1795, *F.R.P.P.G.*, 19, No. 1723.

by Manesty to write to the Kuwaitī *nōkhadha* asking Reinaud to confiscate the dispatches. This order was not carried out, because Reinaud fell ill soon after his departure from Kuwait. It is interesting to note that the Shaikh wrote the letter unwillingly.<sup>1</sup>

Three months later, in similar circumstances, the Shaikh's attitude changed considerably, for reasons unknown. On October 25th, Manesty, after receiving intelligence that a Monsieur Guirard left Baṣra enroute to Surat in a Kuwaitī *dhow* owned by Shaikh Ibrāhīm b. Ghānim,<sup>2</sup> directed Reinaud to capture the French dispatches carried by Guirard. Manesty gave Reinaud a letter to Shaikh 'Abd Allāh asking him to write Ibrāhīm to permit Reinaud to seize the dispatches. Shaikh 'Abd Allāh complied but it was uncertain whether Ibrāhīm, the *nōkhadha*, would allow the seizure. To ensure this, Reinaud carried 4,000 *piastres* to be given to Ibrāhīm if he agreed.<sup>3</sup> Ibrāhīm agreed after he had seen the letter from Shaikh 'Abd Allāh.<sup>4</sup>

By the 13th of November of the same year, Shaikh 'Abd Allāh had granted the British Resident at Baṣra the right to search every 'Utbi vessel that called there for foreign dispatches and emissaries.<sup>5</sup> It is noteworthy that in the last two events, the vessels belonged

<sup>1</sup> Manesty to Reinaud, Grain, 10.vii.1795, *F.R.P.P.G.*, 19, No. 1754.

<sup>2</sup> Āl-Ghānim family in Kuwait is now one of the richest trading families in Kuwait.

<sup>3</sup> Manesty to Reinaud, Baṣra, 25.x.1795, *F.R.P.P.G.*, 19, No. 1773. It should be remembered that the British Factory returned to Baṣra on 27th August, 1795. For the local and foreign currency in the Gulf in the second half of the eighteenth century, the best information can be traced in an anonymous pamphlet in the British Museum, *An Account of the Monies, Weights and Measures, etc.* (London, 1789).

<sup>4</sup> Ibrāhīm must have known Reinaud from the first stay at Kuwait as a member of the Factory.

<sup>5</sup> This grant came after a request from Manesty to the Shaikh which Reinaud carried with him on his last mission. See Reinaud to Manesty, Baṣra, 13.xi.1795, *F.R.P.P.G.*, 19, No. 1773. In this letter Reinaud gives interesting details concerning his mission and how Ibrāhīm was at first reluctant and how he finally helped in the seizure of the dispatches.



to Shaikh Ibrāhīm b. Ghānim.<sup>1</sup> This grant must have been valuable to the British, for they found it easier to intercept the dispatches before the carriers landed and contacted the French Consul at Baṣra. Thus it was easier for the British to carry out their activities on Ottoman territory.

The French apparently became aware of the British talent for interception and no more was heard of 'Utbī boats carrying French agents, emissaries or dispatches in the last four years of the century. Another reason may have been the agreement of the Tartar Aghāsi<sup>2</sup> to deliver to Reinaud all French dispatches sent to M. Rousseau, the French Consul at Baghdād.<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that the French diplomatic manoeuvres at Constantinople, Baghdād, Persia and Masqaṭ during the period 1793-1798 did not include the 'Utbī states. Therefore one may infer that with the establishment of the British Factory at Kuwait from 1793-95 and the favourable policy of the Shaikh towards the British, the French could not win the support of the Shaikh.<sup>4</sup> With the French occupation of Egypt and the British diplomatic successes at Masqaṭ and in the Persian court in 1798, there was no place in the Persian Gulf for French dispatches and emissaries.

Apart from this European activity there is more to the 'Utbī

<sup>1</sup> Two more names are given in another letter (Manesty to Reinaud, Grain, 17.i.1795, No. 1723) of Kuwaitis who owned and were the *nōkhadhas* of their vessels. The first was Muḥammad b. Bakr al-Dawsarī, of a family that still lives in Kuwait, though not rich as the Āl-Ghānim, and Shaikh 'Alī b. Sulaymān. Their vessels were said to have been well equipped for war; see *Ibid*.

<sup>2</sup> Dispatches from Kuwait and Baṣra to Aleppo were usually carried by the Arab express while those coming from Constantinople were carried by Tartars. The Tartars were the imperial Ottoman couriers, referred to as *Ulak*.

<sup>3</sup> According to this agreement Reinaud was able to send the French dispatches sealed. From Reinaud, Baghdād, to Manesty, Baṣra, 25.viii. *F.R.P.P.G.*, 19, No. 1906.

<sup>4</sup> When M. Beauchamp and other French emissaries arrived at Aleppo from Turkey on their proposed journey to Masqaṭ, Robert Abbot, the British Agent at Aleppo, wrote to Manesty at Baṣra, telling him that they might travel through Persia to Masqaṭ and not through Kuwait, al-Ḥasā and Zubāra. See Abbot to Manesty, Aleppo, 27.i.1798, and 1.ii.1798, *F.R.P.P.G.*, 19, No. 1871.

episode, scarcely dealt with by historians. That is their relation with the Wāhhābīs.

C. *‘Utbi-Wāhhābī Relations, 1793-1800*

Against a background of this general state of affairs in Eastern Arabia and of the ‘Utbi states in particular, we may proceed to study ‘Utbi-Wāhhābī relations. This study can be divided into three parts. The first deals with conditions in the ‘Utbi states and how they invited Wāhhābī action against themselves. The second concerns the actual military operations. The third shows how and why the ‘Utūb were able to stay free of Wāhhābī control until the close of the eighteenth century.

It must be remembered that the ‘Utbi states, which formed part of Eastern Arabia, started as small towns under the protection of the Shaikhs of the Banī Khālid.<sup>1</sup> When those towns grew in importance and new territory was conquered in Baḥrain, no change was reported in the attitude of the Banī Khālid Shaikhs towards the ‘Utbi chiefs of both Kuwait and Baḥrain. Friendly relations persisted and the ‘Utūb offered help at certain critical periods in the history of the Banī Khālid.

This may be seen in the temporary stays of Zayd b. ‘Uray‘ir at Kuwait in 1793, when he succumbed to the Wāhhābī attack on his territory of al-Ḥasā,<sup>2</sup> and Barrāk b. ‘Abd al-Muḥsin in 1795, when he fled from al-Ḥasā for the same reason.<sup>3</sup> Many inhabitants of al-Ḥasā who fled from the Wāhhābīs found shelter in the fortified ‘Utbi town of Zubāra.<sup>4</sup> It seems that Bedouin tribes of the Banī Khālid, whenever defeated by the Wāhhābīs, travelled

<sup>1</sup> See the rise of Kuwait, p. 45 and the establishment of Zubāra, p. 65 ff.

<sup>2</sup> See above.

<sup>3</sup> See above.

<sup>4</sup> IBN GHANNĀM, *op. cit.*, II, p. 205, states that many of the inhabitants of the towns of al-Ḥasā were allowed to leave their forts safely on condition that they would leave the country, which they did, and after taking boats in the harbour of al-‘Uqair, they sought refuge with the Zubāra people and told them about the situation in al-Ḥasā.

northwards to the region of Kuwait, while the settlers took to their boats and remained at Zubāra and on coastal islands which the Wahhābīs had not yet conquered.<sup>1</sup> The 'Utūb in this case were following the duty of protection, at the same time increasing their fighting strength; the refugees probably alerted them to the dangers. By sheltering them, the 'Utūb clearly showed the Wahhābīs that there was no alternative but to bring the 'Utūb states under their control.

Offering shelter to refugees from the Wahhābī yoke was not the only reason for the 'Utūb-Wahhābī struggle. In their teachings the Wahhābīs were pledged to carry war to wherever *shirk* (pluralism) and *bida'* (innovation) existed. The 'Utūb territory therefore could not be excluded because the 'Utūb, like other non-Wahhābī Moslems, practised Islām in a manner unacceptable to the Wahhābīs. Moreover, Baḥrain was one of the territories proclaimed by the Wahhābīs as a land of *shirk* and *rafāḍa* (rejection) and Shī'ites.<sup>2</sup> The reduction of such lands was a vital necessity in the upholding of essential Wahhābī doctrines.

It seems likely that the Wahhābīs were attracted by the substantial wealth which the 'Utūb towns had accumulated by trade. Whatever the Wahhābī motive in attacking Eastern Arabia, they would have done their cause no harm by seizing the property of the 'Utūb who were classified, in the Wahhābī teachings, as *mushrikīn*.<sup>3</sup>

The actual armed clash between the 'Utūb and the Wahhābīs

<sup>1</sup> The Wahhābīs were efficient warriors on land, but not at sea, for they dared not attack the islands which belonged to the Banī Khālid. Even in the first one that they conquered, al-'Amāyir, the island was near the shore and people could reach it by swimming or wading out to it. Even then the Wahhābīs were helped by al-Mahāshir, a division of the Banī Khālid. Cf. IBN GHANNĀM, *op. cit.*, II pp. 225-226.

<sup>2</sup> See IBN GHANNĀM, *op. cit.*, I, p. 15. Shī'ites form a large part of the present population of Kuwait and Baḥrain. In Baḥrain Shī'ism dates from the days of the Qaramathians.

<sup>3</sup> *Lam'al-Shihāb* in treating the Wahhābī attacks on Zubāra says that it was one of the richest ports and included some of the wealthiest Arab merchants, such as Ibn Rizq, Bakr Lūlū and others of Āl-Khalifa. See f. 95.

did not take place until 1208/1793, when the latter had almost annihilated the strength of the Banī Khālid in several raids on the various towns of al-Ḥasā. The 'Utūb seem not to have presented a unified front in their fight against the raiders. While the Āl-Ṣabāḥ in Kuwait had to face the earlier Wahhābī raids in 1793, it was not till 1795 that the Āl-Khalifa were exposed to direct Wahhābī attacks on Zubāra and vicinity. Even if the Āl-Khalifa or their cousins the Āl-Ṣabāḥ were aware of a Wahhābī attack, the long distance between Kuwait and Baḥrain and Zubāra made it impractical for 'Utbi forces to go to their aid by land or sea. In addition, the Wahhābī warfare technique of rapid raids and withdrawals would not permit it. The Wahhābīs, in their attacks, depended on their great mobility.<sup>1</sup> The Wahhābī chroniclers give accounts of two such raids directed against Kuwait.<sup>2</sup> The first took place in 1208/1793 under Ibrāhīm b. 'Ufayṣān, who had already won battles against the Banī Khālid in al-Ḥasā.<sup>3</sup> The army of Ibn 'Ufayṣān was composed of Najdī Arabs from al-Kharj, al-'Āriḍ and Sudayr; there was no mention al-Ḥasā Arabs by either Ibn Ghannām or Ibn Bisḥr.<sup>4</sup> The subsequent raid in 1212/1797, however, included people from al-Ḥasā among the invaders. It is noteworthy that in this first Wahhābī attack, the Wahhābī chroniclers state that the people of Kuwait faced the Wahhābīs outside the town and that in the booty they captured were "famous and precious weapons".<sup>5</sup> Ibn 'Ufayṣān and his men returned with their booty after killing thirty inhabitants of Kuwait.<sup>6</sup>

The second Wahhābī raid on Kuwait, according to the chroniclers, took place in 1212/1797.<sup>7</sup> It can be inferred from a Baṣra

<sup>1</sup> See *Notes on the Bedouins*, pp. 311-32, also *The Wahaby*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. IBN GHANNĀM, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 191 and 273; IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 102 and 111.

<sup>3</sup> See above, pp. 141-42.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. IBN GHANNĀM, *op. cit.*, II, p. 191 and IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, I, p. 102.

<sup>5</sup> IBN GHANNĀM, *op. cit.*, II, p. 191.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Cf. IBN GHANNĀM, *op. cit.*, II, p. 273 and IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, I, p. III.

Factory dispatch<sup>1</sup> and Brydges' *Wahauhy*<sup>2</sup> that Wahnābī attacks on Kuwait continued throughout the Factory's stay at Kuwait. Brydges gave an interesting description of one of the more serious Wahnābī raids, in which he revealed how Shaikh 'Abd Allāh Āl-Ṣabāḥ "and his brave townsmen" repelled that attack.<sup>3</sup> This apparently took place before his departure to Baghdād in 1794, and from there to Constantinople and England. From the two Wahnābī chroniclers and the English sources, it is difficult to believe that the 'Utūb were ever on the offensive. The only reference to an 'Utūbī attack on the Wahnābīs may be traced in Ibn Ghannām<sup>4</sup> who, when chronicling the events of 1212/1797, states that a certain Mashārī b. 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥusayn attacked a Wahnābī party near Kuwait. The attacking party consisted of the 'Utūb mounted on horses and twenty camels. Mashārī was killed in this battle.<sup>5</sup>

Earlier that year the Wahnābīs attacked Kuwait, led by Mannā' Abū Rijlayn. The 'Utūb met the enemy outside their town, but eventually retreated from the battlefield, leaving much armour and twenty dead behind.<sup>6</sup>

The Wahnābīs might have meant to indicate to the 'Utūb, that those who helped enemies of the Wahnābīs were open to Wahnābī attack. Wahnābī pre-occupation with the expeditions of Thuwaynī and 'Alī Pasha, inspired by the Ottomans, seems to have saved the 'Utūb of Kuwait. The 'Utūb apparently played

<sup>1</sup> See Manesty and Jones to the C. of D., Grain, 15.vii.1794, *F.R.P.P.G.* 19, No. 1700.

<sup>2</sup> See BRYDGES, *The Wahauhy*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 13-15.

<sup>4</sup> Ibn Bishr does not refer to this attack in his chronicle.

<sup>5</sup> IBN GHANNĀM, *op. cit.*, II, p. 274.

<sup>6</sup> IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, I, p. 111, says that this attack on Kuwait was carried out by order of 'Abd al-'Aziz Āl-Su'ūd. The fact that the attackers were from al-Ḥasā may indicate that 'Abd al-'Aziz wanted to test the fidelity of the people whose land he had subjugated two years before, in 1795.

some part in supporting the Ottomans. In 1211/1796 Thuwaynī's forces spent about three months at al-Jahra in the neighbourhood of Kuwait, on their withdrawal to 'Irāq. This was both before and after the assassination of Thuwaynī by a Wahhābī fanatic in al-Ḥasā.

Later in 1795, after the failure of what the Wahhābī chroniclers called the "Conspiracy against the Wahhābīs in al-Ḥasā", many of the Banī Khālid and inhabitants of al-Ḥasā escaped to Baṣra and Baghdād. There they persuaded Sulaymān Pasha to send Thuwaynī against the Wahhābīs who would soon be attacking his territory in Baṣra. Although the role of the 'Utūb in Thuwaynī's expedition is not clear (because reference is always made to the Banī Khālid and their supporters), they must have sided with Thuwaynī because they were under constant Wahhābī threat and were also supporters of the Banī Khālid.

However, this support led the Wahhābī commander, Ibrāhīm b. 'Ufayṣān, chosen by Su'ūd as Governor of al-Ḥasā after its reduction in 1795, to write to 'Abd al-'Azīz Āl-Su'ūd seeking permission to reduce the 'Utbi settlement of Zubāra and its neighbourhood.<sup>1</sup> Zubāra was used as a shelter for the refugees fleeing from Wahhābī occupation;<sup>2</sup> they continued to plot against the new regime in al-Ḥasā. It is not clear from the text of *Lam' al-Shihāb* why Ibn 'Ufayṣān made his demands from 'Abd al-'Azīz in secret form.<sup>3</sup> Neither is it clear why he did not wage war against the town when he had 'Abd al-'Azīz's sanction to attack. Ibrāhīm, however, began his attacks by sending raiders to the vicinity of Zubāra, instructing them to cut off the town on the land side and thus prevent the inhabitants from obtaining water and wood. The town

<sup>1</sup> It is odd that the Wahhābī chroniclers do not mention the reduction of Zubāra in their works. The only source of information is *Lam' al-Shihāb*, ff. 94-96 and 101-103.

<sup>2</sup> See above p. 134.

<sup>3</sup> See *Lam' al-Shihāb* f. 94.

of Zubāra depended for its water on wells about one-and-a-half *farsakhs* (ca. 7 miles) from the town. These were protected by a citadel. Between the citadel and the town were a number of fortresses (*kūts*), which enabled the 'Utūb to reach the water under guard.<sup>1</sup> It seems clear that Ibrāhīm hoped to capture the town without opposition but because of its strength,<sup>2</sup> position and water supplies, his hopes proved futile, and it was necessary to take it by force. The citadel fell after heavy Wahhābī losses, but the fortresses (*kūts*) did not.<sup>3</sup> Shaikh Salmān Āl-Khalīfa, the ruler of Zubāra, ordered his men to leave the *kūts* after rendering them useless. Thus Zubāra was cut off from the mainland and the siege began. The 'Utūb mistakenly thought the besiegers would tire and depart. In fact, meanwhile the Wahhābīs were conquering other towns in Qaṭar, such as Furayḥa, al-Ḥuwayla, al-Yūsufiyya, and al-Ruwayḍa. Because the latter towns had boats, they were directed by the Wahhābīs against the 'Utbī vessels. It is reported in *Lam' al-Shihāb* that the 'Utūb of Zubāra attacked the above towns and scattered their forces but were unable to meet the Wahhābīs in an open land battle. Thus, when Ibrāhīm came to the rescue of the other towns and maintained a strong siege of Zubāra, the inhabitants, under the rule of Shaikh Salmān b. Aḥmad Āl-Khalīfa,<sup>4</sup> hoped to force the Wahhābīs to leave their town by mass migration to Baḥrain.<sup>5</sup> In Baḥrain they settled at al-Jaw, on high

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* f. 95.

<sup>2</sup> See above,

<sup>3</sup> *Lam' al-Shihāb*, f. 96, states that the building of the citadel and the fortresses was effected after Aḥmad Āl-Khalīfa gathered a council of the rich merchants of the town and consulted them, when he realized the approaching Wahhābī danger.

<sup>4</sup> Aḥmad died in 1796 and Salmān his son was chosen as his successor.

<sup>5</sup> According to *Lam' al-Shihāb*, f. 103, the 'Utūb thought the Wahhābī Government would not last forever, and eventually they would return to their homes. With no inhabitants and no trade the invaders were usually

ground in the south of the largest island. There they built a citadel and homes for the immigrants.<sup>1</sup>

The date of the departure of the 'Utüb from Zubāra is uncertain and there is no evidence to indicate that the Wāhhābīs, on finding Zubāra abandoned, asked the 'Utüb to return. All that is revealed by *Lam' al-Shihāb* is that Ibn 'Ufayṣān, on entering the deserted town, regretted his act.<sup>2</sup> That may have been because he had occupied a town known to be wealthy, but had gained no booty (*ghanā'im*) to distribute among his soldiers or to enrich the state treasury of al-Dir'iyya.

Soon after the failure of Thuwaynī's expedition, Su'ūd led the Wāhhābī forces northwards and attacked the outskirts of 'Irāq.<sup>3</sup> With the Wāhhābī danger at his door, Sulaymān Pasha fitted an expedition against them, under the leadership of his *Kaya*, 'Alī Pasha, a Georgian slave. The cavalry marched to al-Ḥasā. The infantry, artillery and ammunition were transported by water to Baḥrain and other ports at al-Ḥasā, where they were warmly welcomed.<sup>4</sup> Since the details of this expedition belong mostly to Ottoman and Wāhhābī history, we shall deal with it only where it throws light on the history of the 'Utüb. *Lam' al-Shihāb* relates that the artillery and provisions were transported to Baḥrain and landed at al-Ḥasā ports by vessels, 200 of which were hired from the 'Utüb

forced to abandon the settlements and the inhabitants returned. Cf. the evacuation of Baḥrain by the Huwala Arabs in 1741 after the Persian occupation of the island (see above, p. 35.)

<sup>1</sup> *Lam'*, f. 103.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> The attack was directed against al-Sāmāwa and Sūq al-Shuyūkh; see IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, I, p. 112.

<sup>4</sup> Details of the equipment of this expedition, its march against the Wāhhābīs to al-Ḥasā instead of al-Dir'iyya, and reasons for its failure, can be traced in the writings of three contemporaries and eyewitnesses. The first is BRYDGES in his *Wahauy*, pp. 19-24; the second is the anonymous work of *Lam' al-Shihāb*, ff. 173-184; the third is IBN SANAD who gives a detailed account in his *Maṣāli' al-Su'ūd*, ff. 170-175.



of Kuwait.<sup>1</sup> The landing of the provisions at Bahrain indicates that Āl-Khalifa was also on the side of the Ottomans.<sup>2</sup>

**‘UTBĪ INDEPENDENCE CONTINUES TILL THE CLOSE OF THE CENTURY**

One last point in the ‘Utbī-Wahhābī relations is the maintenance of ‘Utbī independence while most of Eastern Arabia was conquered by the Wahhābīs. In this matter it is wise to consider separately the northern and southern ‘Utbī domains in their resistance to Wahhābī aggression.

Both areas shared the same geographical position. They lay on the coast of the Gulf, protected from Wahhābī influence by the Banī Khālid lands on their eastern border. After 1792-1793, with the decline of the Banī Khālid, the subjugation of the ‘Utūb seemed likely. However, with the rise of Zayd b. ‘Uray‘ir to power in 1789 and the rise of Barrāk b. ‘Abd al-Muḥsin in 1793, the establishment of direct Wahhābī rule over Eastern Arabia was postponed for some years.

The fall of Barrāk in 1795 marked the beginning of the end of Khālidī rule in Eastern Arabia; with that decline the difficulties the ‘Utūb faced became greater. Even before the fall of Barrāk, Kuwait was attacked frequently by the Wahhābīs, but they failed to capture the town in the 1780’s and 1790’s.

Reference has already been made to the growing power of the ‘Utbī fleet and its high standard of arms equipment.<sup>3</sup> These weap-

<sup>1</sup> See *Lam’ al-Shihāb*, f. 176. The man who arranged this was ‘Abd Allāh Aghā, the Mutasallim of Baṣra. He seems to have been on good relations with the ‘Utūb because he himself, when hearing of the approach of ‘Alī Pasha and because of earlier animosity with him, took to one of the ‘Utbī vessels going to Kuwait. ‘Alī Pasha, however, promised not to allow previous grievances to affect him and so he returned to Baṣra. See *Ibid*, f. 175.

<sup>2</sup> It is stated in *Bombay Selections*, p. 429, that the Arabs of Kuwait were supposed to take part in the expedition together with the Arabs of Baṣra and the Muntafiq, but no details are given there of the manner in which the ‘Utūb participated. It appears that they offered marine help.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 107.

ons could be used in defending the town and this was necessary from 1793 onwards. The 'Utūb, who were among the Arabs trading with India, could arm themselves with weapons superior to those of the Wāhhābīs. This might explain Ibn Ghannām's comment of the "famous weapons" which the Wāhhābīs won from the 'Utūb after their attack on Kuwait in 1793.<sup>1</sup> The presence of the British Factory at Kuwait from 1793-1795 may have been another strong reason for the safety of Kuwait and its escape from the Wāhhābī yoke.

### THE ROLE OF THE BRITISH FACTORY

There is no evidence in the Baṣra Factory records to show that the Factory upheld the 'Utūb against the Wāhhābī raids. On the contrary, Brydges, the the Joint Factor at Kuwait, in his *Wahauby*<sup>2</sup> gives the impression that Kuwait was defended by its own courageous people. They had full confidence in Shaikh 'Abd Allāh b. Ṣabāḥ, a venerable old man of commanding appearance, whom they regarded more as a father than a governor.<sup>3</sup> The Factory did not intervene between the two combatants because these were orders from the Company and because the Factory feared the Wāhhābīs might intercept the Company's mail in the desert.<sup>4</sup>

However, it is not easy to reconcile this with what Mr. Reinaud, a remarkable figure in the history of the Factory wrote to Dr. Seetzen from Aleppo in 1805.<sup>5</sup> Brydges represented the grand attack of the Wāhhābīs as having been made by 500 men, who were driven off by a single shot from an old gun that had been brought ashore by the Shaikh from one of his vessels.<sup>6</sup> Mr. Reinaud,

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 155-156.

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 12-16.

<sup>3</sup> See *The Wahauby*, p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> According to Gorancez, p. 50, the Wāhhābī Amir undertook to protect the British mail only so long as he should be at peace with the Pasha of Baghdād. He once put a man to death for tampering with it.

<sup>5</sup> See *Monatliche Correspondenz*, pp. 234-235.

<sup>6</sup> See *The Wahauby*, p. 12 ff.

instead, places the strength of the enemy at 2000 camels, each carrying two men, the front rider armed with a gun and the other with a lance to protect his companion while re-loading. He alleges that, under Manesty's orders, two guns were landed from the British cruiser used to guard the Factory, and that the sepoy Factory guard participated in repelling the attack, and that the Wahhābis lost heavily during their flight along the beach from the fire of the cruiser.<sup>1</sup> Reinaud adds that the resentment of the Wahhābis at this interference, expressed in raids on the Company's desert mail, was the cause of his own mission to al-Dir'iyya.<sup>2</sup>

No fixed date is given for the attack by both authorities, except that it took place during the sojourn of the Factory at Kuwait. However, it seems likely that Mr. Reinaud's version of the Factory's role is not entirely fiction. Indeed, there is much evidence to support it. In the first place, the Factory was responsible for the Company's goods at Kuwait. The Wahhābis presumably would not have spared the infidels if the town had been taken. In addition, it seems unlikely that Manesty would have been so ungrateful as to refuse aid to the people of Kuwait who had previously received him with hospitality. At the same time, Manesty could not explain in letters to his superiors the role he played against the Wahhābis, for the policy of the Company had so far been one of neutrality towards the Gulf powers. It is interesting that in the dispatches from Kuwait there is no mention of any Wahhābī attacks, although it is indisputable that they took place.

Kuwait stayed clear of the Wahhābī sphere of influence after the reduction of Zubāra. This may be explained on the grounds that after 1796, the Wahhābis were busy repelling attacks by the Sharīfs of Makka on the one hand, Thuwaynī of the Muntafiq in 1797 and 'Alī Pasha in 1798-1799 on the other. Moreover, the

<sup>1</sup> See *Monatliche Correspondenz*, pp. 234-235.

<sup>2</sup> He gained fame by that mission as the first European to visit that town; see *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf*, I, i, p. 1004.

‘Utūb did not have an army that represented a threat to the strongly established Wāhhābī regime in Eastern Arabia, which could at that time put 50,000 men mounted on camels in the field.<sup>1</sup> In this way the reduction of the ‘Utūb seems to have been postponed.

In 1799, the Imām of Masqaṭ attacked Baḥrain on the complaint that the ‘Utbī ships refused to pay tribute for passing the Straits of Hurmuz. He failed to capture its capital, Manāma, and returned to Masqaṭ.<sup>2</sup> In 1800 the Imām’s expedition against Baḥrain, occupied the Islands, and twenty-six ‘Utbī families were taken as hostages to Masqaṭ; others fled to their deserted homes at Zubāra. From there they sought help from the Wāhhābīs who readily cooperated.<sup>3</sup> The ‘Utūb re-occupied Baḥrain in 1801, but now the influence of the Wāhhābīs was established in their islands.

It is not clear how much Wāhhābī influence existed in Kuwait. According to Lieutenant Kemball, the British Assistant Resident in the Persian Gulf, by 1800-2 Wāhhābī influence was established throughout the whole Persian Gulf coast from Baṣra in the north to the territories of the Qawāsīm in the south.<sup>4</sup> This means that the ‘Utūb of Kuwait must have recognized the Wāhhābī suzerainty.<sup>5</sup>

Before leaving the history of the ‘Utūb in the second half of the eighteenth century, it is fitting to attempt to present an accurate image of their trading activities at that time.

<sup>1</sup> See extract of a letter from Brydges to Jacob Bosanguet, Chairman of the Court of Directors, dated Baghdād, 1. xii. 1798, in *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 21.

<sup>2</sup> See *al-Sira al-Jaliyya*, f. 51 and also *al-Fatḥ al-Mubīn*, ff. 193-194.

<sup>3</sup> IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, I, p. 121.

<sup>4</sup> *Bombay Selections*, p. 152.

<sup>5</sup> Mr. Warden in his historical sketch on the rise of Masqaṭ, *Bombay Selections*, p. 174, states that on the conquest of Baḥrain in 1801 by the Sulṭān of Masqaṭ, the latter demanded of the Shaikh of Kuwait that he would personally pay him homage. This, according to Warden, the Shaikh must have complied with, as the Imām shortly after dismissed all his troops. However, there is no reference to Kuwait in the Wāhhābī chronicles, which refer only to Baḥrain and give the name of Shaikh Salmān Āl-Khalifa as “*Amīr ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ‘alā al-Baḥrain wal-Zubāra*”. Cf. IBN BISHR, *op. cit.*, I, p. 129.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE 'UTBĪ STATES AND THE TRADE OF THE PERSIAN GULF AND EASTERN ARABIA 1750 - 1800

Here we recapitulate some of the important factors that contributed to the development of the 'Utbi States along the Gulf coast in Eastern Arabia. First, is the geographical position which placed them on the important trade-route of the Gulf. From this stems the interest in sharing in that trade. As a matter of fact, the 'Utūb proved throughout the second half of the eighteenth century to be clever merchants who knew how to profit from the state of affairs in the Gulf.

With their lands dominating the trade-route from Qaṭar in the south, to Kuwait in the north, they had the advantage of carrying merchandise to both central and northern Arabia. They also had commercial relations with the Persian coast, Masqaṭ and Baṣra. The position of Kuwait at the extreme northwestern corner of the Gulf, gave them the chance to share in the caravan commerce between the Gulf and Aleppo.

Here an attempt will be made to study the trade-routes to and from the 'Utbi domains, the merchandise itself, and finally to determine what trade, and how much, passed through the 'Utbi channels.

Trade to and from the 'Utbi states must have followed the two old routes in the area: the Gulf sea-route and the caravan tracks. The 'Utbi vessels, together with other ships owned by the

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Arabs of Masqaṭ,<sup>1</sup> almost monopolised the conveyance of goods in the Gulf by the former route. Ships owned by the 'Utbī merchants of Kuwait, Zubāra and Baḥrain called at Masqaṭ, Baṣra, Abū Shahr<sup>2</sup> and changing ports of consequence in the Gulf.<sup>3</sup> Later in the eighteenth century, and after the 'Utbī vessels were capable of trading with India, they ceased calling at Masqaṭ and sailed directly from India to the 'Utbī ports to avoid paying duties to the Sulṭān.<sup>4</sup> There is no evidence of 'Utbī vessels calling at Mukha in the Yaman to share in the transport of coffee to the Gulf.<sup>5</sup> In short, the 'Utbī fleet had a large share in the sea-trade of the Gulf second only to that of Masqaṭ. By the end of 1790...

“their ('Utūb) Galliot and Boats are numerous and large and they have engrossed the whole of the freight Trade carried on between Muscat and the Parts of the Arabian Shore,

<sup>1</sup> With the exception of the vessels of Abū Shahr, it can be said that there were no other Arab cargo vessels in the Gulf in the second half of the eighteenth century. The merchants of Baṣra do not seem to have owned vessels at that time.

“Since the capture of the island of Bahreen by the Arabs of the Tribes of Beneattaba, an Enmity, rather however of an inactive and negative Kind, has uniformly subsisted between that Tribe and the Persians and has totally destroyed the commercial Intercourse, which previous to that Period, was advantageously cultivated by both Parties.”

<sup>2</sup> See SALDANHA, *Selections from State Papers*, p. 409. Elsewhere in this report, p. 423, Manesty and Jones added that “little Intercourse has subsisted between the Inhabitants of the Opposite Shores of the Gulph” after the occupation of Baḥrain.

<sup>3</sup> When the Dutch established their Factory at Khārij Island from 1754-1765, the 'Utūb seem to have benefitted from that. There is no clear evidence on how much use the 'Utūb, especially those of Kuwait, made of that establishment. From Ives' account of the relations between the Shaikh of Kuwait and Baron Kniphausen, however, it becomes clear that the 'Utūb did have commercial intercourse with Khārij. See above.

<sup>4</sup> See SALDANHA, *Selections from State Papers*, p. 408.

<sup>5</sup> Conveying the annual coffee crop seems to have been a monopoly of what was called the Masqaṭ coffee fleet. The latter carried it to Baṣra and the various ports of the Gulf. See PARSONS, *op. cit.*, p. 157 and also SALDANHA, *Selections from State Papers*, p. 418.

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of the Persian Gulph, and a Principal Part of the freight Trade, carried on between Muscat and Bussora".<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately there is no adequate description of these vessels. Thus *baghla*, *trankey*, *galivat*, *dhow* and *dinghy* remain as terms without much indication of what they actually were, especially after the disappearance of the eighteenth century types.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See SALDANHA, *Selections from State Papers*, p. 409.

<sup>2</sup> CAPTAIN JENOUR, *The Route to India through France etc.* (London, 1791) p. 36., gives this brief description of a dinghy:

"These Dinggees have no deck except just abaft, which covers the man at the helm below which there is a place to put goods that might suffer materially by rain; the stern is much higher than any other part, and are altogether, most clumsy, inconvenient, unmanageable things."

He concludes his talk by advising the European traveller not to sail on board those dinghies.

Mr. J. A. Stocqueler made the journey from Bombay to Kuwait in 1831 in a Kuwaiti *baghla*. He gives the following interesting and informative report of the vessel itself and the Kuwaiti seafaring character:

"Buggales are large boats averaging from one to two hundred tons burthen; they have high sterns and pointed prows, one large cabin on a somewhat inclined plane, galleries and stern windows; they usually carry two large latteen sails, and occasionally a jib; are generally built at Cochin and other places on the Malabar coast, and are employed by the Arab and Hindoo merchants on the trade between Arabia, Persia, and the Indian coast. The Nasserie, on which I engaged a passage for the sum of one hundred and fifty rupees, was manned by about forty or fifty natives of Grane, or Koete, on the western side of the Persian Gulph, and commanded by a handsome Nacquodah in the prime of manhood. The sailors acknowledged a kind of paternal authority on the part of this commander, and mixed with their ready obedience to his mandates a familiarity quite foreign to English notions of respect, and the due maintenance of subordination. The Nacquodah took no share in the navigation of the vessel while it was crossing to Muscat, this duty being entrusted to an old Arab who understood the use of the sextant, and who was so correct in his observations that we made Ras-el-Lad within an hour of the time he had predicted we should."

STOCQUELER, *Fifteen Months Pilgrimage*, Vol. I, pp. 1-3.

The *baghla*, according to Low, was a vessel of great size, sometimes of 200 or 300 tons burthen, and carrying several guns. *Baghlas* were long-lived; one of them which had been built in 1750 was still sailing in 1837. See Low, *History of the Indian Navy*, I, p. 169.

"The Arab dhow is a vessel of about 150 to 250 tons burthen by measurement, and sometimes larger... Dhows may be distinguished from baghalahs

While boats formed one means of conveyance, it was left to the desert caravans to carry the merchandise from the 'Utbi, as well as other Gulf ports, into the countries surrounding the Gulf and other remote areas.

The importance of the 'Great Desert Caravan Route' in transporting goods between Asia and Europe in the eighteenth century has thus far gone unnoticed. No serious study has been made of the subject,<sup>1</sup> in spite of the fact that the desert caravans were still used for commercial purposes between the Gulf and the Mediterranean. Here it is worth giving brief data on those caravans because they concern the 'Utūb of Qaṭar and Kuwait.<sup>2</sup> The 'Utūb as a people of rising importance in Eastern Arabia and

by a long gallery projecting from the stern, which is their peculiar characteristic." See *Ibid.* About 1876 the *dhow*s disappeared from the Gulf. *Ibid.*

<sup>1</sup> Two distinguished scholars wrote papers on "The Overland Route to India" in the period under our consideration: Hoskins "The Overland Route to India" in *History*, Vol. IX, 1924-25, pp. 302-318, and Furber, "The Overland Route to India in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries" in *J.I.H.*, Vol. 29, 1951, pp. 106-133. Both papers speak of the usage of both the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf routes for purposes of sending the Eng. East Ind. Company's dispatches. In neither of them can one trace mention of goods conveyed by means of caravans; but both are extremely valuable for their information relative to the Company's mail.

<sup>2</sup> Information on the desert-route and caravans in the second half of the eighteenth century comes from the Journals of the European travellers who used those caravans in journeying from Aleppo to the Persian Gulf, or vice versa. Most of these Journals were written by men who were in the Eng. East India Company's service. Among those who crossed that desert in the 1750's and whose journeys were published: are Bartholomew Plaisted (his work is *Narrative of a Journey from Basra to Aleppo in 1750*) and John Carmichael (his work is *Narrative of a Journey from Aleppo to Basra in 1751*). These Journeys are published by D. CARRUTHERS in his work *The Desert Route to India*, London, 1929. They were followed by Ives in 1758. The story of the caravan route subsequent to that, as told by Western travellers, is brief. In 1765 Niebuhr recorded an itinerary of this same caravan route, from information gathered from a Bedouin who made the journey more than twenty times, and from a merchant of Baṣra (*Voyage en Arabie*, Vol. II, p. 193 ff). In 1771 General, afterwards Sir Eyre, Coote crossed the desert from Baṣra to Aleppo (see an account of that journey in the *Geog. Journal*, Vol. XXX, p. 198 ff). In 1774 A. Parsons set out from Alexandretta on "his voyage of commercial speculation" to Baghdād and Baṣra. In 1778 Colonel Capper went overland



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as tribes interested in commercial activity, continued to use the usual caravan routes that passed through their territories. Thus, goods that were unloaded at the ports of Eastern Arabia found their way into the inner parts of the peninsula through the traditional caravan routes from al-'Uqair, Zubāra and al-Qaṭif.<sup>1</sup> There is no clear evidence of caravans carrying goods from Masqaṭ along the Eastern shore of the Gulf to Baṣra. The fact that the 'desert express'<sup>2</sup> was dispatched from Masqaṭ by the East India Company's agent there, to Baṣra to announce the arrival of the Company's ships at Masqaṭ, seems to suggest that the ancient caravan route still operated.<sup>3</sup> However, there is clear evidence that the desert caravans loaded at Kuwait and carried goods from there to Baghdād and Aleppo. The earliest reference to such caravans can be traced in Ives' *Voyage*<sup>4</sup> of 1758. This continued until 1781, when for unspecified reasons the caravans stopped calling at Kuwait until 1789, and perhaps for some time after.<sup>5</sup>

Caravans<sup>6</sup> were usually composed of merchants who hired camels, mules and donkeys from shaikhs who made this their business, and who accompanied the caravans from starting point to

to India. In 1781, Mr. Irwin, of the Madras Establishment, "entrusted with dispatches too important to admit of delay", rode from Aleppo to Baghdād, Baṣra and India. In 1785-6 we have Julius Griffiths' account of the same journey from Aleppo.

In 1789, Major John Taylor, "of the Bombay Establishment," went out to India by the same desert route and recorded his journey in great detail. Earlier in 1785, Captain Matthew Jenour made the same journey, also from Aleppo. In 1797, Oliver, followed over the northern section of the route, on his way from Aleppo to 'Irāq.

<sup>1</sup> See SALDANHA, *Selections from State Papers*, p. 408.

<sup>2</sup> Arab messengers, most probably riding camels.

<sup>3</sup> For dispatching of these messengers see PARSONS, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

<sup>4</sup> See IVES, *op. cit.*, p. 222-225.

<sup>5</sup> See SALDANHA, *Selections from State Papers*, p. 409.

<sup>6</sup> Because most of the journeys describing caravans are from people in the service of the Eng. East India Company, they give almost the same details of the procedure followed by the Company's representatives at Baṣra and Aleppo for securing them a speedy and safe arrival at their destination. Cf. CAPPER, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-58; IRWIN, *op. cit.*, pp. 290-292; JENOUR, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

destination. These shaikhs charged the merchants fixed amounts of money for services offered during the journey. These included the payment of duties<sup>1</sup> to some chiefs of the Arab tribes on the caravan route and the hire of Arab guards or *rafiqs*,<sup>2</sup> besides the actual hire of camels. The cost of a camel was a matter of bargain. During the second half of the eighteenth century it ranged between thirty-five and fifty *piastres* for a loaded beast from Basra or Kuwait to Aleppo.<sup>3</sup> This varied with the type of goods carried by a camel. For "in Arabia", say Manesty and Jones in their report of the trade of Arabia bordering on the Gulf,

"the usual load of a Camel is in Weight about seven hundred English Pounds, and the Shaiks of the Caravans will in all Times by Customary Agreement, engage to convey from Grain to Aleppo and to pay the Arab the Jewaise or Duties thereon, that Weight of Piece Goods for a Sum of Money equal to Bombay RS. 130, and that weight of Gruff Goods for a Sum of Money equal to Bombay RS. 90".<sup>4</sup>

The shaikh of the caravan performed the duties of guide, and his authority was absolute.<sup>5</sup> These caravans covered the distance

<sup>1</sup> What was called *juwaiza*, allowance for free passage; see SALDANHA *Selections from State Papers*, p. 409.

<sup>2</sup> These men usually belonged to the tribes through whose territories the caravan passed; this was the only way to guarantee unmolested passage. See GRIFFITHS, *op. cit.*, p. 351 and PARSONS, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

<sup>3</sup> Ives, in 1758, states 35 *piastres* for a camel from Kuwait to Aleppo; see his *Journey*, *op. cit.*, p. 223. PARSONS in 1774, *op. cit.*, p. 112, paid forty *piastres* "for the hire of each camel" and five *piastres* for the desert duty on each camel as well.

<sup>4</sup> See SALDANHA, *Selections from State Papers*, p. 409. Although this estimate looks too high, Manesty and Jones may be considered reliable, after their long stay at Basra.

<sup>5</sup> JENOUR, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-26, writing to advise the travellers on the best way to accomplish that journey, mentions the caravans, and gives this interesting report:

"As to the preparations for the journey, it depends on the manner you propose going, whether with expedition, ease, or at moderate expense. To accomplish the first method, you must engage four or six Arabs to conduct you to Bassora, carry very little baggage, and as

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from Baṣra or Kuwait to Aleppo in about seventy days.<sup>1</sup> Desert caravans sometimes broke their journey at Baghdād and sometimes travelled direct between the Gulf and Aleppo. Other caravans often joined them enroute.<sup>2</sup> The number of camels conveying goods<sup>3</sup> varied. The increase or decrease depended on the state of commerce in Aleppo, Baṣra, Baghdād and other commercial centres in the area. Plaisted estimated that the caravan with which he travelled from Baṣra to Aleppo consisted of 2,000 camels and about 150 'Musqueteers' at the start. These camels did not make a laden caravan, but were being taken to market.<sup>4</sup> Half-way, they were joined by the Baghdād caravan of 3,000 camels, bringing the total to 5,000 camels, 400 of which were laden, plus 1,000 men.<sup>5</sup> Carmichael's caravan consisted of fifty horses, thirty mules and 1,200 camels, "600 of which were laden with merchandise valuing £ 300,000". It was guarded by an escort of 240 Arab soldiers.<sup>6</sup> The caravan by which Ives and his colleagues attempted to travel from

soon as you quit Aleppo, leave every thing to the management of the escort, they knowing what is most proper to be done, and the best track to pursue... As to the next mode, where ease is solely considered, it will be necessary to purchase mules.... Tents, provisions... camels to convey them; and this show of wealth will demand a large escort.... to guard it... The third method, which is by far the cheapest and most common, is, with the caravan. A caravan is a number of merchants, and other travellers, assembled together, some on horse back, but mostly on camels, to any number, escorted by a very strong guard; the whole under the direction of a Shaik or Chief... The only objections against this mode are, the length of time it takes, and the uncertainty of their departure."

<sup>1</sup> JENOUR, *op. cit.*, p. 27, allows sixty to seventy days, while Manesty and Jones, *Selections from State Papers*, p. 409, estimate about eighty days.

<sup>2</sup> See Plaisted's account of his journey in CARRUTHERS, p. 80.

<sup>3</sup> Not all the camels in the caravan were carriers, especially when the caravan was travelling northwards to Aleppo. Many camels accompanied the caravan unloaded, to be sold at Aleppo to merchants to convey their merchandise southward. This was necessitated by the lack of camels in Syria.

<sup>4</sup> See his *Narrative of a Journey* in CARRUTHERS. pp, 68-69 and 93.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p. 80.

<sup>6</sup> CARRUTHERS, *op. cit.*, p. xxxiii.

Kuwait to Aleppo in 1758, amounted to 5,000 camels accompanied by 1,000 men.<sup>1</sup> Parsons' caravan had 800 laden camels besides several mules, donkeys and horses; there were four European and twelve Turkish merchants. They had 105 Arab guards.<sup>2</sup> Griffiths' caravan, which was composed originally of eight camels and a guard of thirty to forty men, reached 200 camels<sup>3</sup> before their departure from Aleppo on June 8th, 1786.

The number of camels varied because of the three types of caravan making the desert journey. The first was the light camel caravan coming from the south, up to Aleppo. This supplied that town with animals to carry goods for one of the two other caravans. The first of these two was the caravan of merchants who wished to carry their goods from Aleppo southwards without waiting for the arrival or departure of the largest caravan, called the Aleppo or Başra caravan, depending upon the place of departure. This last caravan travelled twice a year between Aleppo and Başra.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to those three caravans there was a fourth which could be called the travellers' caravan. English travellers sometimes hired a complete outfit, including both riding and baggage camels,

<sup>1</sup> From the context it appears that the caravan was coming to Kuwait from the south because Ives and his companions planned to hire camels at Kuwait to join that caravan. This might have been the same caravan dispatched annually from al-Ḥasā by the Shaikh of the Banī Khālid. It is described by PLANTÉ, p. 93, as "the caravan of light camels" contrasting it with the merchants' laden camels. It used to be made up of young camels sent to Aleppo for sale. It had a guard of 150 men mounted on dromedaries, "which is a lighter and swifter sort of camel". Many merchants used to wait for its arrival at their stations to join it with their merchandise and thus they used to double or triple the original number setting out. Those merchants were Greeks, Armenians, Europeans and sometimes Turks (Arabs?).

<sup>2</sup> PARSONS, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-76. The caravan left Aleppo on March the 14th, 1774.

<sup>3</sup> GRIFFITHS, *op. cit.*, pp. 350-353.

<sup>4</sup> Latouche stated in one of his letters to the Court of Directors that such a caravan spent eight months performing this operation. See Latouche to the Court of Directors, Başra, 31.x.1778, *F.R.P.P.G.*, 17, No. 1160.

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as well as a small force of armed guards.<sup>1</sup> Captain Taylor favoured travelling in comfort, by hiring a caravan at a cost from £ 500 to £ 600, engaging forty to sixty armed men, and twenty camels for water, tents, provisions, etc.<sup>2</sup> The procedure of hiring and equipping these caravans, for men usually in the service of the English East India Company, was done by the English Consul at Aleppo and members of the Baṣra Factory.<sup>3</sup>

The travelling time between Aleppo and Baṣra or Kuwait depended upon the size of the caravan and the method of travel. While large caravans went slowly, (seven hours a day), and took from forty-five to seventy days, small caravans accomplished it in twenty-five days. Plaisted was twenty-four and-a-half days in a rather large caravan. Carmichael, averaging about seven hours a day, took 318 hours or forty-five days. Capper took 310 hours.<sup>4</sup> The 'desert express' covered the same distance in about thirteen-and-a-half to twenty days.<sup>5</sup>

This activity of the desert-route no doubt had its effect on the 'Utbi trade. Together with the sea-borne cargoes, it was of great importance in building up the 'Utūb as a power in the area. It may have been one of the factors that politically united the 'Utūb in the south and north. The other phase of the commercial activities of of the 'Utūb would be a brief study of the conditions of commerce in the 'Utbi domains. Here, it is timely to review the commercial activities on the western side of Arabia, because the Red Sea trade-route had always been a rival to the Persian Gulf.

During the second half of the eighteenth century, the Red Sea was not a great rival of the Persian Gulf in the transport of Indian goods to the markets of the Ottoman provinces in Syria

<sup>1</sup> See IRWIN, *op. cit.*, II, p. 291.

<sup>2</sup> See CARRUTHERS, *op. cit.*, p. xxxiv.

<sup>3</sup> See IRWIN, *op. cit.*, II, p. 291 and CAPPER, p. 54.

<sup>4</sup> See CARRUTHERS, *op. cit.*, p. xxiv.

<sup>5</sup> See Latouche to Manesty, Baṣra, 6.xi.1784, *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 18, No. 1299; JENOUR, *op. cit.*, p. 26, allows the Express Messengers 14 days.

and Turkey. True, European vessels called at Suez carrying Indian goods to Egypt and other neighbouring countries until the 1770's, but the last decades saw a decline in that trade. This was because the firman of 1779 prohibited Christian vessels from trading with Suez.<sup>1</sup>

These orders were against the interests of the Mameluke Beys, the actual rulers of Egypt, who naturally tried to neutralize its effect. But desert Arab attacks on caravans carrying articles for European merchants, represented another danger to their trade. Until 1786, the Court of Directors of the East India Company, preferred the Cape-route to that of Egypt for conveying Indian goods to Europe. "They were, therefore, quite willing to support the point of view of the Turkish Government in opposing the navigation of the Red Sea by European vessels".<sup>2</sup>

French commercial rivalry and the conclusion of a treaty between Chevalier de Troquet for France and Murād Bey for the Mamelukes of Egypt at Cairo on February in 1785, revived British interests in the Red Sea Route. British diplomacy continued to prevail at the Porte, which in 1787 sent a successful Ottoman campaign against the Mamelukes. The English success did not mean that the Red Sea route was preferred to the Cape route, or that of the Persian Gulf. All three routes remained in use after that, both for trade and mail purposes, until the occupation of Egypt by Bonaparte in 1798.<sup>3</sup>

If the French were able to compete in the markets of Egypt, they were not so successful in the markets of the Persian Gulf.

<sup>1</sup> See Hoskins, *loc. cit.*, p. 315.

<sup>2</sup> See Hoskins, *loc. cit.*, p. 307. In 1775 the English signed a treaty with the Beys of Egypt to facilitate their commercial activities. The Sultān and his advisers at Constantinople were against this because they were apprehensive that in time the governors of Egypt might find it to their advantage to throw off the Turkish yoke entirely, perhaps with English aid. See *loc. cit.*, p. 306.

<sup>3</sup> See *loc. cit.*, pp. 315-317.

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Nevertheless, the 'Utūb were not affected in their commercial enterprises by the Anglo-French rivalry, nor did they rely on goods carried only by English or other European vessels. By the 1780's their own fleet sailed to India, returning with Indian goods to the 'Utbi ports and Baṣra. Masqaṭ was the emporium of trade in Arabia in the second half of the eighteenth century,<sup>1</sup> and the 'Utbi and Masqaṭ fleets monopolised the freight from Masqaṭ and India to the Gulf.<sup>2</sup>

It is uncertain how much trade was conveyed in the 'Utbi vessels and how much went through Kuwait and Zubāra from the Gulf trade. A hypothesis could be formed after considering the types of goods brought by the various trading vessels to the 'Utbi and other Gulf ports.

Manesty and Jones began their reports on trade of Arabia bordering on the Persian Gulf, etc.<sup>3</sup> by showing how difficult it was for them to make a report because of lack of available information from the people of the Arabian coast.<sup>4</sup>

Still, one can assume that the 'Utūb conducted almost continual commercial activity all through the latter half of the eighteenth century. Their activity was centralized at three places: Manāma in Baḥrain,<sup>5</sup> Zubāra in Qaṭar and Kuwait. These places shared

<sup>1</sup> PARSONS, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

"Muscat is a place of very great trade, being possessed of a large number of ships, which trade to Surat, Bombay, Goa, along the whole coast of Malabar, and to Mocha and Jedda in the Red Sea. It is the great magazine or deposit for the goods which they bring from those parts; it is resorted to by vessels from every port in Persia, from Bussora, and the ports of Arabia within the gulph, and from the coast of Caramaina without the gulph, as far as the river Indus, and many places adjacent to that river."

<sup>2</sup> See SALDANHA, *Selections from State Papers*, p. 409.

<sup>3</sup> This report covers the period from 1763 to 1789.

<sup>4</sup> The merchants in those parts did not normally keep registers of their trade. This practice is still continued by many merchants of Kuwait.

<sup>5</sup> The name of Manāma does not occur often, but the whole Island is mentioned.

in the sea-borne as well as the desert-trade. It seems more convenient to deal with each separately and try to establish what goods were imported to and exported from each place.

Bahrain's trade before the 'Utbī occupation of the islands in 1782-1783 was important only in pearls.<sup>1</sup> The Islands' trade after their arrival seems to have been of two sorts. The first was fishery and the marketing of pearls and the second the sea-trade with India, Masqaṭ and the ports of the Persian Gulf.

Concerning the pearl fishery, the 'Utūb seem to have made no changes in the customary practice of pearl-fishing which was "engaging the Attention of many rich Arabian Merchants resident at Bahreen" and which gave "Employments to many industrious People of the lower Arabs belonging to that Place".<sup>2</sup>

With the acquisition of large vessels from India, the 'Utūb of Bahrain in the 1780's and after, sailed to Indian ports to import necessities for daily use of their people and to export to Baghdād and Aleppo. These goods found their way to market partly via Baṣra and partly via Kuwait.<sup>3</sup> It is interesting to note that the

<sup>1</sup> See SALDANHA, *Selections from State Papers*, p. 405.

<sup>2</sup> See *Ibid.*, p. 405. The principal fishery is carried on during the months of May, June, July, August and September, when the water is warm. The yearly catch was estimated at 500,000 Bombay rupees. This was divided in proportions settled by agreement between the merchants who were the proprietors of the vessels employed in the fishery, the people who navigated them and the divers. For a detailed description of pearl fishing see BUCKINGHAM's *Travels in Assyria*, pp. 454-457, and WELLSTED, *Travels in Arabia*, Vol. I, pp. 264-265 and his *Travels to the City of the Caliphs*, pp. 115-123. Al-Rashid in his *Ta'rikh al-Kuwait*, Vol. I, pp. 47-65, gives a detailed account of the present way of pearl fishing which has not changed through the ages.

<sup>3</sup> See SALDANHA, *Selections from State Papers*, p. 408. Manesty and Jones speak of those Indian goods as well as other European mercantile articles which were carried in the 'Utbī vessels to Bahrain.

"Those Articles, in the present Times (1789) are however first conveyed in a direct Manner from Surat to Bahreen and from thence to Zebarra and Catiffe. The Importations made from Surat to Bahreen for the Consumption of that Island, principally consist of small Quantities of Surat Blue and other Piece Goods, Guzerat Piece Goods and Chintz, Cambay, Chanders, Shawls, Bamboos, Tin, Lead and Iron." *Ibid.*



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owners of those vessels were merchants who carried goods for their own profit. This part of Surat goods was transported to Baghdād and Aleppo.<sup>1</sup> Besides, there was the trade with Masqaṭ, where vessels imported the Mukha coffee to Baḥrain, "partly intended for the Bussora Market", and a quantity of sugar, pepper, spices of Bengal, *ghes* and rice. Some of these imports were in turn sent to Baṣra.<sup>2</sup> On their way back from Baṣra, these vessels carried dates to Baḥrain and grain necessary for the local population, as well as other articles for the market of Surat.<sup>3</sup> Though unable to state the exact amount of the imports at Baḥrain during the 1870's, at the end of the century those imports "of Indian Goods" amounted annually to ten *lakhs* of rupees. We also learn that these were "balanced by an export of pearls to an equal amount".<sup>4</sup>

The second centre of commerce in the 'Utbi states was Zubāra. This port, because of its geographical location, was bound to play a role in conveying part of the above-mentioned 'Utbi cargoes from Baḥrain to Eastern and Central Arabia. Before the occupation of Baḥrain by the 'Utūb, Zubāra was the centre of commercial activities of the Āl-Khalīfa and the other 'Utbi families. There is no evidence of the amount or kind of trade there before the 1780's. As a port on the pearl coast<sup>5</sup> it must have shared in the pearl fishery, although it seems to have been small.<sup>6</sup> After the 'Utūb of

<sup>1</sup> These Surat articles in demand at Baghdād and Aleppo were described as "Sundry Gruff Articles of Commerce... Cotton, Yarn, Shawls, Surat Blue and other Piece Goods and Guzerat Piece Goods and Chintz". See SALDANHA, *Selections from State Papers*, p. 408.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> These other articles which were "proper for the Surat Market" were: Copper, Arsenic, Galls, Lamette, Ora Contarino, Venetian false Corals, and Bead of different Kinds, Cochineal and Saffron". See *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> See Malcolm's "Report" in SALDANHA, *Selections from the State Papers*, p. 445.

<sup>5</sup> The rich pearl coast extended from the neighbourhood of Qaṭīf to Rās al-Khayma on the Arabian coast of the Gulf.

<sup>6</sup> See SALDANHA, *Selections from State Papers*, p. 408.

Bahrain bought their large vessels which traded with India, Zubāra, together with al-Qaṭīf, served as a centre to distribute those goods among the Banī Khālīd tribes. Caravans carried the Mukha coffee and sundry goods to al-Dir'iyya, the Wāhhābī capital, and other areas in the Wāhhābī domain.<sup>1</sup> The occupation of Bahrain must have inevitably reduced the importance of Zubāra as the Āl-Khalīfa's commercial centre.

The conquest of Bahrain seems not to have reduced the commercial importance of Kuwait. The ruling 'Utbī family there was faced with the rivalry of the Banī Ka'b and other Arabs from the Persian littoral, a fact which determined the Āl-Ṣabāḥ to own a strong fleet.<sup>2</sup> We have seen that in 1770 Kuwait served as a centre for the East India Company's mail. In addition to this, its geographical situation was advantageous to the town both as a sea-port and as a station for the Aleppo and Baghdād caravans. In 1793, with the two year establishment of the East India Company's Factory at Kuwait, the town held a special position equalling that of Bahrain.

Therefore, Kuwait's commercial success seems to have been largely dependent upon transit trade. With the growth of the 'Utbī trade as a result of the occupation of Bahrain, imports were made from Bahrain and Zubāra to Kuwait. These originated with merchants from Bahrain and Baṣra, who wanted to send goods either to Aleppo or Baghdād by desert caravans, to avoid the heavy duties levied at Baṣra.<sup>3</sup> Dates and grain were imported from Baṣra for

<sup>1</sup> See *Ibid.*, pp. 405-408. These imports which were made at Zubāra were the same as those imported at Bahrain. Dates and grain were always in demand by the Arabs of the Banī Khālīd and the Wāhhābis. *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 107.

<sup>3</sup> See SALDANHA, *Selections from State Papers*, p. 409. Some of those imports from Bahrain, al-Qaṭīf, Zubāra and Maṣqāṭ were for "the local Consumption of Kuwait and its immediate Vicinity". These consisted of "small Quantities of Surat Blue Goods, Bengal Coarse white Goods, Bengal Soocies, Coffee, Sugar, Pepper & ca. Spices, Iron and Lead"... "and of more considerable Quantities of Bengal Piece Goods, Surat Piece Goods, Cotton yarn,

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consumption there and in the immediate vicinity.<sup>1</sup> It is interesting that the conveyance of property from Kuwait to Baghdād or Aleppo by desert caravans was in no danger. The caravan shaikhs were careful in their selection of *rafiqs* and in giving the tribal shaikhs the necessary gifts.<sup>2</sup> Griffiths, writing in 1785-1786, adds that the tribal shaikhs did their best to keep the caravans running regularly and free from harm. Thus they were sure of their reward.<sup>3</sup>

The trade of Kuwait seems to have profited little from the stay of the English Factory there. In the beginning, the captains of the English ships refused to unload goods destined for Baṣra at Kuwait. As noted,<sup>4</sup> Manesty did not insist his orders be carried out forbidding English vessels from unloading at Baṣra. The gain from the English stay was largely political, not economic.<sup>5</sup>

The principal entrepôts for the trade of the Persian Gulf in this period were Masqaṭ and Baṣra. The first was described by Parsons as a large store for European and Indian goods<sup>6</sup> which were conveyed to Baṣra and the 'Utbī ports by the Masqaṭ and 'Utbī fleets. Baṣra was the centre of the English East India Company's trade with the Gulf during most of the years from 1763-1800.<sup>7</sup>

Although there are no statistics on the trade of the Arabian

Camby, Chandernagore, Coffee, Pepper for the Bagdad and Aleppo merchants". *Ibid.* For the duties collected on those goods both at Baṣra and Baghdād, see above, Chapter III, pp. 72-73.

<sup>1</sup> SALDANHA, *Selections from State Papers*, p. 409.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> See GRIFFITHS, *op. cit.*, p. 351. It took the caravan, according to Manesty and Jones, about 80 days from Kuwait to Aleppo and about 30 to Baghdād. See *Selections from State Papers*, p. 409.

<sup>4</sup> See above, p. 147.

<sup>5</sup> The Wahhābī threat to Kuwait was averted.

<sup>6</sup> See PARSONS, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

<sup>7</sup> The devastating plague of 1773 and the Persian siege and occupation of the town (1775-1779) had noticeable effect on its trade, but it soon recovered. Griffiths, visiting the town in 1785, wrote: "Bassorah is the emporium of this quarter of the World. It is here that richly laden ships, from every part of India pour in their valuable cargoes..." *op. cit.*, p. 389.

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side of the Gulf, apart from those of the English trade with the area, the commerce can only be described as prosperous. According to Malcolm, the Indian trade to Arabia amounted to forty *lakhs* of rupees, of which thirty were with Baṣra, and ten went to Baḥrain and its neighbourhood.<sup>1</sup>

"These great Imports", says Malcolm, "are answered by exports from Bussora of Dates, the Native Product, by Pearls (received from Baḥrain and other neighbouring ports in exchange for grain) and Gold and Silver Lace brought from Europe by the Aleppo caravans and Copper from the mines of Diarbakr. Most of those exports pass through Muscat in their way to India".<sup>2</sup>

Griffiths said:

"returns are made chiefly in specie or jewels; and a certain number of highly bred Arab horses".<sup>3</sup>

The 'Utüb's share in this prosperous trade was enormous, for they participated in its conveyance both by sea and caravan. They seem to have made use of all legal and illegal means to benefit from that flow of trade. They did not hesitate to smuggle goods from Kuwait to the markets of Baghdād and Aleppo, to avoid the Baṣra customs. Their mercantile activities increased enormously after their conquest of Baḥrain.

<sup>1</sup> See SALDANHA, *Selections from State Papers*, p. 445.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> GRIFFITHS, *op. cit.*, p. 389.

## CONCLUSIONS

### SOCIAL POSITION AND DOMESTIC AFFAIRS

The 'Utūb were originally Arab families who came from al-Aflāj in Najd. They first settled in Kuwait where they lived under the protection of the Shaikh of the Banī Khālid until 1752. On the death of Sulaymān Āl-Ḥamīd, the Khālidī Shaikh, they became independent and Ṣabāḥ b. Jābir, the ancestor of the present Shaikh of Kuwait, was chosen as the first known 'Utbī shaikh. In 1766 the second 'Utbī settlement of Zubāra was established by the Āl-Khalifa, the second influential 'Utbī family. In 1782-83 Baḥrain was conquered jointly by the Āl-Ṣabāḥ and Āl-Khalifa. This put the 'Utūb in a delicate political situation, since Baḥrain had always been coveted by its neighbours.

The government of both ruling families was hereditary, thus no member of other 'Utbī families could become a shaikh. The tribal authority of the shaikhs was strong, but because of the commercial nature of the 'Utbī States, the shaikhs were less despotic than might be expected. Besides the influence of the merchants in the 'Utbī towns, there was the power of the *Qāḍī*, who executed *Sharī'a* law.

The boundaries of the 'Utbī territories cannot be ascertained except in the case of Baḥrain Island. In the north Failaka Island belonged to Kuwait. Yet the fact that both Kuwait and Zubāra originated in unoccupied desert territory, made it possible for the 'Utūb to have free exits by land and sea. In Qaṭar, for example, the Āl-Jalāhima settled at Khōr Ḥasan to the north of Zubāra, and later, in the early nineteenth century, they settled without

opposition at al-Dammām near al-Qaṭīf. However, all 'Utbī territory, except Baḥrain and the neighbouring islands, was within the Khālīdī sphere of influence.

The 'Utūb did not engage in piracy like other Arabian maritime tribes. The sole exception was Raḥmān b. Jābir of the Āl-Jalāhima section. Even in his case, he turned pirate only after the Āl-Khalīfa had refused him a proper share in the pearl trade of Zubāra and the booty from the conquest of Baḥrain.

Despite circumstances that forced the Āl-Khalīfa to leave Kuwait in the late 1760's and settle in the south, cordial relations existed between the two 'Utbī ruling families of Āl-Ṣabāḥ and Āl-Khalīfa. Two examples bear witness to this. The first was that the 'Utūb of the north joined their cousins in fighting against Shaikh Nāṣir of Abū Shahr in 1770 and in conquering Baḥrain in 1782-1783. The second was that the Āl-Khalīfa at Baḥrain and Zubāra sent their goods to Kuwait rather than to Baṣra, enroute to Aleppo.

There is evidence that towards the end of the eighteenth century the 'Utbī states were united to form one political entity with Shaikh 'Abd Allāh Āl-Ṣabāḥ at its head. This can be explained by the Arab custom of giving power to the eldest. Thus 'Abd Allāh Āl-Ṣabāḥ, eldest among the 'Utbī rulers, was their chief and his authority, according to Malcolm, extended over all the 'Utbī territories, both north and south.

#### FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Concerning the 'Utbī relations with other powers which had interests in eastern Arabia, it is clear the 'Utūb did their best to keep on good terms with all of them. In the second half of the eighteenth century, there was no Ottoman ruler in Eastern Arabia. In fact, Ottoman rule was not even nominally acknowledged. Their attempts to restore their lost position in al-Ḥasā through the campaign of Thuwaynī in 1786, and 'Alī Pasha's expedition against the Wāhhābīs in 1798, were unsuccessful. At Kuwait, the nearest point

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of the 'Utbī domains to the Ottoman *Mutasallimiyya* of Baṣra, the Shaikh was under no form of Ottoman control. The aim of 'Utbī external policy was to keep on friendly relations with all the forces working in the Gulf.

Thus the 'Utūb of Kuwait appeared to be on the side of the Pasha of Baghdād in the early stages of the Persian siege of Baṣra in 1775. However, their policy was reversed and aid was sent to the besieging army when Persian occupation became almost certain. In spite of this, Persian influence, expressed through the medium of the Arab shaikhs of the Persian littoral, was not felt in Eastern Arabia during the period under consideration. In fact, the 'Utūb erased Persian influence from its centre nearest the Arabian littoral by occupying Baḥrain. Because Kuwait was not a dependency of Baṣra, the Persian occupation of Baṣra (1775-79) did not affect Kuwait.

There were friendly relations between the 'Utūb and the Dutch and English. Relations with the former were the outcome of their establishment at Khārij Island in the north-eastern corner of the Persian Gulf, almost opposite Kuwait. Stronger and closer relations existed between the 'Utūb and the English. The recorded history of these ties started in 1775 when the Persians besieged Baṣra. The accomodating disposition of the Shaikh towards the English is often seen in services rendered them. Examples were the interception of French emissaries and dispatches in the Persian Gulf (the earliest example, that of Captain Borel de Bourge in 1778), and the 1793 choice of Kuwait as a refuge for the Baṣra Factory for about two-and-a-half years. Another testimony to the existence of strong friendly associations was the aid apparently given by the Factory to Kuwait, in repelling the Wahnābī aggressor during its stay there.

The hostile 'Utbī attitude towards the Wahnābīs was dictated by their allegiance to their benefactors, the Banī Khālid, who were the Wahnābīs' bitter enemies. Thus, so long as the Banī Khālid,

could withstand the Wahhābīs, the 'Utūb in turn, escaped Wahhābī domination. Once the Khālidī power was annihilated by the Wahhābīs in 1795, the 'Utūb gradually came under their domination.

#### COMMERCIAL STATUS

Turning finally to commercial enterprise, we find it was here the 'Utūb were most successful. They used their geographical position to enrich themselves in trade, by sea and desert. This study reveals clearly for the first time, that the Eastern Arabian coast shared the Indian and European trade. The Banī Khālid's rule was favourable to trade, but the 'Utūb were able to surpass the Banī Khālid by becoming the traders of Eastern Arabia. Their fleet was the strongest in the Gulf and in less than sixteen years after the establishment of Zubāra in 1766, they defied all the Arab maritime forces in the Gulf. Thus neither the ships of Abū Shahr, nor Bandar Rīq, nor the Banī Ka'b could compete with them. Their fleet was next in importance to that of Masqaṭ. Indeed, many of their large ships made non-stop journeys from the Persian Gulf to India.

The 'Utūb in the second half of the eighteenth century felt no great threat from the European trading nations. On the contrary, Arab traders monopolised sea-freight in the Gulf. But for this fact, and the desert caravan routes, the 'Utūb would not have achieved success, and their early settlements at Kuwait and Zubāra could not have flourished, because they were built on the barren desert. The 'Utūb made great use of these two trade channels between Asia and Europe on the one hand, and of the internal trade of Arabia on the other.

The occupation of Baḥrain in 1782-1783 was of vast importance to the 'Utbī trade because it gave them the richest pearl producing area, as well as a centre for substantial commercial activity. Thus the 'Utūb were successful because they made intelligent use of their newly conquered island.



### *Conclusions*

Research into the 'Utbī commercial activities reveals that the cargo carried by Arab vessels of Masqaṭ and 'Utbī ports, matched or surpassed the volume of that carried by European vessels. Although the actual amount of trade is unknown, the reports of Manesty and Jones are available. This leaves no doubt that it was enormous. The Arab boats, of which the 'Utūb's fleet was the greatest, monopolised Gulf trade during most of the last fifty years of the eighteenth century.

Finally, we see that it was in this period that the foundations were laid for the present ruling houses of the Āl-Ṣabāḥ and the Āl-Khalifa. These were steadily guarded by the wisdom and perseverance of Shaikh 'Abd Allah Āl-Ṣabāḥ, the second 'Utbī ruler of Kuwait, and of Aḥmad Āl-Khalifa of Zubāra.

At sea, these two rulers and their followers were invincible. On land their position was weaker. They were certain that resistance to the Wahhābīs could not last very long after the defeat of the Banī Khālid. Subsequent events proved they were right.



## APPENDIX

### THE AFFAIR OF M. BOREL DE BOURGES <sup>(1)</sup>

In consequence of intelligence received from Grain of the arrival there of a French Officer having in charge a packet of importance for Pondicherry, it was determined by your Honours Factors at Bussora to endeavour to get possession of it, a measure which appeared to them the more necessary from an unguarded declaration made at Grain by the officer in question that war was absolutely declared between France and England.

I was in consequence, ordered immediately to repair to Grain to use my utmost endeavours towards getting possession not only of the packet but of the bearer also. I departed from Bussora the 1st at night on board your Honours Cruizer the Eagle; and finding the wind unfavourable and a great probability of being detained so long perhaps as to afford an opportunity to the bearer of the packet to escape to Muscat, I procured a boat in the river which I was convinced would convey me to Grain by some days sooner than I could expect to reach it in the Eagle whose presence too I judged might alarm the Prey I had in view and give him an opportunity, if not of avoiding me entirely, at least of destroying his packet. I therefore left the Eagle in the river, and in about twenty hours arrived at Grain at 10 o'clock at night; I immediately proceeded to the Sheik and having gained him to my interest so far as not to interfere in the business I had in hand, I proceeded

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<sup>1</sup> Abraham to the C. of D., Grain, 7.xi.1778, *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 17

directly to the house where the messenger lodged, and informed him who I was, seized him together with his packet, and conveyed him instantly on board my boat — this was all effected without the least disturbance.

I arrived on board the *Eagle* in about twelve hours, where having examined the packet, I find it contains sundry advices in cypher from Monsieur de Sartine, Minister for the Marine Department in France directed to Monsieur de Bellecombe, Commander-in-Chief at Pondicherry, and to Monsieur de Briancourt, the French Consul at Surat, together with a declaration of War between France and England, and sundry private letters from all which I can only gather that the bearer of the packet is Captain Borel du Bourg, that the advices he bears are of the utmost consequence, and that he is directed to fix a Resident at Muscat in order to convey all French packets with the utmost expedition by way of Aleppo, and that, the King of France having acknowledged the Independency of the United States of America, all vessels belonging to them are to be received into the port belonging to the King of France and to be paid the same honors as are paid to the United States of Holland. From a Journal of Captain du Bourg, I find he left Marseilles the 14 of August, and arrived here from Aleppo in 21 days.

Before I left Bussora, it was determined should I find the packet in question to be of any consequence immediately to despatch it to India by the *Eagle*. The Declaration of War alone therefore I have judged to be of sufficient consequence to warrant her despatch. I have in consequence ordered Captain Sheriff, the Commander, immediately to proceed to Bombay without touching at Bushire or Muscat and to deliver Monsieur du Bourg together with his packet to the Honorable the Governor and Council.

## *Appendix*

A letter from William Digges Latouche (Basra Fact.)  
to Mr. Manesty (Basra Fact.) <sup>(1)</sup>

There are several other Powers (besides the Banī Ka'b) with whom it is the Company's Interest to continue on friendly Terms— with the Bunderick, the Grain People, and other Tribes of Arabs on the Persian and Arabian Coasts, who have it in their Power to annoy our Trade — with the shaiks of the Montificks, of the Benechalids, of the Anisas, of the Gheesaals for the Security of the Company's Dispatches, of the English Trade, and of English Travellers passing between Bussora, Aleppo and Bagdat.

Timely Presents are often of great Use in preserving this good Understanding. Those on the changes of the Mussalems here are fixed, and should not be increased though Attempts under various Pretences have been, and will be probably made for that Purpose. The Others must be regulated by your own Prudence and according to Circumstances — they should be made with Caution. If they are too frequent and too large they will increase Expectations of future Ones. If on the other hand they do not in some Measure answer the Expectation of the Person to whom they are given, the giving them will be worse than not giving any. They are too often in this country considered as a kind of Tribute and therefore as a Right. When I have found this to be the Case, I have deferred them until they appeared as made from my own Inclination, and rather as a Return for Favours received, than as given through for or in Expectation of future Services.

Başra 6th Nov. 1784

Signed Latouche

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<sup>1</sup> *F.R.P.P.G.*, Vol. 18, dispatch No. 1299.

*The Capture of Bahrain by the 'Utūb*

A letter from Mr. Latouche (Başra Resid.)

to the Court of Dir., London, dated 4th Nov., 1782. <sup>(1)</sup>

The Zebara, and the Grain People, have lately taken and plundered Bahreen, and have likewise seized at the Entrance of this River, several Boats belonging to Bushire and Bunderick. Shaik Nassir of Bushire, in return is collecting a Marine, as well as a Military Force, at Bushire, Bunderick, and other Persian Ports — he gives out that he intends to revenge these Hostilities by attacking Zebarra, and has wrote for a Supply of Money to Aly Morat Caum at Isphahan. Notwithstanding this show of vigor, however, it is said, that he has lately sent to Grain to request a Peace, but that the Shaik had refused to grant it, unless Shaik Nassir pays him half the Revenues of Bahreen, and a large Annual Tribute also for Bushire.

It is not many years since Grain, was obliged to pay a large tribute to the Chaub, and that the name of Zebarra, was scarcely known. On the Persians attacking Bussora, one of the Shaiks of Grain, retired to Zebarra, with many of the principal People. Some of the Bussora Merchants also retired thither. A great Part of the Pearl and India Trade, by this means entered there, and at Grain, during the Time that the Persians were in possession of Bussora, and those Places have increased so much in Strength and Consequence, that they have for some time past set the Chaub at defiance, have gained very considerable Advantages against him, and now under no Apprehensions from the Force, which Shaik Nassir threatens to collect against them.

Başra 4th Nov. 1782

Signed Latouche

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<sup>1</sup> F. R. P.P.G., Vol. 17, dispatch No. 1230.

## *Appendix*

### *Translate of a Letter from the Resident to Abdulla ibn Subbah Shaik of Grain dated the 17th April 1789 (1)*

I am induced by the Consideration of the Friendship which has long subsisted between us, to write to You in the present Hour.

I have lately paid a Visit to the Bacha of Bagdat in his Camp. In the Course of our Conversations the Bacha mentioned Your Name. He said that an ancient Friendship had subsisted between the People of Grain and of Bussora, he expressed great Surprise and anger at Your Conduct in giving Protection to People, who had been in Rebellion against him, and who had fled to avoid the Punishment due to their Guilt, he said that unless You delivered them up to him, or ordered them to quit the Town of Grain, they should consider You, as his Enemy, and proceed on an Expedition against You. He said that he would march with his Army to Grain and order his Fleet, to repair thither to cooperate with it. He said that he would write a letter to the Governor of Bombay, requesting the early Assistance of a Marine force and he desired that I would also write a Letter to the Governor of Bombay to the same Purport.

Friendship has urged me thus to make known to you the Sentiments of the Bacha of Bagdat.

### *Translate of a Letter from Shaik Abdulla ibn Sabbah to the Resident received the 30th April 1789.*

After Compliments,

I have received Your Letter and understand its Contents. You

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<sup>1</sup> This letter with its heading and the following one come from Volume 18 of the Factory Records, Persia and Persian Gulf. Their serial number in that volume is 1532.

mention that a friendship has always subsisted between the English and myself, I pray God, it may continue so to the End of time.

I am obliged to You for the Information You have given me in Regard to the Intentions of Soliman Bacha, whom I am sorry to observe is displeased at my Conduct towards Mustapha Aga.

The Town of Grain belongs to the Bacha, the Inhabitants of it are his Servants but You Yourself thank God are well enough acquainted with our Customs, to know, that if any Person whatsoever falls upon Us for Protection we cannot refuse to afford it to him and that after having afforded it, it is the extreme of Infamy to desert him or to deliver him into the hands of his Enemies.

You know the Bacha knows, the whole World knows that I receive no Advantage from Mustapha Aga's Residence at Grain but to turn him out is wrong, to deliver him up is Infamy.

I depend upon Your Friendship to stop this Matter to the Bacha in its proper Light.

May Your Years be long and happy

Bussora the 29th June 1789.

True Translates

(signed) Samuel Manesty

Translation of a contract with the Shaik Suliman for an escort of Arabs across the Great Desert from Aleppo to Bassora. <sup>(1)</sup>

"THIS writing is to certify, that we the under-written of the tribe of Arabs Nigadi, have for our own free will agreed to accompany and conduct the bearer of this contract, Colonel Capper, an Englishman, and those of his company: and that we oblige ourselves to take with us seventy guards of the tribes of Arabs Nigadi, and Agalli and Benni Khaled, who are all to be armed with

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<sup>1</sup> CAPPER, *Observations on the Passage to India*, pp. 55-58.



muskets; we the under-written are included in the number, excepting Shaik Haggy Suliman Eben Adeyah. — And we do promise also to carry with us nine refeeks with their muskets, two of whom of the two different tribes called Edgellah, two of the two tribes Il Fedaan, one of the tribe of Welled Aly, one of the tribe of Benni Waheb, one of the tribe of Lacruti, one of the tribe of Baigee, and one of the tribe of Sarhaani, making in all nine refeeks, as above-mentioned.

AND it is agreed, that we the underwritten are to bring with us our own provisions, and the provisions for the guards and refeeks above-mentioned, and the same provisions are to be loaded upon our camels, the hire of which camels is to be paid by us; and we likewise agree to buy ourselves thirteen rotolas of gunpower, and twenty-six rotolas of balls, the cost of all the aforesaid things are to be paid by us, and not by Colonel Capper.

AND we also oblige ourselves to provide for him and his people nineteen camels, for the use of himself and his company, to carry their tents and baggage, water and provisions for themselves and for their horses, beside those nineteen camels above-mentioned; we also oblige ourselves to provide them two other strong camels to carry the mohafa, in order that they may change every day one camel, and to provide a person to lead the camel that carries the mohafa from Aleppo to Graine, and moreover we will appoint him a person to take care of his horses.

WE the underwritten do promise Colonel Capper, by our own free will and consent, and oblige ourselves to pay all kafars and giawayez (that is to say duties) to all the Arabs, and to the Shaik Tamur, the Shaik Tiveini, and all the Shaik of the tribe of Beni Khaled, and to all other tribes of Arabs whatever; and we make ourselves responsible for all what is above-written, and further when we approach the tribe of Arabs called Il Aslam, and Shammar and any other tribes, we oblige ourselves to take from them a refeek to walk with us till we have passed their confines.

WE agree to carry no goods, or even letters from any other person or persons, excepting the goods from Khwaja Rubens, which are thirty-one loads, for the hire of the said goods from Khwaja Rubens we have received in full, that is, the hire, the inamalumi, the refecks, the giawayez, figmaniah, and all other expences to Graine; we have received of him in full, according to the receipt in the hands of the said Khwaja Rubens: moreover we have agreed with our free will to provide for the said thirty-one loads, for every load of camels, in order to keep up with the above-mentioned Colonel Capper, and never separate from his company till our arrival at Graine; and we also oblige ourselves to pay the dolleels (scouts) the maadeb, the birakdar, and the chaous (officers of the guards) all the said persons we are to pay ourselves, and not Colonel Capper. We have agreed also with our free will, with the said Colonel Capper, to carry him and his company safe in thirty-six days to Graine, from the day we depart from the village of Nayreb; but in case the said Colonel Capper should be desirous of staying to rest a day or more the said delay is not to be reckoned in the aforesaid thirty-six days. And we the underwritten also engage three days before our arrival at Graine, to dispatch a messenger from our parts with Colonel Capper's letter to the agent of the British nation in Graine. And by this instrument it is stipulated and agreed between the said Colonel Capper and us the underwritten persons, that he pays us for all the services above-mentioned dollars nine hundred forty-one and one fourth in Aleppo, which sum we have received in full; besides which the said Colonel Capper does oblige himself to give us on the road dollars five hundred; and moreover at our safe arrival at Graine, on our having fulfilled this our agreement with him, he the said Colonel Capper obliges himself to pay us dollars eight hundred rumi, and in case we should fail in performing any part of our agreement with him, we then are to forfeit the last-mentioned eight hundred dollars, and all we the underwritten are

### *Appendix*

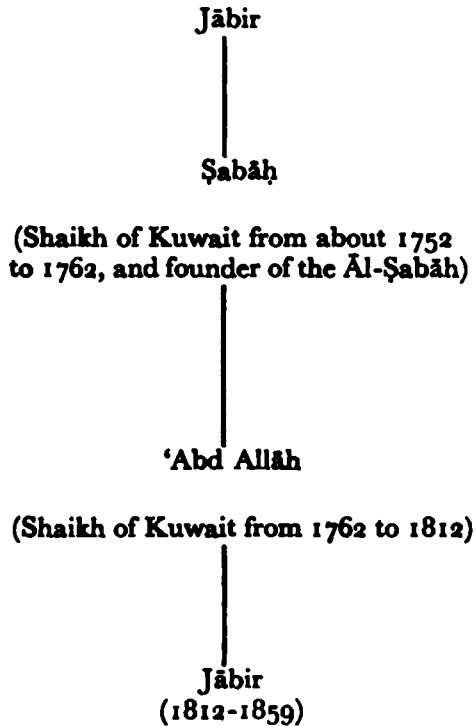
responsible one for the other, for the performance of the promises as above agreed between the contracting parties. In witness whereof, we have signed with our fingers this the sixteenth day of the moon called Shewal, in the year of the Hegira, one thousand one hundred and ninety-two.

Suliman Ebben Adeyah — Mohamed il Bisshir — Ally Ebben Faddil — Haggy Isa Ebben Hameidan — Nasseh Ebn Resheidan — Suliman Ebben Gaddib — Mohamed Ebn Nidghem — Suliman Ebben Naaisay.

The witnesses to the agreement are:

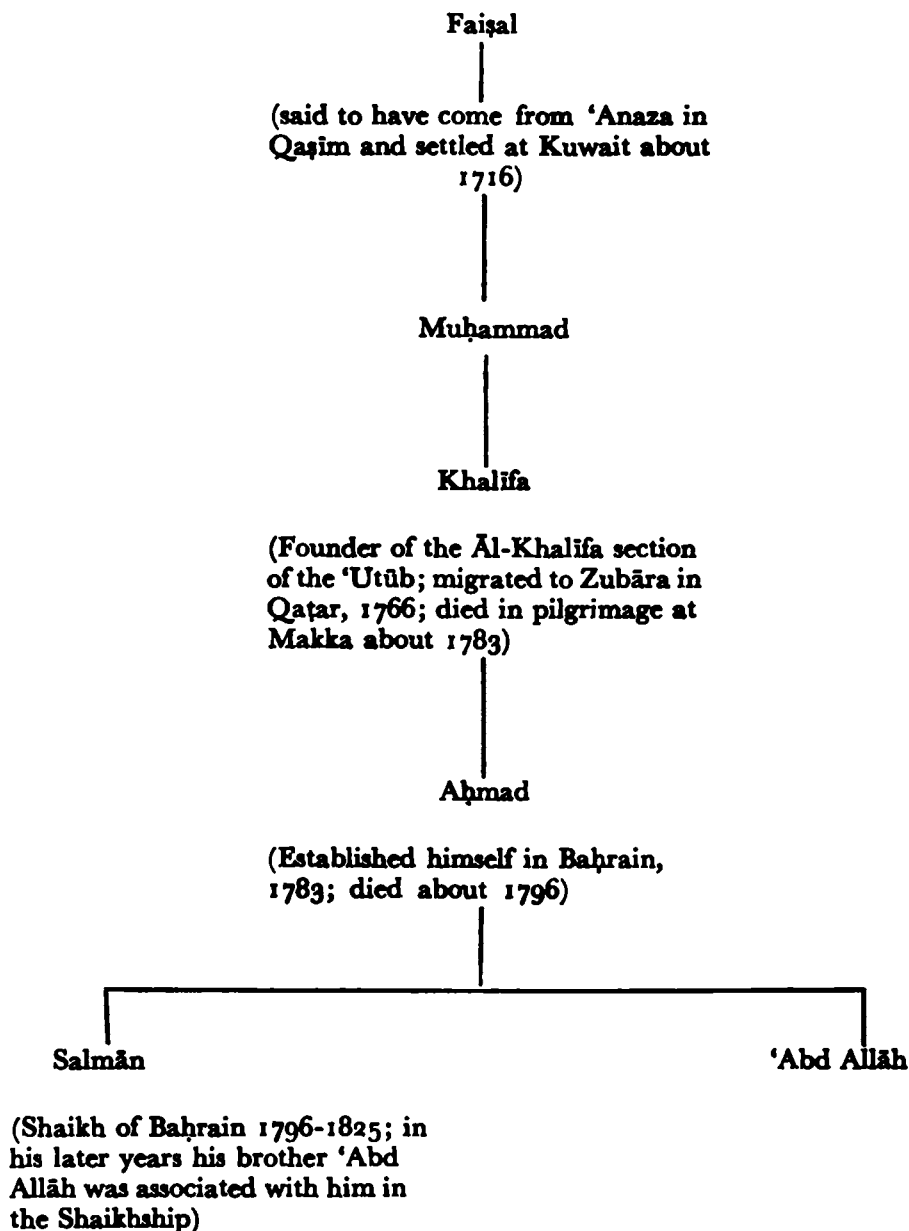
Il Haggi Omar Ulleed — Ismael Estracy — Il Haggi Mahomed Firous — Il Haggi Ibrahim Ulbed — Il Haggi Mahomed Emin il Takrity — Il Haggi Fathu Ebn il Haggi Usuph Maadaraloy — Ismael Ebben Achmed Tecrity.

**GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE  
ĀL-ŞABĀḤ, RULERS OF KUWAIT  
IN THE 18th AND EARLY 19th CENTURIES**



*Appendix*

GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE ĀL-KHALĪFA  
RULERS OF ZUBĀRA AND BAḤRAIN  
IN THE 18th CENTURY



**GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE  
ĀL-SU'ŪD RULERS OF  
SU'ŪDĪ ARABIA**

**Maqran**



**Muḥammad**



**Su'ūd**

(From whom the family take their  
name of Āl-Su'ūd)



**Muḥammad**

(*Amīr* of Southern Najd until his  
death in 1765)



**'Abd al-'Aziz**

(1765-1803, assassinated at al-  
Dir'iyya; married a daughter of  
Shaikh Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb)

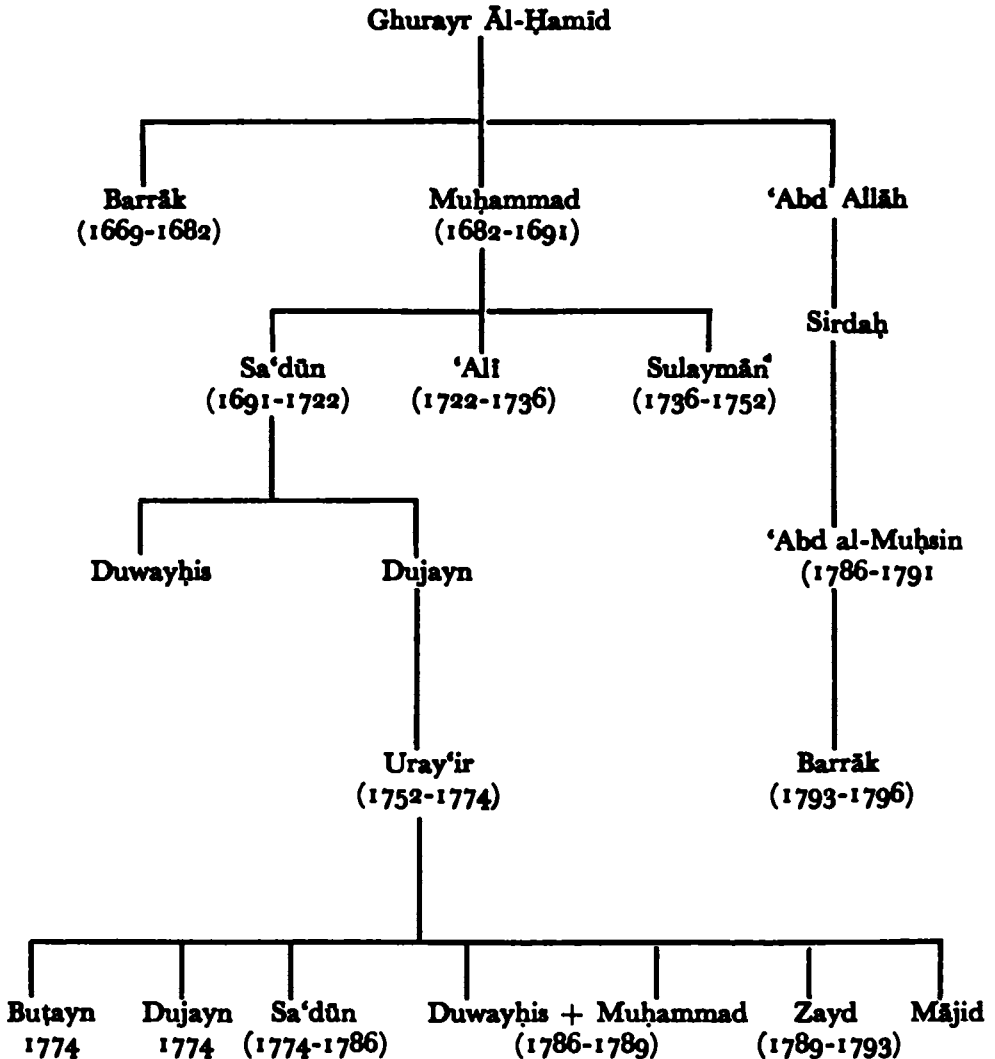


**Su'ūd**

(Born in 1746; mother a daughter  
of Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb. Com-  
manded the Wahhābis in the field  
during his father's life time; died  
1814)

*Appendix*

**GENEOLGY OF THE BANĪ KHĀLID SHAIKHS  
IN THE 17th AND 18th CENTURIES**







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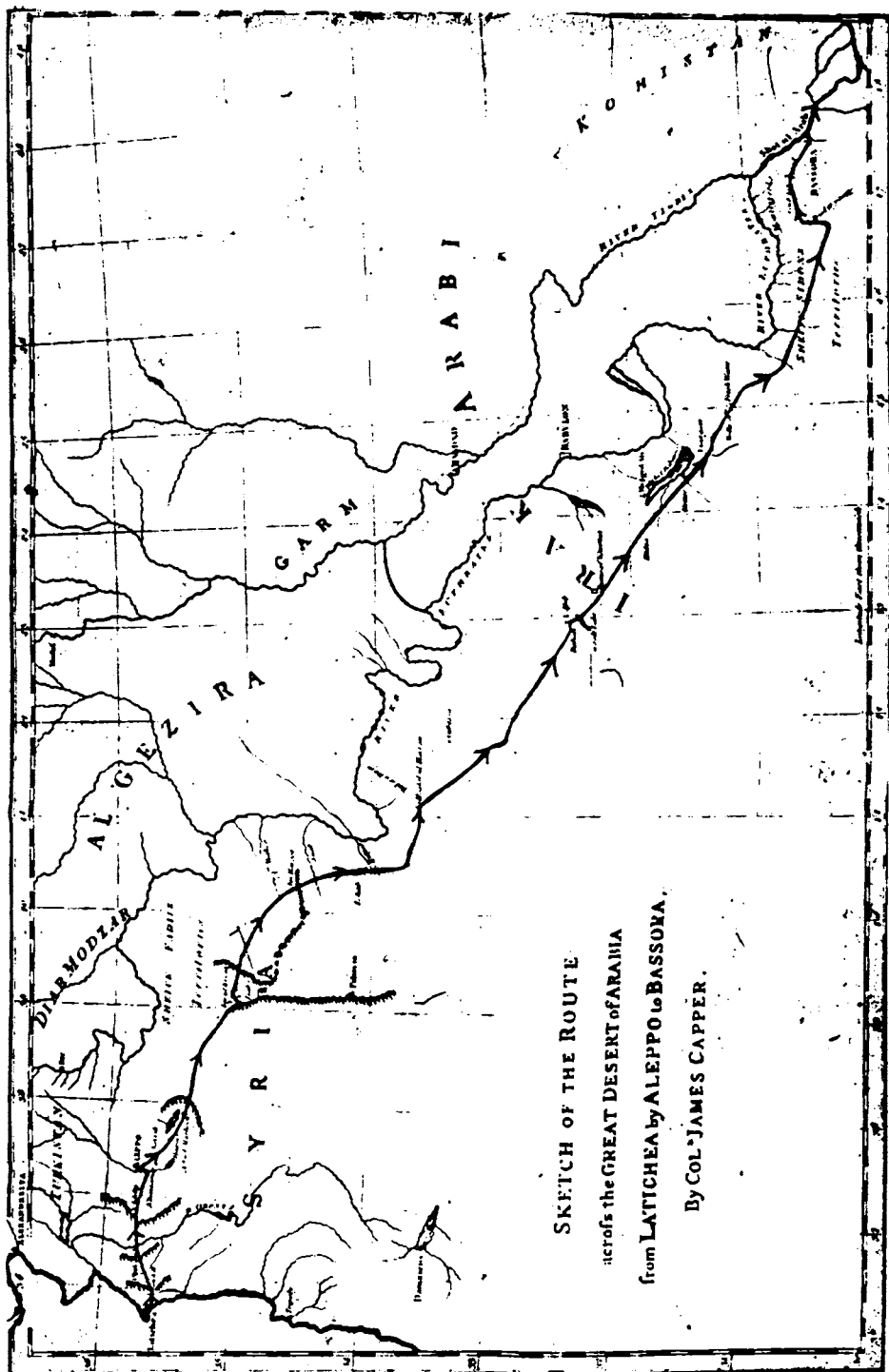


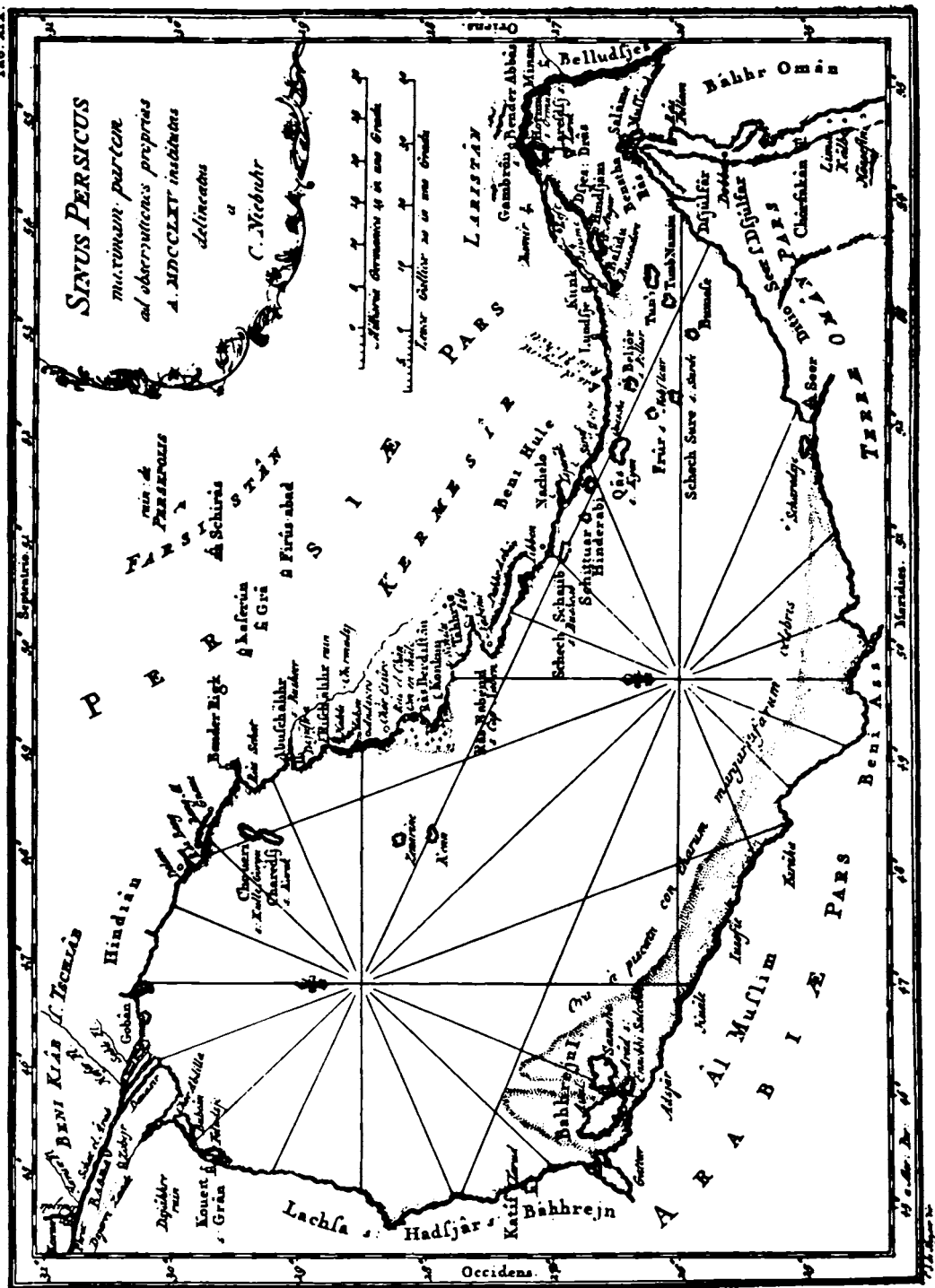


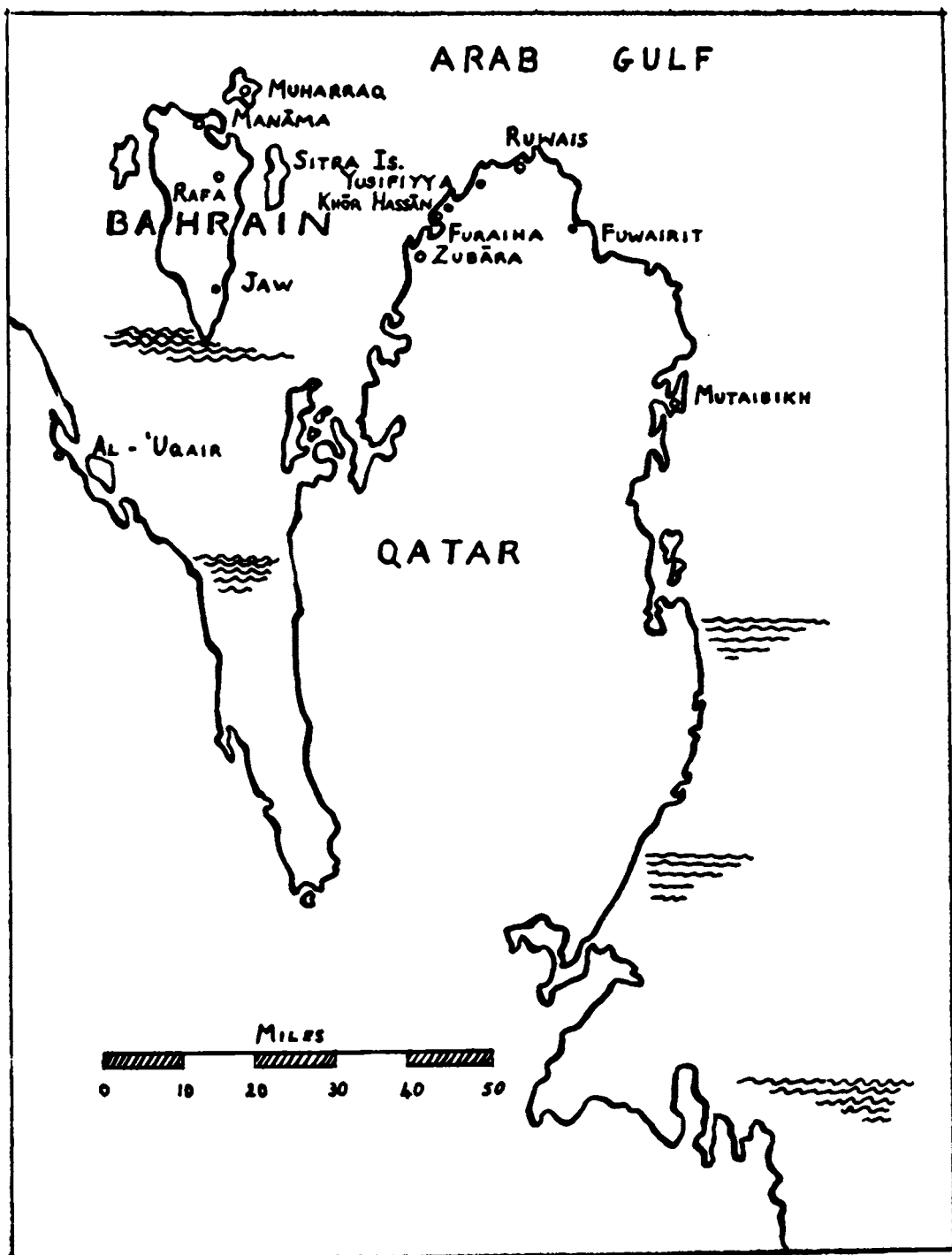


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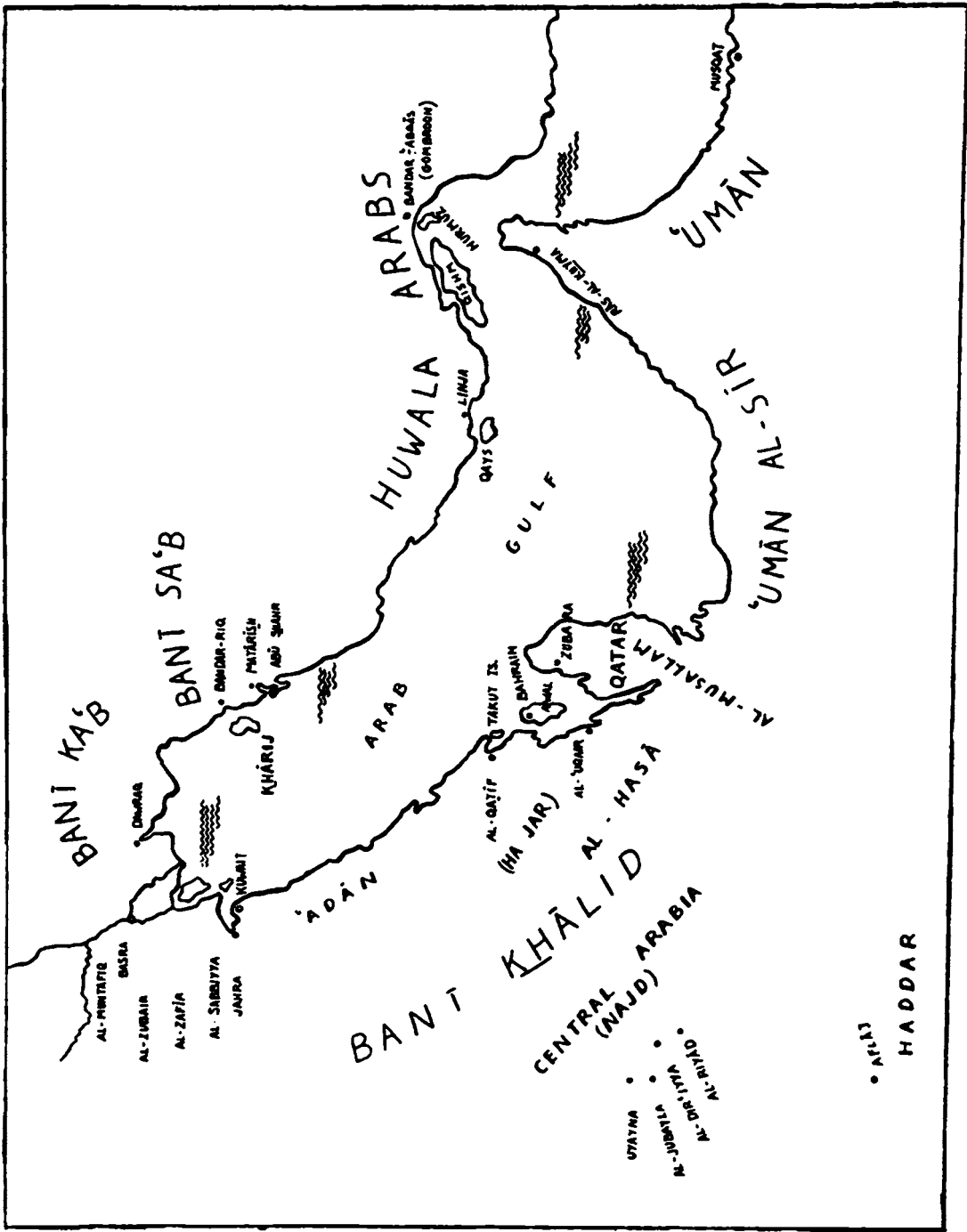




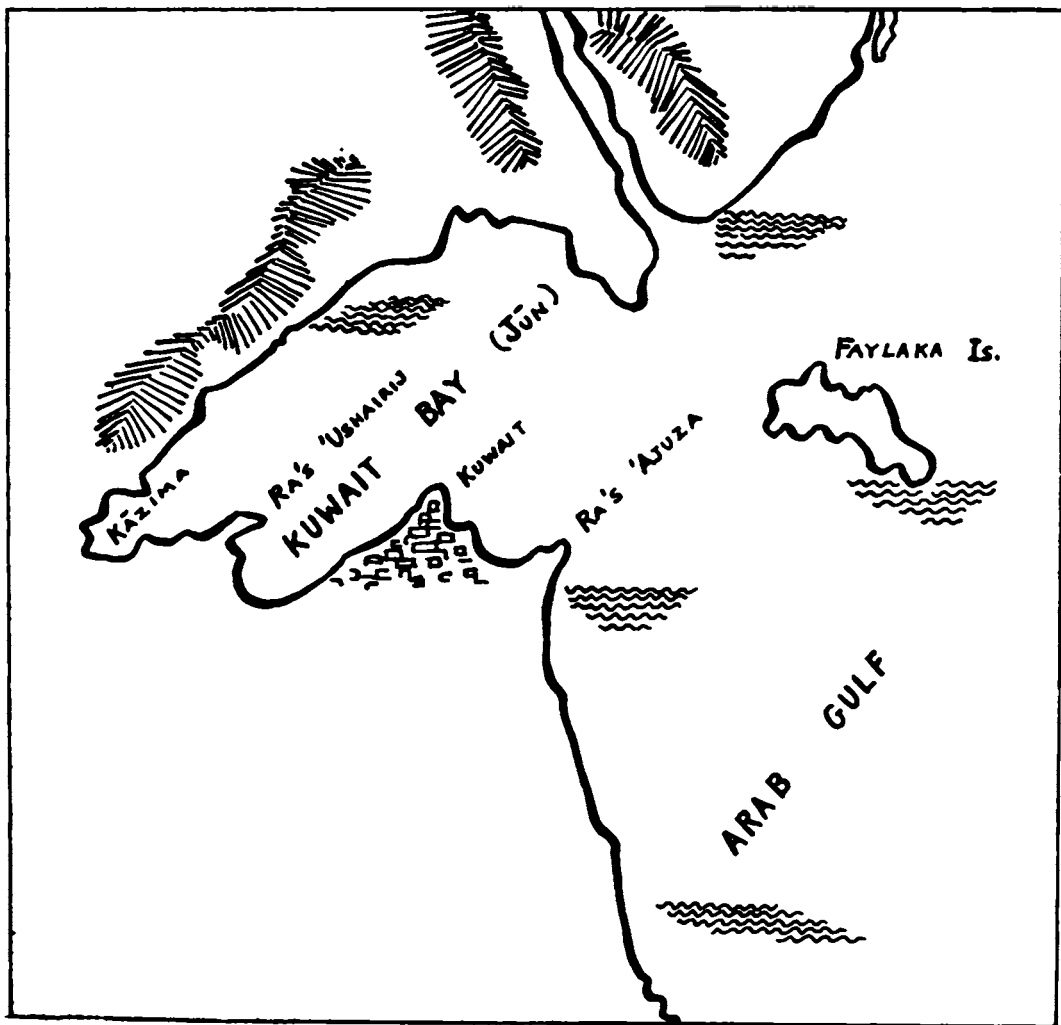




BAHRAIN & VICINITY



LOCATION OF ARAB TRIBES IN THE ARAB GULF (18th Century)



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