

## Economic Situation of Khuzestan in the Qajar Era Based on Foreign Travel Literature

Parvin Abolhallaj

Office of Education, First Period High School, Shahr-e Qods, Tehran, Iran

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**Abstract:** The aim of this study was to evaluate the economic developments in Khuzestan, during the Qajar era According to Foreign itinerary. Climate, cultural diversity, diversity of demographics, located in the Persian Gulf, enormous economic resources, agriculture, livestock and industrial, the existence of many historical and cultural great heritage, located next to Ottoman borders have been the most important variables affecting the political, social and cultural developments of been Khuzestan province. In this study, historical research method is used that trying to look objectively documented historical events that come to the primary sources of historical explanations issue. Results of this research showed that travelers and adventurers with long-term residence or short passages of Khuzestan have written their experiences in the form of travelogues that these are valuable resources for more and better knowledge of this land in the past. Most Foreign travel writers with the aims of political, economic, religious and cultural heritage looted have traveled to Khuzestan. Natural and unnatural disasters and threats, including plague, cholera, floods, earthquakes, riots, continuous internal and external attacks have been main factors of lack of progress of Khuzestan in the economic fields.

**Key words:** Travel literature, Qajar, Khuzestan, economic, adventurers, heritage

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### INTRODUCTION

Khuzestan in Qajar era or Saudi Arabia of Iran from ancient times until now because of the strategic position, unique climate, agricultural and horticultural crops, oil wells and bitumen, very, hard-working labour, etc., always has been on attention of local authorities and Foreign enemies, especially Britain and Russia. Khuzestan due to climatic conditions and geographic location, historically, it had been an independent state from Iran as far as multiple internal and external threats impedes the state's development. This rich state during the Qajar era resort representatives of European governments which each had own political and economic objectives. In the present research aims of Foreign travel writers and the economic situation of province were studied.

**Khuzestan:** Khuzestan was once inhabited by a people known as the Elamites, who spoke neither Indo-European languages (like the Medes and Persians of the Iranian plateau) nor Semitic languages (like the peoples of the Mesopotamian city-states). The Elamite language was not related to any Iranian languages but may have been part of a larger group known as Elamo-Dravidian. Archaeologists and historians have documented various Elamite dynasties ranging from approximately 2700 BCE to 644 BCE. However, various early proto-Elamite ruins such as Sialk exist in central Iran. The boundaries of Elam shifted throughout history but Elam usually included

present-day Khuzestan and areas of the Iranian plateau now part of the Iranian province of Fars. Elamite kings sometimes ruled as far afield as Babylon; sometimes they were completely subjugated by the Babylonians and Assyrians and vice versa as was the case for numerous dynasties that ruled Iran. Historians differ as to whether the Elamites could be considered "Iranian". On the one hand, the Elamites spoke a non-Iranian language and were culturally closer to the established civilizations of Sumer and Akkad than they were to the tribes of the Iranian plateau. On the other hand, the Elamites linked the old civilizations of Mesopotamia and the new peoples of the plateau and their version of Mesopotamian civilization was a formative influence on the first indisputably Persian empire of the Achaemenids. Elam was one of the first conquests of the new Persian Empire; Elamite scribes kept the Persians' records, writing them down in Elamite cuneiform. Hence one contemporary historian, Elton Daniel, states that the Elamites are "the founders of the first Iranian empire in the geographic sense. If the Elamites are considered proto-Persians, then Khuzestan would have been one of the cradles of Persian civilization. Many experts such as Sir Percy Sykes in fact called the Elamites "the earliest civilization of Persia" (A History of Persia, p38) and Ibn Nadeem in his book *al-Fehrest*, mentions that all the Median and Persian lands of antiquity spoke one language. In his book which is the most accredited account of spoken languages of Iran during the early Islamic era, Ibn Nadeem quotes the 8th century scholar

Abdullah Ibn al-Muqaffa as having counted Khuzi among the Iranian languages and for having identified it as the unofficial language of the royalty of Iran. In 644 BCE, the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal conquered Elam and destroyed their capital at Susa. For a time, the area was ruled from northern Mesopotamia. The area then seems to have re-established its independence. It was known as Susiana and ruled from Susa. It managed to remain independent of the burgeoning Median Empire.

Throughout the 19th century, Russia and Britain contended for control of Persia. Both attempted to influence or intimidate the Qajar Shahs. Russia dominated the northern parts of Iran while Britain dominated the south. Khuzestan was an area of particular interest to Britain, originally because of its strategic location and later due its vast oilfields. For more than a century, Britain was a dominant influence in the area.

In 1856-1857 Anglo-Persian War Following a trivial dispute between the British ambassador to Persia and the Shah's prime minister, Britain declares war and sends troops up through the Persian Gulf. They march through Khuzestan and up the Karun River as far as Ahvaz. The Persian government concedes and at the Treaty of Paris, Persia surrenders Herat and surrounding territories to Afghanistan. British troops withdraw from Khuzestan.

In 1870 end of construction for the Indo-European telegraph line from Calcutta to London. The line passes through Iran. In 1878 the British establish a consulate at Bushehr, just down the Persian Gulf coast from Khuzestan in 1888. The British firm of Lynch Brothers is granted a concession to run a line of steamers on the Karun River as far to Ahvaz in 1908. Oil discovered in Khuzestan in 1909, the Anglo-Persian Oil Company is founded. The company constructs drill rigs, refineries, large industrial facilities and British-style housing for overseers. The Arab character of the western region of the province is diluted by immigration from other parts of Iran. The area becomes one of the more prosperous areas of Persia. The oil company pays royalties to the Qajar Shah as well as to the provincial governor-general, Sheikh Khaz'al Khan of Mohammarah.

In 1914-1918 during World War I, Britain lands troops in Khuzestan using it as a staging area for an invasion of Ottoman territories in what is now Iraq in 1921 British officials support a coup mounted by Colonel Reza Khan which overthrows the Qajar dynasty and eventually establishes the Pahlavi dynasty in 1925. The British believed that Reza Khan would be more effective at holding the country together and resisting Russian (now Bolshevik) incursions from the North.

In 1925 Reza Khan is crowned the new Shah and has Sheikh Khaz'al deposed, who is held under house arrest

in Tehran. Reza Shah attempts to forcibly settle the tribal groups of Khuzestan and impose strict central government control.

In 1929 the Trans-Iranian Railway is built across the Karun River at Ahvaz. 1936 Sheikh Khazal dies in Tehran. The province is renamed Khuzestan, a return to the name of the province before the Safavid era (Lorimer, John Gordon).

**Qajar dynasty:** Qajars filled a number of diplomatic missions and governorships in the 16th-17th centuries for the Safavids. The Qajars were resettled by Shah Abbas I throughout Iran. The great number of them also settled in Astarabad (present-day Gorgan, Iran) near the south-eastern corner of the Caspian Sea and it would be this branch of Qajars that would rise to power. The immediate ancestor of the Qajar dynasty, Shah Qoli Khan of the Qovanlu of Ganja, married into the Qovanlu Qajars of Astarabad. His son, Fath Ali Khan (born c. 1685-1693) was a renowned military commander during the rule of the Safavid shahs Sultan Husayn and Tahmasp II. He was killed on the orders of Shah Nader Shah in 1726. Fath Ali Khan's son Mohammad Hasan Khan Qajar (1722-1758) was the father of Mohammad Khan Qajar and Hossein Qoli Khan (Jahansouz Shah), father of "Baba Khan," the future Fath-Ali Shah Qajar. Mohammad Hasan Khan was killed on the orders of Karim Khan of the Zand dynasty (Katouzian, 2006).

Within 126 years between the demise of the Safavid state and the rise of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar, the Qajars had evolved from a shepherd-warrior tribe with strongholds in northern Persia into a Persian dynasty with all the trappings of a Perso-Islamic monarchy.

"Like virtually every dynasty that ruled Persia since the 11th century, the Qajars came to power with the backing of Turkic tribal forces, while using educated Persians in their bureaucracy." In 1779 following the death of Karim Khan of the Zand dynasty, Mohammad Khan Qajar, the leader of the Qajars, set out to reunify Iran. Mohammad Khan was known as one of the cruelest kings, even by the 18th century Iranian standards. In his quest for power, he razed cities, massacred entire populations and blinded some 20,000 men in the city of Kerman because the local populace had chosen to defend the city against his siege. The Qajar armies at that time were mostly composed of Turkomans and Georgian slaves. By 1794, Mohammad Khan had eliminated all his rivals, including Lotf Ali Khan, the last of the Zand dynasty. He reestablished Persian control over the territories in the entire Caucasus. Agha Mohammad established his capital at Tehran, a village near the ruins of the ancient city of Rayy. In 1796, he was formally

crowned as shah. In 1797, Mohammad Khan Qajar was assassinated in Shusha, the capital of Karabakh Khanate and was succeeded by his nephew, Fath-Ali Shah Qajar (Katouzian, 2003).

In 1803, under Fath Ali Shah, the Qajars set out to fight against the Russian Empire, in what was known as the Russo-Persian War of 1804-1813, due to concerns about the Russian expansion into the Caucasus, most notably Georgia which was an Iranian domain, although some of the Khanates of the Caucasus outside of Georgia were considered quasi-independent or semi-independent by the time of Russian expansion in the latest 19th century and their entrance in Tbilisi. After the Russians annexed the Iranian territories comprising eastern Georgia on 12 September 1801 during the rule of Tsar Alexander I, they, under General Pavel Tsitsianov, stormed the Iranian town of Ganja in 1804, officially commencing the 1804-1814 war. This period marked the first major economic and military encroachments on Iranian interests during the colonial era. The Qajar army suffered a major military defeat in the war and under the terms of the Treaty of Gulistan in 1813, Iran was forced to cede most of its Caucasian territories comprising modern day Georgia, Dagestan and most of Azerbaijan. The second Russo-Persian War of the late 1820s ended even more disastrously for Qajar Iran with temporary occupation of Tabriz and the signing of Treaty of Turkmenchay in 1828, acknowledging Russian sovereignty over the entire South Caucasus and Dagestan as well as therefore the ceding of what is nowadays Armenia and the remaining part of Republic of Azerbaijan, the new border between neighboring Russia and Iran were set at the Aras River. Iran had by these two treaties, in the course of the 19th century, irrevocably lost the territories which had formed part of the concept of Iran for centuries. The area to the North of the river Aras, among which the territory of the contemporary republic of Azerbaijan, eastern Georgia, Dagestan and Armenia were Iranian territory until they were occupied by Russia in the course of the 19th century (Shamim, 1979).

As a further direct result and consequence of the Gulistan and Turkmenchay treaties of 1813 and 1828 respectively, the formerly Iranian territories became now part of Russia for around the next 180 years, except Dagestan which remained a Russian possession ever since. Out of the greater part of the territory, three separate nations would be formed through the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, namely Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia. Lastly and equally important as a result of Russia's imposing of the two treaties, It also decisively parted the Azerbaijanis and Talysh ever since between two nations.

The first itinerary that had precise knowledge about the lands of the East (Iran) is the travel writer of Spanish Ruy González de Clavijo. Ruy González de Clavijo (died 2 April 1412) was a Castilian traveller and writer. In 1403-05 Clavijo was the ambassador of Henry III of Castile to the court of Timur, founder and ruler of the Timurid Empire. A diary of the journey, perhaps based on detailed notes kept while traveling, was later published in Spanish in 1582 (*Embajada a Tamorlán*) and in English in 1859 (*Narrative of the Embassy of Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo to the Court of Timour at Samarcand AD 1403-6*) (Chisholm, 1911). Clavijo, a nobleman of Madrid and chamberlain to the king, set sail from Cadiz on 21 May 1403 in the company of Timur's ambassador, Muhammed al-Kazi, a Dominican friar, Alfonso Páez de Santa María, one of the king's guards, Gómez de Salazar and other unnamed Castilians. Clavijo sailed through the Mediterranean, passing Majorca, Sicily and Rhodes to Constantinople. Using modern names for the countries through which he passed, Clavijo sailed along the Black Sea coast of Turkey to Trabzon and then overland through Armenia, Iran and Turkmenistan to Uzbekistan. He visited Tehran, Persia, in 1404. The original intention was to meet with Timur at his winter pasturage in what is now modern Georgia but due to foul weather conditions and a shipwreck, the embassy was forced to return to Constantinople and spend the winter of 1403-1404 there. After setting sail from Constantinople across the Black Sea, the entourage spent the following months following in the wake of Timur's army but were unable to catch up to the rapidly moving, mounted horde. It is for this reason that the Castilian delegation continued all the way to Timur's capital at Samarkand, in modern Uzbekistan, arriving there on 8 September 1404, occasioning the most detailed contemporary description of Timur's court by a westerner. Clavijo found the city in a constant cycle of construction and rebuilding, in search of perfection: The Mosque which Timur had caused to be built to the memory of the mother of his wife... seemed to us to be the noblest of all we visited in the city of Samarkand but no sooner had it been completed than he began to find fault with its entrance gateway which he now said was much too low and must be pulled down.

Clavijo's long-sought first audience with Timur was in "a great orchard with a palace therein", the paradise garden of Iranian tradition where Clavijo gave detailed descriptions of the trained and painted elephants he saw and the tent-pavilions of jewel-and pearl-encrusted silks with tassels and banners that fluttered in the wind. The embassy spent several months in Samarkand, during which time the Castilians attended celebrations for Timur's recent victory at Ankara in July 1402, over the

Turkish sultan, Bayezid I whom he captured, relieving Western fears of Ottoman expansion in Hungary and spurring the desire for diplomatic connections on the part of Charles VI of France as well as Henry of Castile. Unable to procure a letter from Timur for their king, Henry, due to Timur's ill health (Timur's final illness), the Castilians were forced to depart Samarkand on 21 November 1404, due to Timur's impending death.

One of the important points in the logbook is brand positioning, economic, roads and rivers of Khuzestan from perspective of travel writers.

In the era of Fath Ali Shah Qajar period, Iranian officials and the ambassador that travel to the court of European governments or neighbours countries, they did not compile such researches. Iranian people culture from Safavid to Qajar era had a special interest for tourists. Historical texts have little awareness from intellectual and social situation in Iran. While many cultural and social behaviours seemed normal by people or historians from the perspective of an outsider, was astounding and unnatural, especially the Qajar era, Europeans socially and economic was far from the Iranians because Qajar society has not changed much and remains a traditional society. Travelogues are actually beautiful images of scenes of social life from countries whose content is written about them. However, the reflection of condition and images of communities in the logbook is not based on the rule of specific law and more depend on researcher insight. So, the images that is reflected from Iranian society in the researches of European travelers, is very different.

For example: one of the explorers traveled to Khuzestan Henry Rawlinson, politician and statesman in the early period of Mohammad Shah Qajar was serving as a military advisor in Iran.

For example, one of the travelers that traveled to Khuzestan was Henry Rawlinson, politician and statesman in the early period of Mohammad Shah in Iran, worked as a military advisor. Unlike other travel writers his itinerary only is not a trip without purpose and not just tourism and we can say that her journey within a predetermined defined research project and this is the distinguishing features of his itinerary. He in this itinerary pay attention to a variety of issues including tax system areas, major crops of areas, religion and language, people and the number of households and the agricultural use of the land and the people characteristics and ancient geography of the regions.

Baron Dvbd, Russian traveler in 1840 worked as vice former Russian embassy in Tehran. He during his travel to Iran and especially Khuzestan studied its people status and is created a comprehensive research. He has brought together whatever about the geographic, cultural, social,

economic, for example, the state of roads and rivers and seas and their role in the security is to note. Baron Dvbd itinerary has 30 chapters that have been discussed issues such as geographical location, culture and customs, language, race, history and monuments and divisions of tribes and tribal structure.

Natel George Curzon is east experts and travel writers that as a reporter is traveled to Iran (Khuzestan) in nineteenth century. He in his travelogue not addressed only political issues but also about various issues of Khuzestan such as industry, agriculture, tribes and clans, cities and places, the army and armed forces, strategic areas, historically, boundary issues, policies and actions of the Russians and the British, reform, economy, trade, roads, etc. are included.

Nobuyoshi Furukawa Furukawa, travelogue and writer was a military officer who worked at the headquarters of Japan's war that his itinerary is the third Japanese travelogue that has been translated into Persian. In fact Furukawa logbook is an encyclopaedia from various issues of political, social, economic, agricultural, cultural and military.

John McDonald Keener in 1810 AD as a political assistant Sir John Malcolm was arrived in Tehran. He has to inform the Government of Great Britain about the political situation and economic and social geography of Iran, the outcome of his studies and observations about the country of Iran wrote.

Lord Curzon writes about Khuzestan people's jobs: they are catching fish in Karoon River and buy and sell date palm and live in tents that make from straw and use fertile land for their needs. Their property is goats and sheep, especially sheep that use its milk, cheese butter and its wool is used to weave tents and blankets. Horse breeding is very low and most is grown ass.

Baron Dvbd in approved Lord Curzon states: main job of the people of Khuzestan is breeding of sheep farming which is their main task and the biggest source of wealth. Flocks during the winter in the plains of Khuzestan are warm and spring approached slowly through the mountains to plains and Chaharmahal returned Frieden. Aside from the benefits of wool and milk sheep, in the summer earn income from the sale of sheep.

## CONCLUSION

Iran's economy was experiencing a serious recession due to Safavid collapse and chaos of the fall after the arrival of Qajar and security and relative calm was not also out of recession. This problem was due to Qajar social nature that people were nomads and had no view of planning and foresight. Strict dictates of these rulers and

knew the road and property of the people their property was considered too much damage to trade and investment in Iran. Lack of business confidence from the central government and its agents were allowed out of the country. Domestic and Foreign wars, internal uprisings and colonial states on the Iranian economy, signing of contracts colonial domination and the arrival of cheaper and higher quality European goods in the 19th century brought much damage to the Iranian economy.

Although, travel writers for legitimate purposes such as scientific research, history and archaeology and commerce were entering Khuzestan province but the reality was that their aim was to identify the strengths and weaknesses of Khuzestan and use them to supply their imperial interests in parts of Asia and Africa. Among the results of this research is natural and non-natural threats, mismanagement, lack of management of political men and continued meddling of Asian and European Foreign

neighbours have been major agents of Khuzestan retardation and backwardness. In the meantime, the ongoing rivalries Russia, Britain, France and the Ottomans continued attacks in Khuzestan can be noted.

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