



Article

A Field Study on Foreign Travelers Writings in the Ottoman Era in Kurdistan Iraq

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Abstract: The writings of foreign travelers are important sources for studying the history of Iraq during the Ottoman era and the history of modern Iraq. Our knowledge of these trips is still limited, and although some studies have appeared that relied on them or translated some of them into Arabic, there is no doubt that the goals and objectives of European travelers were diverse and multiple, but they certainly reflect the European interest in Iraq since the beginning of the sixteenth century, as the writings of foreign travelers were a vital and important source for studying the history of modern and contemporary Iraq, especially in the Ottoman era, and the Kurdistan region of Iraq in the Ottoman era based on what was written by most travelers, especially foreigners. The Kurdistan region, which the Ottomans adopted as a military base, formed a major station on the transportation routes for movement in northern Iraq and was distinguished by its castles, especially Erbil, which formed the center of the city (the region) and in which the population settlement settled. Like the rest of the cities of Iraq, the economic and social aspects formed the true image of the region, and what was associated with them of means of transportation that the residents used, which the travelers divided into two sections: means of transportation in the center of the region, including river and land. All of these matters were covered by the study based on what was written by travelers who passed through the city in the center of the region, which is Erbil, and what this city possesses of many economic and commercial privileges, including the writings of foreign travelers, which are important sources for studying the history of Iraq during the requirements of the Ottoman era and what it contains of importance for this study, and that the region and what it has of interest from the Ottomans and what it possesses of commercial economies in modern Iraq. While Longrigg mentioned more than ninety-six voyages, most of which were European (1: 337-347), some Iraqi writers, researchers and historians estimated them at nearly three hundred voyages (2: 217-227). Therefore, there is no doubt that the aims and objectives of most foreign travelers, including Europeans, were diverse and different, and that the expansion in the Arab-Islamic world, which was initiated by the Dutch and Portuguese, and then the English and French as naval powers that were able to reach different regions of the Ottoman Empire, including Mesopotamia, providing - i.e. travelers - detailed, accurate and important information to their governments, contributed to a great extent in directing and shaping the policy of those countries towards the region (3: 156-173). This study is concerned with clarifying the social, economic and military conditions of the region throughout the Ottoman era, which lasted for about four centuries, relying in its scientific material on the information that foreign travelers transmitted about the city to form a historical picture of its general conditions.

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1. Introduction

The great role in which the Ottoman Sultan at the time sought to win the Kurdish princes and leaders to his side and incite them against the Safaws at the time, and assigned

this task to his close advisor Idris Al-Badlisi [5: 6-7], who succeeded in his mission after a tour in the regions of the region during which he won the rulers of Makri, Bradost, Baban, Soran, Amadiya, Bhutan and other cities to the side of the Ottomans, and encouraged them to cleanse their areas of the Safavids [6: 11].

It continued throughout the seventeenth century [7: 243], since the late seventeenth century and the control of its ruler, Suleiman al-Babani (1699-1669), over the city of Kirkuk in 1660 and its continuation under Babani rule until 1701 [8: 445-448] to push the Ottomans to abolish the state of Shahrzör from the administrative divisions of Iraq since the beginning of the eighteenth century [9: 112-113]. This annexation seems to have included the dependencies of the province of Kirkuk in the region and its center (Erbil), which continued to belong to the wilayat of Baghdad in the sixth decade of the eighteenth century; in 1766, the Danish traveler Carsten Niebuhr visited the Kurdistan region, including Erbil. He pointed out that it belongs to the province of Baghdad [10: 90], The same observation was repeated by the French traveler Olivier, who visited the province of Erbil, the center of the region, in the last decade of the eighteenth century [11: 65], thus reinforcing what the sources pointed out and according to what was written by foreign travelers, where most historical sources referred to it. In 1804, the governor of the region, especially the center of the region (Erbil), was Suleiman Bey, the nephew of the Mamluk governor of Baghdad, Ali Pasha (1802-1807) [12: 162], and in 1821 the Mamluk governor Daoud Pasha (1817-1831) appointed his brother Ahmed Pasha as governor of the center of the region (Erbil) [13: 122]. This is confirmed by the traveler James Raymond, Listed and other foreign travelers who visited Baghdad in 1830, who wrote: "Although the authority of the province of Baghdad officially expanded from Basra in the south to Mardin in the north and from the borders of Persia and Kurdistan in the east to the borders of Syria and Palestine in the west, many of these lands were occupied by Bedouins and Kurds, whose recognition of the Pasha's Sultan was nominal rather than real" [14: 54].

The Kurdistan region, including Erbil and its outskirts, was a destination for the trips of many foreign travelers, many of whom were the subject of study during the Ottoman era due to the location of the center of the region on transportation routes, so Erbil occupied an important geographical location in the northern part of the Iraq, making it a major station on the transportation roads, where the shortest roads linking this city to each other pass. The center (Erbil) was connected with the cities of Iraq by a number of important main land roads, from which less important secondary roads branched. The most important of these roads is the Baghdad-Mosul road, which is known as the East Tigris road, and then continues to Baghdad. This road is one of the important vertical paths that influenced the history of modern Iraq, as it was connected to Europe through the governorates (Kirkuk, Erbil and Mosul) and was called the old Shahrzör road [15: 250]. Foreign travelers preferred to take this route because it is safer than the rest of the roads, because of the large number of kasbahs and cities located on it [16: 103].

In addition, it was protected by a number of Ottoman military garrisons, but despite this, this road was sometimes subjected to raids by Arabic tribes, and it was interrupted in some Kurdish areas, especially the Dezai, Hamavand and Jaf clans [17: 43]. In the spring due to melting snow, which hinders the movement of caravans and stops the movement of transport [18: 96].

2. Theoretical Studies

Urban Aspects in the Ottoman Era:

The urban features of the region, especially the mountainous ones, the picturesque nature and the nature of urbanization in it, attracted the attention of foreign travelers, and at the forefront of these manifestations was the center of the region (Erbil) and its wall. The

Iraqi city in the Ottoman era, where it was characterized by an important feature, is the large number of fortifications and walls, which were famous for its castle and were considered one of the fortified castle cities of the region, which was characterized by market importance by virtue of its distinguished military characteristics with its walls and castles, which is attributed to being a fortified castle for it, built primarily for the purposes of defense of the region and its revolutions, as well as being an important major station in the transportation and external communication routes of the region [18: 77]. As we have gone through the above-mentioned, as the castle of the region (Erbil) is built on a high hill secured naturally, this is how Nippur (1766) describes it and continues, "Today, nothing remains of it except the castle, but even this is not walled, but houses were erected on it, especially around the edge of the hill in a coherent manner, so no one can carry out it - that is, the castle or the secured wall - except through the city gate." [19: 89-90]. The same observation is repeated by the traveler Olivier (1797) The castle is the center of the region (Erbil) built on a flat hill and surrounded by an old wall [20: 64], and the fact that the important observation that can be referred to is the issue of the castle wall, as the travelers of different historical nationalities who visited the center of the region since the beginning of the sixteenth did not see the full city wall, but what is left of it, the Dutch traveler Rawulf refers to this matter during a visit to the city in 1573 and mentions that it is a large city It has modest buildings and its walls are scanty [21: 200].

Therefore, the region, especially the Citadel of Erbil, had the center has significant effects except for the remains of a large mosque located outside it in the middle of the fields, and the minaret of the mosque is built of plaster and brick, and is characterized by its Islamic architecture, as it has two opposite entrances through which it can climb to its top [22: 90], which identified its external walls contain windows built in an unorganized manner similar to the latches, and the other there are balconies of houses built by the rich of the city, and the castle of the regional center (Erbil) has two large doors, one of which is wide and is located on the northern side and passes From under the Saray, the other is small and located on the eastern side. The streets of the city are rugged and narrow "so that the chariots cannot walk in them" [23: 148] that the effective and influential role of foreign travelers The region has a great role, especially its castle is one of the important military centers in the region, especially its center and its role, So it had an Ottoman military garrison. In fact, the researcher cannot form a clear picture of the role of the military special force of the region, especially the center (Erbil), as the travelers did not address this aspect except rarely, and it seems that what is attributed to any reason for this is due to the movement of the center of the region (Erbil) in its subordination between the local rulers and the governors of the state of Baghdad at the time, and Nippur mentions that it - that is, the center (Erbil) of the region - has a strong protector of the Janissary forces. [24: 90].

The same observation was repeated by Olivier by saying: ".... It has a strong protector of Janissaries that resurrects the ruler [25: 65]. Thus, we used to say that we can recover the number of these forces from the observations made by other foreign travelers, including the Frenchman Dupre, who presented a list of the Ottoman army during the rule of the Mamluk governor Suleiman Pasha the Little (1808-1813), the share of the center (Erbil) of which was 300 knights [26: 199-201], either the traveler Porter, the number of the army of the Pashwa of Baghdad in 1818 is estimated at about ten thousand fighters, and that Daoud Pasha can double this number with the help of troops from the center of the region (Erbil) and other Kurdish areas [27: 33-25].

Social aspects of the region, especially the regional status (Erbil):

Those who follow the aspects of social life in the cities of Iraq in general and the center of the region (Erbil) in particular, find that most of them were an extension of what Iraqis knew and were familiar with in periods prior to the Ottoman era, which is the set of

customs, traditions, costumes and clothes that people were familiar with in the past centuries, did not change much, and perhaps most of them retained their original image [28: 78] because of the clothes that people acquired in that period.

The study of these manifestations in the Ottoman era is not easy, because most foreign travelers, writers and historians who dealt with the study of the history of Iraq and the status of the region (Erbil) in particular did not address all aspects, especially the social aspects, not casually, and through that their references to political events. The types of writings of foreign travelers of various nationalities have therefore been an important material to illustrate these manifestations. Although travelers did not penetrate deeply into Iraqi society because they usually do not spend much time in every city they pass through, what they wrote is actually the key to such important historical studies in their studies. The inhabitants of the region were Kurdish Muslims, Turkmen, Arabs, Christians and Jews [29: 124] and the Ottoman authorities allowed only Muslims to live in the castle, while the Jews lived in the city below the castle. While Christians lived in the village of Ainkawa and near the center of the region (Erbil) [30: 133] and most of them are Syriac followers of the Catholic Church [31: 23] and because of the turbulent political conditions in the Ottoman Empire at the time, which the region went through, especially Erbil, and the waves of drought and high prices and the spread of epidemics and diseases from time to time, including, for example, the waves of drought and high prices in the region in general in the years 1582, 1677-1678 and 1695-1696 and the spread of the plague epidemic in the center of the region (Erbil), Kirkuk, Baghdad and other cities Iraq in the year 1772-1773 [32: 137].

According to the historian Yassin bin Khairallah al-Omari, the impact of this epidemic intensified in the center of the region (Erbil) and its villages in the following year, "even the most artistic and the least of them" [33: 74], as its population declined and decreased significantly due to the large number of epidemics and diseases at the time.

The French traveler Olivier estimated the city's population in the last decade of the eighteenth century at only 2,000 [34: 126] which is undoubtedly an inaccurate and exaggerated figure because the information is inaccurate, the traveler James Buckingham, who passed through the city in 1816, wrote, "It was mentioned to us that the number of souls exceeds ten thousand, and half of this number may be correct" [35: 76], meaning that he estimated the population at about 5000 people, while other travelers estimated the number of inhabitants depending on the number of houses, the Baghdadi builder (1821) mentions that in the castle, the center of the region (Erbil), about a thousand houses, At the bottom are about 4,000 houses, [36: 18] and in any case the information is inaccurate, the late studies that dealt with this indicated that the city center in 1847 accommodated about 5-6 thousand inhabitants (37-65) and the following table shows the number of inhabitants of the city for separate years according to what was reported by foreign travelers.

Table 1. Population of the region and the center of (Erbil)

Years	Population of the region and the center of (Erbil)
1796	2000 people
1816	5000 people
1821	5000 people
1837	4000 people
1873	2000 people
1915	1000 people
1918	6000 people

Costumes of the population of the region, especially the center (Erbil):

The different costumes and clothes of the inhabitants in the Iraq had the interest of foreign travelers of different nationalities, who paid great attention to them in their literature, and the many original descriptions that they recorded for these costumes according to the requirements of life in the city or village indicate that they enjoyed great diversity in their shapes and beautiful bright colors, and this is a natural reflection of the diversity of the population and the multiplicity of social classes of different races in the Iraq, especially the region in the Ottoman era, as well as the difference in climate and its variation and the difference between the north and south of Iraq, and the extreme disparity in The temperatures between the summer and winter of the country have affected the diversity and different forms of clothing of the population, as they tended to wear clothes that suit each season. The clothes of the rich are other than the clothes of the middle and poor classes, and the clothes of the people of the cities are not similar to those worn by the people of the countryside and the desert, in addition to that, each sect had its own costumes that distinguish it from other sects [38: 17] or the different minorities in the region, especially its center (Erbil).

In the region, especially Erbil, Dr. Ross Tayeb describes the British Residency in Baghdad as the costumes of the inhabitants during his wanderings in the city and its vicinity in 1834, as being divided into two parts: the people of villages and countryside, whom he describes as "apparently do not know anything about the world" and they wear simple clothes that he described as "rags". The second section is the poor and rich people of Medina, whom he called the "well-known", whose costumes were similar to those of the rich people of Baghdad [39:286] which is a loose shirt with two waistcoats on top of the other, then a third wide jacket lined with silk, and the rich wear two trousers of different fabrics over which a skirt - which is commonly called a sayah - open with a belt of luxurious wool embroidered with gold and silver. The fact that the clothes of the people of Baghdad usually consist of loose clothes characterized by simplicity and beauty of clothes, and it is noticeable that the Baghdadi costumes were different according to the categories of the population, the clothes of notables, princes and rich sheikhs who likened travelers to the clothes of the people of the region, especially Erbil, were mostly made of beautiful Indian textiles very bright bright colors, as shown in the caftan, trousers and outer robes, while the chest and head dress is made of silk [40: 17].

As for the clothes of the poor residents of the region, especially the center of Erbil, it consists of a short jacket, loose woolen trousers (charwels), a felt vest that has no ardan (jaruka), woolen shoes (kalash) and woolen socks [41: 17]. As with men, the women's dress in Erbil consisted of a wide garment with loose trousers tightened from below around the wrist of the foot and a square cloak that was tightened from two angles so that it became a pendant over the back, while on the head the women wore a round piece of silver from which large sheets hanged in each of which pieces of currency (lira) were hung around the head and neck, all made of silver [42: 350-351].

Economic features of the region and its status Erbil:

What seems to talk about economic manifestations means in one way or another talking about the region and its center in Erbil, that the economic movement in its various forms, starting from agriculture through industry and craft production to complex automated production to trade, is a manifestation of the economic life of the region and the center of Erbil. The cities of Iraq - in general during the period covered by the study were small centers at the time, and many parts and afflicted from desolate areas, and this situation was only a continuation of the period before the previous eras in which we reached the Ottoman era, which accompanied this period of political instability on the one hand and natural disasters such as natural floods, disasters, epidemics and famines on the

other hand, which contributed greatly to the backwardness of Iraqi cities and the delay of their economic activity [43: 90-91] in the region, especially the center.

The economic life in the region, based in Erbil, aroused a great deal of interest from foreign travelers of different nationalities, especially agriculture and trade, as agriculture in the region was prosperous, especially wheat cultivation, which Nippur says "is ten times higher than the yield of the lands of another region, and in good years it is more than fifteen, for example" [44: 90-91]. [45: 223] It seems that it is due to the high fertility of the territory of the region, which one traveler described as "wonderful" [46: 124] and linked to the issue of agriculture is the issue of livestock breeding, where Newman reports that he often saw herds of cattle in the region [47: 48]. In fact, one of the travelers mentioned a funny picture of the people of the region by raising livestock, especially the well-to-do, that they used to leave the region with their herds of livestock to the mountainous areas in order to graze them in the summer, and he describes this, saying, "I was told that the majority of the wealthy people of the castle had traveled with their flocks of sheep and livestock to mountainous areas in order to graze animals, and that they would return in the autumn season to the town." [48: 270] and its development and elevation. Therefore, the regional trade, which has been established and contributed by many factors to its prosperity, and these factors are its distinguished geographical location, which made it an important commercial area distinct, and a crossroads for the routes of commercial caravans coming from Iran towards Iraq, and Edmonds indicates that the region, especially the center, was characterized by the export of grains (wheat and barley) - for commercial purposes, as well as exports of wool, tobacco, tannins, wood, gum, honey and various dried fruits [49: 136-137].

The region, especially the center of Erbil, also obtained necessary and consumable items such as tea, sugar and coffee from Mosul and sometimes from Baghdad, and through Iranian cities such as Sojak, they also obtained beetles, silk, leather, furs and mules. In turn, they – the merchants of the province – re-export them to Mosul or to Baghdad by means of the Aklak [50: 157] which we will mention later. The cities of Iraq were characterized by a vital phenomenon of increased activity of markets, which are often close to the Saray al-Hakam area. Each city has many markets, each of which specializes in a specific trade of goods, which is often called the market after the goods that trade in it, such as the perfumers market, the tailors' market, the Bazzazin market... etc [51: 224].

As for the boxes of the first type, large and small, they were concentrated in the region's market or near it, and the amount of this concentration allows us to estimate the role they contribute to the region's trade [52: 88] and the specializations of this type of khans varied and they were a place for internal and external trade, a shelter for foreign merchants and travelers and stores for their goods. Newman (1873) tells us that he lodged in one of them consisting of two floors, saying, "In the region there are several khans crowded with merchants and commercial caravans, which landed in one of them, and at that night we stayed on the ground floor of the khan, near an animal stable [53: 226] and it seems that the reason that prompted them to stay on the first floor is the crowding of the khan with travelers, especially since we know that the engineering design of the khan usually consists of two floors, the ground floor of which is allocated stores for goods, stables and animal feeds; The second is where there are the rooms of travelers and merchants [54: 88].

It should be noted here that through the description of this type of box, we can diagnose two main features in it, namely its hotel character and the social character, as it was a scene for meeting people coming from different places, which facilitates the conclusion of commercial deals among them, as well as social closeness, especially in the summer sessions at night, which creates a means for rapprochement between them, where travelers provide pictures of their adventures while traveling, and one of the travelers wrote describing this by saying, "It was The owner of the khan – who descended in it – is

an Arab and is an old and wise man, and at night the inmates of the khan presented a description of stories related to theft and murders in a tragic way, which is most likely a representative style and took the courtyard of the khan as a stage to present their performances on it. As for the second type of khans located at the edges of the Erbil region, they do not differ from the first type, except in terms of function, size, architecture style and location.

The traveler Nippur (1765) mentioned one of them, which is located on an area of 10 km south of the city in the village of Goshtepe and the Khan is called (Khan Adela) after the daughter of the governor of Baghdad Ahmed Pasha (1719-1747), who ordered the digging of a well and the establishment of this khan in the area to facilitate the travel of caravans and postmen (Tatar), and his daughter Adela Khatun expanded this khan to ensure the comfort of travelers, and to develop the place, the authorities allowed the cultivation of the lands surrounding the khan for all residents of the area who wished [55: 7].

Inter-regional transport:

There is no doubt that the means of transport that were in use during the Ottoman era are the same means that its inhabitants used to use for centuries ago, and if Iraq has witnessed the introduction of modern means of transport since the middle of the nineteenth century, this was limited to commercial river and sea transport in the first place with some attempts that were not completed until (1914) to benefit from modern means of transport, especially railways [56: 28]. Foreign travelers, especially to and from the center (Erbil), distinguished two types of transport that were in use in the region, namely land and river means of transport, and as far as land transport is concerned, we have previously experienced the existence of several main land roads that linked the region to the center (Erbil) with the rest of the cities of Iraq, as well as secondary land roads that linked the region with its cities and kasbahs, which are located within its territory. These roads were part of a wider network of roads that connected the region to the centre (Erbil) and Iraq to neighbouring countries. The process of transportation through this network of main and secondary roads was carried out by caravans, one of the most important means of transport in the region, which continued until the beginning of the twentieth century [57: 73].

Any follower of caravans in Iraq during the Ottoman era will notice that there are differences between the caravans in terms of importance, size, organization, materials transported, transportation fares, and the time it takes to walk between city centers and their exit seasons. In the region, especially the center (Erbil), which was an important major station on the road east of the Tigris, we find that the travelers' books do not include adequate detailed information about these convoys, in terms of size, organization and transportation fees, the Italian traveler Vincenzo (1656) mentions that he traveled to the region of Erbil with a convoy of 300 The Nippur (1765) mentions that he did not find a caravan traveling from the region centered in Erbil to Mosul, but he learned that a group of Jews intend to travel to it and their number was between 25-30 people, Using donkeys to transport their goods where they had only this type of animal [58: 124].

In addition to these convoys, there were convoys connecting the region, the city center (Erbil) and its dependencies and neighboring cities, especially the city of Kirkuk, as Nippur indicates that he traveled by convoy from Kirkuk to the center of the region Erbil and that "most of the members of the convoy who traveled with us from Kirkuk did not walk further from the region to the center Erbil, and their travel ended then [59: 83-88]. In the same sense, Newman (1873) mentions that he traveled with the convoy of the governor of Mosul (Adi Effendi) to the province with its center in Erbil: "When the convoy moved, twenty soldiers came to us on foot, then they came with twenty mules loaded with tents

and travel gear, and then twenty horsemen armed with swords, spears and rifles pursued them [60: 92-93].

As for the means of river transport that foreign travelers came to mention is the Aklak [61: 57-62], which was used for transportation in the Upper Zab region and is worked on by the Yazidis, and Nippur says about these Aklak, "There is no means of crossing the river other than the Yazidi Aklak from the people of the village of Abdulaziz, but these Aklak are not so durable as to resist the current of sweeping water, they are the worst mode of transport I have ever seen," and describes Nippur Aklak as consisting of 32 bladders blown from the skin of the sheep, Four of them are placed in length and eight in width and tied with one rope [62: 18]. The preceding text confirms the traveler Olivier (1766) upon his arrival in the Zab that "a group of Yazidis he met there took care of unloading their horses, "and some of them – that is, the Yazidis – were equipped with an inflated bag, taking a horse from his reins and making him swim, holding the reins in one hand and the bagpipe in the other. All of them – the horses – arrived without any accident".

As for the luggage, it was carried on a eater consisting of 32 bagpipes tied and installed under willow timber thick and a half knots, and the worker who leads the kalak was rowed by a paddle with a support in the form of a handle, and the traveler also points out an important note that during the lack of resistance of the alklak to the current was tied to a horse to deliver it to the side and describes the English traveler Hood (1817) Yazidis working on these eaters as semi-naked people and appear to them emirates of want and misery, and they live on the banks of the river, and they have Extremely skilled in transporting goods across the river," as these Yazidis and their children "drove two or three horses across the water with surprising ease [63: 18].

3. Conclusion

The writings of foreign travelers constituted an important source for the study of the history of modern Iraq in the Ottoman era because they studied various aspects that historical sources omitted to mention. Especially its center (Erbil) is a destination for the trips of many of these travelers because it is located on the main transportation routes, where the shortest roads that connect the cities of Iraq with each other pass, and the region was linked to the center (Erbil) with the cities of Iraq by a number of land roads, which were branching off less important secondary roads. The urban, economic and social aspects in the Erbil region attracted the attention of foreign travelers, as the region's citadel and its wall were mentioned by travelers with great interest, while showing its military importance and what it meant for the Ottomans who took it as a military base.

While social manifestations constituted a good space in the writings of these travelers, they showed care for the inhabitants of the region (Erbil), their religion and sects, while addressing their costumes, descriptions and forms. As for the economic aspects, they focused on the pattern of agriculture in the Erbil region and a small part of the city's trade, with the expansion of the description of markets and the associated facilities complementary to the commercial process, which we mean the khans, where the travelers had a stand with them and their writing constituted rich material on this topic. The transportation used in the region had a share in the literature of travelers who distinguished two types of it, land and river, who missed mentioning caravans, their size and type, because they were the main means of land transport in the city. As for the river, it was used in the Zab region, and the Yazidis living in that area were the ones who worked on it, and the most important medium used was the aklak.

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