

Presentation:

The Kurds and the Euphrates Island Region History, Civilization, Language and Literature

Prof. Dr. Khudair Abbas Al-Manshdawi

Asst. Prof. Dr. AbdulSalam N. Abdullah

The Euphrates Island Region is one of the territories where have a significant geographical and strategic location in Kurdistan and the Arab region. This region is characterized by its highlighted presence in various historical eras. Probably, the golden era of this region was in ancient history and the mediator (Islamic); The most prominent states and civilizations have been emerged in this region such as The Mitanni and Assyrian states in ancient history, the Hamdani, the Zangid, and the Ayyubids ones in the medieval (Islamic) history. While in the modern era, many Kurdish emirates have been established in it, which possibly the most prominent and powerful of them is the Bhutanese Emirate.

Through seeking for the justifications for the history of the region in the modern era, the destiny of this region is very alike to the destiny of Kurdistan. It can be said that it is a miniature version of Kurdistan, as Kurdistan was divided its lands among four countries: Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Iran. Meanwhile, the Euphrates Island Region was also divided among three Countries are: Turkey, Iraq, and Syria, knowing that it was a unified region within the borders of the Ottoman Empire even after the First World War.

There are two reasons behind naming this region as the Euphrates Island; the first: Because it is located in the Euphrates River bank and extends its borders to the Great Zab River, one of the tributaries of the Tigris River, accordingly, it forms an integrated island surrounded by the lands of the Euphrates River from three sides: North, West and South. There are some who say that the name The Euphrates was affixed to the region of Al-Jazeera, in order to distinguish it from the name of the Arabian island. Therefore, this region was famous for the name of the Euphrates Island. Note that in ancient history it was called (Aqur).

Regarding the information about the geographical borders of this region is still somehow unclear. It is known at the present time that the name of the Euphrates Island is now called on the lands between Nineveh Province in Iraq and Al-Hasakah Province in Syria, but historically, this region comprised many areas that extend its borders from the East Bank of the Euphrates River, particularly from the Kobani region (Ain al-Arab) east on the Syrian-Turkish border to Albukamal on the Syrian-Iraqi border, within the current Iraqi state, its borders extend from Anah in the south to include the provinces of Nineveh, Salah al-Din, Dohuk and part of the Province of Erbil. Plus, for its northern borders, it lies within the Turkish state, and includes the areas from Sharnakh to Bhutan Island, Hasnikeva, Sirt, Batman, Mardin, Alazig, Diyarbakir, and Urfa to get an end again and reach with the Syrian borders at the banks east of the Euphrates River.

Based on the deep glance at the region of the Euphrates Island that shows its ethnic, national, and religious diversity. Many people were inhabited on this island such as the Kurds, Arabs, Syrians, Yazidian Kurds, Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Turkmen, besides, their inhabitants are devoted to many religions such as Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and Yezidi. Therefore, we could find a great difference between its inhabitants, whether nationally, linguistically or religiously, despite some cramps of history, but the people of the island lived with each other as if they were having one color, race, and religion.

Throughout studying the history of the Euphrates Island, it states that there are two nationalities that have controlled its destiny and had the upper hand in its historical events over the rest of the other nationalities within: Kurdish and Arabs, and it appears that the northern half of the island is Kurdish, and the lower half of the island has an Arabic character. Therefore, the focus of this conference is on the Kurdish section of the Euphrates Island, which can be called (the Kurdish Island), and its geographical boundaries can be determined by a line that runs from Kobani (Ain al-Arab) on the eastern bank of the Euphrates River on the Syrian-Turkish border to include most of the parts of the province of Hasaka In Kurdistan-Syria gets an end at the Sinjar district, in addition, within the Iraqi borders, the borders of the Kurdish section of the Euphrates island starts from Sinjar, passing through most of the northern regions of Nineveh province until the Aqra district and to cover all of province of Dohuk. Besides, to start its borders in Turkey from the Shernakh region and includes cities: Sirt, Batman, and Bhutan Island, Hasnikeva, Alazig, Diyarbakir and Urfa, and it again reaches the Syrian borders on the eastern bank of the Euphrates River.

Previously, before the period of Islam, particularly throughout the 6th century AD, the island witnessed bloody conflicts, and those conflicts were in particular between the major powers of its time, namely, the Byzantine Empire and the Persian Empire. What is added to the importance of that conflict and its impact on the island was that the political borders of the Byzantine and Persian states were passing through the middle of that region. The importance of the island increased when it became a province of the Islamic state, and since 18 AH / 639AD it has become one of centers of the Islamic state and has political, administrative, scientific, and economic importance.

Furthermore, the Euphrates Island has a distinctive importance, due to its location in the heart of the ancient world between the upper reaches of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. It has established ancient civilizations on its land, and the traces of these civilizations are still present today. The importance of the island is due to its regular location between Kurdistan, Iraq, the Levant, and Turkey, as well as due to its natural and agricultural resources and the markets of its prosperous cities. Plus, another reason is due to its location, it represented a land (land) bridge connecting between sea transportation roads in southern Asia, as well as in southern Europe, as it is generally located between the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf.

Moreover, there was a commercial intersection among Kurdistan, the island, the Levant, and Mesopotamia. The Euphrates Island's close to Persia and the Gulf in the south, and Egypt's contact with it through the Levant countries gave a great importance and it became a strategic location that related to the international business in two periods the ancient and moderate Islamic ones if the Passers-by roads across the island were the shortest road between western and southern Europe and between southeast and central Asia.

Apparently, the Euphrates Island has contributed an effective contribution to the progress of Islamic civilization and contemporary scientific thought. Its scientists, with all their spectrums, including Kurds, Arabs, Turkmen, Syrians, Christians and Yazidis, and other spectra have contributed to provide many scientific concepts in various sciences and arts. In addition, from those scholars who are affiliated to the Euphrates Island, the reciter Abu al-Karam, the Fityan al-Harrani, the updater Izza al-Din Abu Mahmoud al-Rus'ni, the grammarian Abu Muhammad Ahmad bin Saeed al-Denisari, and the glory of religion Abd al-Rahim bin Abi Bakr al-Jazari, the historian Ibn al-Athir al-Jazari, the writer Fakhr al-Din al-As'ridi, and the musician Montakhab al-Din Omar Al-Burtli, the musician Al-Hassan bin Ahmed Al-Sinjari, and the mechanic scientist Badi Al-Zaman Al-Jazari, who first considered the work of a robot working mechanically to provide certain services, and Zaina AL Din AL-Amidi who was the first to devise a way to teach blind people to be able to read and write and thus had preceded the western science (Braille) who he attributed that method to him and called it a Braille font, while it is historically and scientifically more correct to be so-called the Al-Amidi way to teach blind people to read and write by using the prominent letters that were first used, as we mentioned, by Zaina Al-Din Al-Amidi.

The importance of the topic of the conference is to cover a wide region of the Islamic State and the Middle East regions, this region which is gaining the importance in many aspects: geographic, economic, political, and scientific, despite the difference and the multiplicity of both in terms of natural land and the various climate and diversity of its wealth as well as other characteristics that we may not find in other regions, namely, population diversity, as we find in that region the Kurds, Arabs, Syriac, Yazid Kurds, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Armenians, and Turkmen, in addition to the contrast of those people in their religions as is the case in Islam, Christianity Judaism, and Yezidism, as well as the clear linguistic difference between these people. But all of these above points were characterized by features that we may not find in the inhabitants of any of the other areas in the region because the inhabitants of the island region coexisted with each other according to values and principles based on respecting the privacy of others, whether in nationalism or language or religion as well. Consequently, that territory occupied the characteristic particularity the feature of brotherhood, love, and cooperation. As a result, a brilliant civilization made a real contribution to the progress of Islamic civilization and the civilization of the region, thus, its positive effects on contemporary scientific thought were reflected.

Concerning the language and literature of the Euphrates Island, we see that there are two languages more common in the region than others, namely: the Kurdish language in the north and the Arabic language in the south, but there are many other languages that lived in this region and they are still, such as Armenian, Syriac, Assyrian, Turkmen, and Turkish languages, and each had its own particularity, and this linguistic diversity greatly affected the general culture of the Euphrates Island region. We also rarely find a region in the different stages of history that enjoys this linguistic diversity.

The progress of Kurdish literature in the Kurdish part of the region of the Euphrates Island is one of its most prominent features in the modern era. It can be said that the height of its development was in the first centuries of the modern era, as writers emerged who were thinkers of numerous Poetry are still heard and taught not only in the area of the Euphrates Island, but in all the corners of Kurdistan, such as: Mulla Ahmad Al-Jazari, Ahmad Al-Khani and Faqi Tayran who are among the pioneers of Kurdish literature. Besides, we should not forget that in the twentieth century, one of the most prominent faces of poets appeared in this region and we meant by the great Badhinian poet Ahmad Nalband who wrote a large collection of poetry that his verses exceeded the six thousand verses. By studying the contribution of these poets with contemporary critical approaches, we can state the extent to which these literary works are developed and classified among the global productions.

