

## **The Ottoman-Asiri conflict: A study on the elimination of the Emir of Asir Muhammad bin Ayedh 1871**

**By**

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### **Abstract**

Asir is a strategic area that connects Yemen to the Hijaz. It was the ambitions of many nations that competed to control it, including the Ottoman Empire, and many campaigns were sent to the Asir region. Despite the Ottoman attempts that did not stop, the Asir region was able to resist these repeated campaigns and refused to surrender. The study sought to follow the Ottoman attack against Asir, the internal and external elements that contributed to its success, the causes of the Asir region's fall, and the involvement of local forces in the campaign's success and Ibn Ayedh's eradication.

**Keywords:** The Ottoman Empire - Asir - Ibn A'idh

### **Introduction**

The Ottoman Empire employed the land route before the building of the Suez Canal, and its men frequently arrived in a disorganized state and exhausted, sometimes arriving too late. The Ottoman Empire could dispatch its troops, garrisons, and military supplies to its army in the Arabian Peninsula as quickly as possible after opening the Suez Canal. This distinction may be shown by contrasting the Ottoman Empire's stance on the Ottoman campaign conducted by the Emir of Asir Muhammad bin Ayedh on the Arabian Peninsula prior to the Suez Canal's opening and its stance on the campaign he conducted after the canal's opening.

The results of the canal and its importance for the Ottoman Empire were clear and evident the second time, as the Ottoman Empire, thanks to the facilities provided by the canal, was able to send large forces to the island to save the Ottoman presence there and confront the Asir forces and lift the siege as soon as possible <sup>(i)</sup>. Although the Ottoman forces succeeded in lifting the siege on the island and defeated the Asir forces and forced them to retreat and withdraw, the siege of Hodeidah provoked the anger of the Ottoman Empire, which was fed up with the rebellion of the Emir of Asir and his campaigns against The most important Ottoman centres in the southern Red Sea, those campaigns that foreshadowed their exit from the fold of the Ottoman Empire. It decided to mobilize crowds and conduct campaigns to eliminate the Emirate of Asir <sup>(ii)</sup> as Yemen represented the southern border of the Ottoman Empire, and the first line of defence for its property, the Asir region <sup>(iii)</sup> represents the southern border of the Hijaz, and the first line of defence for the Two Holy Mosques <sup>(iv)</sup>. The importance of Asir for the Ottoman Empire increased after the British occupation of Aden in 1839 and forcing the Egyptian forces to leave the area in 1840, as well as the intensification of the international struggle for control of the entrance to the Suez Canal. However, the Asir region was not one of the areas of material wealth that the state could benefit from, and its protection required great

sacrifices <sup>(v)</sup>. Thus, In order to safeguard the Two Holy Mosques and the Ottoman Sultan's position as custodian of the Two Holy Mosques in the Islamic world, the Ottoman Empire attempted to fill the political gap in the area by reestablishing an Ottoman province in Yemen in 1849 and taking control of the Asir region in 1872.<sup>(vi)</sup> This competition was launched by the occupation of France For Egypt in 1798 imposes the cutting of the trade route of Indo-English through the Red Sea and since then England began seeking to protect its trade transportation routes coming from its colonies in India has been its occupation of Aden in 1839 or control of the nine areas <sup>(vii)</sup>of Aden and the island (Perim), which controls the Bab al-Mandab beginning of the interest of Western colonial countries in the region of Yemen in general and Asir in particular England has tried to control the local clans in Yemen by making money, in an effort to secure the convoys of its trade The navy through Aden and to find an area loyal to it that can counter the interference of its enemies<sup>(viii)</sup>.

The strategic location of Yemen in general and Asir, in particular, was the first wall to defend the Two Holy Mosques against internal transgressions and external aggressions, the main concern of the Ottoman Empire since the middle of the nineteenth century<sup>ix</sup>. This interest was heightened by the international competition between Britain, France and Italy for control of the entrance to the Red Sea, following the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and the return of activity to the old trade route.<sup>x</sup>

The transition of the rule of Asir from the tribe of Rabia and Rufaïda to the tribe of Bani Ghafed by Saeed bin Muslat after the end of the Emirate of Al Muthami in Asir continued the conditions of Asir in chaos and turmoil between tribal strife, and successive wars by the forces of Muhammad Ali in the Hijaz, and in this period Asir was considered a follower of the Emirate of Hijaz, and Sharif Mohammed bin Aoun was the Emir of the Hijaz and Asir, appointed by him Emir of Asir is Sharif Hazza and put his garrison in medicine, But after enough was enough for the people of Asir from this dependency, Saeed bin Muslat revolted against the protection of Sharif and took Sakka as the capital <sup>of his Emirate ()xi</sup> This is an important turning point in the history of the establishment of an independent system of government in the region has been able bin Mujthal in the exercise of his tribal policy in Asir known about him of cunning and firmness, has gathered the people of Asir to pledge allegiance to him has been working in government affairs during the rule of his cousin Saeed bin Muslat <sup>(xii)</sup>

He was able to consolidate the independence of the Asir region, where he took Abha as the capital of the region. After him, Ayedh bin Marei extended the influence of Asir until it reached Taif and Al-Laith in the north, Baqim in the south and Tatlaith in the east, and he repelled the attacks by the supervision of the Hijaz and the Egyptian forces and confronted the movements of the tribes of Abu Arish, Bani Omar, Rabia and others<sup>xiii</sup>. The men of the tribe of Almaaa and their neighbors revolted against Prince Muhammad bin Ayedh and were a massive revolution that extended until it reached the path of Bani Shu'ba. This revolution was It confused Prince Muhammad bin Ayedh which he was able to eliminate when he assumed power in 1856 instead of his father's policy in the rule of Asir.<sup>(xiv)</sup> He was also able to suppress the rebellion movements of the tribes against him and unified Al-Mikhlaif Al-Sulaymani <sup>(xv)</sup> under his rule and consolidated his relationship with the Khedive in Egypt and the supervision of Mecca and the princes of Najd but Ibn Ayedh's attack on Abu Arish and his arrival at the seat of the Ottoman rule in Hodeidah and his siege was a direct reason for stripping the Ottoman Empire of its campaign on Asir in 1871, despite his ability to recruit regional powers in Egypt, Hejaz and Najd and maintain The territorial independence of Asir However, his local tribal policy clashed with many tribes of Asir and his expansionist

ambitions gave the Ottoman Empire a strong justification for the elimination of his principality<sup>(xvi)</sup>.

The Ottoman Empire's response to Ibn Ayedh's siege of Hodeidah was a direct reason that was eagerly awaited to control the Asir region, which came out on the strategic Emirate of Hejaz, and thus the Sublime Porte rushed to hold an emergency meeting in which the issue of Asir was discussed, as the decision was issued to strip a military campaign under the command of both Radeef Pasha<sup>(xvii)</sup>, and Ahmed Mukhtar Pasha (1839-1919)<sup>(xviii)</sup>.

The Ottoman campaign arrived in Jeddah at the end of December 1870 and was received by the Sharif of Mecca and the governor of Hijaz, Khurshid Pasha, and it was agreed to go out to Al-Qunfudhah. The expedition arrived at the port of Al-Qunfudhah in preparation for heading towards Asir<sup>(xix)</sup>. Commander Redif Pasha issued a leaflet warning to the people of Asir before the start of military operations, while the Emir of Asir, Muhammad bin Ayedh, rejected the ultimatum and declared a general alarm and readiness for confrontation.<sup>(xx)</sup>

The army left Al-Qunfudhah from um Al-Jarm and then went to Mahail, which is the main centre of Tihama and was able to eliminate many tribes loyal to Ibn Ayedh then moved to Sakka through which Radif Pasha was able to enter it after a violent confrontation between the two parties, after which Ibn Ayedh withdrew<sup>(xxi)</sup>.

Raydah<sup>(xxii)</sup> was the last target of the commander Radeef Pasha and took bombardment with cannons has been Prince Muhammad bin Ayedh and his men respond in kind Vamir Redif Pasha later bin Ahmed Zaidani, who played an important role in the mediation between Ibn Ayedh and Hussein Aqabi and in the wooing of many members of the resistance Asiri besieged to enter into negotiations with Ibn Ayedh<sup>(xxiii)</sup>, the Ottoman forces besieged the fortified castle of Raydah, where Radif Pasha began his correspondence with Ibn Ayedh to conclude peace with the mediation of later bin Ahmed Al-Zaidani, but the lack of confidence of Prince Al-Asiri and the families of his brother Saeed bin Ayedh from the hands of Radeef Pasha was the reason for launching the attack on the castle, which ended with the surrender of Ibn Ayedh after obtaining charters to secure his men in 1871, but Ibn Ayedh was betrayed by Radeef Pasha, who killed him with his brother later.<sup>(xxiv)</sup>

Thus, the Ottoman Empire got rid of Prince Muhammad bin Ayedh and his power, which had long bothered the Ottomans a lot, and they were able to subdue Asir and extend Ottoman control over it until the First World War and the defeat of the Ottoman Empire and its withdrawal from the country Arabic.

## **Conclusion**

The Ottoman Empire recognized the strategic importance of Asir and began a military campaign to take control of it in order to ensure the protection of Islamic holy sites and to make it easier for its armies to enter Yemen. Although the Ottoman Empire was largely resisted by Prince Muhammad bin Ayedh's forces, the internal politics of the Asir region at the time of the campaign, as well as the imbalance in the armies' organizational structures, ultimately contributed to the Ottomans' defeat.

## References

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- <sup>Asir</sup>The word differed historically and spatially, as it was called Jerash, but it later bore the name of allied tribes that resided in the region and was known as Asir, and it has become known that its name is derived from the difficult because of the difficulty of its paths and the large number of zigzags, and this province was known in the era of the Ottoman Empire as the Asir Mutasarrifiya, its center is Abha. See for more: Sabah Mahdi Rumaydh, Emirate of Asir: A study in its social, economic, political conditions and its Arab relations and the state 1876-1932, Dar Jama'a for Printing and Publishing, Damascus, 2011, p. 24.
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- <sup>vi</sup>Z.H.Kour, Shafiq Abdul Qadir Othman, History of Aden 1839-1972, Dar Al-Wefaq for Publishing and Distribution, Riyadh, 2020, p. 180; Saeed Salam Qasim, Some Features of the Ottoman Administration of Yemen, a research paper presented at the International Symposium on Yemen in the Ottoman Era held in Sana'a from December 16-17, 2009, published in Al-Thawabat Magazine, Issue 59, March 2010, p. 121
- <sup>Thevii</sup> Nine Districts: A geopolitical term given to the western regions of Aden with which Britain signed protection treaties, and it includes the lands of the tribes of Abdali, Al-Fadhli, Al-Aqrabi, Al-Hawshabi, Al-Alawi, Al-Umayyad, Al-Subaihi, Al-Yafei, and Al-Awlaki. Khaled Abdullah Tohal, Al-Awaliq and their Modern Political Tactics 1918-1967, Aden University Press for Printing and Publishing, Sana'a, 2006, p. 220
- <sup>viii</sup>See for more: Abdul Aziz Saleh bin Habtoor, Aden Qutoof from loyalty to population and man, Moral Orientation Press, Sana'a, 2021, p. 115.
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- <sup>xii</sup>For more information, see: Muhammad al-Zulfa, from the Modern History of Asir, Riyadh, 1991, p. 152; Adnan Muhammad Qasim, Political Developments in Yemen 1840-1872, Master's Thesis, Institute of Arab History and Scientific Heritage, 2004, p. 35.

- <sup>xiii</sup> Ali Issa Asiri, *Asir: A Historical Study 1833-1972*, Abha Literary Club Publications, Saudi Arabia, 1986, p. 172; Hashem Saeed Al-Tamimi, previous source, p. 256.
- <sup>xiv</sup> For more information, see: Sabah Mahdi Rumayed, *op. cit.*, p. 93; Abdullah bin Ali Ibn Misfer, *Al-Sarraj Al-Munir in the Biography of the Princes of Asir*, Al-Resala Foundation, d.t., Beirut, p. 11.
- (<sup>2</sup>) Al-Mikhlaḥ Al-Sulaymāni: This name was named in relation to Suleiman bin Taraf Al-Hakam, who took over the rule of the region in 983 and then ruled his sons until their emirate fell in 1056. Then the rule moved to the Sulaymanis supervision and the naming of Al-Mikhlaḥ Al-Sulaymani by this name was lost to the middle of the fourth century AH, see for more: Al-Hassan bin Ahmed Akash, *Al-Dibaj Al-Khosrawani in the news of the notables of Al-Mikhlaḥ Al-Sulaimani*, investigated by Ismail Al-Bishri, 2004, p. 21; Muhammad Banam Ahmed Al-Aqili, *History of Al-Mikhlaḥ Al-Sulaimani*, Part 1, Al-Aqili Company, Sana'a, 1989, p.25
- <sup>xvi</sup> Abd al-Hadi al-Shammari, *The Turkish Wars in the Southern Region, 1831-1872*, Al-Inas Press, Riyadh, 1998, p. 577.
- <sup>wexvii</sup> did not find any information about this leader, but he was undoubtedly chosen for his excellence to lead this great campaign, which is the largest in the history of the military campaigns directed by the Ottoman Empire to the Arabian Peninsula in its modern history, see for more: Prince Alai Ahmed Rashid, *The Ottoman campaign on Asir in 1872*, commentary: Muhammad Al-Zulfa, Riyadh, d. T., p. 34.
- <sup>Ahmedxviii</sup> Mukhtar Pasha, born in Bursa, graduated from the Military Academy in 1860, rose in the military career, and was made to high ranks despite his young age compared to his colleagues, he assumed many leading military tasks in various aspects of the Ottoman Empire See more, Suhail Saban, *Arabia, Research and Studies from Ottoman Archives and Turkish Sources*, King Fahd National Library, Riyadh, 2005, p. 173;
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- <sup>Forxix</sup> details on the campaign see, Appendix 1
- <sup>xx</sup> *Asir*, *op. cit.*, p. 362; for the text of Radeef Pasha's publication, see: Abdel Moneim Ibrahim Al-Jumai'i, *Asir during the Two Centuries 1800-1988*, Abha Literary Club Publications, Saudi Arabia, 1990, p. 93.
- <sup>xxi</sup> Mahmoud Shaker, *The Arabian Peninsula*, Damascus, 1976, p. 212; Abdul Hamid Al-Batriq from the *Modern History of Yemen*, Publications of the Institute of Research and Studies, Institute of Arab Research and Studies, Cairo, 1969, p. 15.
- (22) Raydah is a fortified city located to the west of the city of Abha, and is characterized by the fertility of its land, and the beauty of its nature and was the refuge of the princes of Asir as they were defeated, for more see: Abdullah Nasser Al-Walaie, *Dictionary of geographical places in the Red Sea*, part 1, King Abdul Aziz House, Riyadh, 2017, p 80
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- <sup>xxi</sup> BOA, IDH651/45277.L.1288H(1871).