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Author(s): Bahram Tajrishy

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The Persian Gulf Khark: The Island's Untold Story

Bahram Tajrishy¹ 

Abstract

Khark is one the very important islands in the Persian Gulf and considered to be a vital link for commercial ships passing through this strategic waterway since the ancient time. Some researches dealing with archaeological and historical significance of the island have already been carried out but more efforts are needed to unearth hidden truth, including archeological finds from there. The current paper aims to review a book entitled *The Persian Gulf Khark: The Island's Untold Story* by Willem Floor & D. T. Potts.

Keywords: Khark; Persian Gulf; Commercial Route; Navigation.



¹ Ph.D of Archaeology, USA.  tajrishy@yahoo.com

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Introduction

Iranians attach great importance to the Persian Gulf and their efforts for archeological survey and excavations are aimed at revealing this strategic water in the south of Iran more than before (see Rahbar, 2023). The islands located in this sea have had a vital role in regional relations from the time immemorial. Khark or Kharg is one of these islands that many archeologists, historians, and geographers have paid a lot of attention. *The Persian Gulf: Khark: The Island's Untold History* (Floor & Potts, 2017) is one of the newest books written by Willem Floor and Daniel de Potts, which is being reviewed with critical perspective in this paper.

This book includes a preface, five chapters, and four appendixes. The bibliography and index are at the end of the book. The preface explains that Khark is the Persian name of this Island but Arabs call it Kharg whereas, Europeans call it Korgo.

The first chapter of this book entitled "History of Khark" deal with the island in terms of its archeology and location as well as the initial archeological activities done on this island, including those by Roman Ghirshman, and Ernst Herzfeld.

The second chapter of the book is under the theme "Khark during early years of Islam and Safavid era." In this chapter, the history, geography, and social status of Hengam Island are examined after the introduction of Islam to this area. The authors have tried to provide some information about the living standard of the people on the island, with pearl fishing being the most important source of income, by referring to books by some previous Islamic authors such as Ibn Hawqal, Istakhri, Yaqut al-Hamawi, and Ibn Khordadbeh.

The third chapter of the book "Khark during the 18th century" deals with the history of the Dutch presence on Khark Island since 1753 and its occupation by Mir-Mahna in 1766. The significant topics of this chapter include the Dutch's problems in Basrah, the action of the Netherlands against Basrah, relations between the Netherlands and Karim Khan Zand, the uprising of Mir-Mahna, and the handing over and leaving Khark by the Dutch.

The fourth chapter "Khark during the 19th Century" discusses evolutions in Khark after the departure of Dutch, especially the governance by Al-e-Madhkoor in Bushehr and regional competitions of this tribe with their rivals in Ganaveh, Rig, and Dashtestan. This chapter has reviewed the wars between Iranian rulers and the UK during 1837 and 1856, explaining how the Khark Island was occupied in these two wars and finally the expulsion of the British by Iranians.

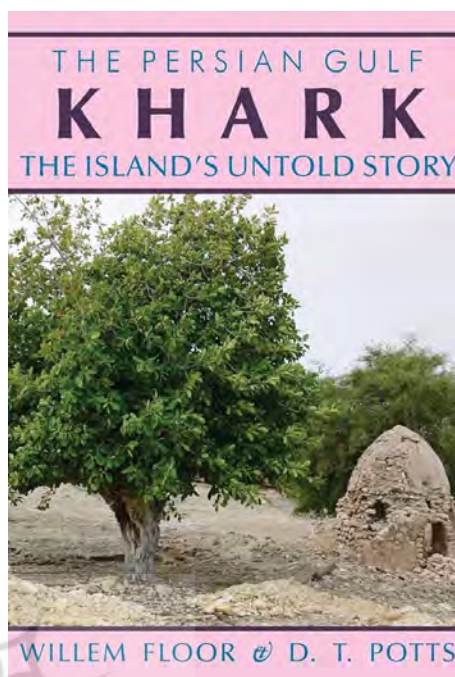
The fifth chapter "Khark during the 20th century", in which, writers review the developments and changes on this island throughout this century. The most substantial evolutions occurred after the building of the oil industry, which changed the lives of the people living over there.

The book also includes four appendixes, with fourth being in form of a paper about Hayat Davudi published in Soroush Newspaper. Hayat Davudi was one of the local forces on the Persian Gulf shore in Bushehr Province that tried to not obey the Pahlavi government and keep power in its own hands. This dynasty lived in Bandar

Rig and Bandar Ganaveh. This dynasty attempted to prevent the expansion of the central government's power in the Hayat Davud area but could not achieve this goal. Finally, Fathollah Khan Hayat Davudi was executed in Bagh-e Takht Barracks in Shiraz in October 1964 and his image is illustrated in the book.

Conclusion

The Persian Gulf Khark: The Island's Untold Story provides invaluable information for those who are interested in the Persian Gulf and Khark Island. This book makes the reader familiar with the history and geography of Khark during early Islam, the Safavid era, 18th and 19th centuries.



The Persian Gulf Khark: The Island's Untold Story, Willem Floor & D. T. Potts, Mage Publishers, Washington DC, 2017, 244 pp, ISBN: 978-1-933823-90-4

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