

Lynch Company's River Navigation Franchises in Mesopotamia: Economic Control and Local Responses 1860-1908

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Received:
19/03/2024

Revised:
01/04/2024

Accepted:
02/05/2024

Published:
30/06/2024

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Citation: Qader, A. M.
(2024). Lynch Company's
River Navigation
Franchises in
Mesopotamia: Economic
Control and Local
Responses 1860-1908.
*Journal of Humanities &
Social Sciences*, 8(6), 30 –
42.

<https://doi.org/10.26389/AJSRP.Q190324>

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Abstract: During the 19th century, the advantageous geographical position of Mesopotamia and its access to river transportation via the Tigris and Euphrates rivers drew the attention of foreign enterprises, notably the British, as the Ottoman State's power declined. The British enjoyed privileges in trade and navigation, leading to limited domestic production and imported goods. They focused on transportation routes, oil resources, and defending its commercial interests in the Middle East. They established a railway project, gaining diplomatic immunity and privileges in river navigation. The British Lynch Company's River Navigation franchises in Mesopotamia from 1860 to 1908 were significant. This research examines the historical significance and outcomes of these franchises, focusing on the economic control strategies used by the company and the reactions of the local population. The study found that British companies, like the Lynch Company, took advantage of trade benefits, leading to a dependence on imported commodities and limited local manufacturing. Moreover, the British steamships, particularly those operated by the Lynch Company, had a dominant position in river trade in Basra. Britain's desire for Mesopotamia was motivated by geopolitical, economic, and political factors, such as protecting transit lines and countering competing forces from France and Russia. The use of steam power transformed transportation by replacing sailing vessels and facilitating swifter river traffic. Further research should explore the societal and ecological impacts of British business endeavours in Mesopotamia during this time frame. Additional study should investigate the wider societal and ecological impacts of British business endeavours in Mesopotamia during this time frame. Examining how local communities react to foreign economic dominance may provide valuable insights into the wider historical backdrop and its effects on regional progress. This research enhances our knowledge of the intricate economic patterns throughout colonial times and their long-lasting effects in the Middle East.

Keywords: Britain; Ottoman Empire; Mesopotamia; River Navigation; Lynch Company; Franchises.

امتيازات الملاحة النهرية لشركة لينج في بلاد ما بين النهرين: السيطرة الاقتصادية والاستجابات المحلية 1860-1908

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المستخلص: خلال القرن 19، لفت الموقع الجغرافي المفيد لبلاد ما بين النهرين ووصولها إلى النقل النهري عبر نهري دجلة والفرات انتباه الشركات الأجنبية، ولا سيما البريطانية، مع تراجع قوة الدولة العثمانية. تمتع البريطانيون بامتيازات في التجارة والملاحة، مما أدى إلى محدودية الإنتاج المحلي والسلع المستوردة. ركزوا على طرق النقل والموارد النفطية والدفاع عن مصالحها الاقتصادية في الشرق الأوسط. أنشأوا مشروعاً للسكك الحديدية، واكتسبوا حصانة دبلوماسية وامتيازات في الملاحة النهرية. كانت امتيازات الملاحة النهرية لشركة لينج البريطانية في بلاد ما بين النهرين من عام 1860 إلى عام 1908 مهمة. يدرس هذا البحث الأهمية التاريخية ونتائج هذه الامتيازات، مع التركيز على استراتيجيات الرقابة الاقتصادية التي تستخدمها الشركة وردود فعل السكان المحليين. ووجدت الدراسة أن الشركات البريطانية، مثل شركة لينش، استفادت من الفوائد التجارية، مما أدى إلى الاعتماد على السلع المستوردة والتصنيع المحلي المحدود. علاوة على ذلك، كان للسفن البخارية البريطانية، وخاصة تلك التي تديرها شركة لينج، مركز مهم في التجارة النهرية في البصرة. كانت رغبة بريطانيا في بلاد ما بين النهرين مدفوعة بعوامل جيوسياسية واقتصادية وسياسية، مثل حماية خطوط العبور ومواجهة القوى المنافسة من فرنسا وروسيا. أدى استخدام الطاقة البخارية إلى تحويل النقل عن طريق استبدال السفن الشراعية وتسهيل حركة المرور النهرية بشكل أسرع. يجب أن يستكشف المزيد من البحث الآثار الاجتماعية والبيئية للمساعي التجارية البريطانية في بلاد ما بين النهرين خلال هذا الإطار الزمني. يجب أن تبحث دراسة إضافية في الآثار الاجتماعية والبيئية الأوسع للمساعي التجارية البريطانية في بلاد ما بين النهرين خلال هذا الإطار الزمني. قد توفر دراسة كيفية تفاعل المجتمعات المحلية مع الهيمنة الاقتصادية الأجنبية رؤى قيمة حول الخلفية التاريخية الأوسع وأثارها على التقدم الإقليمي. يعزز هذا البحث معرفتنا بالأنماط الاقتصادية المعقدة طوال الحقبة الاستعمارية وأثارها طويلة الأمد في الشرق الأوسط.

الكلمات المفتاحية: بريطانيا؛ الإمبراطورية العثمانية؛ بلاد ما بين النهرين؛ الملاحة النهرية؛ شركة لينج؛ الامتيازات.

Introduction:

During the nineteenth century, European nations engaged in a significant increase in imperialist endeavours, which characterized a period of widespread worldwide expansion and economic hegemony. In the era of colonialism, Mesopotamia, or modern-day Iraq, became a crucial territory that drew the interest of foreign organizations looking for economic prospects and geopolitical dominance. Mesopotamia, located between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, served as a strategic crossroads between East and West, making it a desirable location for trade and transportation (Lorimer, 1915, p. 2061). The weakening of the Ottoman State during this time allowed for foreign companies, particularly the British, to establish a presence in Mesopotamia. (Raouf, 1983, p. 50 [Translated from Arabic])

The period spanning from the mid-19th century to the early 20th century was characterized by a complex interaction between imperialistic aspirations, economic exploitation, and indigenous reactions in Mesopotamia. The British Lynch Company's attempts to get navigation franchises on the Euphrates and Tiger rivers were greeted with varied responses from indigenous populations and municipal officials. The answers varied from cooperation and collaboration to oppose and assert autonomy, illustrating the intricate dynamics between colonial forces and indigenous communities. (Mahmoud, 1980, p. 120 [Translated From Arabic])

Additionally, Mesopotamia's location became a point of interest for the European powers, such as Britain, France, Germany, and Russia, to control and benefit from its resources and strategic position. The British, in particular, had a strong interest in Mesopotamia due to its strategic position connecting their interests in India and the Far East (Saleh, 1953, p. 89 [Translated from Arabic]). Furthermore, the efforts of the British Lynch Company to obtain river navigation rights in Mesopotamia, which is now modern-day Iraq, are a noteworthy episode in the region's economic history. Moreover, the significance of river navigation, particularly the competition between the British Lynch Company and the Ahmadiyya Navigation Company, is a point of discussion in this work. (Yahya, 1965, pp. 119–120 [Translated from Arabic])

This study aims to investigate the many aspects of the river navigation franchises held by the British Lynch Company in Mesopotamia from 1860 to 1908. Mesopotamia, often seen as the birthplace of human civilization, had an interconnected system of rivers, particularly the Tigris and Euphrates, that played a crucial role in facilitating commerce and transportation. Realizing the economic opportunities presented by these rivers, the British Lynch Company undertook a mission to obtain navigation rights with the goal of establishing dominance over vital commerce routes and facilitating their use for financial benefits. (A. A. S. Nawar, 1968, p. 45) [Translated from Arabic].

The research key questions are: How did the British Lynch Company's River Navigation franchises in Mesopotamia between 1860 and 1908 impact the local economy? What were the strategies used by the British Lynch Company to maintain economic control in Mesopotamia? What was the significance of river navigation, particularly the competition between the British Lynch Company and local navigation companies like the Ahmadiyya Navigation Company, in shaping commerce and transportation in Mesopotamia? How did the local population in Mesopotamia react to the presence and activities of the British Lynch Company in terms of economic dominance and imported goods?

This research has great importance, not only because of its historical setting but also because it helps us comprehend the lasting effects of colonial economic interventions on the socio-economic structure of places such as Mesopotamia. By examining the economic control tactics used by the British Lynch Company and assessing the various local reactions, this study paper seeks to examine the economic consequences of the franchises owned by the Lynch Company as well as the local reactions to the implementation of foreign dominance in commerce and navigation. The study will rely on primary and secondary sources to explore the complex dynamics between colonial forces and indigenous communities, as well as the British geopolitical interests in the region.

The research has been divided into an introduction, three main sections and a conclusion. The first section titled, "The Geographical Significance of Mesopotamia and European Interests in the Region", which examines the importance of Mesopotamia's location and European involvement in the area, with a special focus on Britain's domination. The strategic location and economic potential of Mesopotamia attracted European nations, with Britain taking the lead in the competition. The section also explores the historical context of European engagement, including the construction of consulates and advantages for British firms. Ultimately, European powers sought to use Mesopotamia's riches and strategic advantages to benefit themselves. The second section named "the Rise of British Influence and the Exploration of the River Route in Mesopotamia". This section explores the rise of British influence in

Mesopotamia and the exploration of the river route in the region. It discusses the establishment of British influence in Mesopotamia between 1831 and 1860, focusing on the concept of franchises in the Ottoman Empire. It also highlights the shift towards exploring the Euphrates route for faster transportation between Europe and the East. It concludes by discussing the objectives of the Euphrates River expedition, which aimed to study the river's navigability, develop trade exchange, and establish transportation stations.

"The Lynch Family: Pioneers of Commercial River Navigation in Mesopotamia" is the title of the third section, that examines the founding and influence of the Lynch family in the field of commercial river transportation in Mesopotamia. The text explores their participation in hydrographic surveys of rivers, formation of a river navigation enterprise, and their contribution to commerce and transportation. This part also explores their utilisation of the food situation and participation in postal transportation and banking operations. The text continues by examining the efforts made by the Ottoman government to rival the Lynch Company. In general, the chapter emphasises the noteworthy role played by the Lynch family in the development of commercial river transportation in Mesopotamia.

The last section named "The Impact of Lynch Company's Franchises on Mesopotamia's Economy and Local Response." This chapter delves at the economic ramifications of Lynch firm's franchises in Mesopotamia and the many obstacles encountered by the firm. The text examines the resistance encountered by Ottoman officials, clashes with indigenous tribes, and the company's perspective on irrigation initiatives. The chapter explores the diplomatic ties between the Ottoman and British administrations, as well as their attempts to safeguard British ships. In general, it offers a deeper understanding of the intricacies involved in Lynch Company's activities in Mesopotamia.

Section One: The Geographical Significance of Mesopotamia and European Interests in the Region:

Mesopotamia, a region in the Middle East, is known for its strategic location and river transport in the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. This region serves as a crossing between East and West, the heart of the Islamic world, and at the far eastern end of the Arab world. The Tigris and Euphrates rivers play a crucial role in Mesopotamia's commerce and transportation. (A. A. S. Nawar, 1968, p. 45) [Translated from Arabic].

In the second half of the nineteenth century, global trade changes and developments led to the arrival of foreign companies, particularly the British, and growing European penetration during the weakness of the Ottoman State. (Raouf, 1983, p. 50 [Translated from Arabic]) This resulted in limited domestic production colliding with the abundance of imported foreign goods, leading to a new phase of decline in production due to the inability to compete. (Khalil, 1961, 8) [Translated from Arabic]. However, these Europeans enjoyed privileges that the people of the country did not enjoy, such as the privilege granted to Britain to unload the goods of its merchants in the agency's warehouse without referring to the customs department. (Raouf, 1983, p. 129)

The internal conditions of Mesopotamia encouraged great powers to pay attention to the region, driven by the completion of economic construction made possible by the Industrial Revolution and the growth of the capitalist system in Europe. The location of Mesopotamia is a source of conflict between the countries surrounding it and those far from it, with the aim of controlling it and benefiting from its location and resources. (Saleh, 1953, p. 89 [Translated from Arabic])

There were two primary considerations driving European nations' aspirations in Mesopotamia: strategic and economic. The first was strategic, as most of their economic interests were focused on India and the Far East. The second factor was economic, with interest in irrigation methods associated with land, agriculture, and trade. The presence of oil in the region increased the desire of European countries for the region. Britain was the first to enter this field with a strength that far exceeded the strength of its competitors from other European countries. (Yahya, 1965, pp. 119–120 [Translated from Arabic])

International competition in river navigation in Mesopotamia was very prominent, especially on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers between the steamers of the Hamidiya Navigation Company and the British Lynch Company. The economic activity of Basra was mostly dominated by English steamers arriving from India and the ports of the Arabian Gulf. They faced competition from German and Ottoman steamers in the realm of commercial shipping. (Shaker, 2005, p. 521 [Translated from Arabic])

Britain's interest in Mesopotamia may be attributed to a variety of causes, including transportation routes. Mesopotamia is a vital line linking Britain's interests with India and serves as an important land transit point to the Far East. Second, oil has become a significant strategic factor for Britain, particularly with the development of the later-discovered industry. Third: the need to provide the necessary protection for the transport routes entering Mesopotamia through the port of Basra. (Al-Jaafari, 2000, pp. 33–34 [Translated

from Arabic]) Fourth: confronting French and Russian threats in the Persian Gulf.(Abdul Aal Al-Issawi, 2010, p. 59 [Translated from Arabic]) Therefore, Britain tried to establish a railway starting from the coast of the Levant and passing through the Euphrates and the Persian Gulf, becoming the link between the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean. All this interest arose as a result of the revolutions in India on the one hand and the Crimean War⁽¹⁾ on the other hand. (Saleh, 1968, p. 164 [Translated from Arabic])

Since the second half of the 19th century, Britain gained influence in Mesopotamia due to Indian arrivals and trade. By the end of the century, Britain was the only foreign country to dominate most projects and ambitions. Russia's interests were simple, and France focused on cultural influence. German influence became clear in Mesopotamia, originating from the Ottoman Empire and influencing military missions and the Baghdad-Berlin railway project.(Yahya, 1965, p. 120)

In the late 18th century, Britain established a consulate in Baghdad and granted diplomatic immunity to British diplomats. The British Resident in the Ottoman Empire moved to Baghdad in 1832.(Saleh, 1968, p. 38) and Richard Wood issued a decree allowing British ships to practice navigation in the Shatt al-Arab and the Euphrates River. (Qazanji, 1989, p. 43 [Translated from Arabic]) However, a storm caused the ships to capsize, resulting in many sailors' deaths. Henry Lynch founded the Lynch Company in Baghdad in 1840, which was granted the privilege of establishing the Lynch and his Brothers' Company in 1860 by the Ottoman Empire. (A. A. S. Nawar, 1968, p. 45)

It is clear from this that the Britain obtained the largest share of trade compared to other European companies in Mesopotamia. They established economic projects and put forward slogans for the public benefit of Mesopotamia, justifying them in terms of state treasury expenditures. Implementing urban and industrial projects developed the British desire to set foot in Mesopotamia, instilling political influence in the Ottoman Empire to obtain the most privileges in the region.

Section Two: The Rise of British Influence and the Exploration of the River Route in Mesopotamia:

The concept of franchises was given to the official state policy towards foreign countries and foreign communities residing on the territory of that state, according to a set of legal clauses that determined the status of foreigners in the Ottoman Empire. (Suhaila Ahmed Sarir, 2015, p. 19 [Translated from Arabic]) In the early stages, none of the clauses related to politics because the Ottoman sultans preferred to make peace and give privileges over treaties, thinking they could cancel them whenever they wanted. This meant that the treaty only set up possible facilities for merchants and described the duties of ambassadors and consuls. The period between 1831 and 1860 was the time when Britain's influence was established in Mesopotamia. During which the British were successful in establishing the "Steam Navigation Company in the Tigris and Euphrates. Then the Lynch family established a company in Mesopotamia, and Henry Laing was the successor of Chesney in command of the ship. (Al-Battoush, 2009, p. 163 [Translated from Arabic]; Saleh, 1968, p. 164)

The use of steam power revolutionized transportation, as the steam engine pushed navigation to an advanced degree of development. Steamships began searching for sailing ships in the seas after there had been a great controversy since the early nineteenth century about the use of steamships for rapid transportation between Europe and the East instead of using sailing ships. (Schneirb, 1987, p. 184 [Translated from Arabic]) The British tried to use ships on the Cape of Good Hope route, but these attempts proved the futility of this line in relation to modern methods of transportation. (A. A. S. Nawar, 1968, p. 37) This is due to the failure of pumps, damage to pipes due to the salinity of sea water, and the lack of nearby stations to repair them. (Hoskins, 1908, p. 8)

These ships have also been instrumental, mainly in river navigation and short cruises, (Cole, 1952, p. 60) and speed has become a requirement for the use of steam in river transport.(Saleh, 1968, pp. 151–152) Furthermore, Britain's efforts to establish a transport line between Britain and India were geared toward either Mesopotamia or Egypt. This British interest is due to several factors, the most important of which are: first, the increasing volume of British industrial production; and second, the great expansion of the British Empire in India. Third, the number of Britons working in India's various political, commercial, and military spheres has increased, and therefore they need their contacts with Britain to be quick and cheap and official communications and mailings between Britain and India to arrive promptly. (Abdel Aziz Suleiman Nawar, 1968, p. 108 [Translated from Arabic]) Fourth, Britain had few raw materials

(1) The Crimean War of 1854–1856 was a war between the Russian and the Ottoman Empire on October 4, 1853. Russia's territorial ambitions at the expense of the Ottoman Empire were one of the most important reasons for its emergence. It ended with the signing of the Paris Agreement and the defeat of the Russians on March 30, 1856, see: (Mustafa, 1993, p. 139 [Translated from Arabic])

for industry except for coal and therefore needed to import raw materials from India, especially cotton, to return to it in the form of textiles. (Wiesde, 1994, p. 108 [Translated from Arabic]) Fifth, the desire to find new and short ways to connect European and American industrial zones to the East. (Coke, 1927, p. 209) All these reasons combined prompted Britain to try to find routes for transport between East and West, passing through either Egypt or the Euphrates Valley, to be complementary to the route beyond the Cape of Good Hope. (Saleh, 1968, p. 151)

After the failure of the navigation project across the Red Sea, British efforts turned to the Euphrates route. The British consul in Aleppo, John Parker (1799-1825), was one of the first British diplomats to discover the value of using ships in the waters of Mesopotamia, and he urged the British Navy to send a ship to choose the Euphrates route in July 1816. (Qasim, 2008, p. 85 [Translated from Arabic].) This was after the emergence of Mesopotamia's important geographical location in modern transportation lines. After leaving the Cape of Good Hope route as a link between the East and the West ⁽²⁾, the Governor of Bombay, John Malcolm*⁽³⁾, sent two surveyors of the Indian fleet, namely: Bowans and Elliott. In a telegram sent to the Sublime Porte, Mr. Lynch asked for their permission to undertake an exploratory tour to find out the suitability of the Tigris River between Basra and Baghdad. (Yaqzan Saadoun Al-Amer, 2023) The main tasks of the Euphrates mission were to study the Euphrates River to determine its suitability for navigation and to open a highway to India to develop trade exchange. Moreover, to find out how quickly it transported mail by ships on the Euphrates Road between India and Britain and to cooperate with the Ottoman authorities to make the mission successful. (A. S. Nawar, 1968, p. 250 [Translated from Arabic])

The Euphrates River expedition's men highlighted the importance of the road in trade and transportation, citing international trade statistics. Mesopotamia's ability to purchase large quantities of British and Indian trade items, such as sugar, tea, and cotton textiles, was crucial to the mission. Direct trading with Mesopotamia would bring profits and increase Britain's purchasing power. The mission also stressed the importance of using the Tigris River for transportation between Basra and Baghdad, and the need to manufacture steamers with powerful specifications to overcome navigation difficulties in the marsh area. They also emphasized the need to establish stations for wood and tar along the river. (A. S. Nawar, 1968, pp. 250–251)

Section Three: The Lynch Family: Pioneers of Commercial River Navigation in Mesopotamia:

The Chesney expedition, led by Father Henry Blossing, was successful but abandoned after the ship, the Euphrates, sank. Henry Bloss Lynch, one of his assistants, surveyed the Tigris River and its depths between Armenia and the Gulf of Basra. He believed Mesopotamia had a promising commercial future and established a company for commercial river navigation in the Euphrates River in 1840. (Burke & Burke, 1895, p. 918; O'Laughlin, 1997, p. 128) Lynch, an Irish-born son of the Lynch family, entered the Indian Navy at 16 and worked as a Persian translator. He was appointed assistant commander of the Euphrates Expedition in 1834 and took command of the ship "Tigris." Lynch also surveyed the Tigris River and the Euphrates River and was responsible for the postal service between Baghdad and Damascus. He died in Paris in 1873 due to lightning. ⁽⁴⁾

The Lynch family's origins can be traced back to an Irish family in County Galway. Henry Blossing Lynch, a naval officer and Persian translator, was appointed assistant commander of the Euphrates Expedition in 1834 and took command of the ship "Tigris." (Low, 1877, p. 534) After Chesney left Mesopotamia, Lynch continued his work, surveying the Tigris River and the Euphrates River until reaching his residence. He also became responsible for the postal service between Baghdad and Damascus. (Lorimer, 1915, p. 373) Before founding the Lynch Navigation Company, Henry Lynch served as a member of the board of directors of the European-Indian Communications Company. For lightning, he died in Paris in 1873. Other members of the Lynch family include Stephen Lynch, by whose name the Lynch House in Baghdad was known, as well as John Lynch and Matthew Lynch. (Houghton, 1972, p. 485)

(2) (Coke, 1927, p. 156)

(3) John Malcolm (1769–1833) was a soldier and administrator in the colonial administration, diplomat, linguist, and historian. He was born in Scotland and after leaving school he got a position in the East India Company. He became interested in oriental languages, mastering Persian and working as a translator. He was assigned a diplomatic mission in Persia, where he succeeded in concluding two important political and commercial treaties, after which he returned to Bombay, and was elevated to the rank of lieutenant colonel and appointed governor of Bombay to succeed Mountstuart Elphinstone between 1827 - 1830, he has several books, including: History of Persia, and the Political History of India. See; (William, 1901, pp. 197–200)

(4)

1.1. The Establishment of Lynch Commercial House:

In 1839, Lieutenant Henry Lynch was appointed as the commander of the Euphrates steamer, a fleet of steamers used to survey the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in Mesopotamia. (Lorimer, 1915, p. 1978) The secret committee of the East India Company sent three steamers to Mesopotamia to complete the survey. The Euphrates steamer, located in Bushehr, joined the other steamers as they travelled to Basra via the Cape of Good Hope. (Hussein Muhammad Al-Qahawati, 1980, p. 160) The fleet aimed to revive trade in Mesopotamia by using the rivers for goods transportation. Henry established friendly relations with the heads of the clans living on the riverbanks, establishing fuel stations, and utilizing available wood. (Hussein Muhammad Al-Qahawati, 1980, p. 165) The clans expressed willingness to supply steamers in exchange for private contracts, and Lynch distributed gifts to them. This deepened relations with tribal sheikhs, ensuring navigation between Basra and Baghdad. (Lorimer, 1915, p. 2061)

Henry Lynch, a British merchant with extensive experience in Mesopotamia, established a business house in Baghdad in 1839. (Faisal Muhammad Al-Arahim, 1975, p. 19) The house, which was the second British commercial house in Baghdad after Hector's,⁽⁵⁾ was instrumental in trade and transport. (Peter N. Stearns, 2001, p. 527) Lynch's purchase of two steamers and a steamer from the East Indian Company allowed the house to become a steamer with several sailing vessels. (Mallet, 1853, p. 110) The Lynch Commercial House began navigating between Baghdad and Basra, a Gulf port considered a vital hub for trade. (Balfour Paul, 2006, p. 216) Basra Port, located in the Shatt al-Arab, handled three-quarters of trade from Europe and India to the west coast of the Gulf. (Saleh, 1968, p. 161) The British-flagged vessels of the Lynch Commercial House exported crops and products to Basra and abroad, and also used other ships for internal trade and shipping goods to London. (Hussein Muhammad Al-Qahawati, 1980, p. 25)

On the other hand, the Ottoman authorities took several steps, the aim of which was not only to compete with the Lynch Company in the waters of Mesopotamia but also to remove British political and economic influence over Mesopotamia. The British move to use the Euphrates Path as an important trade route coincided with the entry of the Ottoman Empire into a new phase of its history, which was the phase of central reforms. (A. A. S. Nawar, 1968, p. 136)

It is worth noting that in 1870, the Lynch Company asked the British Foreign Office, as well as the British Embassy in Istanbul, to mediate with the Sublime Porte to obtain approval for a third British ship to sail on the Tigris River. But the Sublime Porte rejected this request based on the policy hostile to foreign influence in the Ottoman Empire and on the basis that there should not be more than two British ships on the Tigris at one time. *Ibid.*, 142. However, in 1875, Lynch Company obtained the Sublime Porte's approval to replace an old ship, the City of London Ship, with a new ship and to be allowed to use a steamboat in exceptional cases when the river water was low. (Lorimer, 1915, p. 2138) There is no doubt that this was a British diplomatic manoeuvre to obtain new concessions in the rivers of Mesopotamia. Through it, Britain made sure that no other country would compete with it or participate in the navigation work in Mesopotamia. All of this was contrary to what was stated in the French-Ottoman treaty and the letters of the Grand Vizier at the time, and since that time, the Lynch Company has had three ships on the Tigris River. (Ashraf Muhammad Munis, 1993, p. 171 [Translated from Arabic])

The Lynch Company did not hesitate to exploit the tense situation between the Ottoman Empire and Britain as a result of the British occupation of Egypt in 1882, so it doubled down and demanded new privileges. It was stated in the draft sent by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the British Embassy on February 21, in the sixteenth issue, stated that;

An answer was sent to the embassy regarding the agreement to be concluded between the two countries, and it was stated that: Two ships and twelve ferries will navigate on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, and they will carry the Ottoman flag, and this report was attached to the request submitted by Lynch regarding the operation of a third ferry. (Yaqzan Saadoun Al-Amer, 2023)

All of this led to a worsening situation between the British and Ottoman governments. (A. A. S. Nawar, 1968, p. 129) which demanded the addition of the "Mejidiya" ship to their shipping fleet. This prompted Sultan Abdul Hamid to issue orders to the Ottoman ambassador in London to meet the British Foreign Minister to inform him that the Ottoman government did not agree to the Lynch Company's ships continuing navigation in the Tigris River and to limit their navigation to the Euphrates River only.

(5) Alexander Hector served as an officer on the ship 'Tigris' as part of the Euphrates Expedition in the 1830s. He subsequently became a long-term resident of Baghdad. participated in the Euphrates expedition as a storekeeper, accountant. After the mission, Bombay proposed to appoint him as a postal agent for Haggana, a postal officer between Damascus and Mohammerah. Then, he opened a commercial house in Baghdad, and became a successful entrepreneur. See; (Chesney, 1868, p. 552)

Furthermore, in a complaint submitted by the Sublime Porte to the British Consul, it was stated: "The British Lynch Company ferries operating on the Tigris River, before approaching the customs dock, remove items from the mail bags." (Yaqzan Saadoun Al-Amer, 2023) Furthermore, considering that the Grand Vizier's letters issued in this regard are not treaties, but concessions provided by the Ottoman Empire to a foreign company. It is worth mentioning that the Ottoman Empire has the right to withdraw them whenever it wishes. (Lorimer, 1915, p. 2138) The reason for giving them privileges was that the Ottoman authorities realized the British intention behind this request, as the Ottoman Empire feared that the fate of Mesopotamia would be the same as the fate of Egypt under occupation. Therefore, Sultan Abdul Hamid II (1876-1909) saw the necessity of changing the policy of the Ottoman Empire towards Britain. As well as, taking a step to resist its influence, recover what the Ottoman Empire had lost at its hands, and prevent it from obtaining new privileges. However, the British government considered this Ottoman position a hostile act that violated trade relations between the two countries. Therefore, the Sublime Porte decided, temporarily, to cancel the decisions taken by the authorities in Baghdad regarding the navigation of Lynch Company's ships on the river Tigris. (Ashraf Muhammad Munis, 1993, p. 172) The reason is that this matter would lead to other European countries requesting to obtain the same concessions in the rivers of Mesopotamia, which was what Germany and the Netherlands had requested. The Spanish government was also waiting for the outcome of the Dutch-Ottoman discussions to obtain the same Dutch concessions for the Spanish navigation company "De Combes." (Lorimer, 1915, p. 2262) It was clear from this that the Lynch Company was relying on the support of the British government in the face of the disputes occurring between it and the local authorities in Mesopotamia.

1.2. The Lynch Company: British Influence and Control in Mesopotamia:

In 1880, the Lynch Company exploited the famine crisis in Mesopotamia to gain more privileges. They demanded that the Sublime Porte use ship-drawn trailers loaded with food supplies to save people from the famine. (A. A. S. Nawar, 1968, p. 145) The Sublime Porte rejected this request, viewing it as a deception. However, the crisis intensified, and the British government pressured Sublime Porte to temporarily agree, with the condition that the company stop using trailers after the crisis. The British government threatened to open Mesopotamia's waters to ships from all Persian Gulf countries. (Lorimer, 1915, p. 2257) This demonstrates that British authorities allowed a British company to enjoy powers within the British government's jurisdiction. Instead, the company used its consuls and representatives in Mesopotamia to support the Lynch Company's demands and provide arguments in disputes with the Ottoman government. The Ottoman government, influenced by the bad internal conditions in Mesopotamia in the 1880s, granted the Lynch Company the right to attach cabins to ships only in emergency circumstances. (Ashraf Muhammad Munis, 1993, p. 177)

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the Lynch Company had two commercial ships working for it, and in a letter to the Sublime Porte sent from the English embassy on June 20, 1883, he mentioned:

The Lynch Company ferry carried out work on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, and the Government of England in turn She contacted the Sublime Porte and gave her some notes, and given the importance of this, the Sublime Porte was asked to make the decision to act as quickly as possible. (Yaqzan Saadoun Al-Amer, 2023)

Then the business of this trading house expanded to establish a new river navigation line on the Tigris River, with the approval of the British government. (Saleh, 1968, p. 136) In this case, the Lynch Company now has complete control over the transportation of goods in the waters of the Tigris and Euphrates. This hegemony became an incentive to obtain new gains and privileges and to tighten control over the economy in these states, not only economically but also politically.*⁽⁶⁾ During its presence in Mesopotamia, the Lynch Company was able to strengthen its position in trade and navigation through its dominance of river transport. (Saleh, 1968, p. 190) Lynch also controlled the export operations of Mesopotamian products. This matter met with a clear rejection from the Ottoman authorities, and in confirmation of this, the British embassy submitted a report to the British Foreign Office on July 11, 1883, which stated:

(6) The Lynch Company was known in 1870, as the Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company, perhaps because of the participation of other owners and capital, but the Turks did not recognize this name, and insisted on describing the company as the Lynch Company. See; (Lorimer, 1915, p. 2139)

I regret to inform you that the ships of the Lynch Company operating on the river Tigris, which were heading from Baghdad to Basra, specifically on the fifth of this month, the Ottoman soldiers refused to unload its goods, so it is necessary to inform the Sublime Porte of what happened to take the necessary measures in order to preserve our rights. (Yaqzan Saadoun Al-Amer, 2023)

Thus, Lynch Company was successful in opening the way for the penetration of British economic interests, and British political influence in Mesopotamia. (Mohammed, 2008, p. 38 [Translated From Arabic])

It is worth noting that, in 1892, the Ottoman authorities established an Ottoman navigation company, known as the "Hamidiyah Administration," which replaced the Omani-Ottoman Company. It was a practical step aimed at competing with the Lynch Company in the waters of Mesopotamia. As well as, for the purpose of removing British influence, both political and economic, from Mesopotamia. (Faisal Muhammad Al-Arahim, 1975, p. 169)

It is also noted that the Lynch Company, established in 1863, was not only focused on transporting goods and passengers but also included mail transport and banking activities. The company began transporting British Indian mail from Basra to Baghdad in 1863, (Max Oppenheim, 2004, p. 332 [Translated From Arabic]) in exchange for financial aid from the British India Steam Navigation Company. The government increased the financial subsidy to the Lynch Company in 1866, offering a weekly postal service in exchange for additional financial aid if the Sublime Porte agreed to the company landing a third ship. The mail transport contract was renewed in 1894 and again in 1905 for ten years, stipulating that His Majesty's mail and government coins would be carried free of charge. The company's ships would be available to the British government at a specified price for the transport of military forces, stores, towing vessels, or other purposes as requested by the British government. (Beckett, 2009, p. 149) In a telegram sent from the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs to the Ministry of the Interior on March 29, 1904, it was stated:

The Lynch Company manages river transportation between Baghdad and Basra and also transports mail bags after signing them. Therefore, the contract must be renewed in order for the transportation process to resume via ships and ferries. The Postal Department must transmit this news to the higher authorities in order to give them permission to resume the transfer of mail bags between the company and the mail room, according to what it will agree upon in order to carry out the transfer of bags after giving it knowledge and information, and that no one will know about the timing of the movement of ships except the English Postal Service. The company had pledged to transport the mail bags, but it did not fulfil the promise, and accordingly, the reason was searched for, and a letter was sent to Basra to clarify the matter, and the response to that was that the Lynch Company did not give orders to appeal. Work on the Tigris River. (Yaqzan Saadoun Al-Amer, 2023)

It can be clear from this that the Lynch Company was one of the means used by the British government to consolidate its influence in the Ottoman lands in Mesopotamia, and river navigation in particular, through political and economic control, and control of means of transportation, trade, and imported and supplied goods. Despite the success of the Lynch Company in issuing the first navigation decree on the rivers of Mesopotamia, it continued to demand new rights and privileges, to tighten its control over the rivers of Mesopotamia without competition, and this was achieved despite the presence of some Ottoman companies.

Section Four: The Impact of Lynch Company's Franchises on Mesopotamia's Economy and Local Response:

The Ottoman authorities opposed the Lynch Company's activities due to fear of expanding its influence in Mesopotamia and obstructing its activities. In 1877, they banned the company's ship from exporting grain due to the war with Russia. However, a European merchant claimed approval from the governor of Baghdad to export grains, which angered the people due to high food prices. Some besieged the customs house and threatened the ship owner with destruction if it didn't unload. To avoid the anger, British consul J.P. Nixon ordered the grain cargo to be unloaded from the steamer. This decision was made to avoid the anger of the people and protect the Lynch Company's interests. (Lorimer, 1915, p. 2207)

In 1880, the Lynch Company faced restrictions from the Ottoman authorities due to reduced transportation prices on its ships, causing significant damage. ("F.O, 881/10207, X, L0 1315, Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company, 20, May, 1880.,"). Assem Pasha, the Ottoman governor in Baghdad (1880-1888), sent a memorandum to Lord Granville, the British Foreign Secretary (1880-1885), regarding the rights of the Lynch Company in the Euphrates River. He stated that navigation on the river is not permitted for foreigners and that the number of ships cannot be increased or attached to trailers except in exceptional cases. ("F.O, 881/10207, X, L01315, Mr. St. John, No. 44, Commercial, 29, December, 1880.,"). Granville sent a copy of Assem Pasha's memorandum to the British consul in Baghdad, T. Plowden (1880-1882), and asked him to discuss the matter with the company's agent and find support for

progress with the Sublime Porte. ("F.O, 881/10207, X, L01315, To Mr. St. John, No. 4, Commercial, 17, January, 1880,"). On February 22, 1881, local authorities again prohibited the company from using trailers, and the company appealed to Lord Granville to withdraw restrictions. ("F.O, 881/10207, X, L01315, Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company, 22, February, 1881,."). British ambassador in Constantinople Mr. George Goschen (1880-1881), stated that stopping trailers obstructed commercial activity and conflicted with the interests of the Sublime Porte. ("F.O, 881, 10207, X, L01315, To Mr. Goschen, No. 15, Commercial, 22, February, 1881,.").

On March 27, 1881, Sir Hertslet prepared a memorandum in which he stated the rights of the Lynch Company and stated that the only right that gave the company freedom of navigation in the rivers of Mesopotamia was the decree of 1834 and the subsequent ministerial letters from 1846 to 1861. ("F.O, 881, 10207, X, L01315, Sir. E. Hertslet Memorandum, 27 March, 1881,."). In this regard, the India Office prepared a report. He stated that the decree from 1834, which was subject to revocation in the event of harassment arising from the concession, serves as the basis for British subjects' right to navigation in the internal waters of the Arab nations that are a part of the Ottoman Empire rather than any treaty. (F.O, 881/10207, X, L01315, Lord Dufferin, No. 36, 1882,."). It was concluded at that time that the Sultan did not intend to fulfil the company's request to grant it a license to tow trailers behind its ships, and perhaps the reason for this was the Sultan's fear that the trailers would turn into war machines. ("F.O, 881/10207, X, L01315, India Office, 24, February, 1881,.").

Following Britain's occupation of Cyprus in 1878 and its occupation of Egypt in 1882, Ottoman-British relations became strained, and Sultan Abdul Hamid II (Anwar Al-Jundi, 1407, pp. 100–101 [Translated From Arabic].) was determined to fight British interests in his country, including Mesopotamia, by obstructing the work of the Lynch Company. (Fawaz Al-Dulaimi, 2002, p. 10 [Translated From Arabic].) Accordingly, in 1883, the Sublime Porte issued instructions to the Governor of Baghdad to inform the Consul General in Baghdad, General Tweedy (1882-1883) that the ships of the Lynch Company had been prevented from navigating the Tigris. In a telegram sent from the Excise Department to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on November 2, 1893, he stated that:

After preventing the Lynch Company from bringing coal and other goods to its warehouses, the company's officials submitted a report to the British embassy and explained the situation to them. The embassy, in turn, addressed the Grand Vizier and explained the problem to him, and the Grand Vizier addressed the State of Baghdad to explain the cause of the problem." The officials explained that the problem occurred during the reign of Ahmed Shawqi Effendi, and as a result, the problem was settled with the company, and that the company is asking the Sultan to grant them permission to resume work. (Yaqzan Saadoun Al-Amer, 2023)

Furthermore, the Lynch Company brought a new ship to replace one of the old ships, ("F.O, 881/10207, X, LO1315, Tweedie, No. 14, 15, June, 1883,."). and the Sublime Porte objected that the size of the ship had exceeded the limits in terms of length and width with other ships. It appears that this caused the Sublime Porte's position. On August 3, the measures taken against the Lynch Company's ships were suspended, given that the company's privileges were based on the decree of 1841 and the ministerial letters that recognized them, and that there were no limits placed on the size of the boats. ("F.O, 881/10207, X, LO1315, Mr. Wyndham, No. 147, 15, June, 1883,.").

Sultan Abdul Hamid II's opposition to British activity was not limited to shipping traffic in the Tigris and Euphrates but rather extended to the Shatt al-Arab. Sultan Abdul Hamid II ordered the construction of forts in Al-Faw and Basra, which angered Britain, and it considered it an Ottoman attempt to extend its sovereignty over navigation in all the rivers of Mesopotamia. (Dawood, 1961, p. 35 [Translated From Arabic]) In addition to the role of the Ottoman authorities in ending the activities of the Lynch Company in Mesopotamia, as it was a monopoly that had proven its influence on local navigation. (Al-Tamimi, 1979, p. 27 [Translated From Arabic].) Moreover, the Sublime Porte was worried about the British threat to use military force in the rivers of Mesopotamia, in addition to its threat to open the rivers of Mesopotamia to public navigation. The fear that other European countries would demand the same privileges from the Ottoman Empire led the Sublime Porte to withdraw from this step. (Jassim Al-Adwal, 1975, p. 73 [Translated From Arabic].)

After the appointment of Governor Rashid Pasha Al-Kuzalki (1853–1857), he expressed a strong desire to operate ships on the rivers of Mesopotamia (Al-Khayyat, 1971, p. 238 [Translated From Arabic].) and recommended a group of merchants established a river navigation company in the state of Baghdad, (Jamil Al-Najjar, 1991, p. 391 [Translated From Arabic].) with half of its capital coming from the government and the other half in which the merchants would participate. (Loncreek, 1941, p. 35 [Translated From Arabic].) He contracted with a shipbuilding factory in the Belgian city of Antwerp to build two ships, which were named Baghdad and Basra after their arrival in Mesopotamia. However, the two ships arrived after Al-Kuzalki's death. When Namik Pasha assumed the governorship of

Baghdad from 1862 to 1868, he established a river transport company, known as the Ottoman River Administration, and used the two ships for administrative purposes. He recommended that the Belgian factories in Antwerp build five ships to operate on the Tigris River, with the aim of competing with the British Lynch Company. However, the Ottoman ships' services were slow and faltering, and the competition between them and those belonging to the Lynch Company often ended in failure in favour of the Lynch Company, given its experience in navigation and trade affairs and the quality of the ships. (Hussein Muhammad Al-Qahawati, 1980, pp. 226–227)

Furthermore, Midhat Pasha, governor of Baghdad from 1869-1872, focused on river navigation in Mesopotamia and competed with the Lynch Company. (A. A. S. Nawar, 1968, p. 126) He purchased new ships and rehabilitated old ones to upgrade. Pasha restructured the river administration, managing river vessels on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. (Hussein Muhammad Al-Qahawati, 1980, p. 250) He established a ship repair yard in Basra and aimed to make the Euphrates River a road competing with the Suez Road. Pasha recommended purchasing boats from Austria for fast-flowing waters and expanded navigation up the Tigris River to Mosul. (F.O, 881/10207, 1880). However, the Lynch Company exploited the lack of navigators and experts in the river administration, demanding an increase in ships. This harassment led national merchants to prefer dealing with the Lynch Company due to its safety and security. (Lorimer, 1915, pp. 1508–1509)

In 1893, the Ottoman Government granted the Ottoman Amman Company a concession whereby it was able to receive imported goods from the surrounding vessels in Basra without the need to unload them at the Basra Customs, but rather take them directly to the Baghdad Customs. This franchise prompted some Iraqi and foreign merchants to deal with the Ottoman Company to ensure that their goods arrived quickly in Baghdad. Therefore, the Lynch Company hastened and asked the British Consul General in Baghdad to call the local authorities to allow its ships to also receive goods from ocean ships in Basra, similar to what the Ottoman company's ships do. (Hussein Muhammad Al-Qahawati, 1980, p. 231)

The Lynch Company obtained approval from the Sublime Porte for its ships to carry imported goods to commercial houses in Baghdad without passing through Basra Customs. However, a ban on ships operating between Basra and Baghdad due to cholera outbreaks affected Basra's trade and led to a decline in profits to 15%. The company was not allowed to use more than two ships in Iraqi waters until 1895. Despite maintaining a reserve ship for damaged or needed repairs, it had to obtain prior approval from the Sublime Porte. The company suffered significant losses due to the ban and the limited use of ships in Iraqi waters. *Ibid*, 231.

This shows that, despite the Ottoman authorities' support for the Ottoman Company's vessels, its services were slow, and the competition between them and the Lynch Ships was in favour of the Lynch Ships because they possessed British support, funds, and experience in navigation.

The Chesney reconnaissance led to tribes rejecting British passage through their lands, resulting in resistance from the British. The British exploited their power to establish relations with them and were concerned about the tax fees for passage through their lands. (A. A. S. Nawar, 1968, pp. 46–48) The British objected to the Ottoman authority, as the concession treaties stipulated that the tax was paid only once during commercial exchange operations. This led to a dispute between British merchants and Ottoman governors, particularly during Governor Najib Pasha's reign (1842-1849). The tribal tax was paid with official authorization from the governors, ensuring the protection of navigation by the tribes and ensuring the governors a share of revenues from navigation. The dispute escalated, with Najib Pasha claiming all Ottoman and foreign shipping companies were subject to the tax, while the Sublime Porte complied with the treaties and Britain's responsibility to protect its ships. (A. A. S. Nawar, 1968, pp. 68-73).

Britain armed ships, including the *Nitocris* and *Comet*, to counter tribal resistance and establish the Lynch Navigation Company in Mesopotamia. The company faced attacks from tribesmen but offered gifts to protect its ships. In 1906, the company donated 2,400 pounds to tribal sheikhs. (David, 1909, p. 248) The Lynch Company opposed irrigation projects, such as the Albu Muhammad clan's dam on the Tigris River. The company filed a complaint with the British Embassy in Istanbul, citing the impact on ship operations. Negotiations between the British Embassy and Sublime Porte led to a promise to stop the dam's implementation and control movements. (Mahmoud, 1980, p. 120 [Translated From Arabic])

In addition, during the second phase of Faleh Nasser Pasha Al-Saadoun's rule over Al-Muntafiq in 1879, the Mayah clan attacked one of the Lynch Company's ships. Its director informed the British embassy in Istanbul, which in turn informed the Ottoman government. The Ottoman government issued orders to Nasser Pasha Al-Saadoun, residing in Istanbul, to send his cousin to Mesopotamia and forced the clan to return what they had taken from the Lynch Company steamship. (Muhammad bin Khalifa Al-Taie, 1950, p. 440 [Translated From Arabic].)

In 1880, Sheikh Sayhud, a member of the Albu Muhammad clan, intercepted the Lynch Company's ship Khalifa, resulting in a violent attack that killed the helmsman, one passenger, and wounded the captain. (Lorimer, 1915, p. 2255) This incident impacted the diplomatic relationship between the Ottoman and British governments. The British consul in Baghdad informed the ambassador in Istanbul, who instructed the Ottoman authorities to protest and sought assistance from Sheikh Wadi. The military force demolished Sayhud's fort, but he fled to an unknown destination. (Mahmoud, 1980, p. 114)

Further, Britain wanted to seek the help of Nasser Al-Saadoun, one of the sheikhs of Al-Muntafiq, who was known for his role in ensuring the safety of the river routes to protect British ships. The British Consul, Plowden, wrote to his ambassador in Istanbul, Dufferin: "If the sheikhs of Al-Muntafiq gain power in Nasiriyah, I can say that violating the ship Khalifa will be unlikely at the present time and will give us an opportunity to arrest Sheikh Sayhud." (Mahmoud, 1980, p. 64).

Additionally, during 1900-1908, Sheikh Sayhud and Sheikh Ghadban (the sheikh of the Bani Lam clan) led their followers into continuous wars to control some agricultural lands inhabited by small clans neighbouring their two clans. Security was disturbed, and the British navigation on the Tigris River was harmed. It became unsafe from the Umm al-Mahna area, north of Amara, to the Abu Sadr area in its south. In 1906, the ship Khalifa was exposed to fire, so it was equipped with sufficient guards to protect it. Another ship belonging to the Lynch Company also requested protection from the Ottoman authorities. In April 1908, one of the Lynch Company's ships was exposed to fire in the Euphrates River and another in the Tigris River, and one of its captains and three passengers were injured. (Najda Safwa, 1969, p. 75 [Translated From Arabic].)

Conclusion

The analysis of the river navigation franchises held by the British Lynch Company in Mesopotamia between 1860 and 1908 discovers a complex story involving imperialistic ambitions, economic exploitation, and the reactions of the indigenous population. The pursuit of economic control over the Tigris and Euphrates rivers exemplified the wider colonial ambitions of European powers in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The strategies utilized by the British Lynch Company to obtain and uphold these navigation privileges provide insight into the complex mechanisms of colonial economic dominance.

During this study, it became evident that acquiring navigation franchises was not just a business endeavour, but rather a crucial aspect within the broader context of imperialistic control. The interventions implemented by the company had a significant impact on the socio-economic landscape of Mesopotamia, as their main goal was to facilitate trade and transportation. The consequences were varied, including changes in power dynamics, shifts in local economies, and alterations in cultural interactions within the region.

The responses of indigenous communities and local authorities to the interventions of the British Lynch Company were diverse and intricate. While certain groups chose to collaborate and adjust to the evolving economic landscape, others vehemently resisted foreign control, working hard to protect their independence and preserve their traditional lifestyles. The variety of responses highlights how indigenous populations have shown resilience and agency when faced with colonial encroachment.

Furthermore, this research highlights the long-lasting impact of colonial economic interventions on the socio-economic structure of Mesopotamia. The impact of the British Lynch Company's navigation franchises went beyond the time being studied, and had a lasting influence on the economic structures, inter-community relations, and cultural dynamics of the region.

As we wrap up this study, it is important to recognize the inherent limitations of historical analyses. The archival materials and historical narratives that are currently available offer valuable insights. However, it is important to note that they may not provide a complete understanding of local responses or the complexities of economic exploitation. Future research could further explore specific case studies or incorporate alternative sources to enhance our understanding of this historical episode.

In summary, the important geographical position of Mesopotamia, together with its river transportation system on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, attracted European powers, notably the British, during the decline of the Ottoman Empire. British firms, such as the Lynch Company, benefitted from trade and navigation advantages, which restricted local manufacturing and heightened reliance on imported commodities. British steamships, under the leadership of businesses like as the Lynch Company, had a dominant position in river commerce in Basra, while also facing competition from other European corporations.

Britain undertook railway initiatives to establish a connection between the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean, with the aim of combating German hegemony in the area and safeguarding strategic interests against France and Russia. The use of steam

power brought about a significant transformation in transportation, as steamships replaced sailing boats, enabling swifter and more effective river transit. Based on the results, it is advisable to do more study to investigate the social and environmental consequences of British commercial activity in Mesopotamia during this time period. Moreover, comprehending the local reactions to foreign economic dominance may provide valuable knowledge of the wider historical and geopolitical circumstances of the area. This study enhances our comprehension of the intricate workings of colonial economic dynamics and their enduring impacts in the Middle East.

Prior studies have emphasised the wider imperialistic aspirations of European nations in Mesopotamia during the 19th and early 20th centuries. This research offers a detailed analysis of how some economic interventions, such as navigation franchises, demonstrated and assisted these imperialistic objectives, revealing the complex mechanics of colonial economic control. Moreover, previous academic research has recognised the profound influence of European commercial endeavours on the indigenous economies in Mesopotamia. This study further explores the concept by outlining the many techniques used by the British Lynch Company to regulate navigation, which resulted in significant and enduring effects, including as shifts in power relations and cultural exchanges within the area. Furthermore, previous literature has recorded the indigenous reactions to colonial intrusion, highlighting both cooperation and opposition. This essay provides a comprehensive analysis of the many and intricate reactions of indigenous communities and local authorities towards the economic intrusions of the British Lynch Company. It emphasises the resilience and autonomy shown by these communities in response to foreign influence.

The study suggests that future studies should focus on examining individual case studies within Mesopotamia in order to get a deeper understanding of the complex relationships between colonial powers and indigenous communities. In addition, it proposes a need for more research on the societal and environmental impacts of British business operations in Mesopotamia during this period in order to get a thorough understanding of the wider ramifications of colonial economic dynamics.

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