

# **Study on the Historical Site of Sarmashhad of the Fars Province in Historical Transcripts and the Findings of Islamic Geographers with Emphasis on Archaeological and Artistic Evidence**

## **Abstract**

The village of Sarmashhad is located in the Dadin rural community of "Jarreh Baladeh" section of Kazerun city and 30km west of Baladeh city. There is a historical site in this village which is considered as one of the largest areas where the remaining artworks of the Sassanid period up to the 7th century AH can be perceived. This historical site is located seven kilometers from the village of Sarmashhad in a flat plain between two mountain ranges. Islamic geographers in their works have called this area "Barin" and "Ghandjan" plains. For the first time, Tabari (224-310 AH) introduces the Barin plain in "Ardeshir Khoreh" and attributes its history to the Sassanid era. A number of these sources have considered "Gandjan" in Ardeshir Khoreh furnace and others in "Shapur Khoreh" furnace and related to "Jarreh" region. This research has been done by descriptive and analytical methods by relying on library data and field observations. Findings of the study indicate that the study of the name of Gandjan and Barin plain in the texts of Islamic geographers and its adaptation to the historical site of Sarmashhad, provides valuable data on population dispersion, communication and trade, social relations and industrial centers and production. The method selected in this research is based on the study of historical geography and the study of archaeological and artistic evidence about the Barin and Gandjan plains and regional visits. According to this research, from the third century to the ninth century AH, ten Islamic geographers have mentioned the city of Gandijan and Dasht-e Barin in their works and provided several information about the city limits, water sources and the distance of this city to the surrounding homes. With regard to these descriptions, Gandjan Islamic texts are consistent with the historical site of Sarmashhad in the Fars province.

## **Research aims:**

1. A study on the changes in the administrative geography of Gandjan in the form of Ardeshir Khoreh and Shapur Khoreh furnaces by studying the sources of Islamic geographers.
2. A revision of the historical and geographical area of Sarmashhad.

## **Research questions:**

1. What are the reasons for the uncertainty of the historical and geographical background of the historical site of Sarmashhad?
2. What factors have played a role in the development and expansion of Gandjan city?

**Keywords:** Sarmashhad, Islamic Geographers, Barin Plain, Ghandjan.

## **Introduction**

One of the prominent features of Iran's natural environment is the existence of numerous unevenness in its territory, which has left diverse effects on the structure of Iran's political geography. The shape of the ruggedness in a country and the way it is located affect the geographical unity of that country. It is obvious that the presence of physical barriers such as mountains, mountain plains, deserts and other natural factors, is effective in the formation and development of communities. A review of archeological materials and cultural trends of southwestern and south-central Iran displays the importance of mountainous areas from prehistoric times, and historical evidence emphasizes the political and military position of these mountainous plains. To better understand population centers and cities, it is important to study them based on historical geography studies. Research and study of the historical geography of the city indicates what has happened in the past and how it has formed and developed. Historical geography should be considered as the geography of a region by studying the sources and documents of the past, consequently, in this science, past human spatial relations are discussed to better comprehend the geographical issues of today. Historical geography is a separate topic from general geography that deliberates on the economic, political, and human geography during periods of history. In fact, it is the identity card of a city, region, etc., which helps us in identifying a city or region geographically. The study of historical geography is of particular significance for it is a simultaneous representation of the geographical environment and related historical events.

The first research on the works of Sarmashhad was done by the German archaeologist Ernst Herzfeld. In 1924, he first identified and introduced the Cartier inscription and the relief of Bahram II (Hertzfeld, 1975: 168). Mostafavi in the book *Pars Climate* describes the ancient site of Sarmashhad and introduces it as Khandijan (Mustafavi, 1375: 118). Trumppleman calls the site "Hosseinabad" and writes: "Hosseinabad was probably destroyed by the Mongols, and according to the pottery found there, it seems to date back to before the seventh century AH. (thirteenth century AD.) (Trompleman, 1372: 30). Donald Whitcomb introduces the ruins of Ghandkan in the south of Kazerun and along the historical road to Shiraz (Whitcomb, 1979: 1). Jahanbakhsh Sawaqeb believes that the historical city of Ghandakan is the present-day capital of Mashhad, 84 km south of Kazerun (Sawaqib, 2006: 192). From 1924 until today, researchers, archaeologists and experts have conducted research on the city of Gandjan and the historical site of Sarmashhad that include works by the following scholars: (Lesterling, 1998: 281; *Pars Climate*, 1996: 118; Trompleman, 1993: 30; Mostafavi, 1329: 42-35; Sawaqib, 1385: 192; Ghasemi, 1386; Abolharar, Ebrahimi, 1387: 80; Ghasemi, 1389; Niknami and Fazel, 1394; Ebrahimi, 1385: 80; Ghasemi, 2009; Miri, 2012: 46; Ghasemi, 2009; Iranica, 2018: 3; Whitcomb, 1979: 64; Upton, 2011: 19).

Using this evidence, this article examines the city of Gandjan in Islamic sources, especially the works of Islamic geographers. These works cover the time period between the third and ninth centuries AH. It is clear that our knowledge in the Islamic period is more than in previous periods due to the abundance of written sources. The history of the historical site of Sarmashhad and the city of Gandjan-e-Islami dates back to the Sassanid period according to archaeological studies. This research is based on a historical and geographic study and the works of Islamic geographers; also, the collected data of this study is analyzed and examined by close observation and visits to the regions and the application of a comparative method.

## **Conclusion**

According to the studies conducted in this research, ten Islamic geographers have mentioned the city of Gandijan and Barin plain in their works, and with descriptions from this place about the city limits, water resources and the distance of this city to neighboring areas, it corresponds to the current location of the Sarmashhad compound. Ibn Khordadbeh (211-300 AH), Ibn Faqih (255-330 AH), Ibn Balkhi (498 AH),

Mostofi (680-750 AH) and Ebru (763-834 AH), Ghandjan and Barin plain have been introduced as part of Shapur Khoreh kiln. Tabari (224-310 AH), Istakhri (340 AH), Ibn Hawql (367 AH), Moqaddisi (334 AH) and Hamwi (574-626 AH) consider it as one of the Areas of Ardeshir Khoreh (Table 1).

تا پیش از ابن بلخی هیچ‌یک از جغرافی‌نویسان اسلامی در معرفی راه‌های ارتباطی و بازرگانی فارس، به شهر غندجان اشاره‌ای نمی‌کنند. این امر ممکن است به دلیل تغییر مسیرهای تجاری در سده‌های پنجم و ششم هجری قمری و اهمیت غندجان در این زمان باشد. اصطخری و ابن حوقل در سده چهارم به صدور کالاهای تجاری از این شهر به دیگر نقاط دنیا که مستلزم آن وجود راه‌های بازرگانی است، اشاره کرده‌اند، اما از مسیر تردد و منزلگاه‌های آن صحبتی به میان نیامده است.

This may be due to the border between these two kilns and the fragile borders of the Persian kilns in different periods, which has reformed with the change of local rulers, and another reason may be related to the route from Najiram to Shiraz and the use of two separate routes, the first is Kazerun road and the other is the route from Shiraz to Najirom port. For the first time in the fourth century, Estakhri mentions the city of Gandjan next to the Barin plain. Before that, Tabari, Ibn Khordadbeh and Ibn Faqih mentioned only the Barin plain in this region. Until Ibn Balkhi, none of the Islamic geographers mentioned the city of Gandjan in introducing the ways of communication and trade of Persia. This may be due to the change of trade routes in the fifth and sixth centuries AH and the importance of Gandjan at this time. In the fourth century, Istakhri and Ibn Huql mentioned the export of commercial goods from this city to other parts of the world, which required the existence of trade routes, but there was no mention of the route of traffic and its homes. After Ibn Balkhi, Hafez Ebro also mentions this trade route and the city of Gandjan. His writings are similar to the text of the Farsnameh, and only in mentioning the route of Saif's actions and the distance to the last house, he made a mistake in copying He introduced the seventh, Najir, and described the distance between Mandestan and Najir as eight miles. Springs, wells, reservoirs and rivers are the sources of water in Gandjan, which are mentioned in the works of Islamic geographers. During the visit to the area, Nojin mineral hot springs were found in Nojin village near Sarmshahd village (Ghandjan), which is still used for treatment today. In describing the city of Ghandjan, Ibn Balkhi and Mostofi refer to a strong and solid fortress called the fort of Rome Ravan or Dam Zwan. In the field observations, a castle called Tir Castle is located in this area, which is consistent with the descriptions of this castle. By studying the works of Islamic geographers about the city of Gandjan and comparing these works, it seems that the writings of Mostofi (740 AH) and Hafez Ebro (833 AH) in many cases taken from the book Farsnameh. Ibn Balkhi is not one of the personal observers of these two geographers. Archaeological evidence obtained in the city of Sir Mashhad, introduces the last settlement period in the late sixth century AH. This is another reason why these two geographers did not refer to the city of Gandjan, because in the eighth and ninth centuries AH, when Nozha al-Qulub and the geography of eyebrows were written, the city of Gandjan was uninhabited.

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