

Investigating the Visage of Sistan in the Mirror of the Ancient Geographical and Mythical Books

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Abstract

Sistan is a city in the southeast of Iran and it is stretched in an area of land presently in this section. The Persian geographical and mythical books provide us with some information regarding this ideal city. The present article uses a descriptive-analytical method to explore the Persian geographical and mythical books written about Sistan so as to compare the obtained information. In the old geographical books, Sistan has been a large city and region, prosperous and with temperate weather and a lot of precipitations; it has also had a booming economy. In mythical books, Sistan is the eleventh city created by Ahura Mazda and its name has always been mentioned with good characteristics. In these books, the founder of Sistan has been intended more than anything else. Except *Hodud Al-Aalam* and *Mamalek* and *Masalek* the information of which are based on geographical knowledge, there are mythical and religious books offering information based on religious and mythical sacrosanctity; therefore, Sistan's desert is most often missing from the descriptions.

Keywords: Sistan, *Hodud Al-Aalam*, *Mamalek* and *Masalek*, *Garshasp Nameh*, history of Sistan, *Bundaheshn*

INTRODUCTION

Geographical and mythical books provide us with various information about the ancient Sistan. Qazvini (1209-1283), the author of the book "*Athar Al-Belad wa Akhbar Al-Ebad*", has the following statements about Sistan: "Sajestan is a vast state and attributed to Sajestan Ibn Fars. Its land is salty and sandy and there is always a mild wind blowing therein; in such a way that the mills of that state are always rotating by wind force" [1]. Due to its special position, Sistan has witnessed many civilizations in various epochs. In a book called "*Nozhat Al-Moshtaq*", Edrisi mentions the followings amongst the cities in Sistan: "the most famous cities of Sistan are Zaranj, Taq, Qarnain, Khash, Sarvan, Bost, Zaleqan, Boqnain, Jazeh, Fareh, Dezeh, Dezaq, Ghala'ei, Karkooy, Hishum and Bashurd" [2]. Amongst the geographers, Sistan has been known as "the city of Rostam" [3].

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

Sistan has been a city in the southeast of Iran but nobody has exact information about its real and precise position. Nowadays, it is the name of a region in the east of Iran with several thousand years of history. "The old name of Sistan (in Arabic, Sajestan) means "Sakestan" derived of the name "Sakai" [Scythians], an Iranian nomad tribe that has possibly gradually migrated since about 746 in the end of Parthian Farhad II's time from the vicinity of Balkh and Amudarya lands towards this new land" [4, 5]. Before Scythians could come to this region, Greeks called it Drangiana and Drangai

(Strabo, 1966: VII/141-145) or Drangiani [6]. In the old geography, Sistan has been situated in the third climate [7]. There are cited various notions about this city in the geographical, mythical and historical books indicating its importance in the past. The information that is of great importance for us in this regard is twofold: one set is the information that can be obtained from geographical books about the position and situation of this city hence it can be stated that it is relatively exact information about the city's position. The other set is the information that can be found in the quasi-historical and mythical books like the history of Sistan, *Shah Nameh* and religious Zoroastrian books. As stated in the first set of the information, Sistan has been a city and region positioned in the east of Iran. In mythical, religious

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and quasi-historical books, Sistan has been a holy city and the hometown of Zoroaster and his offspring.

The present study tries describing the information from both sets to figure out their similarities and dissimilarities.

Study Method:

The present study is based on a descriptive-analytical method. Thus, after collecting the information from geographical and mythical resources and making comparisons, efforts will be made to gather information about Sistan in the old geographical books like *Hodud Al-Mamalek* and *Masalek wa Mamalek* as well as mythical books like the history of Sistan (mythical section thereof), *Ehya'a Al-Moluk*, *Nozhat Al-Qolub*, *Bundaheshn*, *Vandidad*, *Shah Nameh*, the treatise of Sistan's wonders and values and *Garshasp Nameh*.

Theoretical Foundations:

Sistan has a holy position in the historical and mythical texts in such a way that it can be called utopia. "Sistan, Sagestan, Sajestan, Sagzestan (Arabic forms of Sag, Sac, Sekeh (tribe) + stan, a suffix indicating place) is a land located in the tails of Afghanistan's mountains and it is consisted of sandy lands wherein the floods and runoffs of the adjacent regions pour in some low lands and holes to form lakes and Hamun and Gudarzeh swamps" (Dehkhoda, 1998, under the term "Sistan")^[8]. Ibn Balkhi has the following words about Sistan: "Sistan is originally termed Sagestan which is written in Arabic as "Sajestan"^[9]. According to Musa Khormi (1019-1095), Sakestan's establishment dates back to Solukis' era. He states that "Sakestan has been part of Soluki Province and positioned in an ancient coastal province named Zaranka or Zarankeh which was conquered by Parthians"^[10].

Roman Ghirshman realizes prehistory as the commencement time of Sistan's civilization (1993, p.29) for such a proof as the burnt city. There are also left many relics from Sistan in Parthians' time; amongst these remnants, a temple in Karkooy¹ in the mountain of Khajeh can be pointed out^[11]. Sistan was enumerated amongst the holy cities.

"The traditional communities believe in a relationship between two ethereal and common realms; it is a relationship that is undoubtedly determined through biological and environmental and social experiences"^[12]. In discussions about "center's symbols", Elyadeh concludes that some of the mountains and cities were considered sacred in the minds of the ancient human beings because they believed that the "temple or the holy city is always the intersection between three cosmic regions, earth and sky and hell, for its being situated in the world's center"^[13]. Due to the civilizational values that utopias may have, they might be raided by the foreign and domestic enemies. Sistan's land "is the scene of

an old struggle between Iranian tribes for taking possession and dividing of the water in Hirmand River in such a way that, as stated in Avesta, *Franrasyan*, the *Turya*, (*Turyan Afrasiab*) developed *Vorukasha* so as to be able to capture *Khavarena*"^[14].

There are valuable materials presented in geographical books like *Hodud Al-Aalam Min Al-Mashreq Ela Al-Maqreb* (1993)^[15] and *Masalek wa Mamalek*^[16] and also in mythical and religious books like *Vandidad*^[17] and *Bundaheshn* (2016), Sistan's history (1935), *Ehya'a Al-Moluk*^[18], *Nozhat Al-Qolub*^[19], *Shah Nameh*^[20], treatise of Sistan's wonders and values (1985) and *Garshasp Nameh*^[21]. These all signify the value of this city or region in Iran; the present study discusses and investigates these materials.

DISCUSSION AND INVESTIGATION:

Geographical books have presented a scientific account of Sistan; but, the mythical and religious and quasi-historical books have offered a holy visage of the city beyond the realities so they are in contrast with one another. However, each of these books contains valuable information in itself. The forthcoming sections separately investigate each of them.

Sistan in Geographical Books:

• *Hodud Al-Aalam Min Al-Mashreq Ela Al-Maqreb*:

The book "*Hodud Al-Aalam*" is amongst the oldest geographical books written in Persian prose. "*Hodud Al-Aalam Min Al-Mashreq Ela Al-Maqreb*" is amongst the credible geographical books and it has been written in 982 about the characteristics of the land, regions, territories and various tribes and their situations and other issues of the like"^[15, 22]. The author of this book is unclear. This book has the following words about Sistan: "Sistan is a region with its borough being called Zarang. It is a city with fortresses in its periphery; a trough full of water has been dug about the city. There are rivers therein with water flowing through houses. The city has five gates made of iron. There is a castle in the city's center and it has thirteen doors. The city is located in a tropical region; no snow falls in there. The city also has a lot of mills rotated by wind. Garments of Tabari style and rugs in Jahromi style are made and sold in this city. Dried dates and the gums of lovage tree [*Angzad*]² are also produced in the city"^[15].

As it is understood from the text, Sistan has been a very prosperous city at the time of the author in such a way that it has had a lot of water resources; the author has possibly meant the water of Hirman River that passed through the city for the author also states that "and, the other is Hirmand River which originates from the limits of Guzganan and passes by the

¹ A village in Sistan (history of Sistan, 1935, p.29)

² *Angjad* or *Engzad* is a term referring to all sorts of tree resins and gums. The gum of lovage tree has an extremely bad odor and it is called *Haltiat* in Arabic. It is called *Angzad* for the reason that it is the gum produced by *Angdan* (lovage); it is originally *Angdan Jad* for *Jad* means gum in Persian (Borhan Ghat'e, 2014, under the term *Angjad* and *Angdan* and *Mo'ein*

Dictionary, 1996, under the same title). It is stated in *Masalek wa Mamalek* that "a lot of grains are produced in the desert between Sistan and Makran from the tree of lovage in such a way that they do not eat any meal without *Angjad*" (Estakhri, 1961, p.196). Based on *Hodud Al-Aalam* and *Masalek wa Mamalek*, it becomes clear that this resin has been edible and a sort of grain".

vicinity of Ghur and reaches Dorghosh and Tel and Bost and exits Sistan; part of it is exploited and another part is let to pour into the sea of Zareh” [15].

Hirmand originates “from very high mountains” [3, 23]. Sistan has been so large that its center has had five gates with thirteen gates around the city in whole. Hodud Al-Aalam has pointed to the tropical nature of its weather and also its frequent winds; it has also mentioned that products like carpet, garment and dates and lovage gum were being produced therein. He goes on with the following sentences about Sistan’s deserts: “and, every part of this desert is called by the name of the closest region thereto; there is sand in the desert and the sand comes from around Sistan; it is called sandy Sistan” [15]. In fact, he wants to say that the area outside Sistan is a sandy desert.

• Masalek wa Mamalek:

Estakhri (957) gives a more detailed account in Masalek wa Mamalek about the limits of Sistan: “Makran desert is on the eastern side of Sistan; this territory is stretched in the land of Send and part of the land of Moletan and the western side of Khorasan and part of India’s land and the northern side of the India’s territory and the southern side of Sistan’s desert and Kerman from the side of Khorasan and Ghur and India ... but, the cities of Sistan that should be recognized and mentioned in this book are Zaranj, Kes, Neh, Taq, Khovash, Farah, Jazeh, Bost, Ruzdan, Sarvan, Saleqan, Boqnain, Darghash, Tel, Beshlank, Benjway, Kohak, Ghazneh, Qasr, Sivi, Esfenjay and Jamay. No city is bigger than Zaranj which has a stronghold and castle with fortresses around the stronghold ... it has five gates” [16].

Points learned from this information are unprecedented in their types. Sistan’s limits and boundaries have been specified and its cities have been mentioned and Zaranj has been introduced as its largest city. It seems that Sistan has not been a city at the time of Estakhri. However, it should not be forgotten that the writer of Hodud Al-Aalam has lived the period after Estakhri but his method of book-writing has been based on library research and he has not himself gone to visit the geographical regions [15]. Based thereon, he might have read it in a book that Sistan has been a city.

Estakhri has the following words about the economic status and products of Sistan: “and, Sistan is a fruitful land and it produces a lot of dates and Sistan’s people are mostly wealthy; a lot of grains are grown on lovage in the desert between Sistan and Makran and they do not eat any meal without lovage gum” [16].

Edrisi (1100-1166) has the following words about the economic status in Sistan: “Sajestan is a region wherein cities like Zaranj are situated and there are various kinds of foods, dates and grapes. The people of the city are wealthy”. [2]

Ibn Faqih (third hegira century) states as follows about Sistan’s artefacts: “and the people of Sistan make water containers in Sistani style; they also make various kinds of pots and a lot of different instruments by brass and zinc”. [24]

Abu Al-Fada’a (1274-1332), as well, has the following words about Sistan’s blessings: “Sajestan is a prosperous land wherein edibles as well as dates and grapes are abundant. The people are living a comfortable life and they gather a large amount of asafetida from the deserts and they substantially sustain on that” [25].

As it is clear, the people of Sistan were living a wealthy life.

Sistan in Mythical Books:

In mythical and Zoroastrian books, information has been presented about the founder of Sistan as well as its religious values and civilization. These cases are missing from or less frequently seen in the geographical books.

• History of Sistan, Ehya’a Al-Moluk and Nozhat Al-Qolub:

History of Sistan includes “two distinct parts with two different styles from two different periods and written by two different persons” [22]. In the first part of the book, there are valuable materials offered about Sistan. These books can be categorized amongst the cultural geography because they are more about the human beings and the behaviors of the people in Sistan. This is while none of the books written about Sistan is this much detailed. The book “Ehya’a Al-Moluk” by Malek Shah Hussein Sistani deals with the mythical events and occasionally historical incidents in Sistan until 1028. The author of this book copies the lead of the history of Sistan and offers information without citing the source. The book “Nozhat Al-Qolub” has been written by Hamdollah Mostowfi in 1340; it contains three articles.

Sistan’s Founding:

In the first part of the history of Sistan, the author introduces Garshasp as the founder of Sistan.

“Sistan was established by Garshasp Ibn Atharth and Kyumarth lived a thousand years after he was brought to the earth by the eminent God and [Ushhang] took possession of the kingship for forty years after him followed by the kingship of Tahmureth ... they established Sistan on the day that Garshasp had gathered all the sages of the world and told them that I am going to establish a city at the time that Zahhak is ruining all parts of the world and killing the free persons of the world and removing them all from the earth by a sort of magic so that it might be a refuge for the people of the world and he cannot rule them in there” [26].

As it is stated in the beginning of this text, Sistan has been a city before Garshasp, as well, at the time of the kingship of Kyumarth, Hushang and Tahmureth. After all the destructions that Zahhak created, Garshasp emerges as a king organizing the world. In Ehya’a Al-Moluk, besides introducing Garshasp as the founder of Sistan, the author quotes Hamdollah Mostowfi in saying that Solomon (PBUH) has been the founder of Sistan [18]. Mostowfi introduces Garshasp as the founder of Sistan [19].

Sistan’s Appellation:

A story has been narrated in the history of Sistan regarding the appellation of Sistan; it has been realized therein as having been derived from the root “Saivastan” meaning “the place of the magnanimous men”:

“But, it is called Sistan for the reason that Zahhak has been a guest to Garshasp here and he had a habit of drinking wine with women; at that time the women’s place of staying was called bedchamber. After getting drunk, Zahhak remembered his habit and said ‘I want a bedchamber so that I can drink better there’. Garshasp knew his habit and said: ‘it is Saivastan here not Sistan. It is called Siv because there are only magnanimous men here and such things are not allowed’ [26].

This story has been mentioned by Sistani as an excerpt from the history of Sistan but without citing the reference [18]. There are two quotations made about the appellation of Nimruz, as well: in the past, the people were allowed to bring a judge on just one day and the people of Sistan alone had the right for making complaint for half a day [Nimruz]; another description holds that Sistan was considered as the center of the earth in astrology:

“The kings came there to judge about the people’s complaints and petitions on just one day every year; all the people went there to have their cases tried and Sistan’s share of judgment was alone half a day and this is why it is called Nimruz. And, Abu Al-Faraj Baghdadi states that it is not so; but, the scientists have divided the world into two parts of sunrise and sunset in Nimruz and its limits are the sunrise from the east on the shortest day and the sunset in the west on the longest day and this knowledge can be gained through calculations” [26].

Sistani has also presented these two quotations about Nimruz from the book “history of Sistan” [18]. It has been stated about its being called Zarang that the reason for such an appellation has been the construction of buildings by Zal-e-Zar in this city: “Zarang is also a name given to this city for the reason that Zal-e-Zar made a city in Sistan after Garshasp’s construction of edifices and the people of Sistan called it Zarang with the subsequent omission of one “r” and its being transformed in to Rangzar” [18].

Mostowfi, as well, states that the initial name of the city has been Zarang but he has not said why it was called so: “the champion of the world, Garshasp, made it and called it Zarang which was articulated Zaranj by Arabs ... after that, Bahman rebuild the edifice and called it Scythia. The general public called it Sakestan and Arabs made it Arabic and called it Sajestan which was gradually transformed into Sistan”. [19]

Sistan’s Resistance against the Enemies:

At the time of Parthians and in the early Sassanid Era, Sistan has been neighboring by such hostile tribes as Kushanian.

Sagzian played an essential role in protecting Iran’s borders especially at the time of Parthians, including the Parthian king, Mehrdad II [27]. History of Sistan speaks about the city’s strength by stating that it has had a large borough³ and warrior men who defended it.

“First of all, the big borough has a fortress which is per se composed of several cities. It was called Madinah Al-Ozra for the fact that nobody has been ever able to take it unless they gave it up; nobody can capture it forever for it has warrior men accustomed to fight, uprising and carrying weapon and these are their habits they learn from their childhood and keep them on to their adulthood” [26].

These words have been expressed by Sistani in another form: “Sistan has a huge and big borough and it is called Madinah Al-Ozra for it has not been captured by anyone and its people have not also been ever subjugated and nobody has ever been able to capture it up to now except its ruins; because the residents of the city were warriors and chivalrous fighters and they had learnt fighting and killing” [18].

Sorren which is a courageous Iranian clan lived in Sistan [11, 28]. The dynasties of Sam, Zal and Rostam, as well, have been introduced in Shahnameh as the residents of Sistan. The history of Sistan has the following words elsewhere about the chivalry of Sistan’s people:

“Internally, it is a city that no enemies have ever intended and will ever intend to capture it for they know that they will return denounced and defeated if they can walk on their feet or they are perished” [26].

Hamzeh Isfahani (death at 961 or 971) realizes Baladat Al-Jonoud [land of army] as the root of Sakestan [4]. Although it is not correct, it can have a reference to the importance of art of war amongst the people of Sistan.

“The assistant Sagzi forces had been recruited by Sassanid Army and they had a high military value; in the Islamic period, the Sistan’s people were known for their robust and huge bodies. They were accustomed to even walk in the bazars with uncovered swords and Sistan still had a well fame during Ghaznavi period for training infantry” [26].

Sistan’s Weather:

The history of Sistan says that Sistan’s weather has been temperate and it is as if it has been willed by the God so that the people could always be cheerful.

“And, it is also a very temperate place; the southern and the northern pole stars and Canopus and Qedman and Farqadan [two bright stars in the Ursa Minor] shine thereto; the northern wind and zephyr always blow in there so that the understanding and mind of its people can be better than those

³ Borough [Sharestan] has been the main part of the city with walls around it and a fortress in it (Mo’ain, 1996, under the term “sharestan”).

of the people from other places by that moderation and wellness of the weather” [26].

Sistani, as well, realizes Sistan’s weather as moderate and temperate: “first of all, his highness Adam was wandering about in every corner of the world in search of Eve and, upon reaching Sistan and finding its weather temperate and its water tasty and flowing on the sand, spent a while resting there ...” [18].

Mostowfi has adopted a more realistic approach and says “its weather is inclined towards warmth” [19].

Cities’ Needlessness:

History of Sistan realizes the people of Sistan needless of anything for such a reason as the abundance of the blessings found in there: “and, it is also a city self-standing and needless of all other cities; if the caravan gets scattered, everything such as colorful blessings and precious garments and all the other things needed by the fellows of royalty and magnanimity can be found in the city and nothing would be required to be brought from the other cities; everything [is] in abundance” [26].

As for the deliciousness of the meat of sheep in Sistan, Sistani states that “another thing is that there is a grass called salsola rigida and the Sistan’s sheep eat it and its meat is very delicious” [18].

About the fruits of Sistan, Mostowfi states that “there are a lot of orchards in Sistan and they produce good and abundant fruits” [19].

It is seen that these three authors have pointed to the abundant fruits of this city.

Sistan’s Architecture:

The author of the history of Sistan has seen very big buildings in Sistan and stated that they are larger than those of the other places: “and, another thing is that not so many large buildings can be possibly found in any other place than Sistan ...” (the history of Sistan, 1935, p.13) [26].

Estakhri realizes Adineh [Friday] Mosque of Zaranj as the third biggest mosque after the mosques of Herat and Balkh [16]. In Zaranj, there has been a church, as well, and it has been at work till the attack by Mahmoud Ghaznavi in 1003 [26]. The palaces of Ya’aghoub and Amrolaith, as well, had been constructed in competition with Baghdad’s and they had a special beauty [16, 29]. Regarding the method of the construction of houses in Sistan, Bastani Parizi states that “the houses of the city dwellers had been constructed in parallel on two sides of the alleys and streets and southwardly oriented; most of the houses had been built using limestone and white chalk” [30]. It can be discerned from Ehya’a Al-

Moluk that the materials used for the construction of houses in Sistan have been mud and baked sand: “they used to mix sand and mud and applied them as a coating on the houses’ roofs. The mud and sand was stuck to the houses’ roofs and became as hot as fire; there were casts in the middle of the house and the mud fell into it and became stone hard” [18].

Cleverness and Zealousness of Sistan’s People:

The history of Sistan realizes the people of Sistan as astute and fanatic for such a reason as Sistan’s weather:

“It never happened for the city to become empty of the scholars and great jurisprudents; it is due to the weather of the city that it is incumbently filled with great scholars ... its men are magnanimous and its women are clean and industrious in such a way that there are no equivalents for them in other places; the Sagzi people are pure unless they are not from Sistan” [26].

Sistani introduces the people of Sistan as clever [18]. Then, he mentions the names of a large number of the city’s prominent poets, politicians and elders [18].

• Ferdowsi’s Shahnameh:

The term “Sistan” has been repeated 25 times in Ferdowsi’s Shahnameh. In this book, Sistan has been mentioned as the birthplace of Rostam and his clan. The command center of this magnificent city is Zabol and Rostam rules it. Ferdowsi has less frequently spoken directly about Sistan. He realizes Ardashir and his son, Shapour, as the founders of Sistan’s borough:

“He made a borough in Sistan wherein there were a lot of palm gardens”

“One half of the city had been built by Ardashir; another half by the chivalrous and valorous Shapour” [20]

Our perceptions of Ferdowsi’s Sistan are indirect. The Sistan described in Shahnameh is a green land with a lot of animals to be hunted for food as well as a place for teaching heroism in such a way that, in one story, Siavash learns heroism, politeness, politics and so forth from Rostam.

“The champion took him to Zabolistan and made him a residence place in the rosary ...”

“He personally taught him various kinds of art; he suffered a lot of pains but succeeded in making a hero of him” [20]

• Iran’s Counties:

The book “Iran’s counties” has been written by an anonymous author during Sassanid Era; it is originally in Pahlavi language. This book has attributed the founding of Nimruz to Ardashir, son of Sepandbad; it also states that Bost has been constructed by the order of Bastour, Son of Zarir. It also ascribes the construction of Farah⁴ and Zabolistan Counties to Rostam [31]. This book has the following words about Zaranj: “Zarang County was built by the mean

⁴ Faraah or Farah has been the governorship’s center of Zabolistan (Iran’s counties, 1941, p.131).

Turanyan Afrasiab. He set it on the victorious fire of Kirkuk. He dispatched Manuchehr to Padishkhwargar and asked the marriage to Sepandarmaz (angel defending the earth) and she intermingled with her on earth. He destroyed the borough and put off the fire. Then, Kaikhosrow, son of Siavash, again established the borough and Ardashir, son of Babak, finished the construction of the borough” [31].

The notable point is that Afrasiab established Zarang; so, it can be stated that the city has been firstly an ominous city and Afrasiab destroyed it. Finally, it was revitalized by benevolent persons.

• Vandidad and Bundaheshn:

According to Vandidad, Hirmand has been the eleventh land created by Ahura Mazda but necromancy⁵ has been common in there. “The eleventh of the best places I have created is the rich Hirmand and Genaminou started exercising necromancy therein” [17] (Vandidad, part one, paragraph 14). Bundaheshn also confirms the sayings of Vandidad [32]. It might have been called Hirmand for the reason that it was satiated by the water of Hirmand River. In religious Zoroastrian books, Sistan has been recalled with the name of Rud [river] and this has been due to the value of river in Zoroastrianism. “Water and its economic role in the formation of political systems have been discussed by a great many of historians and its valuable role has been always taken into account in respect to production method hence it was deemed holy” [33].

• Treatise of Sistan's Wonders and Values:

“Sistan's wonders and values” is a geographical treatise from before Islam with its Pahlavi text being available. In this treatise, the marvels of the city have been pointed out: 1) Sistan's wonders and values are in this regard more and better than the other cities; 2) one is that Hirmand River and Farzdan Sea and Kiyaneseh Sea⁶ and Oshadeshtar Mountain are in Sistan's territory; 3) generation and rearing of Sepitman Zoroastrians' Hushidar⁷ [34] and Hushidarmah and Soshance [is in there] and they [will] be resurrected from it; 4) another is that the bond and seed of Kiani commanders were damaged in this country; 5) amongst the sons of Fereydun, Salm who ruled Rome and Tuch who ruled Turkistan overthrew Iraj who was the king of Iran; 6) nobody was left of Iraj's offspring except a maid; 7) and, then, Fereydun took her to Fazdan Sea and hid [this secret] till the ninth bond and the maid gave birth to a son [35].

As it is clear from the lines excerpted from this treatise, the author has paid more attention to religious and mythical values of the city than Sistan's geography. In fact, as viewed by individuals like this author, Sistan has been a remarkable utopia.

• Garshaspnameh:

In a narration from Asadi, Jamshid, king of Iran, who was driven away from his country by despotic Zakhak easily gets married to the daughter of Kurang, king of Zabolestan. Therefore, Garshasp, as well, has a close kinship tie like his descendant, Rostam, with Sistan and Zabolestan. Garshasp Nameh attributes the construction of the city of Zarang to him and states that he made a big castle in the middle of the city with its top reaching the moon [4].

Asadi has described the construction of the city in the following words:

“When a month elapsed from this task, he reached the close vicinity of the water in the sea of Zareh”

“He had gathered a lot of well-known astrologists and engineers from Rome and India”

“He hired them and established the city of Zaranj and he did not take a rest even for a day and made a lot of efforts” [21]

CONCLUSION

Sistan has been one of the holy cities of the ancient world and there is only currently left a region with the same name. Books like Hodud Al-Aalam and Masalek wa Mamalek have described it in a realistic manner. However, they have not dealt with cultural and anthropological matters. In the book “Hodud Al-Aalam”, prosperity, water abundance and fruitfulness of Sistan and its great many of the artefacts like rugs and carpets have been pointed out. Furthermore, Sistan has been described as a big city with five gates but it has also been stated that it had been surrounded by a sandy desert. In Masalek wa Mamalek, Sistan's cities have been specified; but, Sistan has not been mentioned as a city amongst the other towns of the region. The ancient city of Ram has introduced a borough. This book has offered a detailed account of the city's economic status. Mythical books have offered information more about the founder of the city. The history of Sistan, Ehya'a Al-Moluk, Nozhat Al-Moluk and Garshasp Nameh realize Garshasp as the founder of the city. History of Sistan and Ehya'a Al-Moluk mention Saivastan as the old name of Sistan that means a place wherein magnanimous men live. Nozhat Al-Moluk has pointed also to the idea that Zarang has been the old name of Sistan. The history of Sistan and Ehya'a Al-Moluk have also specified the boundaries of Sistan: Bost, Rokhad, Kabul, Safzar, Bouzestan, Lavastan, Ghur, Keshmir, Gardiz, Ghaznain. The history of Sistan and Ehya'a Al-Moluk realize this city as a resistant town both for the robust construction of the city and for the chivalrous dispositions of the people in there. In these two books, Sistan's weather has been introduced as having been temperate but Nozhat Al-Qolub states that it has been warm. History of Sistan, Ehya'a Al-Moluk and Nozhat Al-Qolub have pointed to the needlessness of the people therein. History of Sistan states that the buildings of Sistan have been

⁵ Magic and sorcery (Dehkhoda, under the term “kanda”

⁶ Hamun Lake

⁷ Hushidar, Hushidarmah and Soshance are the names of Zoroaster's sons. Their embryos are at the bottom of Kiyaneseh Sea and, every one thousand

years after Zoroaster, a lady goes to Kiyaneseh sea to wash herself and she gets pregnant with one of their seeds” (Bahar, 2012, p.199).

very tall. Ehya'a Al-Moluk expresses that "the materials used for the construction of Sistan's buildings have been sand and baked mud". From the perspective of the authors of History of Sistan and Ehya'a Al-Moluk, the people of Sistan have been clever and fanatic. Ferdowsi's Shahnameh realizes Ardashir and his son, Shapour, as the founders of the borough in Sistan. The book "Iran's counties" realizes Ardashir, son of Sindbad, as the founder of Sistan and introduces Afrasiab as the founder of Zarang. The two books "vandidad" and "Bundaheshn", as well, realize Sistan as the eleventh city created by Ahura Mazda and introduce it with such a name as Hirmand. The treatise of Sistan's values and wonders has more enumerated the religious and mythical values of Sistan. It can be concluded based on this information that, except Hodud Al-Aalam and Mamalek wa Masalek whose information are more geographical in nature, mythical and religious books have information more based on the religious and mythical sacrosanctity that resided in the heart of Iran's people; therefore, they have not mentioned the sandy and desert-like nature of Sistan.

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