

# A Study of the Sasanian Province of Khūzistān at the Time of Muslim Conquest in the Seventh Century

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## Introduction

During the seventh and eighth centuries after the appearance of Islam, Muslims created a vast empire that stretched from Spain and North Africa to the borders of India. The Sasanian provinces of Iraq and Khūzistān were among the first to be conquered. Khūzistān was one of the most fertile and prosperous regions of *Ērānšahr* or the world of Iran, during the Sasanian era, as well as the time of the Muslims' conquest in the seventh century.<sup>1</sup> The province of Xūzistān or Khūzistān was mentioned in the Pahlavi text of *Šahrestānīhā ī Ērānšahr* and was one of the major provinces of the Sasanian realm.<sup>2</sup> Khūzistān was a major agricultural zone and the Sasanians paid exceptional attention to this province and invested heavily in making it an agricultural haven with a high productivity rate that could be taxed efficiently. Khūzistān along with Iraq were the breadbaskets of the Sasanian Empire and they were the most important regions to every empire that ruled the lands of Iran. This province was the scene of great imperial contributions and enormous agricultural investments during the Sasanian times. Khūzistān was the second most vital province of *Ērānšahr*, after *Āsōristān* or Iraq and its conquest by the Muslims was a huge blow to the Sasanians. The Muslim invaders were attracted to this province because of its rich agriculture and it became one of their earliest targets in the conquest of *Ērānšahr*. The Muslims raided from the garrison cities of Baṣrah and Kūfah in Iraq when they invaded this province and they opened the Iranian Plateau to later conquests.<sup>3</sup> Yet, there are barely any scholarly works on this province during the Sasanian and the Islamic times, let alone on its Muslim conquest. Therefore, Khūzistān's significance in this period mostly remains unknown. As a result, more research is needed to interpret this phase of history with the

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<sup>1</sup> G. Gnoli, *The Idea of Iran, An Essay on its Origins* (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1989), 177-8; Guy Le Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate: Mesopotamia, Persia, and Central Asia from the Moslem conquest to the time of Timur* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1905), 6; Philip Wood, *The Chronicle of Seert: Christian Historical Imagination in Late Antique Iraq* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 25.

<sup>2</sup> Touraj Daryaee, trans., *Šahrestānīhā ī Ērānšahr: A Middle Persian Text on Geography, Epic and History* (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publisher, 2002), 5.

<sup>3</sup> D. R. Hill, *The Termination of Hostilities in the Early Arab Conquests A.D. 634-656* (London: Luzac & Company LTD., 1971), 131; A. H. Zarrīnkūb, "The Arab Conquest of Iran and Its Aftermath," In *From the Arab Invasion to the Saljugs*, of *The Cambridge History of Iran*, ed. Richard N. Frye (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 4: 21.

use of both literary and non-literary sources. This research aims to fill the gap in the current historiography and to try to reconstruct the political, administrative, and geographical situations that were present in Khūzistān during this transitional period. The extent of Khūzistān's importance in both the late Sasanian and the early Islamic times, along with the process of conquest are addressed in this research. This introduction into the Muslim conquest of Khūzistān aims to contribute to the understanding of the conquest of *Ērānšahr* as a whole in order to compare it with the conquest of other Sasanian provinces such as Fārs, Sīstān, and Iraq.<sup>4</sup> To understand the processes by which the Muslims were able to conquer, defeat, and control this province, one needs to understand its topographical makeup, the office holders, and the generals who either fought or cooperated with the conquerors. It is also crucial to analyze the Sasanian records and administrative divisions of their empire, along with later geographical accounts in order to get a clear idea of how Khūzistān looked like, how it functioned, and how it was conquered.

## Historiography

A few primary literary sources focus on the province of Khūzistān during the late Sasanian era and the time of the Muslims' conquest. Most are Muslim sources that were written in the ninth and tenth centuries, long after the conquest. However, there are Syriac and Middle Persian sources contemporary to the time of the conquest as well, which rarely have been consulted in scholarly works. There are also few literary sources regarding the late Sasanian period. Nevertheless, a significant work titled *Šahrestānīhā ī Ērānšahr*, is one of the few surviving Middle Persian works on the geography of *Ērānšahr*. It was initiated in the late fifth century, however, it was completed in the late eighth to the early ninth century. This source recites the cities of *Ērānšahr*, their builders, and their significance for history, and it provides a mixture of mythical and historical information of the various regions of the world of Iran.<sup>5</sup> This text gives many details about Khūzistān in the Sasanian era, as it recites all the major cities of this province and the story behind their founding. This source is mostly independent of the Muslim materials and therefore historians could get a view of how the situation was in Khūzistān before the Arab invasion.

As regards to the literary sources that were written later about the province of Khūzistān, quite a few Islamic geographical sources thoroughly described this province. Istakhrī was a ninth-century Persian geographer and traveler, who founded the genre of *masālek* or itineraries in Islamic literature.<sup>6</sup> His only surviving work was written in Arabic and was titled *al-masālek wa'l-mamālek*. It gives many details about his stay in Khūzistān, describes all the big cities of this province one by one, and emphasizes on the agriculture and various products of this

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<sup>4</sup> Touraj Daryaee, "The Fall of the Sāsānian Empire and the End of Late Antiquity: Continuity and Change in the Province of Persis," (PhD diss., University of California Los Angeles, 1999), 5; Edmund C. Bosworth, *Sīstān under the Arabs: from the Islamic Conquest to the Rise of the Šaffārids (30-250/651-864)* (Rome: IsMEO, 1968), 32; Michael G. Morony, *Iraq After the Muslim Conquest* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984), 11.

<sup>5</sup> Daryaee, trans., *Šahrestānīhā ī Ērānšahr*, 24.

<sup>6</sup> Istakhrī, *Mamalek o Masaalek*, ed. Iraj Afshar (Tehran: Mahmood Afshar Foundation, 1994),

province.<sup>7</sup> His work shows many traces of pre-Islamic history and it provides many details about late Sasanian Khūzistān as well as early Islamic Khūzistān. Ibn Khordādbēh was another ninth-century Persian geographer, whose work is the first surviving administrative geography of the Islamic period. Ibn Khordādbēh's *al-masālek wa'l-mamālek* provides vast amounts of information about agriculture, geography, administration, and tax rates in Khūzistān and it is a great source to investigate this province during the late Sasanian and the early Islamic periods.<sup>8</sup> Ibn Khordādbēh described major trade routes of the Islamic empire including many cities of Khūzistān and talked a great deal about this province in pre-Islamic times as well.<sup>9</sup> Ibn Ḥawqal was also a celebrated Muslim geographer, traveler, and writer of the tenth century, who described the province of Khūzistān in details in his work, *Surat al-Ard*.<sup>10</sup> He largely incorporated the works of Ibn Khordādbēh and Istakhrī in his narrative. He claimed that he corrected and revised their great works, but he also provided many new details as well.<sup>11</sup> Both Ibn Khordādbēh and Ibn Ḥawqal provide eyewitness accounts and therefore are very valuable sources in describing the situation of Khūzistān in the early Islamic times. Istakhrī, along with other accounts, used pre-Islamic sources and described Khūzistān in details before and after the Muslim conquest, which makes these geographical reports extremely treasured sources in the study of Khūzistān at the time of the conquest.

Regarding conquest literature, al-Ṭabarī is the most important source in the study of the Islamic conquest of Khūzistān and its aftermath. He condensed the vast wealth of the historical erudition of previous generations of Muslim scholars and laid the foundations for the historical sciences with his enormous book, *Ta'rīkh al-Rusūl wa al-Mulūk*, which is a universal history from the time of Qur'anic creation to 915 CE.<sup>12</sup> Al-Ṭabarī wrote his book in the beginning of the tenth century, and he is known for his comprehensiveness and citation of multiple accounts, even though they are sometimes contradictory. He gave a whole chapter on the conquest of Khūzistān, detailing all major battles, negotiations, and peace treaties from the point of view of Muslim victors, which makes it a greatly valued source. Al-Balādhurī is another well-known Muslim historian for the events of the conquest, who covered the formation of the Islamic Empire. In his monumental work titled *Futūh al-Buldān*, written at the end of the ninth century, he retold the history of Muslim conquests from the time of Prophet Muhammad to his own time at the end of the ninth century.<sup>13</sup> Al-Balādhurī also presented a whole chapter on the conquest of Khūzistān and gave detailed descriptions of the invasion of all cities of this province. A rare non-Muslim source on the conquest of Khūzistān is *The Khuzestan Chronicle*, which is a vital seventh-century Syriac chronicle by an anonymous Nestorian writer that covers the history of this province from the reign of the Sasanian king Hormīzd IV (579-89 CE) to the middle of the

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<sup>7</sup> O. G. Bolshakov, "Estakrī, Abū Eshāq Ebrāhīm," *Encyclopædia Iranica* 8, no.6 (1998): 646-647.

<sup>8</sup> Ibn Khordādbēh, *Ketāb al-masālek wa'l-mamālek* (Tehran, 1991), 33-34.

<sup>9</sup> Edmund C. Bosworth, "Ebn Kordādbēh, Abu'l-Qāsem 'Obayd-Allāh," *Encyclopædia Iranica* 8, no.1 (1997): 37-38.

<sup>10</sup> Ibn Ḥawqal, *Ṣūrat al-ard*, trans. Jafar Shiar (Tehran: Bonyad-e Farhang-e Iran, 1966), 31.

<sup>11</sup> Anas B. Khalidov, "Ebn Ḥawqal, Abu'l-Qāsem Mohammad," *Encyclopædia Iranica* 8, no.1 (1997): 27-28.

<sup>12</sup> al-Ṭabarī, *The History of al-Ṭabarī (Ta'rīkh al-rusul wa 'l-mulūk): The Conquest of Iran*, trans. G. Rex Smith (New York: State University of New York Press, 1994), 14: xiv.

<sup>13</sup> al-Balādhurī, *Futūh al-Buldān, The Origins of the Islamic State*, trans. Philip Khūri Hitti (New York: AMS Press, 1968), 1: 6.

seventh century and the early Muslim conquests.<sup>14</sup> It details both political and ecclesiastical matters and most importantly entails the Muslim conquest of Khūzistān and the resistance put up by the governor of this province, Hormozān.<sup>15</sup> This chronicle starts before the Arab conquests and it ends after the conclusion of the invasions. *The Khuzestan Chronicle* is one of the few non-Islamic sources that directly mention the province of Khūzistān and therefore it should be studied comprehensively.

There are non-literary sources as well, such as Sasanian and Arabic-Sasanian coins, epigraphic, seals, and archaeological finds that could help clarify our literary sources. Official seals and administrative Bulle give details about the administrative and geographical divisions of Khūzistān in the late Sasanian times.<sup>16</sup> Sasanian silver coins are also great examples that could help scholars investigate the chronology of events, as well as the level of prosperity in each region, from the time of Khosrow II to Yazdgerd III, specifically in the cities of Khūzistān.<sup>17</sup> After the end of the conquest, Arab-Sasanian coins found in this province also show the scope of domination of Muslim rulers throughout this region. They also show that the new rulers were still using the taxation and administration system of the Sasanians to rule their subjects effectively. Inscriptions, ceramics, and archaeological artifacts also help to meld together the various accounts of events into accurate and cohesive historical narratives. Khūzistān is one of the most heavily excavated regions of Iran in terms of archaeology, mostly because of the curiosity over the Elamites and the patterns of living in early civilizations. Consequently, numerous Sasanian and Islamic archaeological materials were found in this process too, which are crucial in the study of this region. Inscriptions and archeological evidences such as remains of armors or other military equipment, as well as settlement patterns, irrigation systems, and even landscapes could help scholars clear a more coherent path and provide productive starting points for analyzing.<sup>18</sup> Especially when placed in a dialogue with literary and textual sources, these findings are very valuable in creating a clear picture of Khūzistān in the late Sasanian and the early Islamic times.

Very few scholarly works have focused explicitly on the eminence of Khūzistān in the Sasanian or the Islamic times. Most secondary sources that do discuss this province, center it at a broader context as one the provinces of *Ērānšahr*, and do not go into details about the critical role of this province to both the Sasanians and the Muslims. However, there are still those works, which had contributed a chapter or section to this province. Guy Le Strange's *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, published in 1905, examines Khūzistān in one of his chapters. He acknowledged it as one of the main provinces of Post-Conquest Iran and gave a detailed description of its famous cities such as Šūš, Šūštar, and Gondēšāpūr.<sup>19</sup> Robert Göbl's *Sasanian Numismatics*, published in 1971 gives a comprehensive and greatly illustrated introduction to the

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<sup>14</sup> The Khuzestan Chronicle, In “Un nuovo testo siriano sulla storia degli ultimi Sassanidi,” trans. and ed. Ignazio Guidi, Proceedings of the Eighth International Congress of Orientalists, held in 1899 in Stockholm: Semetic Section (B) (Leiden: 1893), 15.

<sup>15</sup> The Khuzestan Chronicle, 21.

<sup>16</sup> P. Gignoux, “Les collections de sceaux et de Bulles Sassanides de la Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris,” In *La Persia nel Medioevo. Convegno internazionale sul tema la Persia nel medioevo Roma* (Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1971), 24, 535-42.

<sup>17</sup> Robert Göbl, *Sasanian Numismatics* (Braunschweig: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1971), 82-83.

<sup>18</sup> Daniel T. Potts, *The Archaeology of Elam: Formation and Transformation of an Ancient Iranian State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 410-431.

<sup>19</sup> Le Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, 233, 246.

Sasanian numismatics.<sup>20</sup> He specifically analyzed the Sasanian silver coins from the region of Khūzistān, and gave detailed descriptions about identifying the mint types of each city.<sup>21</sup> Rika Gyselen's *La Géographie Administrative de L'Empire Sassanide: Les témoignages sigillographiques* (Administrative Geography of the Sasanian Empire: The sigillographic testimonials), published in 1989, focuses on the Sasanian official seals and how they could help us better understand the administrative divisions and the geography of the Sasanian Empire. The author mentioned many regions of Khūzistān such as Ērān-Xvarrah-Šāpūr (Karkeh de Lēdān), Vēh-Antiōk-Šāpūr (Gondēšāpūr), Bēth Houzayē (Šūštar), Hormizd-Ardašīr (Ahwāz), and Susiana (Šūš), and the name of the officials who governed over these areas.<sup>22</sup> Gyselen demonstrated many different seals from collections all over the world and broadened our understanding of the Sasanian administration, the geography, and the official titles, which could help us better understand late Sasanian Khūzistān. Peter Christensen's *The Decline of Iranshahr: Irrigation and Environments in the History of the Middle East 500 B.C. to A.D. 1500*, published in 1993, discusses the trends of irrigated agriculture and populations settlements in between the Euphrates in Iraq and the Amu Darya River in Central Asia.<sup>23</sup> He focused on the province of Khūzistān in one of his chapters as one of the greatest centers of agriculture in the Sasanian and the Islamic times and the enormous efforts of the Sasanian in cultivating this province and raising the productivity of agriculture in order to increase the tax revenues accordingly.<sup>24</sup>

In another similar work, published in 1999, Daniel T. Potts' *The Archaeology of Elam: Formation and Transformation of an Ancient Iranian State* looks at Khūzistān from early times in the Elamites era, and follows the history of this region all the way to the Sasanian and the Islamic times based on archaeological findings.<sup>25</sup> He designated a whole chapter on archaeological findings of the late Sasanian and the early Islamic periods and concluded that based on ceramic, pottery and many other finds, these two periods are almost identical.<sup>26</sup> One of the rare pieces of scholarship focused exclusively on the conquest of Khūzistān, is Chase Robinson's "The Conquest of Khūzistān: A Historiographical Reassessment," written in 2004, which offers some insight into the conquest of this province and how various sources depicted this event.<sup>27</sup> He heavily used Arabic sources such as al-Ṭabarī, al-Balādhurī and al-Ya'qūbī, but focused mainly also on *The Khuzestan chronicle* as well.<sup>28</sup> Robinson attempted to show that the Syriac sources could vindicate and repudiate the Arabic sources. However, he failed to use Middle Persian sources along with non-literary materials, which weakened his argument. He was also most concerned about clarifying the chronology and the order of event, which is admirable, but at the same time, he failed to bring up any paramount political and social issues after the conquest of Khūzistān.

<sup>20</sup> Göbl, *Sasanian Numismatics*, 3.

<sup>21</sup> Göbl, *Sasanian Numismatics*, 82-83.

<sup>22</sup> Rika Gyselen, *La Géographie Administrative de L'Empire Sassanide: Les témoignages sigillographiques* (Paris: Groupe Pour L'Étude de la Civilisation du Moyen-Orient, 1989), 74-75.

<sup>23</sup> Peter Christensen, *The Decline of Iranshahr: Irrigation and Environments in the History of the Middle East 500 B.C. to A.D. 1500* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 1993), 12.

<sup>24</sup> Christensen, *The Decline of Iranshahr*, 107-111.

<sup>25</sup> Potts, *The Archaeology of Elam*, 9.

<sup>26</sup> Potts, *The Archaeology of Elam*, 410-431; Robert M. Adams, and Donald P. Hansen, "Archaeological Reconnaissance and Soundings in Jundi Shahpur," *Ars Orientalis* 7 (1968): 53-4.

<sup>27</sup> Chase F. Robinson, "The Conquest of Khūzistān: A Historiographical Reassessment," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 67, no. 1 (2004): 17.

<sup>28</sup> Robinson, "The Conquest of Khūzistān," 30-35.

All these works provide a very dim light onto the situation of this province in the late Sasanian and the early Islamic times. Each work concentrates on one aspect of either Islamic or Syriac sources and they would ignore other authorities such as Sasanian or non-literary sources. The province of Khūzistān should be studied with both literary and non-literary sources in mind, in order to facilitate a better understanding of how this province was administered before the Muslims' time and how it was subjugated by the conquerors. Therefore, an extensive study of Khūzistān should be conducted in the late Sasanian era, before investigating this province at the time of the Muslims' conquest.

## **Late Sasanian Khūzistān**

### Geography and Climate

The Province of Khūzistān is located northwest of the province of Fārs and southeast of Iraq. This region is an extension of the Mesopotamia plain and it lies at the head of the Persian Gulf and borders the Zagros Mountains to the northeast. This territory has significant ecological advantages due to the Zagros Mountains preventing the westerly air masses of Mediterranean origin, from leaving this plateau.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, Khūzistān receives above-average precipitation and several major rivers run from the base of Zagros Mountains, pass through the Khūzistān plain, and feed its lands. The most important river in this province is the Karun River, which is the only navigable river in Iran, along with many smaller rivers such as Dez River, Karkeh River, and bountiful manmade canals and waterways. This province consists of two major parts; the hills and mountainous lands in the north and the plain and marsh fields in the south. Khūzistān has a hot and wet climate, however, the rainfall in winters stores into the mountains and many rivers that spawn from these mountains in the north allow for an irrigated agricultural system in the south.<sup>30</sup> There is no snow in this province throughout the year and water does not freeze except in the mountainous regions to the east, which is an exception.<sup>31</sup>

The name of Khūzistān means 'the land of Khūz' and the name Khūz or Hūz comes from the ancient Elamites that lived in this region from the third millennium BCE until the coming of Achaemenids in 539 BCE.<sup>32</sup> In Sassanian times, Khūzistān was among the regions of *Ērānšahr* mentioned by the second Sasanian king, Shapur I, in Naqš-e Rostam inscriptions (ŠKZ) in the third century. He put Khūzistān right after the provinces of Persis and Parthia, the homelands of

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<sup>29</sup> W. B. Fisher, "Physical Geography," In *The Land of Iran*, of *The Cambridge History of Iran*, ed. W. B. Fisher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 1: 33.

<sup>30</sup> Robert J. Wenke, "Imperial Investments and Agricultural Developments in Parthian and Sasanian Khuzestan: 150 B.C. to A.D. 640," *Mesopotamia 10-11 (1975-76)*: 82; W. Floor, "Le Karun et l'irrigation de plaine d'Ahvaz," *Studia Iranica* 28 (1999): 115.

<sup>31</sup> W. Barthold, *An Historical Geography of Iran*, trans. Svat Soucek, ed. C. E. Bosworth (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 184-5; al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsān al-Taqāsīm fī Ma'rifat al-Aqālīm*, *The Best Divisions for Knowledge of the Regions*, trans. and ed. Basil Anthony Collins (Reading, United Kingdom: Garnet Publishing Limited, 1994), 368.

<sup>32</sup> Potts, *The Archaeology of Elam*, 309; I. M. Diakonoff, "Elam," In *The Median and Achaemenian Periods*, of *The Cambridge History of Iran*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 2: 23; Gyselen, *La Géographie Administrative de L'Empire Sassanide*, 74; Edmund C. Bosworth, et al. eds., *The Encyclopedia of Islam* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986), 5: 80; Ahmad Kasravi Tabrizi, *500 Years History of Khuzestan* (Tehran: Kaju Publication, 1983), 71.

the Sasanians and the Arsacids, which attests to its significance.<sup>33</sup> Kartīr or Kerdīr, the most prominent third-century Zoroastrian priest, also placed this province among the regions of *Ērānšahr* in his inscriptions at Naqš-e Rājab (NRj) as well.<sup>34</sup> The Sasanian king Nāreseh, in the fourth century, mentioned Khūzistān in the Pāikūlī inscriptions (NPi), and emphasized on its strategic importance in providing easy access to Āsōristān (Iraq) and underlined guarding of this vital passage.<sup>35</sup> The first Sasanian king, Ardašīr I, made Khūzistān into a *šahr* or province in the beginning of the Sasanian rule, however, the Khūzistān mentioned in ŠKZ in the beginning of the third century was definitely meant in a broader context than Khūzistān at the end of the sixth and seventh centuries.<sup>36</sup> This province along with Iraq had many Christian centers and the Church of the East, as indicated in Syriac texts, knew this region as Bēth Houzayē or Hūzestān with the metropolitan seat in the center of the province. In the early fifth century, Christian sources divided Bēth Houzayē or Khūzistān into five dioceses; one metropolis and four sub-regions.<sup>37</sup> Syriac and Pahlavi records as well as seals and Bullae evidence show various Sasanian officials and their different functions in late Sasanian Khūzistān. This province had many major and flourishing cities and towns in the Sasanian period as well as after the Muslims' conquest.<sup>38</sup> However, it is certain that the boundaries between regions were changing and the hesitation of Muslim geographers in assigning cities and sub-regions to this province is evident to that.

### Agriculture

Khūzistān was an essential center for the Sasanians since it contained many agricultural projects in order to ensure the region's productivity. It was specially a rich agricultural province before the conquest and it continued to thrive even after the invasion. Rivers of Karun, Karkeh, Dez, Jarrahī, and Hedyphon along with many other hydraulic manmade canals and waterways made this province into an agricultural haven.<sup>39</sup> Sugar was the main product of this province,

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<sup>33</sup> Philip Huyse, *Royal Inscriptions with their Parthian and Greek Versions: Texts I – Die dreisprachige Inschrift Šābuhrs I an der Ka'ba-i Zardušt (ŠKZ)* (London: School of oriental and african studies, 1999), 11; Rika Gyselen, "New Evidence for Sasanian Numismatics: the Collection of Ahmad Saeedi," *Res Orientales* 16 (2004): 53.

<sup>34</sup> Prods Oktor Skjærvø, "Case in Inscriptional Middle Persian, Inscriptional Parthian and the Pahlavi Psalter," *Studia Iranica* 12 (1983): 153; Prods Oktor Skjærvø, "Kartir," *Encyclopædia Iranica* 15, no. 6 (2011): 616; D. N. MacKenzie, "The Kartir Inscriptions," In W. B. Henning Memorial Volume (London: Lund Humphries, 1970), 264.

<sup>35</sup> Helmut Humbach and Prods Oktor Skjaervo, *The Sasanian Inscription of Paikuli* (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1983), 37-8.

<sup>36</sup> Gyselen, *La Géographie Administrative de L'Empire Sassanide*, 74.

<sup>37</sup> Wilhelm Eilers, "Iran and Mesopotamia," In *The Seleucid, Parthian and Sasanian Periods, of The Cambridge History of Iran*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 3(I): 499; Gyselen, *La Géographie Administrative de L'Empire Sassanide*, 74.

<sup>38</sup> Christell Jullien, "Contribution de Actes des Martyrs Perses a la géographie historique et a l'administration de l'Empire Sassanide," In *Contributions a l'histoire et la géographie historique de l'Empire Sassanide*, ed. Rika Gyselen (Bures-sur-Yvette: Groupe pour l'étude de la civilisation du Moyen-Orient, 2004), 148.

<sup>39</sup> Richard N. Frye, "The Political History of Iran under the Sasanians," In *The Seleucid, Parthian and Sasanian Periods, of The Cambridge History of Iran*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 3(I): 131; Christopher Brunner, "Geographical and Administrative Divisions:

which was exported to all of *Ērānšahr*.<sup>40</sup> Even in the early Islamic times, Khūzistān held the monopoly of sugar cane among all other provinces.<sup>41</sup> Regular products of this province also included rice, barely, wheat, dates, beans, cotton, and various kinds of fruits. Rice was taxed at the same rate as barley and wheat in the beginning of the Islamic times, which shows its prominence and importance.<sup>42</sup> Rice and sugar were highly profitable products and were cultivated more than any other grains and garden fruits. Rice breads were a common food for the people of Khūzistān in the late Sasanian and the early Islamic times.<sup>43</sup> The baking of these breads was introduced in the Sasanian times at the latest and the Muslim geographers reported that people of this province were so accustomed to this type of bread that if they ate wheat bread, it made them sick.<sup>44</sup> There are mentions of production of great quantities of rice, sugar, and sesame in this period, which further indicates the presence of a strong irrigation system. Sugar and rice were extremely labor and water intensive and they required effective labor, adequate water control, transportation, processing, and direct taxation.<sup>45</sup> Most narrative sources include the extent of irrigation systems as one of the main features of Khūzistān. Ibn Ḥawqal, al-Ya'qūbī, Ibn Rustah, and Istakhrī all described the rivers of Khūzistān and emphasized their value in creating suitable agricultural lands.<sup>46</sup> Khūzistān along with Mesopotamia were the breadbaskets of the Sasanian Empire, just as Egypt was for the Romans, and their loss to the Muslims was a severe blow that crumbled the Sasanians and ensured the victory of the invaders.

Introduction of rice and sugar in the Sasanian era was a break from the traditional barley and wheat crops and it greatly increased profits from taxation for the Sasanians. Use of these cash crops by the end of the Sasanian era was an indication of a changing economy pushing towards commercialization.<sup>47</sup> The Sasanians instituted imperial forms of taxation, which was to effectively generate revenues for the central government.<sup>48</sup> These new crops meant a new market economy, which led to the expansion of irrigations systems from the late Sasanian to the early Islamic eras. The Sasanian government increased the efficiency of these water systems, which resulted in a boost in production and thus an increase in the population growth.<sup>49</sup> This was a

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Settlements and Economy,” In *The Seleucid, Parthian and Sasanian Periods*, of *The Cambridge History of Iran*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 3(II): 753-4.

<sup>40</sup> Barthold, *An Historical Geography of Iran*, 185.

<sup>41</sup> Bosworth, et al. eds., *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, 5: 80.

<sup>42</sup> Marius Canard, “Rice in Middle East in the First Centuries of Islam,” In *Production and the Exploitation of Resources*, ed. Michael G. Morony (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 154.

<sup>43</sup> Ibn Hawqal, *Ṣūrat al-arḍ*, 26; Istakhrī, *Mamalek o Masaalek*, 83; al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsān al-Taqāsīm*, 369; Canard, “Rice in Middle East in the First Centuries of Islam,” 159.

<sup>44</sup> Ibn Ḥawqal, *Ṣūrat al-arḍ*, 381; al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsān al-Taqāsīm*, 354; Istakhrī, *Mamalek o Masaalek*, 91.

<sup>45</sup> Wenke, “Imperial Investments and Agricultural Developments,” 41.

<sup>46</sup> Ibn Ḥawqal, *Ṣūrat al-arḍ*, 22-3; Ibn Rustah, *Kitāb al-A'lāk an-Nafīsa*, *Les Atours précieux*, trans. Gaston Wiet (Cairo: la Societe de Geographie d'egypte, 1955), 98-107; al-Ya'qūbī, *Kitāb al-kharāj*, trans. Ben A. Shemesh (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), 117; Istakhrī, *Mamalek o Masaalek*, 82.

<sup>47</sup> Potts, *The Archaeology of Elam*, 358; Khodadad Rezakhani, “Empires and Microsystems: Late Antique Regional Economy in Central and West Asia, 500-750,” (PhD diss., University of California Los Angeles, 2010), 218.

<sup>48</sup> Robert J. Wenke, “Elymeans, Parthians, and the Evolution of Empires in Southwestern Iran,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 101, no. 3 (1981): 304, 313.

<sup>49</sup> James A. Neely, “Sasanian and Early Islamic Water Control and Irrigation Systems on the Deh Luran Plain, Iran,” In *Production and the Exploitation of Resources*, ed. Michael G. Morony (Aldershot:





gradual and eventual process, and it took many generations of the Sasanian kings to complete it. Khosrow II was one of these Sasanian kings that greatly expanded the agricultural productivity of Khūzistān in the seventh century. This trend continued into the early Islamic era and it is evident by the abundance of Muslim geographers' accounts describing Khūzistān's abundance of agricultural products. Many tax seals from various cities of this province suggest a prosperous region with a high tax yield for the Sasanian government.<sup>50</sup> The Sasanian government held a firm control over this province and maintained it constantly because of its high productivity and profits.<sup>51</sup> The Sasanian economic changes that led to a huge increase in production were successful and led to an increase in taxation and economic growth, which the incoming Muslims adopted it as well.<sup>52</sup> Khūzistān and especially its capital city of Gondēšāpūr had one of the highest populations in the late Sasanian and the early Islamic times.<sup>53</sup> Most of the population was drawn to the big cities such as Gondēšāpūr, Šūš, and Šūštar.<sup>54</sup> The population patterns also suggest that the late Sasanian and the early Islamic eras were almost identical.<sup>55</sup> Muslim geographers, Ibn Khordādbēh and al-Muqaddasī, reported that the tax of the whole province was fifty million silver dirhams at the end of the Sasanian times and forty-nine million in the ninth century under governorship of al-Faḍl ibn Marwān.<sup>56</sup> This suggests that the taxation from agricultural products did not change significantly with the collapse of the Sasanian Empire. It also strongly advocates that the Sasanian administrators and tax collectors had to stay in power for the revenues to be collected efficiently. Ibn Ḥawqal also mentioned the collection of thirty million silver dirhams in 969 CE under governorship of Abūfaḍl Shirazī.<sup>57</sup> Beside the initial phase of the conquest, this region was clearly not in decline by the end of the Sasanian era into the early Islamic period.

## Economy

Khūzistān was the scene of intense state investment and involvement and this could be attested based on a variety of seals and coins that are found in this province. Archaeological

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Ashgate, 2002), 254, 269; Brunner, "Geographical and Administrative Divisions," 754; Robert M. Adams, "Agriculture and urban life in early southwestern Iran," *Science* 136 (1962): 118-9; Robert J. Wenke, "Western Iran in the Partho-Sasanian Period: The Imperial Transformation," In *Archaeology of Western Iran: Settlement and Society from Prehistory to the Islamic Conquest*, ed. Frank Hole (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1987), 257.

<sup>50</sup> Gyselen, "New Evidence for Sasanian Numismatics," 85.

<sup>51</sup> Wenke, "Western Iran in the Partho-Sasanian Period," 259.

<sup>52</sup> Rezakhani, "Empires and Microsystems," 4, 218; Adams, "Agriculture and urban life in early southwestern Iran," 118; Remy Boucharlat, "Suse á l'époque sasanide. Une capitale prestigieuse devenue ville de province," *Mesopotamia* 22 (1987): 365.

<sup>53</sup> Wenke, "Imperial Investments and Agricultural Developments," 97; Wenke, "Elymeans, Parthians, and the Evolution of Empires in Southwestern Iran," 304.

<sup>54</sup> Wenke, "Elymeans, Parthians, and the Evolution of Empires in Southwestern Iran," 313.

<sup>55</sup> Wenke, "Imperial Investments and Agricultural Developments," 138.

<sup>56</sup> Ibn Khordādbēh, *Ketāb al-masālek wa'l-mamālek*, 33-34; al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsān al-Taqāsīm*, 372.

<sup>57</sup> Ibn Ḥawqal, *Ṣūrat al-arḍ*, 31.

materials suggest that the end of the Sasanian period was almost identical to the early Islamic period and they cannot be told apart unless there are identifiable objects such as seals or coins.<sup>58</sup> This points out to the issue of economic continuity between these two periods in Khūzistān. Archaeological evidence also point to the heavy cultivation of crops such as rice and sugar as well, which confirms the literary sources. Towards the end of the Sasanian period, there seem to be an increase of immigration into major cities and a decline of population in rural areas.<sup>59</sup> Even though there is an increase of production in agricultural goods and a stable economy, urban areas attracted most of the population and many of the rural areas were depopulated.<sup>60</sup> Sasanian urban and agricultural sites were mostly in western Khūzistān with the exception of Rām-Ohrmozd.<sup>61</sup> Scholars estimate that by the end of the Sasanian period as many as one hundred thousand people, if not more, lived in this province.<sup>62</sup> These facts point out to a great agricultural economy, which was in growth.

Enormous amounts of coins that have been discovered further emphasize the significance of Khūzistān to the Sasanian and the Muslim rulers. There are six different types of Sasanian silver coins found in this province, which further asserts the influence of this province in terms of trade and economy. In comparison to other provinces of *Ērānšahr*, *Āsōristān* (Iraq) and *Khurāsān* had four types of mints and only Media and Fārs surpassed Khūzistān by seven types of coins. Khūzistān coin mints include AW/AWH (Hormizd-Ardašīr /Ahwāz), AY/AYL (*Ērān-Xvarrah-Šāpūr* and *Šūš*), LAM (Rām-Ohrmazd), LYW (Rev-Ardašīr), WH (*Vēh-Antiōk-Šāpūr / Gondēšāpūr*), and finally the general mint of HWC (Khūzistān region/Bēth Houzayē).<sup>63</sup> Multiple Sasanian hoards have been discovered, and most of the times a great portion of them belong to the province of Khūzistān. Twenty percent of the Khosrow II coins come from Khūzistān and based on their weight, which is around four grams, they are definitely from the late Sasanian period and not part of the Arab-Sasanian coins.<sup>64</sup> There is a great wealth of late Sasanian coins in major cities of Khūzistān, and many Arab-Sasanian coins were also produced by the Muslims after the fall of the Sasanian for many decades.<sup>65</sup> These Arab-Sasanian coins usually were the same as the late Sasanian coins except that they had some Arabic inscriptions. Arab-Sasanian coins were made mostly from silver but sometimes from copper too. There is a vast amount of Arab-Sasanian copper coins also discovered in *Šūš*, Khūzistān, which is only comparable with the coins found in *Estakhr*, Fārs. The fifty-four copper coins had the same design and production materials as the late Sasanian coins, which suggest that the same coin makers produced them

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<sup>58</sup> Andrew M. Watson, "A Medieval Green Revolution: New Crops and Farming Techniques in the Early Islamic World," In *Production and Exploitation of Resources*, ed. Michael G. Morony (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 243; Abas Moghaddam, and Negin Miri, "Archaeological Surveys in the 'Eastern Corridor,' South-Western Iran," *Iran* 45 (2007): 48.

<sup>59</sup> Wenke, "Imperial Investments and Agricultural Developments," 134; Wenke, "Western Iran in the Partho-Sasanian Period," 253.

<sup>60</sup> Moghaddam, and Miri, "Archaeological Surveys in the 'Eastern Corridor,' South-Western Iran," 51; Adams, and Hansen, "Archaeological Reconnaissance and Soundings in Jundi Shahpur," 65.

<sup>61</sup> Moghaddam, and Miri, "Archaeological Surveys in the 'Eastern Corridor,' South-Western Iran," 48.

<sup>62</sup> Christensen, *The Decline of Iranshahr*, 112.

<sup>63</sup> Hodge Mehdi Malek, "A Survey of Research on Sasanian Numismatics," *The Numismatic Chronicle* 153 (1993): 242-3; Göbl, *Sasanian Numismatics*, 82-3.

<sup>64</sup> Hodge Mehdi Malek, "A Seventh Century Hoard of Sasanian Drachms," *Iran* 31 (1993): 80-82.

<sup>65</sup> Göbl, *Sasanian Numismatics*, 82-3.

only under different masters.<sup>66</sup> These findings indicate some sort of continuity in the administration and economic life of Khūzistān from the late Sasanian into the early Islamic times. Khūzistān was in between the trade route from Iraq to Fārs, and therefore many of its cities were very well maintained, even after the Muslims' conquest.<sup>67</sup> For these reasons, and in order to understand the Muslim conquest of Khūzistān better, major cities and sub-districts of this province in the late Sasanian era are examined further ahead based on Pahlavi, Syriac, and Islamic sources.

## City Centers

### Gondēšāpūr

Gondēšāpūr, or as it was known by its Syriac name Bēth Lapat, was the administrative capital of Khūzistān in the Sasanian era. It was founded as Vēh-Antiōk-Šāpūr ('Antioch made better by Shapur') around 260 CE, and as the name suggests it was constructed by the second Sasanian king, Shapur I, for the Roman captives brought from Syria.<sup>68</sup> It was built on a pre-existing village called Bylt or Pilābād in between Šūš and Šūštar, also to serve as a summer residence for the Sasanians.<sup>69</sup>

There is no evidence of pre-Sasanian occupation and the archaeological evidence suggests that it was no later than the third century that it was first resided.<sup>70</sup> The Dez River crossed nearby the city and it provided ample water for its many canals and waterways. The fortifications of the city were not that substantial, even though, there were two levels of walls, which suggest a royal citadel, and outer defensive walls. The city was in a rectangular shape and the river and a canal protected the western side and an inner ramp, a moat, and outer walls defended the other three sides. Based on its large rectangular size, archaeologists deduced that it had to be the administrative capital of Khūzistān.<sup>71</sup> Bēth Lapat was the metropolis of Bēth Houzayē or Khūzistān in the Canon XXI of the Council of Mar 'Ishaq in 410 CE.<sup>72</sup> The city is mentioned again in ten different synods until the end of the Sasanian reign in the seventh century.<sup>73</sup> Forty Martyrs were reported to be from Bēth Lapat who were killed in the reign of Shapur II in the fourth century.<sup>74</sup> Traditional transfers of Romans and Christian prisoners from

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<sup>66</sup> Rika Gyselen, *Arab-Sasanian Copper Coinage* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000), 19, 145-9.

<sup>67</sup> Moghaddam, and Miri, "Archaeological Surveys in the 'Eastern Corridor,' South-Western Iran," 49.

<sup>68</sup> Daryaee, trans., *Šahrestānīhā ī Ērānšahr*, 27, 68.

<sup>69</sup> Gyselen, *La Géographie Administrative de L'Empire Sassanide*, 74; Daryaee, trans., *Šahrestānīhā ī Ērānšahr*, 27, 68; Adams, and Hansen, "Archaeological Reconnaissance and Soundings in Jundi Shahpur," 53-4.

<sup>70</sup> Adams, and Hansen, "Archaeological Reconnaissance and Soundings in Jundi Shahpur," 53-70.

<sup>71</sup> Wenke, "Imperial Investments and Agricultural Developments," 134.

<sup>72</sup> J. B. Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, Ou, *Recueil De Synodes Nestoriens* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1902), 272-3.

<sup>73</sup> Chronicle of Sīrt, in "Histoire nestorienne inédite: Chronique de Séert, Première partie (I)," of *Patrologia Orientalis*, trans. Addāi Scher (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1908), 4: 309-10; Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, 283, 285, 306, 315, 330-1, 366, 368, 423.

<sup>74</sup> Jullien, "Contribution de Actes des Martyrs Perses," 149.



Syria by Shapur I and Shapur II are indicated many times into the city of Vēh-Andiyōk-Šāpūr.<sup>75</sup> Persians and Romans both practiced this act, and recent studies suggest that the shortage of labor lead the Sasanians to transfer prisoners into their empire for economic reasons.<sup>76</sup> This practice continues all the way before the Muslim conquests. This further strengthens the presence of a strong agricultural system that needed an abundance of labor to sustain it.

Seal evidence and archaeological findings also shine some light into the significance of this city. There is mention of the presence of a *framadār* or “Province Administrator” in Gondēšāpūr or Vēh-Antiōk-Šāpūr in the late Sasanian period as well as the presence of a *maguh* or “Priest”.<sup>77</sup> The Sasanian mint coin of this region was WH, it was first produced during the time of the Sasanian king Wahrām IV in 388 CE, and it continued to be minted until the Islamic conquests. Archaeological materials suggest that sugarcane and rice were heavily grown in this city in both the Sasanian and the Islamic times.<sup>78</sup> The hydraulic water system of Gondēšāpūr was a wonder of the Sasanians, which was built on the Dez River by Shapur I. The textile industry also made this sub-province rich and famous.<sup>79</sup> Discovery of Samarian style pottery from the early Islamic times along with many Muslim geographical accounts suggest the continuation and survival of this major city with the coming of Muslims.<sup>80</sup> In early Islamic times, Gondēšāpūr was known for its date palms and many fields of fruits such as apricots and pears, a good weather, and an ample supply of water.<sup>81</sup> Ibn Ḥawqal reported that there are no mountains or sands in province of Khūzistān beside around Gondēšāpūr.<sup>82</sup> All these materials point to a high population, economic prosperity and a general attractiveness in early Islamic sources, which mention the antiquity of this prosperity, and its foundations in the Sasanian times.

## Šūš

Šūš, which later came to be known as Ērān-Xvarrah-Šāpūr, was another major city in Khūzistān. The Karkeh River, which is the second largest river in this province after the Karun River, passed through this city and made its soil extremely suitable for agriculture. Christian sources called it Karkeh de Lēdān, which was one of the main dioceses. They mention that Simeon Bar Sabba’e, the bishop of Seleucia-Ctesiphon was buried in this city in 339 CE.<sup>83</sup> Šūš along with Gondēšāpūr were at times the residence of the Sasanian kings besides Ctesiphon, the administrative capital of the Sasanian Empire. Šūš was actually the ancient Elamite city of Susa, but it was renamed under the Sasanian king Shapur I and made into an Iranian town.<sup>84</sup> It was named *Šūš ī Ēr-kar* (‘Šūš made Iranian’) and remained a *šharestān* or sub-province until it

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<sup>75</sup> Frye, “The Political History of Iran under the Sasanians,” 131, 137.

<sup>76</sup> Michael G. Morony, “Population Transfers between Sasanian Iran and the Byzantine Empire,” In *La Persia e Bisanzio. Atti del Convegno internazionale Roma, 14-18 ottobre 2002* (Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 2004), 162.

<sup>77</sup> Gyselen, *La Géographie Administrative de L’Empire Sassanide*, 114.

<sup>78</sup> Adams, and Hansen, “Archaeological Reconnaissance and Soundings in Jundi Shahpur,” 57-62.

<sup>79</sup> Christensen, *The Decline of Iranshahr*, 111.

<sup>80</sup> Adams, and Hansen, “Archaeological Reconnaissance and Soundings in Jundi Shahpur,” 58; Wenke, “Imperial Investments and Agricultural Developments,” 71-4.

<sup>81</sup> Ibn Ḥawqal, *Ṣūrat al-arḍ*, 28; Ibn Khordādbēh, *Ketāb al-masālek wa’l-mamālek*, 35.

<sup>82</sup> Ibn Ḥawqal, *Ṣūrat al-arḍ*, 25.

<sup>83</sup> Jullien, “Contribution de Actes des Martyrs Perses,” 156.

<sup>84</sup> Le Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, 246.

provoked the hostility of Shapur II in the early fourth century. Shapur II destroyed the city using 300 elephants, after the city revolted against the Sasanian king.<sup>85</sup> Ērān-Xvarrah-Šāpūr (‘Ērān, glory of Shapur’) was built on the ruins of Šūš by Shapur II in 360 CE and the title of *šahrestān*, or sub-province/county, was transferred from Šūš to this new city. Šūš ceased to exist, however, the new city continued to be called Šūš as well as Ērān-Xvarrah-Šāpūr.<sup>86</sup> Šūš is mentioned in the 410 synod of the Church of the East and the records indicated that when Šūš was a *šahrestān*, it was assigned a diocese and a bishop. When the title of *šahrestān* was transferred by the Sasanian administration from Šūš to Ērān-Xvarrah-Šāpūr, the Church also followed suit and assigned a new bishop to the new city. However, they did not remove the Šūš’s old bishop.<sup>87</sup> Thus, in many of the Church of the East synods, the bishop of Šūš, as well as the bishop of Karḳeh de Lēdān or Ērān-Xvarrah-Šāpūr are both indicated side by side. These two dioceses were present seven times after the synod of 410 CE until the end of the Sasanian reign.<sup>88</sup>

Based on seal evidence, there was at least three *āmārgar* or “Accountants,” in charge of taxation and official census, as well as two *maguh* or “Priests” present in Šūš in the late Sasanian era.<sup>89</sup> There is also a seal of *driyōšān jādag-gōw ud dādwar*, or “Protector of the Poor and Judge” and a seal from an *āyēnbed* or “Master of Ceremonies” present in Ērān-Xvarrah-Šāpūr as well, which asserts its vast significance to Khūzistān.<sup>90</sup> The coin mint of this region was Ay/AyL, which was first produced under Wahrām IV in the late fourth century until the end of the Sasanian rule. Shapur I and Shapur II both resettled population of Christians from Syria into this region too.<sup>91</sup> In the late Sasanian era, the population of Šūš increased heavily since many of populace from rural areas poured into major cities.<sup>92</sup>

Šūš was also known for its fabrics and weaving of silk in the Sasanian era as well as into the early Islamic times.<sup>93</sup> Many great art works such as Sasanian glassware and silver bowls are found in Šūš from the late Sasanian period.<sup>94</sup> Unfortunately, since archeologists in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were mostly interested in the Šūš from the Elamite period, they cleared away the layers from the Sasanian and the Islamic periods mostly without care. However,

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<sup>85</sup> V. G. Lukonin, “Political, Social and Administrative Institutions: Taxes and Trade,” In *The Seleucid, Parthian and Sasanian Periods*, of *The Cambridge History of Iran*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 3(II): 726.

<sup>86</sup> Gyselen, *La Géographie Administrative de L’Empire Sassanide*, 75.

<sup>87</sup> Gyselen, *La Géographie Administrative de L’Empire Sassanide*, 75.

<sup>88</sup> Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, 273, 283, 287, 311, 315, 330-1, 366, 368, 423, 478-9; Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, *Ecclesiastical Chronicle*, trans. Jean Baptiste Abbeloos and Thomas Joseph Lamy (Leuven, Belgium: C. Peeters, 1872), 3: 116.

<sup>89</sup> Gyselen, *La Géographie Administrative de L’Empire Sassanide*, 35-36, 39.

<sup>90</sup> Gyselen, *La Géographie Administrative de L’Empire Sassanide*, 113.

<sup>91</sup> al-Mas’ūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab wa ma’ādin al-jawhar*, *Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems*, trans. Charles Pellat (Beirut: Universite Libanaise, 1966), 2: 185-6.

<sup>92</sup> Wenke, “Imperial Investments and Agricultural Developments,” 138.

<sup>93</sup> Ibn Hawqal, *Šūrat al-arḍ*, 28; Istakhrī, *Mamalek o Masaalek*, 83; al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsān al-Taqāsīm*, 370; Dorothy Shepherd, “Sasanian Art,” In *The Seleucid, Parthian and Sasanian Periods*, of *The Cambridge History of Iran*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 3(II): 1107-1108.

<sup>94</sup> Shepherd, “Sasanian Art,” 1104; Prudence Harper, “Sasanian Silver,” In *The Seleucid, Parthian and Sasanian Periods*, of *The Cambridge History of Iran*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 3(II): 1114.



archaeologists still discovered huge hordes of Sasanian coins in Šūš for both Khosrow I and Khosrow II, which could indicate that it was due to a changing economy and an increase in production.<sup>95</sup> The first hoard includes 1171 coins of Khosrow I and the second consists of 1168 coins of Khosrow II, both in jugs with Pahlavi inscriptions, which is a considerable number compared to the coins of other Sasanian kings found in Khūzistān.<sup>96</sup> Additional coins and seals also suggest that there was a continued commercial relationship between Šūš and other cities of this province such as Rev-Ardašīr and Vahman-Ardašīr.<sup>97</sup> The tomb of Prophet Daniel was in the city of Šūš and was mentioned many times in *Futūh* or conquest literature, as well as by many Muslim geographers.<sup>98</sup> However, there is no mention of this site in non-Muslim sources before or after the conquest. The city was also famous for its products of sugar and fruits such as dates and oranges in both the late Sasanian and the early Islamic periods.<sup>99</sup>

### Šūštar

Šūštar was another important city situated below the Karun River. Šūštar was famous for its great engineering works of irrigation canals and hydraulic system that passed through this city. Based on Pahlavi sources, Šūštar was built in the beginning of the fifth century by Sīsindūxt, the wife of the Sasanian king Yazdgerd I and the daughter of the Jewish exilarch, Reš Galut.<sup>100</sup> However, based on archeological findings, it is more likely that Šūštar was constructed in the third century. This city was famous for its monumental water projects and canals founded by the Sasanians. Three major dams were built in this city in the Sasanian times, and the greatest was constructed on the Karun River and was called Band-e Qayṣar, or Valerian's Bridge, which originally reached a height of 550 meters.<sup>101</sup> Shapur I used Roman prisoners of war captured along with Emperor Valerian in 260 CE, and constructed this bridge.<sup>102</sup> This monumental bridge was regarded as one of the wonders of the world by Muslim geographers, who later described this city.<sup>103</sup> There was a bishop from Šūštar and it was recognized as one of the dioceses of the Church of the East. Bishops from Šūštar were present in all ten synods after the synod of 410 CE

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<sup>95</sup> Aliy Kolesnikov, "Coinage and Taxation in Late Sasanian Iran," In *Materiaux pour l'histoire économique du Monde Iranien*, eds. Rika Gyselen and Maria Szuppe (Paris: Association pour l'Avancement des Etudes Iraniennes, 1999), 125.

<sup>96</sup> Malek, "A Survey of Research on Sasanian Numismatics," 237.

<sup>97</sup> Gignoux, "Les collections de sceaux et de Bulles Sassanides," 534-42; P Gignoux, and Rika Gyselen, *Bulles et Sceaux Sassanides de Diverses Collections* (Paris: Association pour l'Avancement des Etudes Iraniennes, 1987), 74.

<sup>98</sup> al-Ṭabarī, *The History of al-Ṭabarī (Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa 'l-mulūk): The Conquest of Iraq, Southwestern Persia, and Egypt*, trans. Gautier H. A. Juynboll (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989) 13: 147; al-Balādhurī, *Futūh al-Buldān*, 1: 115; Ibn Ḥawqal, *Ṣūrat al-arḍ*, 255; al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsān al-Taqāsīm*, 207; Istakhrī, *Mamalek o Masaalek*, 92.

<sup>99</sup> Ibn Ḥawqal, *Ṣūrat al-arḍ*, 26; Istakhrī, *Mamalek o Masaalek*, 82-3.

<sup>100</sup> Daryaee, trans., *Šahrestānīhā ī Ērānšahr*, 27.

<sup>101</sup> X. De Planhol, "Band, dam," *Encyclopædia Iranica* 3 (1988): 679.

<sup>102</sup> al-Ṭabarī, *The History of al-Ṭabarī (Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa 'l-mulūk): The Sasanids, the Byzantines, the Lakhmids, and Yemen*, trans. C. E. Bosworth (New York: State University of New York Press, 1985) 5: 30.

<sup>103</sup> Ibn Ḥawqal, *Ṣūrat al-arḍ*, 27.

until the Muslims' conquest.<sup>104</sup> Even though Šūštar was a crucial city, it did not possess its own mint coin in the Sasanian times. In early Islamic times, it produced such high quality silks that they were sent to cover Ka'ba in Mecca.<sup>105</sup> Šūštar, like many other cities in Khūzistān, also heavily cultivated Sugarcane and rice as its main products.<sup>106</sup>

### Ahwāz

Hormizd-Ardašīr, which later came to be known by its Arabic name Sūq al-Ahwāz or simply Ahwāz, was also a large and flourishing town in the province of Khūzistān. The third Sasanian king, Hormīzd I or Hormizd-Ardašīr, son of Shapur I, constructed it in the third century.<sup>107</sup> After the Karun River joined with the Dez River in the south, it passed through this city, which made it another agricultural haven. Hormizd-Ardašīr was located 60 miles south of Šūštar and was known to receive many Christian prisoners brought to Khūzistān as well.<sup>108</sup> It was regarded as one of the dioceses of Khūzistān, and it was present after the 410 synod in ten different synods of the Church of the East, which displayed its value to the Christian Church.<sup>109</sup> Hormizd-Ardašīr also had a very famous marketplace, which attracted people from all over the province to this district. The seal evidence shows that the city had an *āmārgar* or an "Accountant" in charge of collecting taxes as well. The Sasanian mint of this city was AW or AWH. This coin mint was first produced during Ardašīr II (379-83) time and it continued towards the end of the Sasanian period. Arab geographers were sometimes confused about the origins of the name of this city. Moqaddasī mentioned that Shapur I, the second Sasanian king, built the city and named half of the city after God and the other half after himself, therefore Ōhrmazd-Ardašīr.<sup>110</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, however, indicated that Ardašīr I, the founder of the Sasanian Empire, rebuilt the city and named it Hormoz-Ardašīr.<sup>111</sup> In any case, the city turned into the administrative capital of Khūzistān after the fall of the Sasanians in the early Islamic times and it came to be known as Ahwāz.<sup>112</sup> Like other cities in this province, Ahwāz was also famed for its agricultural crops and products.

### Rām-Hormoz

Rām-Hormoz was a city in the province of Khūzistān bordering the province of Fārs in the east. It was a particularly mountainous region in comparison to the rest of the province, which meant a cooler climate. The Sasanian king Hormozd I, founded Rām-Hormoz similar to

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<sup>104</sup> Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, 273-4, 283, 285, 306, 317, 330-1, 366, 368, 423, 478; Chronicle of Sīrt, in "Histoire nestorienne inédite: Chronique de Séert, Première partie (II)," of [Patrologia Orientalis](#), trans. Addāi Scher (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1910), 5: 26.

<sup>105</sup> Ibn Ḥawqal, *Šūrat al-arḍ*, 28.

<sup>106</sup> Christensen, *The Decline of Iranshahr*, 105.

<sup>107</sup> Daryaei, trans., *Šahrestānīhā ī Ērānšahr*, 27.

<sup>108</sup> Le Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, 235; Jullien, "Contribution de Actes des Martyrs Perses," 154.

<sup>109</sup> Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, 273, 287, 306, 315-16, 330-1, 322, 350-1, 366, 368, 423, 478; Gyselen, *La Géographie Administrative de L'Empire Sassanide*, 74-75.

<sup>110</sup> al-Moqaddasī, *Aḥsān al-Taḳāsim*, 416.

<sup>111</sup> al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh al-rusul wa 'l-mulūk*, 5: 16.

<sup>112</sup> Le Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, 233.

Hormizd-Ardašīr towards the end of the third century.<sup>113</sup> It was named Rām-Hormoz or Rām-Ōhrmozd-Ardašīr meaning ‘Ardašīr’s peace of Hormozd’. The bishops of Rām-Hormoz were present in two synods of the Church of the East at the end of the sixth century.<sup>114</sup> This sub-province also possessed a coin mint titled LAM dating to at least the third century. There is also mention of transportation of populations in the late Sasanian era such as the Zūtt tribe from India.<sup>115</sup> Rām-Hormoz was known for manufacturing silk and other forms of cloth, as well as fruits and agricultural products.<sup>116</sup>

### Vahman-Ardašīr and Rev-Ardašīr

Some cities in Khūzistān had an ambiguous identity and they were sometimes counted among the districts of this province. Vahman-Ardašīr was a prosperous city, which was known to Muslims as Forāt Maysān. It was located in the southern part of Khūzistān and was situated where the rivers of Karun and Shaṭ al-‘Arab entered into the Persian Gulf.<sup>117</sup> The city was believed to have been built at the time of the first Sasanian king, Ardašīr I, in the third century. There is indication of a bishop of Vahman-Ardašīr being summoned to the 544 synod of Maysān.<sup>118</sup> This region however, was sometimes claimed to be in Maysān, Iraq and other times in Khūzistān. Ibn Khordādbēh counted it among the four sub-districts of province of Maysān.<sup>119</sup> However, it was considered as one the most prosperous regions of the Khūzistān by Ibn Ḥawqal. He mentioned that a certain type of date grew there that if eaten and followed by a drink of water, it would taste like wine.<sup>120</sup> In any case, this region produced many agricultural products and was an important center in both the Sasanian and the Islamic times. Rev-Ardašīr was another city that was founded by Ardašīr I, when he created the Sasanian Empire in the third century.<sup>121</sup> There was a considerable population of Jews, who lived in this city and made it a commercial and industrial center in the Sasanian period. There is a seal of a *marzbān* or “Defender of Borders,” which resided in this city in the fifth century as well as a *mōbad* or “District Administrator” in the same *šahrestān* or sub-province. This city had the mint type of LYW and produced many coins in the Sasanian era. However, by the time of the Muslims’ conquest, this city was less populated compared to the Sasanian times because of the movement of people to larger cities. However, it still produced various agricultural byproducts into the early Islamic period.

The province of Khūzistān and all of its major cities were a place of commerce and heavy agricultural activity towards the end of the Sasanian reign. The imperial government conducted many projects to ensure that this province continued to be beneficial to the empire, which further emphasizes its vast significance. The Sasanian administration ruled this province in an orderly fashion to ensure the most benefits from its revenues. Khūzistān along with Iraq were the most crucial provinces to the Sasanian Empire because of their income and agricultural products and

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<sup>113</sup> Daryae, trans., *Šahrestānīhā ī Ērānšahr*, 27, 67.

<sup>114</sup> Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, 368, 423.

<sup>115</sup> Brunner, “Geographical and Administrative Divisions,” 753-4.

<sup>116</sup> Ibn Ḥawqal, *Šūrat al-arḍ*, 28.

<sup>117</sup> Gyselen, *La Géographie Administrative de L’Empire Sassanide*, 76.

<sup>118</sup> Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, 321, 350.

<sup>119</sup> Ibn Khordādbēh, *Ketāb al-masālek wa’l-mamālek*, 56.

<sup>120</sup> Ibn Ḥawqal, *Šūrat al-arḍ*, 25-6.

<sup>121</sup> Daryae, trans., *Šahrestānīhā ī Ērānšahr*, 26.



their loss was devastating to the Sasanians, and they could not recover from it. Khūzistān was also a gateway into the Iranian plateau, and these reasons attracted the Muslims to conquer this province shortly after the fall of Iraq.

## The Conquest of Khūzistān

Khūzistān was the second province of *Ērānšahr* that fell into the hands of the Muslim conquerors. The Muslim conquest of Khūzistān followed the fall of Iraq, and it brought several changes to this Province.<sup>122</sup> The conquest of this province took about four years, most likely from 638 to 642 CE and it was a stage-by-stage, city to city invasion.<sup>123</sup> The conquest is depicted in detail by Muslim historians such as al-Ṭabarī and al-Balādhurī, however, syriac sources such as *The Khuzestan Chronicle* as well as Pahlavi materials such as *Šahrestānīhā ī Ērānšahr* are also crucial in clearing up the narratives in *Futūh* literature. The ninth-century Muslim historian al-Ṭabarī is the main source for the conquest of Khūzistān. He started his account of the conquest of Khūzistān, or as he called it Ahwāz, from his source Sayf ibn ‘Umar (d. 796 CE) who lived more than a hundred years after the time of the conquest.<sup>124</sup> Sayf was known to inflate his numbers and boost glory of Muslim conquerors, and since he was from the Banū Tamīm tribe, he glorified his tribe’s actions as well. Hormozān, or as the Muslim historians called him al-Hurmuzān, was the *marzbān* of Khūzistān that opposed the Muslim invasion. He commanded the right wing of the Persian army in the Battle of Qādisiyyah in 636 CE and took part in the Battle of Jalūlā in 637 CE. After the Persians were defeated in Iraq, he went back to Khūzistān to regroup and resist the invaders.<sup>125</sup> Many scholars believe that he fled to collect taxes and gather his strength in order to fight the Muslims again.<sup>126</sup> Hormozān or as it was mentioned in *The Khuzestan Chronicle* as Hormīzdān, was a native of Mehragān Kadag, a fertile region southwest of the province of Media.<sup>127</sup> He was a member of one of the seven old nobility families of Persia and the Brother-in-law of King Khusro Parvīz or Khosrow II (600-628 CE).<sup>128</sup> He held dominion over all of Khūzistān, which meant that he held such an incredible amount of wealth and influence that he had the right to wear crown jewels only less elaborate to the Persian King of Kings.<sup>129</sup> When Hormozān arrived in this province, he fortified the major cities and got ready for their defense. However, the Kurds of Fārs and Khūzistān attacked Hormozān before the Muslims did in early 637 CE.<sup>130</sup> Hormozān was able to drive the Kurds back and negotiate a treaty with

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<sup>122</sup> Morony, *Iraq After the Muslim Conquest*, 265.

<sup>123</sup> Michael G. Morony, “Arab Conquest of Iran,” *Encyclopædia Iranica* 2 (1987): 204.

<sup>124</sup> al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh al-rusul wa ‘l-mulūk*, 13: xiii.

<sup>125</sup> al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh al-rusul wa ‘l-mulūk*, 13: 115; al-Mas’ūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab wa ma’ādin al-jawhar*, 5: 221; al-Balādhurī, *Futūh al-Buldān*, 114; al-Dīnawarī, *Kitāb al-Akhbār al-Tiwāl* (Tehran: Nashr-i Nay, 1992), 136.

<sup>126</sup> Hugh Kennedy, *The Great Arab Conquests: How the Spread of Islam Changed the World We Live in* (Philadelphia: Da Capo Press, 2007), 116.

<sup>127</sup> *The Khuzestan Chronicle*, 23; al-Balādhurī, *Futūh al-Buldān*, 1: 117; Michael G. Morony, “The Effects of the Muslim Conquest on the Persian Population of Iraq,” *Iran* 14 (1976): 48.

<sup>128</sup> L. Veccia Vaglieri, “al-Hurmuzān,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam* 2, no. 2 (1960): 587.

<sup>129</sup> al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh al-rusul wa ‘l-mulūk*, 13: 114-115; Istakhrī, *Mamalek o Masaalek*, 140; Abū Alī Moḥammad Bal’amī, *Tārīkh-e Bal’amī* (Tehran: Zowwār, 1974), 56.

<sup>130</sup> Morony, *Iraq After the Muslim Conquest*, 265; A. Shapur Shahbazi, “Hormozān,” *Encyclopædia Iranica* 12, no.5 (2004): 460.

them for the time being. He then gathered his forces and started raiding Muslim controlled cities of Māysān and Dāstimāysān, on the border of Iraq, north and east of Baṣrah, in late 637 CE.<sup>131</sup>

### First Phase of the Conquest

Hormozān hoped to weaken the Muslim forces and prevent them from entering into his province by raiding the newly conquered cities. However, he did not know that his actions would have an opposite effect and he would cause the Muslims to pour into Khūzistān as retaliation. Al-Ṭabarī mentioned that in 16 A.H. or 638 CE, ‘Utbaḥ ibn Ghazwān, one of Prophet Muhammad’s companions, along with reinforcements from Nu’mān ibn Muqarrīn and Nu’mān ibn Mas’ud went to fight Hormozān and his forces between Nahrē Tirā and Duluth, southwest of Ahwāz or Hormizd-Ardašīr.<sup>132</sup> The Muslims came from the cities of Kūfah and Baṣrah in Iraq and they easily defeated the Persian forces.<sup>133</sup> Hormozān realized that he lacked the manpower to oppose the invaders, therefore, he retreated to Ahwāz and sued for peace. The circumstances of the treaty were that the territories conquered by the Muslims west of Ahwāz and the Karun River were ceded and they would not be returned to the Persians and Hormozān also had to pay a tribute to the Muslims.<sup>134</sup> Al-Ṭabarī seems to provide the most complete account so far until this stage of Hormozān’s first peace treaty. Al-Balādhurī also mentioned that al-Mughīrah ibn Shu’bah raided Khūzistān first in the late 15 or early 16 A.H. (637 CE) but made peace with the *dihgān* or “Magnate” of Ahwāz, identified as al-Bīrwāz, or Parwīz, and took payments in return.<sup>135</sup> However, al-Balādhurī does not seem to mention Hormozān. *The Khuzestan Chronicle* also has no insight into this initial phase of Khūzistān’s conquest. The newly arrived Muslims were able to enforce their will on the governor of Khūzistān shortly after entering the province. This suggests that even though Hormozān was strong, he was not able to hold off the armies of the Muslims, and they continued to pour into Khūzistān. The new comers were able to make their way easily in this province, since the Sasanian government and the imperial army was shattered and in chaos. The regional officials were only able to put up resistance at the local level.

### Second Phase of the Conquest and Fall of Ahwāz

The second part of Khūzistān’s conquest depicted the disobedience of Hormozān, a conflict, and the resume of the conquest of city of Ahwāz. Hormozān apparently went back on his word after a short while and withheld tribute and taxes to the Muslims. It appears that he was buying time in order to assemble and arm his new troops to fight the Muslims. He gathered an army and received help from the Kurds, whom he fought against earlier, and set to fight against the Muslims.<sup>136</sup> Hormozān seemed like a smart and seasoned general who did the best with what

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<sup>131</sup> al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh al-rusul wa ‘l-mulūk*, 13: 115.

<sup>132</sup> Daryaei, trans., *Šahrestānīhā ī Ērānšahr*, 27, 67; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh al-rusul wa ‘l-mulūk*, 13: 115-8.

<sup>133</sup> al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh al-rusul wa ‘l-mulūk*, 13: 116.

<sup>134</sup> al-Balādhurī, *Futūh al-Buldān*, 1: 111; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh al-rusul wa ‘l-mulūk*, 13: 119; Morony, "Arab Conquest of Iran," 205.

<sup>135</sup> al-Balādhurī, *Futūh al-Buldān*, 1: 112.

<sup>136</sup> al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh al-rusul wa ‘l-mulūk*, 13: 121.



he had and he did not give up easily. Al-Ṭabarī stated that ‘Umar, the second Rāshidūn caliph, sent the Muslims a new general named Hurqus ibn Zuhayr al-Sa’dī to Khūzistān in order to help them defeat Hormozān.<sup>137</sup> The Muslim army went ahead and defeated Hormozān at Ahwāz easily and enforced *Jizyah* or the poll tax on the people of Ahwāz. Some scholars report that when Muslims took over Ahwāz, they destroyed the administrative part of the city, while they preserved the rest of the city.<sup>138</sup> The scholars are not sure how much a difference the invasion would have made in terms of economics, but most agree that the inhabitants would have had to pay the same amount of taxes before and after the conquest. Hormozān fled to the city of Rām-Hormoz in the east of Khūzistān after the fall of Ahwāz. He sought a peace treaty again and was granted one on the condition that he would collect taxes for the Muslims. In return, the Muslims would protect Hormozān against his enemies.<sup>139</sup> On the other hand, al-Balādhurī mentioned that when Persians broke the treaty, Abū Mūsā al-Ash’arī another companion of Prophet Muhammad, who was the governor of Baṣrah, was sent to raid the city of Ahwāz. He mentioned that Abū Mūsā took Ahwāz and Nāhre Tīra by assault in 638 CE.<sup>140</sup> Al-Balādhurī did not mention the second truce between Hormozān and the Muslims and said that Abū Mūsā continued to raid Khūzistān, city after city. He stated that Abū Mūsā then conquered the small city of Manadhir and took its population as captives, however, the second caliph ‘Umar ordered the Muslims to, "Set free those whom ye have made captive."<sup>141</sup> The Muslim historian wanted to mention the courage and generosity of ‘Umar, the Caliph of Muslims, and how he wanted to treat the population of newly conquered lands, gently and with god-like manners. *The Khuzestan Chronicle* did not mention anything about this phase of the conquest as well. It seems to be the pattern in many sources that if the general inhabitants of a city did not resist and paid their taxes, they would have been left alone. Nevertheless, in some cases there were those who fought and resisted against the Muslims and had to be made an example for other inhabitants.

### Third Phase of the Conquest and Fall of Šūš, Šūštar, and Rām-Hormoz

The third phase in the conquest of Khūzistān started with the breaking of the truce once again and the siege of Rām-Hormoz, Šūš, Šūštar and the final changes that were brought up to the province of Khūzistān. Based on al-Ṭabarī, Hormozān broke his treaty again for the second time and when the rumor was heard by the Muslims, ‘Umar wrote to Abū Mūsā Ash’arī and al-Nu’mān ibn Muqarrīn to take action against him.<sup>142</sup> Hormozān prepared himself for battle, gathered an army, and came face to face with the Muslim forces close to the city of Rām-Hormoz. However, the Muslims, who were mainly from Baṣrah and some from Kūfah, defeated his army again and routed him. Hormozān then deserted Rām-Hormoz and fled to the city of Šūštar, which was a much more suitable place to defend due to many natural and manmade rivers and canals.<sup>143</sup> Baṣran and Kūfan forces under the command of Abū Mūsā and Nu’mān

<sup>137</sup> al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh al-rusul wa ’l-mulūk*, 13: 121; Morony, "Arab Conquest of Iran," 206.

<sup>138</sup> Zarrīnkūb, "The Arab Conquest of Iran and Its Aftermath," 14-15.

<sup>139</sup> al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh al-rusul wa ’l-mulūk*, 13: 124.

<sup>140</sup> al-Balādhurī, *Futūh al-Buldān*, 1:112; G. R. Hawting, "Abū Mūsā Aš’arī," *Encyclopædia Iranica* 1, no.4 (1983): 346.

<sup>141</sup> al-Balādhurī, *Futūh al-Buldān*, 1: 114.

<sup>142</sup> al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh al-rusul wa ’l-mulūk*, 13: 132-3; Morony, "Arab Conquest of Iran," 206-7; Hawting, "Abū Mūsā Aš’arī," 347.

<sup>143</sup> al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh al-rusul wa ’l-mulūk*, 13: 133.

went to Šūštar and a fight broke out before the gates of the city in which Persians were again routed. The city of Šūštar had a huge irrigation system with dams and bridges, and was built on a rocky outcrop, which made it a very difficult place to conquer.<sup>144</sup> Muslims laid siege to the city and waited outside the walls. Muslims were not very good at giving siege to cities at first and it took them a while to learn siege tactics through experience and from many defecting portions of the Persian army such as the Asāwira, which are discussed below.<sup>145</sup> However, a “traitor” among the Persians came to the Muslim general, Nu’mān, and asked for his life to be spared. In exchange, he agreed to show the Muslims a path into the city.<sup>146</sup> The “traitor” was identified as a Sinā or Sināh in another conquest account.<sup>147</sup> The traitor said to the Muslims that if they “attack via the outlet of the water, and then you will conquer the city.”<sup>148</sup> The traitor factor is also another arrow that points to the fact that many people did not want to risk their lives for a defeated king and they preferred to be ruled by the Muslims and pay the same taxes to different rulers. However, one has to be careful since the presence of a traitor is a repeating element through almost all of *Fūtuḥ* accounts and they cannot be fully accepted as literal events. The Muslim forces gathered outside the gates of the city and a small group went inside the city through the secret waterway, opened the gate and the invading Muslims rushed in. Hormozān took refuge inside the citadel along with his men and was able to hold out for some time, but he eventually surrendered and was taken with his companions and relatives as hostages to Medina.<sup>149</sup> When he arrived at Medina, his magnificence attire amazed everyone, but he eventually converted to Islam and became one of ‘Umar’s advisors.<sup>150</sup> Hormozān did his best in defending Khūzistān, despite all the disadvantages. Since it was clear to him that a new ruling class would threaten his wealth and lands, he fought to the best of his abilities, however, the Muslim armies overcame his army and conquered the province.

After the taking of Šūštar and the surrender of Hormozān, Abū Mūsā and his lieutenants went to the city of Šūs, laid siege to it, and finished the conquest of Khūzistān. Šūs was one of the capitals of the Achaemenid Empire and the Elamites civilization and was a splendid city that rivaled Persepolis in its size and greatness.<sup>151</sup> The city of Šūs was a center to Nestorian Christians and many monks lived there. Al-Ṭabarī indicated that the monks taunted the Muslims over the fact that this was a holy city and only the Antichrist could conquer it.<sup>152</sup> Muslims held siege to the city for a long time and were about to leave to join other Muslim forces for the battle of Nahāvand in Hamadān, when one of the Muslim warriors by the name of Safī went ahead, kicked the gate, and shouted “Open up, and then it blew open!”<sup>153</sup> Muslims stormed inside and

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<sup>144</sup> Kennedy, *The Great Arab Conquests*, 126; Zarrīnkūb, “The Arab Conquest of Iran and Its Aftermath,” 15.

<sup>145</sup> Mohsen Zakeri, *Sāsānid Soldiers in Early Muslim Society: The Origins of 'Ayyārān and Futuwwa* (Wiesbaden, Germany: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1995), 98.

<sup>146</sup> al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa 'l-mulūk*, 13: 135.

<sup>147</sup> Touraj Daryaee, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Iranian History* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2012), 211.

<sup>148</sup> al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa 'l-mulūk*, 13: 135.

<sup>149</sup> al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa 'l-mulūk*, 13: 136; al-Dīnawarī, *Kitāb al-Aḫbār al-Tiwāl*, 138.

<sup>150</sup> al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa 'l-mulūk*, 13: 137; Bal'amī, *Tāriḫ-e Bal'amī*, 490; Istakhrī, *Mamalek o Masaalek*, 140; al-Dīnawarī, *Kitāb al-Aḫbār al-Tiwāl*, 169; Shahbazi, “Hormozān,” 460-1.

<sup>151</sup> Kennedy, *The Great Arab Conquests*, 128; Richard N. Frye, *The Heritage of Persia* (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1963), 96.

<sup>152</sup> al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa 'l-mulūk*, 13: 145.

<sup>153</sup> al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa 'l-mulūk*, 13: 145.

the Persians surrendered and asked for peace, which was granted. The heroic story of kicking the gates open also seems to be a legendary factor in this story. It is very likely that the populace of the city were out of water and food after a long siege and they accepted a treaty by opening the city gates and agreed to pay their poll taxes, which was not much different from what they had to pay to their previous Sasanian masters. It is also said that the Tomb of Daniel was also in Šūs, which inside the tomb, there was a body. Abū Mūsā took the body, wrapped it in shrouds, took it outside of the city, and buried it in the riverbank.<sup>154</sup> The story of Daniel's tomb most likely seems to be a myth about a tomb that was named after the Prophet Daniel to attract pilgrims and business to the city.

### **Al-Balādhurī's Version of Fall of Šūs and Šūštar**

Another somewhat different narrative about the fall of Šūs and Šūštar is from the ninth-century Muslim historian al-Balādhurī, which differed in sequence of events with that of al-Ṭabarī, however, it offers the same similar details. He mentioned that Šūs was first taken after the fall of Ahwāz, where al-Ṭabarī stated that Šūštar was first conquered. Al-Balādhurī indicated that Abū Mūsā went and besieged the city of Šūs until people of the city ran out of food and had to surrender.<sup>155</sup> The *marzbān* of the city asked for safe conduct for himself and 80 of his people before opening the gates and Abū Mūsā accepted. However, apparently, he forgot to mention himself among the eighty names and therefore Abū Mūsā ordered him to be beheaded even though he offered a great sum of money.<sup>156</sup> This indicates that Muslims accepted payments and taxes rather than killing all the inhabitants, however, there were instances when the nobility and the military classes had to be made an example for others. Al-Balādhurī reported that all of the fighting men of the city of Šūs were put to death by Abū Mūsā's men, their possessions taken, and their households enslaved.<sup>157</sup> This version seems to be more cruel and bloody than al-Ṭabarī's account. However, these moments were to be expected when a conquest was taking place. There are always lessons to be learned and people had to become examples for others. In addition, the termination of the top ruling classes meant more order and stability for the Muslims, since it was less likely for the inhabitants to rise against the Muslims without a ruler. However, without a native ruler familiar with the local population, it was harder for the Muslims to efficiently tax and profit from the newly conquered lands as well. In any case, the lives of most regular people did not change dramatically, beside during the initial phase of conquest. The body of Prophet Daniel was also mentioned when Abū Mūsā took the body outside of the city, dammed a river, and buried him under the bed of a river, so people could no longer go to his tomb.<sup>158</sup> There are many accounts that mention this tomb, and it is likely that there was a tomb in Šūs. However, the story of a body could be a myth or an exaggeration in order to make the city more interesting and attract attention. Abū Mūsā then went to Rām-Hormoz, took the city, and made another treaty with its people for 800,000 Dirhams a year.<sup>159</sup> The numbers might not be accurate, but it clearly states that taxes were taken and the lives of normal people were, on most

<sup>154</sup> al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa 'l-mulūk*, 13: 147.

<sup>155</sup> al-Balādhurī, *Futūḫ al-Buldān*, 1: 114.

<sup>156</sup> al-Balādhurī, *Futūḫ al-Buldān*, 1: 114-5.

<sup>157</sup> al-Balādhurī, *Futūḫ al-Buldān*, 1: 114.

<sup>158</sup> al-Balādhurī, *Futūḫ al-Buldān*, 1: 115.

<sup>159</sup> Hugh Kennedy, *The Armies of the Caliphs: Military and Society in the Early Islamic State* (New York: Routledge Press, 2001), 5-6; al-Balādhurī, *Futūḫ al-Buldān*, 1: 115.

parts, unaffected. Al-Balādhurī stated that Abū Mūsā finally arrived at Šūštar, where Hormozān had taken refuge. The city of Šūštar was fiercely defended, however, Baṣran and Kūfan forces drove the Persian army back to the city. Hormozān was able to retreat to the city but 900 of his men were killed and 600 were captured, whom were later beheaded.<sup>160</sup> Again, through treachery of one of the Persians, Arabs were able to storm the city, and captured Hormozān after he held his ground for a short period in the citadel. As stated above, there is big contradiction in the sequence of events of *Fūtuḥ* literature, therefore, other sources should be consulted to understand them better. This mix up in the order of events could be explained by the fact that many of these cities were retaken many times, and therefore the chronology seems to be a little out of place.

### The Khuzestan Chronicle's Version of Fall of Šūs and Šūštar

The anonymous seventh-century Nestorian Christian chronicle known as *The Khuzestan Chronicle* also narrated the conquest of Šūs and Šūštar in specific details, which could verify the Muslim sources about the events of the conquest. The narrative started with Abū Mūsā attacking Ahwāz and, as a result, Hormozān made peace with the Muslims because he did not have enough men to engage the Muslims.<sup>161</sup> It could mean that the Sasanian soldiers were not ready to die for a weak king who had fled into the far reaches of *Ērānšahr*, or that they were regrouping and gathering their forces before they made their move. The chronicle mentions that there was a peace treaty between the Persians and the Muslims for two years, most likely from 638-640 CE, until Hormozān broke the treaty and engaged the Muslims. Like al-Balādhurī, the chronicle tells the account of the siege of Šūš first, where the Arabs took it after a few days and killed all of its nobles.<sup>162</sup> Syriac sources did not glorify the Muslims and depicted the conquest as a bloody one. Therefore, it could be expected that the Christian author depicted the Muslims negatively. The story of Daniel's body is also present in *The Khuzestan Chronicle*, where it mentioned that the body was found in the House of Mar Daniel by the Muslims. Sebeos, a seventh-century Armenian chronicler, also mentioned the Body of Prophet Daniel in Šūs, therefore confirming that at least a tomb existed at the time of the conquest in Šūs.<sup>163</sup> The chronicle indicates that many claimed it was the body of Daniel, while others said that it was the body of the great Achaemenid king, Cyrus the Great.<sup>164</sup>

The narrative then reveals the account of siege of Šūštar or as it called it Shūshtrā, which took Muslims eighteen month to two years to complete from 640 to 642 CE<sup>165</sup> It mentioned that the city of Šūštar was very well defended because of the rivers and canals that surrounded it like moats. One of the canals was called Ardashīragān, after Ardašīr I, the founder of Sasanian Empire who dug it, another Shamīrām, after the famous Assyrian Queen and another was named,

<sup>160</sup> al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, 1: 117; Bal'amī, *Tārikh-e Bal'amī*, 491.

<sup>161</sup> Sebastian P. Brock, "Guidi's Chronicle," *Encyclopædia Iranica* 11, no. 4 (2002): 383; James Howard-Johnston, *Witnesses to a World Crisis: Historians and Histories of the Middle East in the Seventh Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 137.

<sup>162</sup> *The Khuzestan Chronicle*, 24; Robert G. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam As Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (Princeton, New Jersey: The Darwin Press Inc., 1997), 184.

<sup>163</sup> Sebeos, *The Armenian History Attributed to Sebeos*, trans. Robert W. Thomson (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), 1: 58.

<sup>164</sup> *The Khuzestan Chronicle*, 25; Howard-Johnston, *Witnesses to a World Crisis*, 133.

<sup>165</sup> *The Khuzestan Chronicle*, 25; Morony, "Arab Conquest of Iran," 204.

Darayāgān, after Achaemenid king Darius the Great.<sup>166</sup> Therefore, the city was surrounded on almost all sides by rivers and it was very hard to conquer it. The similar story of a traitor from the city is also present in this account, this time of a man from Qatar, who conspired with another who lived next to the wall to give the city to the Muslims.<sup>167</sup> They asked the Muslims for a third of the spoils, dug tunnels under the city, and led the Muslims inside. The reasons that a traitor was mentioned to be from Qatar might be that shortly after the Fall of Iraq, the Sasanian colonies such as Qatar, Yemen and Bahrain defected and converted to Islam and took part in the conquest against *Ērānšahr*. Thus, the local Christians greatly resented people of aforementioned areas and it could explain the enmity between the Iranians and people of Qatar at the time of the siege of Šūštar. It is possible that a group of town members, who came to their senses, opened the gates for the Muslims in exchange for tribute and safety. The Muslims killed the Bishop of Hormizd-Ardašīr, along with priests, deacons, and students, while they took Hormozān alive.<sup>168</sup> The killing of all priests and Christians seems to be a bit excessive, since the Prophet Muhammad prohibited the killing of holy men. Meanwhile, these actions were still very plausible at the eve of the conquest since the Christian sources mention it many times. However, it is likely that higher level Christian clerks such as the bishops and monks as well as those Christians who fought and did not give up were killed. Absolute certainty could never be reached, but in any case, there was a great deal of bloodshed. However, gradually after the initial phases of conquest, things calmed down and Muslim rulers continued to collect taxes just like the Sasanians or any other dynasties.<sup>169</sup> It is very likely that Šūš was first conquered and then Šūštar, as al-Balādhurī and *The Khuzestan Chronicle* suggested, and unlike al-Ṭabarī. Since, Hormozān was in the city of Šūštar, his capture most likely finished the resistance against the conquerors, and other small cities gave up since their leader was captured.

### Last Phase of the Conquest and the Fall of Gondēšāpūr

After the fall of Šūš and Šūštar, in whichever order, it seems that Gondēšāpūr was the last in all sources to fall. Abū Mūsā went to Gondēšāpūr or Jundyshapūr and besieged it.<sup>170</sup> The city was also very easy for Arab Muslims to take since it had no natural defenses. It was also known for its many Christians and priests and as well as a family of famous doctors.<sup>171</sup> After a few days, the people of the city opened the gates and surrendered claiming they received a message through an arrow stating Muslims would grant them safe passage if they paid their tribute.<sup>172</sup> Therefore, the people of the city had prepared the *Jizyah* or poll tax and opened the gates. The Muslims denied the truth offer and stated that they were not aware of such a treaty. They found that a Muslim slave by the name of Muknīf, originally from Gondēšāpūr, had done this.<sup>173</sup> The

<sup>166</sup> The Khuzestan Chronicle, 25; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam As Others Saw It*, 185.

<sup>167</sup> Brock, "Guidi's Chronicle," 383; The Khuzestan Chronicle, 26.

<sup>168</sup> The Khuzestan Chronicle, 26; Howard-Johnston, *Witnesses to a World Crisis*, 137; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam As Others Saw It*, 1856; Andrew Palmer, *The Seventh Century in the Western-Syrian Chronicles* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1993), 163.

<sup>169</sup> Stephen R. Humphreys, *Islamic History: A Framework for Inquiry* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991), 69.

<sup>170</sup> al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh al-rusul wa 'l-mulūk*, 13: 148.

<sup>171</sup> Kennedy, *The Great Arab Conquests*, 127-8.

<sup>172</sup> al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh al-rusul wa 'l-mulūk*, 13: 148.

<sup>173</sup> al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh al-rusul wa 'l-mulūk*, 13: 148.

Muslims troops wrote to the second caliph, ‘Umar, and asked for his advice and he wrote back saying that God hold the keeping of promises in highest place, and they should grant the population of Gondēšāpūr immunity.<sup>174</sup> This is another example of how Muslims acted towards the people of newly conquered areas. Poll tax was more important, and people were needed as a source of revenue for the Caliphate. It was therefore in the best interest of Muslims to keep the inhabitants of cities and countryside in the same situation as before the invasion. The Muslim sources clearly want to depict the honesty and goodness of Muslims, even if they did not promise on something compared to the treachery of the Persians. It is very unusual to send a messenger to Medina and wait for his return, which probably took months, to deal with a city. It was the policy of the Muslims to deal with the inhabitant of the cities, who surrendered, in the same fashion and to raise as much revenue as they could. The conquest of Khūzistān was completed by 20 AH (641 CE) based on al-Ṭabarī.<sup>175</sup> Al-Balādhurī also put Gondēšāpūr or Jundyshapūr at the end of the Khūzistān’s conquest, but he stated that the conquest was finished by 642 CE. He mentioned that Abū Mūsā went to the city and besieged it, while offering the terms of peace for the population of the city in return for tribute.<sup>176</sup> The People of Gondēšāpūr accepted and Abū Mūsā did not take their lives or their properties except their weapons. However, a part of Gondēšāpūr population fled to the small town of Kalbanīyah and Abū Mūsā went there and took it over with ease.<sup>177</sup> As long as the inhabitants did not offer resistance, the Muslim forces took their weapons and their taxes and left them alone. It was in the best interest of Muslims to leave most of the officials and the administration of the Sasanians intact as well, in order to ensure a high tax yield from the populace.

On the other hand, *The Khuzestan Chronicle* did not mention the fall of Gondēšāpūr and ended its account with the fall of Šūš and Šūstar in 642 CE. Many Sasanian coins have been found in Khūzistān and Fārs that could help historians better understand the chronology of events. Various types of coins have been discovered in the province of Khūzistān in the cities of Šūš, Gondēšāpūr, Rām-Hormoz, Rev-Ardašīr, and Ahwāz. Yazdgerd III coins are dated starting in year 1 YE<sup>178</sup> (632 CE), and finally in 20 YE (652 CE).<sup>179</sup> Except a few coins that were circulated between the years 3-10 YE (634-5 to 641-642 CE), there is a lack of coins between the years 6-7 YE (637-8 to 638-9 CE), where there were absolutely no coins struck. Tyler-Smith strongly suggests that this shows that the initial phase Muslims conquest of Khūzistān should have happened in this period of 3-4 years from 6 to 10 YE (637-8 to 641-2 CE), which verifies our literary sources.<sup>180</sup> During the conquest of this province, flow of coins stopped coming because of chaos created by the invasion. The Fall of Gondēšāpūr was the last task before Muslim armies headed to the Province of Hamadān to take part in the Battle of Nahāvand. This battle was the last stand of the Persian army, where again Muslims triumphed and the lands of Iran became open to the Arab Muslims and they conquered it region-by-region simultaneously by various commanders sent by ‘Umar and ‘Uthman. The province of Khūzistān acted as a highway into the Iranian plateau and provided many resources and riches to the Muslim army,

<sup>174</sup> al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh al-rusul wa ’l-mulūk*, 13: 149.

<sup>175</sup> Kennedy, *The Armies of the Caliphs*, 22; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh al-rusul wa ’l-mulūk*, 13: 150.

<sup>176</sup> al-Balādhurī, *Futūh al-Buldān*, 1: 119.

<sup>177</sup> al-Balādhurī, *Futūh al-Buldān*, 1: 119.

<sup>178</sup> The year Yazdgerd III started his reign, which equals to 632 CE.

<sup>179</sup> S. Tyler-Smith, “Coinage in the Name of Yazdgerd III (AD 632-651) and the Arab Conquest of Iran,” *The Royal Numismatic Chronicle* 160 (2000): 153.

<sup>180</sup> Tyler-Smith, “Coinage in the Name of Yazdgerd III,” 146.



even though it took four years of hard fighting by the Muslims to achieve it. The Caliph and their generals used these new acquired riches to further expand and hire more soldiers in order to spread their empire. Most of these riches came from poll taxes of agricultural lands in Iraq and Khūzistān and Muslims would have not wanted to upset the flow of this cash stream, therefore, they let people live their lives as long as they paid their taxes.

### Asāwira

The Asāwira or the heavy cavalry of the Persian army also played a great role in the conquest of Khūzistān, and was a great example of how some military factions and nobilities reacted to the Muslims invasion.<sup>181</sup> Al-Ṭabarī and al-Balādhurī both mention that the name of their leader as Siyāh al-Uswarī and that he was in charge of the vanguard of the Yazdgerd III's army.<sup>182</sup> After the fall of Iraq, Siyāh along with three hundred of his men, including seventy aristocrats, was sent to go from Spahān or Eṣfahān to Estakhr in Fārs and gather men as he went along.<sup>183</sup> He went to Šūs as Abū Mūsā was besieging the city and when he saw the greatness of the forces of the Muslim army, he turned to his men and said “Muslims never encountered an armed force without defeating it... for I think we should go over to them and embrace their religion.”<sup>184</sup> It was only rational for these militants to abandon the Sasanian dynasty, since they were concerned about their own wealth and status. They saw that if they were to keep their lands and their positions, they had to join the new ruling system. Then the Asāwira went to Abū Mūsā, gave the Muslims their conditions, and asked for the maximum stipends in return for helping the Muslims in their efforts except in Arabs' civil wars. Abū Mūsā first refused, but ‘Umar sent him a letter and told him to grant them their wishes.<sup>185</sup> The Asāwira impressed the Muslims with their valor and bravery in the Khūzistān campaign and transferred their military knowledge to the invaders.<sup>186</sup> Al-Balādhurī mentioned the same account, except he mentioned that the Asāwira helped Abū Mūsā in the siege of Šūštar rather than the siege of Šūs.<sup>187</sup> They were also mentioned in *The Khuzestan Chronicle*, however, in this account, they actually helped the Sasanian general, Hormozān, in the defense of Šūštar, but only after its fall, they defected to the Muslims.<sup>188</sup> In any case, all sources conclude that they defected to the Muslims and became allies of the Abū Tamīn

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<sup>181</sup> Zakeri, *Sāsānid Soldiers in Early Muslim Society*, 114.

<sup>182</sup> al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa 'l-mulūk*, 13: 142; al-Balādhurī, *Futūh al-Buldān*, 1: 105; Fred McGraw Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981), 257; Sarah Savant, *The New Muslims of Post-Conquest Iran: Tradition, Memory, and Conversion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 210; Edmund C. Bosworth, “Asāwera,” *Encyclopædia Iranica* 2, no.7 (1987): 706.

<sup>183</sup> al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa 'l-mulūk*, 13: 142.

<sup>184</sup> al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa 'l-mulūk*, 13: 143.

<sup>185</sup> Hawting, “Abū Mūsā Aš‘arī,” 347.

<sup>186</sup> al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa 'l-mulūk*, 13: 144-5; Kennedy, *The Armies of the Caliphs*, 46; Savant, *The New Muslims of Post-Conquest Iran*, 211.

<sup>187</sup> al-Balādhurī, *Futūh al-Buldān*, 1: 106.

<sup>188</sup> *The Khuzestan Chronicle*, 27; Parvaneh Pourshariati, *The Decline and Fall of the Sasanian Empire: The Sasanian-Parthian Confederacy and the Arab Conquest of Iran* (New York: I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd., 2008), 240.

tribe and helped the Muslim army in continuing the conquest of *Ērānšahr*.<sup>189</sup> Maintaining their social status and economic interests was much more essential for these soldiers rather than keeping their loyalty to the king. The Asāwira helped the Muslim conquerors in the province of Khūzistān and their defection had great consequences for both the new Muslim rulers and the Sasanians.

## Conclusion

Even though the province of Khūzistān was an essential agricultural and economic center for the Sasanians, there has been no significant scholarly work on this region at the time of the Muslim conquest. Khūzistān's significance is evident based on literary sources such as Islamic, Pahlavi, and Syriac sources as well as non-literary sources such as coins, seals, Bulle, and archeological evidence. Its importance was only magnified by its critical geographical location that was the gateway into the Iranian plateau. The Sasanians paid great attention to this province and invested heavily in creating agricultural projects and administering them precisely. The main agricultural products of Khūzistān such as sugar, rice, and fruits were exported to all the lands of Iran before and after the Muslims' conquest. This is evident by the abundance of coins and administrative seals, which archaeologists have found in this province. Khūzistān was also the home to many Nestorian Christian centers, and its capital of Gondēšāpūr or Bēth Lapat was the second most important seat of the Church of the East only after Ctesiphon. The Muslim conquest of the Sasanian province of Khūzistān was conducted in a systematic, city-by-city process and was launched from the cities of Baṣrah and Kūfah in Iraq. It took around four years and it was met by severe resistance by Hormozān, the *marzbān* of the province as well as its local inhabitants. However, some military groups such as the Asāwira defected and helped the Muslims in this process in order to maintain their social and economic status. There are some inconsistencies in the order of events and the date of the conquest, however, through analyzing both Muslim and non-Muslim sources along with non-literary materials, one could undoubtedly reconstruct the Muslim conquest of Khūzistān clearly.

The loss of this economically prosperous province was a huge blow to the Sasanians and a great achievement for the Muslim armies. Khūzistān continued to flourish as an agricultural haven in the early Islamic period, which is evident by tax figures mentioned by Muslim geographers that match those of the late Sasanian period. Muslim conquest of the breadbaskets of the Sasanian Empire, Iraq and Khūzistān, eventually led to the collapse of the Sasanian dynasty. By studying this province before the conquest and the process in which Khūzistān was conquered, and comparing it with other provinces such as Fārs, Iraq, and Sīstān, scholars could better understand the Muslims' conquest of the regions of *Ērānšahr* and how related or distinct they were from each other. This introduction into the conquest of the Sasanian province of Khūzistān in the seventh century paves the way for more research and scholarly works into this topic and sets an example for exploration of lesser-known parts of *Ērānšahr* and the manner in which Muslims conquered them. It also emphasizes on the significance of this province within the context of both the Sasanian and the Islamic empires. Further research is needed to fully grasp the social and political conditions in the late Sasanian and the early Islamic Khūzistān and this work provides a foundation for future works to build upon. Additional questions and

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<sup>189</sup> Bosworth, "Asāwera," 706; Morony, "Arab Conquest of Iran," 205-6; Zakeri, *Sāsānid Soldiers in Early Muslim Society*, 114-5; Kennedy, *The Great Arab Conquests*, 131-2; Savant, *The New Muslims of Post-Conquest Iran*, 212.

inquires arises about the role of the Sasanian administrators and what happened to them after the conquest. Even though the Sasanian Empire collapsed with the invasion of the Muslims, after the initial shock, the Sasanian administration in many region such as Khūzistān continued to operate and they up lived the Sasanian dynasty for generations.

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