St John Simpson. “Ard Maysan and the Land behind Basrah in Late Antiquity”

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- 1 The economic function of the wetlands and marshes of the Ard Maysan region is laid out through a multi-disciplinary approach. Ethnographic comparisons, historical and archaeological evidence, and the presence of three crucial Sasanian urban centres confirm the existence of relationships between a diverse range of communities. Still unclear is the development of Sasanian maritime trade and this re-assessment of the significance of the region hints at large-scale trading by Sasanian merchants. The importance of the Ard Maysan region continued after the Arab-Muslim conquest, when Basra takes over the substantial role of the three Sasanian cities.
- 2 This paper not only contributes to a reassessment of the importance of this region, but also underlines the part played by the natural environment in shaping the economy. Such theoretical approach is very much welcomed as it has to take in account the diversity of regions in an empire as vast as the Ērānšahr.

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