

Michelle De Gruchy, Jaafar Jotheri, Hayder Alqaragholi, Jassim Al-Janabi, Raheem Alabdan, Haneen Al-Talaqani, Ghadeer Almamouri, Hajir Al-Rubaye. “Khandaq Shapur: Defense, Irrigation, Boundary, Frontier”

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REFERENCES

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- 1 The paper summarises the results of a multidisciplinary research on the Khandaq Shapur, a monumental-scale linear feature between Hit and Basra in Iraq, reportedly built by Shapur II in 324 CE and reused (maybe extended) under Khosrow I in the mid-6th century CE.
- 2 Relying on recent surveys carried out between Karbala and Basra, along the southern segment of the moat/ditch, the Authors more precisely delineate its course in the area. Moreover, they contextualise the Khandaq Shapur in the wider Sasanian defensive, commercial and economic landscape, demonstrating that it was a crucial liminal

feature (between the desert, the irrigated plains and the southern marshes) that served both military and agricultural purposes.

- 3 Archaeological research and a closer scrutiny of ancient written sources do not support, instead, the alleged association of the course of the Khandaq Shapur with that of an older Neo-Babylonian irrigation canal (mentioned as *Pallukat* in cuneiform texts) dating to the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II (c. 604–562 BCE). However, radiocarbon dates in the second millennium BCE from samples collected excavating two deep trenches in the fill inside the cut of the moat/ditch between Karbala and Najaf may indicate that the Khandaq Shapur was partly built making use of pre-existing channels.
- 4 At the end of the paper, the Authors report a link to a very useful and updated Google Earth file (.kmz) tracing the course of the archaeological feature.

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