Sasanian Archaeology

Settlements, Environment and Material Culture

edited by St John Simpson

DESCRIPTION:
The Sasanian empire was one of the great powers of Late Antiquity, and for four centuries ruled the vast region stretching from Syria and the Caucasus to Central Asia. Classical, Armenian, Jewish and Arab written sources throw light on its history, and studies of its rock reliefs, stuccoes, silver, silks, coins and glyptic have created a picture of a rich courtly culture with a strong Iranian character. However, the everyday material culture is much less understood, as is the economy which sustained and supported the Sasanian empire and underpinned its consistent military superiority over its western rivals. This collection of essays looks at these aspects and offers an approach based almost entirely on archaeological and scientific research, much presented here for the first time. This book is divided into three parts which in turn examine evidence for Sasanian sites, settlements and landscapes, their complex agricultural resources, and their crafts and industries. Each section is preceded by an essay setting out the wider research questions and current state of knowledge. The book begins and ends with a general introduction and conclusion setting out why this new approach is necessary, and how it helps change our perceptions of the complexity and power of the Sasanian empire.

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