

**BRITISH SCHOOL OF ARCHAEOLOGY
IN IRAQ**

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**BRITISH SCHOOL OF ARCHAEOLOGY IN IRAQ
(GERTRUDE BELL MEMORIAL)**

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The next BSAI Newsletter will be published in November 2004 and brief contributions are welcomed on recent research, publications and events. All contributions should be sent to the British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 10 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AH, United Kingdom or via e-mail to: bsai@britac.ac.uk or fax 44+(0)20 7969 5401 to arrive by October 15, 2004.

Joan Porter MacIver edits the BSAI Newsletter.

BSAI RESEARCH GRANTS

The School considers applications for individual research and travel grants twice a year, in spring and autumn, and all applications must be received by 15th April or 15th October in any given year. Grants are available to support research into the archaeology, history or languages of Iraq and neighbouring countries, and the Gulf, from the earliest times. Awards will normally fall within a limit of £1,000, though more substantial awards may be made in exceptional cases. Grantees will be required to provide a written report of their work, and abstracts from grantee's reports will be published in future issues of the BSAI Newsletter (published May & November). Grantees must provide a statement of accounts with supporting documents/receipts, as soon as possible and in any case within six months of the work for which the grant was awarded being completed. Applicants must be residents of the UK or Commonwealth citizens and will be informed of the decision of Council concerning their grant application by early July and early January respectively. The School is also keen to encourage applications for Major Research Projects and proposals for future School Projects. The BSAI Fieldwork & Research Committee can be contacted via the Secretary.

Application forms are available from the Secretary or on the BSAI Web-site: **<http://www.britac.ac.uk/institutes/iraq/>**

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Front Cover:

Sumerian Male Dress, Early Dynastic Votive Statue drawn by Kate Morton
Source: *Sumer and the Sumerians* by Harriet Crawford (Cambridge 1991)

David Oates

Archaeologist who excavated Mesopotamian mounds
that reveal the secrets of 9,000-year-old cultures

For 50 years, David Oates excavated the ancient mounds of northern Iraq and Syria. It was a career as interesting for its witness of the turbulent changes in the Middle East as it was for its archaeological discoveries.

Oates's archaeology centred on three of the tells, or mounds, that are dotted throughout the fertile plain between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. The three, at Nimrud and Tell al-Rim in northern Iraq, and Tell Brak in northern Syria, contain jumbled levels of building stretching back to the seventh millennium BC - to the origins of civilisation.

Among the jumble survive the remains of prehistoric settlements, the courts of early kings and the cities of the first empires. Much is lost: these were mudbrick empires, whose buildings were terminally vulnerable to enemy attacks, or to the hundreds of years of wind and rain that subsequently swept the tells.

Oates was a fine mudbrick excavator, and the plans he made of his sites - all drawn expertly himself - are as valuable as the finds he uncovered during the excavations. His reconstructions refilled large parts of the bare tells with forts and temples of impressive size and ambition.

At Tell al-Rimah, for instance, where little was expected, Oates found a temple from 1800BC that covered the whole mound. Over six years he recreated a building whose front walls stood 15 metres high, decorated in a dense mass of spirals and palm tree columns.

Nimrud provided Oates with superb finds. While excavating the royal arsenal of King Shalmaneser III, his team discovered a fantastically rich collection of 9th-century BC carved ivories. So large a number were excavated that many remain to be recorded.

From "Fort Shalmaneser" also came the finest discovery of Oates's career. The throne base of King Shalmaneser is a huge limestone dais, covered with carved rosettes, inscriptions and friezes illustrating the events of Shalmaneser's reign. In order to transfer the base from a six-metre-deep trench to the safety of a museum, Oates had to ask a favour of the Iraq Petroleum Company, who owned the largest lorry in the country. The company's foreman arrived with a crane whose breaking limit was exactly the eight tonnes that the base was estimated to weigh.

"Each slab in turn rose slowly into the air," Oates wrote, "supported by its cradle and the audible prayers of a hundred men...The only unscheduled delay was caused by our epigraphist, who was with difficulty persuaded that it was inadvisable to stand directly under each slab to copy any inscription that might appear on its lower face." The base made it

unscathed to the Baghdad museum - where it was promptly discovered to be too large to fit through the doors.

Edward Ernest David Michael Oates was born in Stoke Climsland, Cornwall in 1927. He went to Oundle School, and then to study classics at Trinity College, Cambridge. He left immediately for a scholarship at the British School at Rome, where he took part in his first archaeological surveys, investigating Roman olive farms in Libya.

Oates's break came in 1954, when he was sent to northern Iraq by the British Academy to review the work of Sir Aurel Stein. Stein, a gallivanting prewar explorer, had been inspired by the work of a French priest, Pere Poidebard, who had flown all over Syria taking photographs that revealed numerous Roman sites only visible from the air. Stein attempted the same in Iraq, but his manuscript was deemed to need serious checks.

It took 14 years for Oates's memorial to Stein to be published. He was poached almost immediately after arriving in Iraq by Max Mallowan, the renowned archaeologist and husband of Agatha Christie. It was joked at the time that Oates was wanted for his Land Rover; the truth was that Mallowan, a flamboyantly brilliant character, recognised a young man with the fine archaeological skill that in some measure he lacked himself.

Mallowan took Oates to Nimrud. At the end of his first season there, Oates married Joan Lines, a beautiful young American from the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Theirs would be a hugely successful marriage, which produced numerous co-authored publications. At the end of his second season at Nimrud, with Agatha Christie starting to find conditions in the desert difficult, Oates was appointed the site's field director.

Mallowan and Christie - one fêted on the newspaper front pages for his archaeological finds, the other known across the world for her detective novels - were a hard act to follow. At the same time, Iraq was in upheaval after the military coup of 1958.

Oates coped superbly: in competent Arabic (he also spoke Turkish, Italian and French) he held regular discussions with the 250-strong local workforce, and he opened up the productive excavations at Fort Shalmaneser. So well known was he to local officials and nomads that a letter was once successfully delivered to him that was addressed solely to "Sheikh Daoud, Mosul, Iraq".

Oates left Nimrud in 1962 in search of a site he could call his own. He found one at Tell al-Rimah, and soon afterwards accepted the resident directorship of the British School. They were to be busy years in Baghdad.

In 1967, as Oates and his young family sat picnicking at the roadside on their return to Baghdad from the Rimah dig site, they were hailed from a British embassy car that was speeding north. The consul told them of the start of the Six Day War, and that all British and Americans had been ordered to leave Iraq. Oates rushed back to the capital, where he refused an embassy request to lead a convoy out of the country. He immediately

received tacit offers of protection from the Iraqi cultural authorities; Joan Oates was also visited by local Iraqis bearing strawberries, a rare fruit that they hoped would demonstrate their support. The family stayed in Baghdad throughout the period, despite the closure of the city's schools.

A year later, they were present for the Baath coup, when they had to forbid their children to visit certain parts of the city, in an attempt to prevent them from seeing the bodies left on display from public hangings. It was at this point that Oates decided to accept the offer of a professorship at the University of London. The family left Baghdad in 1969.

His connection to the region remained unbroken. He started digging at Tell Brak, the largest tell in northern Mesopotamia, in 1976, and returned to the site up until last November. In order to maintain old friendships, for ten years from 1993 David and Joan Oates returned to Iraq at the invitation of the Iraqi Government for the Babylon music and theatre festival.

Oates was a quiet, funny, practical man. He led one of the last large-scale excavations, marshalling a workforce of hundreds, but was equally happy to head off on his own to trace the course of a water channel, or ask questions of local shepherds. He loved to wander with colleagues around sites at sunset, when the softer light and calm of the evening would show up features missed during the day.

"He was the quintessence of an archaeologist," wrote one student, remembering the excitement of a spring spent with the Oates family - during which time he took part in excavations at Tell al-Rimah, was evacuated because of the 1967 war and slept under their packed camper van in a rug haggled for in a local suq. "He was someone who loved countries both as once they were, and as they are now."

Oates is survived by his wife, and three children.

David Oates, archaeologist, was born on February 25, 1927. He died in Cambridge on March 22, 2004, aged 77.

David Oates; Obituary; The Register
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This article will not be available on the BSAI Web-site.

At the March Lecture members of the School, friends and colleagues honoured Professor David Oates with a minute's silence. Few people have had such a close association with the School over a span of fifty years: David first went out to Iraq under the auspices of the British Academy fifty years ago to examine Roman remains and roads west of the Tigris and was warmly welcomed there by Professor Max Mallowan, the BSAI Director at the time in Baghdad. He started working at the School's excavations at Nimrud the following year under Max and in 1958 he became Field Director at Nimrud later Director of the excavations in 1961. In 1964 he then became Director of the excavations at Tell Al Rimah and was also Assistant Director of the School in Iraq in 1959. He was later appointed Joint Director with Professor Donald Wiseman from 1961 until 1965. He became sole Director in Baghdad in 1966 and remained in that position until 1969, when he took up his post as Professor of Western Asiatic Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology in London. In 1971 Professor Oates became Vice Chairman of the Executive Committee of the School and remained in that position until 1989 when he was appointed Chairman of the Executive Committee (1989-1997). He started excavating at Tell Brak in 1976 and was the overall Director until he died. In December 1997 he was awarded the Gertrude Bell Gold Medal at the AGM in recognition of his great contributions to the field of Mesopotamian Archaeology (the 3rd recipient after Professor, Sir Max Mallowan and Professor Seton Lloyd). He became a Vice-President of the School in 1997 and in December 2000 he was elected by Council to be President of the School. He continued to provide his wise counsel and expertise to the School until his death.

After the interesting March Lecture by Dr Heather Baker on 'Urban landscapes and domestic space: the Neo-Babylonian House in its setting' we had a happier moment to celebrate, as members of the School drank the health of Mrs Rachel Maxwell-Hyslop, one of our two distinguished Vice-Presidents, at a surprise party and wished her well on the occasion of her 90th birthday. Our multi-talented Secretary provided a magnificent birthday cake with a ziggurat design and Rachel was given a bouquet. There were many members and colleagues there to participate in this memorable gathering.

We are delighted to report that Mrs Rosalind Hicks has made a most generous donation to the School, which she wishes to be used at the discretion of Council to bring younger Iraqi archaeologists; linguists; students and museum staff for short training courses in the UK. They will be known as the 'Christie Mallowan Scholars' in honour of her mother and we hope that the first Scholars will be able to come later this year. There is a great need for such courses in order to allow Iraqi scholars to catch up on the latest developments in their fields, something they have been unable to do since the imposition of sanctions in 1991. The School is enormously grateful to Mrs. Hicks.

In view of the need for training, the School was very pleased to be able to send Miss Noorah Al Gailani MA, Keeper of Islamic Material at the Burrell Collection, Glasgow, to the Iraq Museum in Baghdad, where she has just given a two week course on 'Recent Developments in Museum Studies' (See 'Letter from Baghdad' following this editorial.) Funding for this work has come from the many generous donations to our 'Fund for IRAQ'. The total amount raised with the Gift Aid outstanding is almost £45,000, which includes the Christie Mallowan Scholarship Fund. We thank all our members, who have donated so generously. As the situation in Iraq becomes clearer, we hope to be able to use the funds appropriately. These donations are being accounted for separately from the School's normal funding resources.

The School is broadening the range of topics, which it covers in order to become more inclusive. Council was particularly glad to be one of the sponsors of a study day on 'Christianity in Iraq' organised by Dr Erica Hunter, which took place at SOAS on Saturday, April 3rd. The study day aroused much interest and was attended by almost one hundred people, both Christian and Muslim. The event was such a success that follow-up study days are planned.

This past January the School sponsored a Study Day on the Sumerians with the Oxford University Continuing Education Department. The guest lectures were: Harriet Crawford, Nicholas Postgate, Eleanor Robson and Jeremy Black. This hugely successful Study Day with a sell-out audience was organised by Dr Jeremy Black. It seems very poignant to let our members and colleagues know that just prior to putting this Newsletter together, Jeremy died very unexpectedly in his sleep – a true shock to us all, who esteemed his scholarship and friendship and indeed are very much effected by his passing. At this stage the emotions are rather too raw to write more but we will ensure that a fitting tribute is written about Jeremy, who was a very valued Council member, scholar and friend. He was Assistant Director and Director of the British Archaeological Expedition to Iraq from 1984 to 1988. In 1988 he took up his appointment to a lectureship in Akkadian at the Oriental Institute in Oxford and we know that he is already greatly missed by his colleagues, friends and students there and at Wolfson College, Oxford. Jeremy was also one of the participants in our Languages of Iraq Study Day, sponsored by the Charlotte Bonham-Carter Trust, and organised by Nicholas Postgate last November at the British Academy. Jeremy's presentation on the Sumerian language was superlative and he left his audience (comprising many non-Scholars) with a grasp at understanding the 'noble tongue' and a potential ability to shock many friends with 'abam muzu – 'what is your name?' Although many of us were left behind by the complexities of the grammar, we were awed by the clarity and humour of his presentation.

Harriet Crawford & Joan Porter MacIver

**Letter from Baghdad – REPORT ON THE BSAI’S MUSEUM
WORKSHOPS AND TALKS DELIVERED TO THE STAFF OF
THE IRAQ MUSEUM, BAGHDAD
Monday 19th – Thursday 29th April 2004**

With the generous financial support of the BSAI, between 16th of April and 1st of May, I was able to do my own little bit for The Iraq Museum in Baghdad.

Armed with a Museums Studies degree from UCL and some 10 years worth of museum work experience in London and Glasgow, I volunteered to carry out a series of workshops and talks on the world of museums in Britain, its profession, standards, aspirations and challenges. The visit was to be the first of BSAI’s programme to help in the regeneration of the Iraq Museum.

Having not been back to Iraq since 1992, I found Baghdad the same survivor I had parted with after the first Gulf War, but rather more battered and neglected, with a scattering of new artistically challenging architecture, both public and domestic! Although April was the peak month of spring, with many of the street trees cut down (*to prevent snipers from hiding behind them*) and the frequent dust storms, Baghdad looked somewhat like a dusty desert city. You only got a real taste of the spring, once you stepped inside people’s homes and gardens, small hidden paradises behind high brick walls and solid iron gates. Even the Iraq Museum had its hidden gardens, though not as well kept; these were flourishing in the two inner courtyards of the museum’s complex. With “our aunt the Date Palm” as the Prophet Muhammad described her, gracing every corner.

Once we got started, I found the Iraq Museum staff as young and excited as the spring. They had been through a lot since March 2003, but things had begun to improve in the museum. Toilets had been repaired, their offices had been re-painted and new desks and chairs supplied, and they were taking up courses in English, French, computer skills, etc. They were very keen to explore the world of museums and how it works in other parts of the world. Through the talks and workshops, which I carried out between 20th and 29th April, we explored the main issues that concern the museum profession including public access to the collections (physical and intellectual), interpretation and audience development, education and outreach work, and design and display. The practical side of the workshops was focused on getting the staff to work in small mixed teams to produce two-dimensional displays on seven pre-specified exhibition themes. Each of the exhibitions was accompanied by a children’s educational activity sheet and an appropriate events programme.

We started off with 45 members of the Iraq Museum staff, but had several others join us from well beyond: One from Najaf Museum, one from Babylon Museum, and one from Kerbelah Museum. All three took risks in travelling to Baghdad to attend parts of the course. We also had two people from Baghdad University's Natural History Museum, and three from the National Archives. Due to the size of the attendance, we had to split them in to two groups and run two sessions a day, each having a theoretical / conversational part and a practical part. For the practical side of the workshops, the people attending were split into eleven exhibition teams of 4 –5 members.

On Thursday 29th, being the last day, the Iraq Museum staff arranged a small display of their virtual exhibitions in what had become our classroom. A number of the ladies brought cold drinks, biscuits, and chocolates to celebrate the end of the training. Everyone came in early to put the final touches on their work and hang it all up. Both the Director General of the Department of Antiquities and the Director of the Iraq Museum came to view and discuss the exhibitions, and offered their compliments to the staff. Dr. Donny George, the Director of the Iraq Museum thanked me for my contribution and thanked The British School of Archaeology in Iraq for its efforts and involvement in the Iraq Museum. We said our goodbyes and promised to keep in touch.

Throughout the talks and workshops, staff highlighted areas they would like to get more focused training in. Education, exhibition design, various areas relating to collections and museum management including front of house services and staff professional development.

I left Baghdad on Friday 30th April, the same way I had come – by way of airplane from Amman to Baghdad International Airport. Ascending was not as exciting as descending, where the plane, once above Baghdad International Airport - at about 34,000 feet high – had started its descend in a dramatically circular / coil path, which enabled me to see both the Tigris and the Euphrates at the same time from my little tilting airplane window. I was moved to see that the old surviving city was expanding westwards, and its suburbs had managed to reach the eastern bank of the Euphrates, and would one day be big enough to have both rivers running through it.

Noorah Al-Gailani MA

The School plans in the near future on supporting the training of two Iraqis on SHORT-TERM TRAINING COURSES or professional development in museum design and photography. If any members know of appropriate well run short-term courses and /or any companies that may be willing to help, please contact the secretary.

THE NIMRUD IVORIES IN 2004

The Nimrud ivories, like much else in the Iraq Museum, Baghdad, suffered as a result of the 2003 war and the sacking of the museum. Many pieces were stolen and disappeared into the antiquities market: these include the jewel-like 'Lioness and the Nubian', of which fortunately there is a version in the British Museum. Others have been damaged, some beyond repair, by the packing, storage and unpacking necessitated by the bombings of 1991 and 2003. Some of the finest were packed and stored in the vaults of the Central Bank in Baghdad, where they were inundated with sewage-contaminated water. On their removal in the summer of 2003 they were given emergency conservation, before having to be returned to the vault because of a lack of security in the Museum. They have continued to deteriorate: the 'Mona Lisa' has apparently split vertically into three, and others have disintegrated.

To begin to cope with this disaster, skilled conservators and a proper laboratory were priorities. The British Museum brought three Iraqi conservators, two from Baghdad and one from Mosul, for training in recent conservation techniques to London in the spring of this year. The Italians have generously provided a laboratory, now in use, and have a conservator in Baghdad working with their Iraqi colleagues. All this is excellent, but the scale of the task is daunting. Many ivories are still in storerooms, where they were apparently swept to the floor during the disturbances: they too await skilled personnel to begin their rescue.

Conservation is the top priority, but so too is the retrieval of material from the art market. Here the School was able to help. As mentioned in a previous newsletter the School has financed a major scanning programme, scanning from the original photographs not only all the ivories published in the *Ivory from Nimrud* series of volumes (I-V), but also those already assembled for publication in the next two fascicules, those from Fort Shalmaneser, Room SW 11/12, and the ivories from the North West Palace. The latter, fortunately, includes, thanks to the generosity of the Iraqi Department of Antiquities, the outstanding ivories found by the Department in Well AJ, some of which were also looted. Advance copies of the scans were made available last summer to Chicago, which has developed a major database of antiquities to help Interpol and others track down and identify some of the lost antiquities.

The scanned archive of *IN*. I-V is currently being printed and should be available in June. It consists of some 180 pages with small photographs of the ivories, 15 to the page. Each photograph is accompanied by a caption containing the volume and catalogue number, the field number and the scan number, so that it is easy to flick through the pages to find the required ivory. Full details of each object are, of course, in the published

volumes: the scanned archive is a supplement to the volumes, not a replacement.

The primary purpose of the archive is to facilitate the next generation of ivory studies. Cataloguing the ivories is, of course, the essential first step to make this unique body of material available for study. However, it is only the first step and needs to be followed by deeper stylistic and analytic studies by a range of scholars asking different questions. Happily such studies are already under way. These have been stimulated by two fine seminars in 1997 and 2001 held in the University of Freiburg under the auspices of the Swiss Society of Ancient Near Eastern Studies and organized by Dr. Christoph Uehlinger. The papers of the 1997 seminar have already been published as *Images as Media, Sources for the Cultural History of the Near East and Eastern Mediterranean (1st millennium BCE)*, Freiburg, 2000. These seminars led to a variety of new initiative, one of which resulted in Dr. Claudia Suter being awarded a major grant by the Swiss Academy for the Humanities and Social Sciences to re-examine the important collection of ivories from Samaria, only a selection of which were published by the Crowfoots in their admirable *Early Ivories from Samaria* volume. Professor Eva Braun Holzinger has set up a project in Mainz, employing, among others, Dirk Wicke, who has recently completed his doctorate in Munster, studying pyxides, of which there are, of course, numerous ivory examples from Nimrud. The Mainz team is currently investigating the Egyptianizing ivories and iconography.

There are a number of groups in Italy. Students in Turin University are studying the ivories found by Paolo Fiorino of Turin University when he re-excavated the doorway of Room SW 37 of Fort Shalmaneser. Elena Scigliuzzo of Pisa is working on 'Intermediate' ivories, and her Professor, Stefania Mazzoni, is the host of the next in our series of ivory seminars in Pisa in December of this year, to be followed by a fourth seminar organized by Professor Braun Holzinger in Mainz. These seminars are a stimulating forum focussed on this remarkable minor art.

I had the good fortune to meet some of the Italian students in April when I was invited to give five seminars in the Universities of Pisa and Bologna. It was encouraging to have an attentive audience, with students travelling from Rome and Turin as well as those from Pisa and Bologna. There is, therefore, a critical mass of young scholars preparing to take forward the study of the ivories, and for whom the School's scanned archive will be of considerable assistance. It will be fascinating to see the different directions which their studies will take.

The next School ivory publication concerns the ivories from the North West Palace. The School has been fortunate, for in this volume the British Museum has generously given us permission to re-publish the ivories

found by Layard in two storerooms in the North West Palace, most of which were published by the late Richard Barnett in his *Catalogue of Nimrud Ivories*, as well as those found for the School by Max Mallowan both in rooms previously excavated by Layard, such as V and W, and in the various new areas in the palace, which he investigated. These include fine pieces from Wells NN and AB, as well as fragments of Assyrian ivories from by the throne base in the Throne Room, which may be the remains of Assur-nasir-pal's throne. Finally and most excitingly the Iraqi Department of Antiquities has provided us with photographs of the outstanding ivories they found in Well AJ, a well investigated both by Layard and Mallowan, but only successfully emptied by the Iraqis. These have already been fully published by Fuad Safar and al Iraqi, but although the photographs are excellent the quality of the paper does not do them justice – and it is a relatively rare work. Muzahim Mahmud, the finder of the famous Royal Tombs of the Assyrian Queens, has also allowed us to include the unpublished ivories he found in Well 4. This volume, the North West Palace Ivories, will publish as a whole by context some of the most important and complete ivories found at Nimrud. This magnificent assemblage includes some fine Assyrian style pieces, as well as an outstanding range of ivories imported from North and Central Syria and the Levant coast. Given a fair wind, the catalogue should be ready in 2005.

Georgina Herrmann

10 WEEKS IN BABYLON

The Babylon Archaeological Project (BAP) has been launched in October 2003 on an initiative of the Coalition Provisional Authority, South-Central Region, as a part of a large scale programme aimed at supporting local communities of the Babil Province by reconstructing civil infrastructure of the area and providing jobs to as large a part of the local population as possible. The project was established as a joint Polish-Iraqi enterprise meant to revive archaeological activities at the site of Babylon and I was acting as the project director. Despite the original promise of the CPA to finance equipment and Iraqi participation in the project, no funds were put at our disposal. Consequently, efforts of the project team have been confined to monitoring and recording the extent of damage sustained by the site since the outbreak of the war. This activity, carried out upon permission issued by the late Dr. Rabi'a al-Qa'isi, Chairman of the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage in Baghdad, has been limited to the area within the military camp, which covers presently about one-fifth of the entire site. Some areas located outside the perimeter of the camp were visited occasionally, but it was impossible to carry out either monitoring or systematic survey of damage there.

The situation in Babylon

Two kinds of damage are in evidence at the site: one resulting from human activity and the other, caused by the elements. The latter has been

observed mainly within the architectural reconstructions. Evidence of numerous shooting positions and shelters of various sizes suggest that Iraqis were prepared to defend the site against the coalition forces, though no battle was finally fought in Babylon. A single line of fire positions was prepared along a modern road south of the Southern Palace. Some pits have also been observed on the eastern side of the Humara hill. A much higher number of positions is in evidence at Qasr, in the area of the Central Palace and to the north of it. Similar positions have been spotted on a low hill located north of Qasr and on the Babil hill, at the northern limit of Babylon. Most of the above mentioned positions were dug into dumps or artificially levelled areas; only few of them destroyed ancient structures or undisturbed archaeological layers.

During a relatively short period before the military camp was established at the ancient site, the whole area had been subjected to looting. The main impact of the looters was on modern buildings, starting from Saddam Hussain's palace and its compound, to the SBOAH buildings, the Museum included, and the tourist complex around the artificial lake, north of the reconstructed theatre. All buildings, reconstructions included, were stripped of all movables, as well as of doors, windows, and electrical equipment. The glass-cases in the Babylon Museum were emptied of their contents, but the original panel of glazed bricks and a plaster fragment with ancient graffiti have survived. A small museum library as well as a gift shop in the corner of the courtyard of the Museum were plundered and papers kept in its offices, field documentation of the Iraqi excavations in Babylon included, burned. With all probability, the portico of the reconstructed Palaestra was burned at that time.

Looters have also sought for inscribed bricks in the Throne Room of the Southern Palace. Where over a dozen of bricks were once present, only one complete and one fragmentary brick survived in the northern wall of the hall. Even more regrettable were the attempts to break and take away relief bricks forming depictions of Marduk's dragons in the Ishtar Gate. Large areas of relief decoration are obliterated; nearly all reliefs forming the lowest row of the decoration have been affected to some degree. Yet, fortunately, very few traces of illicit digging were observed at the site.

The military camp was established in Babylon on April 22nd, to house more than 1,500 US Marine troops (presently, the number of soldiers increased to over 2,000). One of their first activities was setting up sentry posts and barbed wire fence along the perimeter of the camp. The southernmost part of the reconstructed Procession Street was damaged on this occasion in the area to the south of the temple of *Nabu ša hare*, where holes have been made in the brick pavement of the street on a stretch of more than 40 meters in order to secure the fence. The original posts installed by the US Marines have been later replaced by sentry towers located either on natural hillocks or on artificial mounds which had been

prepared to accommodate them with the use of bulldozers.

Another large activity carried out at that time was extension of the Landing Zone towards the north and east. The extension has been covered with a thick layer of reddish earth with many brick fragments (taken obviously from Humara hill), which was packed to form a hard surface able to support even heavy helicopters. The dimensions of the extended landing zone are irregular: it is about 300 m long (east to west, along the road) and more than 100 m wide (north-south, in the western part).

The Humara hill has been extensively used as a source of earth for engineering activities. Four large pits have been dug into the northern spur of Humara, three of them on its western and the other on the north-western side (two have been observed by Helen McDonald already in the Summer of 2003, cf. *The BSAI Newsletter* no. 12, p.6). The largest of the pits is approximately 25 meters long and more than 10 meters wide and reaches 4 meters into the deposits of Humara. At the southernmost pit, digging activity was observed even during my stay in Babylon.

The presence of the military camp at the site of Babylon poses a constant threat to the archaeological remains, mainly because a large number of people and heavy equipment is crammed there on a very restricted area. The ruins and the architectural reconstructions are often visited by soldiers. Their movement has been regulated by an order of the camp commander (enforcing that only groups accompanied by an Iraqi guide may enter the area of the reconstructions and of archaeological excavations), but the order was not being followed very strictly. Only in December was the Qasr area fenced off by barbed wire to stop trespassing, and it is regularly patrolled by the Military Police.

Finally, military authorities constantly attempt to improve and enhance various parts of the encampment. Some of these improvements, for instance replacing tents with containers, pose no danger to the site but others, like installing new showers or levelling certain areas may be potentially precarious to the archaeological remains. An example of a real threat to the antiquities of Babylon was an attempt to extend the Landing Zone towards the north-east, by a large, trapezoid area 150 m long and 50 m wide. The work started in November 2003 but was stopped immediately on request of the director of the local office of the SBOAH.

A thunderstorm that had flooded Camp Babylon on the night of 27th November caused a lot of damage to archaeological objects and reconstructed buildings. Unusually intensive rainfall caused strong run-off water torrents, which cut into the ground. Consequently, in several instances the reconstructed walls started to crack (for example, at the south-eastern corner of the Ishtar of Agade temple), while in other places the already existing cracks widened (the Ishtar Gate). The roof of one of the side chambers of the Ninmah temple, where two of its roof-beams had cracked, was broken by the rain, leaving a hole of 1/2 square meter. Two stretches of the western face of the reconstructed Inner City Wall north of the Marduk Gate had broken off the core of the wall and collapsed. Mud

plaster covering the facades of the reconstructed buildings has been washed away nearly entirely from the walls which were exposed to the wind-driven rain.

Minor damage to several structures was observed prior to the above mentioned storm. The most substantial breakage was observed in the *Nabu ša hare* temple. The surface layer of the back wall in the smaller cella peeled off and collapsed in the middle part, forming a recess 2,5 meters wide and more than 3 meters long. Cracks were observed in some other walls, where gypsum lining was reconstructed on the walls of the temple, for instance in the entrance hall by the northern entrance.

Conditions in Iraq

The main problem for a person staying in Iraq is lack of means of communication. The phone network works only on a local level (in Baghdad it is impossible to make a call from one city quarter to another). Other means of communication are hardly efficient. E-mail is expensive, and access to satellite phones restricted. The only solution is personal contact. This is also difficult to arrange, mainly because security conditions are gradually deteriorating (during my stay there in December, only military or CPA convoys were occasionally targeted). Traveling with military or CPA convoys turned out to be difficult to arrange; renting a local car with a driver was the most efficient way to move about. A journey to Baghdad was considered a bit risky, but traveling in the area of Hilla, Karbala and Najaf was safe and we managed to visit all these cities, as well as al-Kifl, Ukhaidir and Borsippa. For instance, in October the Austrian archaeological mission was staying in the Ibrahim Khalil village close to Borsippa for about three weeks without any incidents.

The situation of the Iraqi Antiquities Service (SBOAH) is very difficult. Some local offices and regional museums have already been restored and partly equipped on expense of the CPA. The Nebuchadnezzar Museum in Babylon and its offices have been equipped, and running water and electricity restored, but both buildings have recently been taken over by American troops, despite a protest of the SBOAH staff. Numerous personnel of the local SBOAH offices is presently paid by the CPA, but lack of material means prevents the Iraqis from undertaking any activities. This will also be difficult in the future, as long as the SBOAH is deprived of funds, and before Archaeological Police starts to operate. At the moment, protection of the heritage of Iraq, archaeological sites included, is a concern of the military authorities, with CIMIC launching reconstruction and protection programs, and coalition troops guarding some of the sites. Yet, in the future, huge sums of money will be necessary to protect sites and to maintain architectural reconstructions at the sites.

The attitude of the Iraqis towards civilian foreigners is difficult to estimate. There certainly is a difference between Baghdad and the Hilla region. Walking the streets of Baghdad one afternoon, I felt a very pronounced difference compared to the time of my previous stay there in

2002, when, as it is typical for the Near East, people in the street greet foreigners by striking a friendly conversation. In October 2003, foreigners in Baghdad were totally ignored; my presence did not cause either friendly or hostile reactions. After sunset, Baghdad becomes a gloomy place; with no streetlights working scarce illumination is provided by shops along the streets and the noise of generators is overwhelming.

The Shia population in the vicinity of al-Hilla present an entirely different attitude. Overthrowing of Saddam's regime was a considerable improvement for them. Lots of pilgrims come to Najaf and Karbala from the East: Iran, Afghanistan and even Turkmenistan, and both cities are busy and developing rapidly. The local population also profits from the implementation of the CPA programs aimed at reconstructing local infrastructure: community offices, hospitals, schools, roads etc., and from employment possibilities offered by military camps, which employ hundreds of Iraqis from the neighbouring villages.

I was back home for Christmas. Since my return to Poland many things in Iraq changed for the worse and, with all probability, my observations on the attitude of the Iraqi people are not valid anymore. Yet, I believe, that even such a personal account as mine, may be a testimony to how the situation in Iraq was changing during the last year.

Rafal Koliński
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THE FORMER COLLECTION OF THE TELL HALAF-MUSEUM, BERLIN, DEVASTATED BUT NOT COMPLETELY LOST

While travelling through Syria trying to find the best route for the proposed Baghdad railways a bizarre story of stone statues of human-animal hybrids was reported to Max von Oppenheim, attaché of the German embassy in Cairo and scholar on his own account. Encouraged by these rumours von Oppenheim (1860-1946) started investigating the site, which would become famous as Tell Halaf.

The Tell Halaf is located on the Syrian-Turkish border near Ras al-'Ain. After three campaigns (1911-1913, 1927, 1929) the excavations had revealed two major settlements which went back to the Chalcolithic period (c. 6000-5000 BC) and Iron Age. Above all the sculptural remains of the Aramean west palace received popular attention. Up to this day the impressive entrance surpasses all known types of the *bit hilani*. The structure rested not on the usual columns or pillars but on caryatids consisting of three oversized sacred animals each carrying a large standing deity on its back. The gods were flanked by two sphinxes framed by a series of large sculptured orthostates; two monumental griffins protected the inner doorway of the palace. More than 187 smaller

relief slabs of alternating basalt and reddish limestone decorated the buttressed east, west and south walls.

Since 1914 von Oppenheim had tried in vain to exhibit the whole of his findings on the Berlin Museumsinsel, but the negotiations with the administration had come to a halt. The sharing of the finds in 1927 forced him to make a decision: Until a final agreement could be reached he either would have to store his objects or find an interim solution which enabled their long-expected presentation. So he accepted an offer made by the Technical University to provide him with the buildings of a former iron-foundry in Berlin-Charlottenburg. Although the charming combination of industrial architecture and art was received quite well, the question of an appropriate exhibition space was still undecided when the Second World War broke out. Important museums like the Museum of Classical Antiquities, the National Gallery or the Pergamonmuseum had to close their showrooms for the public and to protect their holdings. The removal of the Tell Halaf-sculptures was not possible without great efforts and costs, whereas the restored small finds were too fragile. Encouraged by Walter Andrae, the excavator of Ashur and then director of the Vorderasiatisches Museum, all sculptures and artefacts stayed at the museum. After the destruction of his residence and Orient Research Institute (set up in 1922) during an air raid in August 1943, von Oppenheim took refuge in Dresden. Two months later his museum and the adjoining building burned down after a severe aircraft bombardment. At his request Andrae organized a rescue operation: Out of the debris of the ruined Tell Halaf-Museum nine tractor loads of nearly 80 cubic meters of basalt fragments could be rescued and stowed away into the Pergamonmuseum. Political circumstances after 1945, questions of ownership after von Oppenheim's death a year later and shortage of financial funds and personnel prevented any attempt of documentation or further conservation by the Vorderasiatisches Museum.

After the reunion of the two German states a preliminary examination of the stored material showed that the restoration of some monuments including parts of the palace front seemed to be realizable. Since 2001 the Tell Halaf-façade is an integral part of the so-called *Masterplan* (in detail www.museumsinsel-berlin.de). Besides constructional renovation of altogether five individual museums (Altes and Neues Museum, Alte Nationalgalerie, Bodemuseum and Pergamonmuseum) the blueprints for the Pergamonmuseum include a new glass wing which will exhibit probably from 2020 onwards the pillared portico as not only the official

entrance to the Vorderasiatisches Museum, but also as a new highlight of Ancient Near Eastern architecture like the Ishtar gate and Processional street of Babylon or the citadel gateway of Zincirli.

The Tell Halaf-Restoration-Project has started its work in October 2001. During the first year of examination and assorting fragments of more than 30 sculptures and orthostats have been identified and even pieces of the statues from Gebelet el Beida could be singled out. Whereas the limestone slabs were completely lost in the firestorm, the basalt stones were seriously damaged through heat and water: Cracks and very fine fissure cause an instability of the material, while the flaked off surface makes the assigning more difficult. So far two large orthostats, the western griffin, one of the lions, the sculpture of a seated couple and a small collection of bowls and pivot stones have been finished. The eastern sphinx, the second lion, one of the male gods, the monumental funerary statue of a seated woman, the scorpion-man that used to flank the citadel gate are in preparation for the next years.

Without generous funds provided by the von Oppenheim family the reconstruction of the former collection of the Tell Halaf-Museum would be impossible. The Tell Halaf-Project is therefore deeply grateful to the Sal. Oppenheim-Foundation and the Alfred von Oppenheim-Foundation for their support which is an outstanding example of patronage as well.

The devastation of the Tell Halaf-Museum was regarded as one of the most tragic losses for Ancient Near Eastern archaeology. The fate of this unique collection should have been a symbol and admonition for our dealings with cultural heritage and archaeological remains, but unfortunately as the looting and devastation of the Iraq Museum in 2003 has shown, history has the tendency to repeat itself.

References:

Cholidis, N. and Martin, L., Kopf hoch! Mut hoch! und Humor hoch! Der Tell Halaf und sein Ausgräber Max Freiherr von Oppenheim, Mainz 2002

Faszination Orient. Max von Oppenheim: Forscher, Sammler und Diplomat, edited by G. Teichmann and G. Völger on behalf of the Max Freiherr von Oppenheim-Stiftung, Cologne 2003

Illustration:



Max von Oppenheim in front of his lions, Tell Halaf-Museum, c. 1930

Nadja Cholidis, Berlin

(Editor's note: Nadja Cholidis wrote this article at the invitation of the BSAI to let our members know about this important project.)

Missing BSAI 1940 Annual Report

We are missing the June 1940 annual report (8th AGM). If any member has a copy in his or her archive, we would be very grateful for the chance to either copy it or to have the original. Please do let the Secretary know at our registered address, if you can help.

Review Copies of Academic Books & BSAI Library

The School does not review academic books in the Journal *IRAQ*.

All books recently sent to us have been most kindly donated to our Library.

We maintain an exchange programme with 40 scholarly Journals.

We would welcome any appropriate additions to our own Library collection. We are however also holding in safekeeping a number of books for the Iraq Museum Library and Iraqi University libraries.

DONATIONS TO THE BSAI LIBRARY

Roman Syria and the Near East by Kevin Butcher. London: The British Museum Press, 2003 (ISBN 0 7141 2235 1)

Einführung in die Geo-Archäologie des Vorderen Orients by Werner Nützel. Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2004 (ISBN 3-89500-374-3)

BSAI LECTURES & FUTURE EVENTS

10 June 2004 – BSAI Bonham Carter Lecture "**Our Scientific Debt to Iraq**" by **Dr Emilie Savage-Smith** at 5.30 p.m. at the British Academy, 10 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1. A Forum for members of the School will precede the lecture at 5 p.m. Members of the public are welcome to attend.

13 – 14 September 2004 BSAI Joint Conference with the British Academy – '**Steady states: institutional stability in the face of political change. The evidence from pre-modern Western Asia**' For more information and to register go to <http://www.britac.ac.uk> and click on events. (Please note there is a special BSAI member conference fee.) A preliminary programme is provided on pg. 21.

16 December 2004 BSAI AGM and Lecture "**The noble art of the chase under the Abbasid Caliphs**" by **Sir Terence Clark KBE, CMG, CVO** at 5.30 p.m. at the British Academy, 10 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1.

22 January 2005 **The Assyrians, a Day School** - Oxford University Continuing Education in association with the British School of Archaeology in Iraq. Further details will be available from Day School Administrator, OUDCE, 1 Wellington Square, Oxford OX1 2JA Tel. 01865 270 368 or email: ppdayweek@conted.ox.ac.uk

NON-BSAI Events

'Heaven on Earth – Art from Islamic Lands' Islamic Art from The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg and the Khalili Collection. 25 March - 22 August 2004 in the Hermitage Rooms at Somerset House Strand, London.

INTRODUCTION TO AKKADIAN

For September 2004, FCE Archaeology, Birkbeck is offering a new evening course that will introduce students to the Akkadian language. The Akkadian language was spoken in ancient Mesopotamia, which roughly corresponds to modern Iraq. Related to Arabic and Hebrew, Akkadian was written in cuneiform (wedge-shaped) script. After studying the grammar and script, we will read Babylonian laws in cuneiform and learn about witchcraft, divorce and selling beer in c 1750 BC.

Tutor Frances S Reynolds, PhD (BSAI Council Member)

Enrolment opens 30th June 2004. Places are limited. To request a FCE 2004 Prospectus contact 0845 601 0174

Enquires about this course to FCE Archaeology, 26 Russell Square, London WC1B 5DQ tel. 020 7631 6627 archaeology@fce.bbk.ac.uk

**Joint British Academy/British School of Archaeology in Iraq Seminar
to be held 13 - 14 September 2004**

**‘Steady states: institutional stability in the face of political change
The evidence from pre-modern Western Asia’**

Much research has now been done into the agents of change in the ancient world, but less attention has been paid to the remarkable continuities in certain areas in the face of often-violent political upheavals. This conference explores two facets of this continuity; that provided by the administrative records and that visible in the official iconography of the state.

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

Day 1 The textual evidence

10.30 a.m. Welcome and introduction. Harriet Crawford

(11a.m. Coffee)

11.30 a.m. ‘Ur III to Old Babylonian: institutional continuities and discontinuities’ Tonya Sharlach (University of Pennsylvania)

12.30 p.m. Lunch

1.30 p.m. ‘Is visible change real change? (dis)continuity in the administration of Egypt 2000-1700BC’ Stephen Quirke (University College London)

2.30 p.m. ‘The Neo Babylonian Achaemenid transition’ Michael Jursa (University of Vienna)

(3.30 p.m. Tea)

4.00 p.m. ‘Ancient foundations, new structures: the administration of early Islamic Egypt’ Petra Sijpesteijn (University of Oxford)

5.00 p.m. ‘Islamic rule, Turkish style: the survival of pre-Islamic statecraft in Seljuq Iran’ Carole Hillenbrand (University of Edinburgh)

6.00 p.m. Reception

Day 2 Official Iconography

10.00 a.m. ‘Dynastic Change and Institution Administration in Southern Mesopotamia in the latter 3rd Millennium BCE: Evidence from Seals and Sealing Practices’ Richard Zettler (University of Pennsylvania)

11.00 a.m. Coffee

11.30 a.m. ‘The rod & ring: royal iconography from Ur III to Middle Babylonian’ Katharine Slanski (University of Oxford)

12.30 p.m. Lunch

1.30 p.m. ‘Tradition, innovation and researching the past in Libyan, Kushite & Saite Egypt.’ Robert Mortkot (University of Exeter)

2.30 p.m. ‘Persian Conquerors, Babylonian Captivators’ Erica Ehrenberg (New York University)

(3.30pm. Tea)

4.00 p.m. ‘The Royal Hunt in Islamic art: a symbol of power or the power of a symbol’ Sheila Canby (British Museum)

5.00 p.m. Grand finale - ‘Summary, lessons for the future’ Alan Bowman (University of Oxford)

FORTHCOMING BSAI PUBLICATIONS

In conjunction with the Max van Berchem Foundation, the BSAI will be publishing Alastair Northedge's *Historical Topography of Samarra*. This is the first fundamentally new work to come out in half a century on one of the world's most famous Islamic archaeological sites: Samarra in Iraq. This capital of the Abbasid caliphs in the 9th century is not only one of the largest urban sites worldwide, but also gives us the essence of what the physical appearance of the caliphate was like, for early Baghdad is long lost. It is known not only for its famous spiral minarets, but also for its Golden Dome over the tombs of the Imams, and its long avenues of mud-brick architecture still visible. With the end of Saddam's regime in Iraq, the Abbasid caliphate "the Golden Age of Early Islam" is coming back into interest, long obscured by the difficulties of going there.

Northedge sets out to explain the history and development of this enormous site, 45 km long, using both archaeological and textual sources to weave a new interpretation of how the city worked: its four caliphal palaces, four Friday mosques, cantonments for the military and for the palace servants, houses for the men of state and generals. Samarra is particularly strong on the archaeology of sport: polo grounds, courses for horse-racing, and hunting reserves. After treating the origins of the Abbasid city under the Sasanians, the author then analyses each sector of the city, and explains why it was abandoned at the end of the 9th century.

Alastair Northedge is Professor of Islamic Art and Archaeology at Université de Paris 1. He has worked in Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, and conducted projects at Amman in Jordan, and Ana in Iraq, in addition to Samarra. He is author of *Studies on Roman and Islamic Amman*, and joint author of *Excavations at Ana*, with Andrina Bamber and Michael Roaf.

ANNOUNCING A NEW PUBLICATION

In press and shortly available through Oxbow:

G. Herrmann, H. Coffey and S. Laidlaw: *The Published Ivories from Fort Shalmaneser, Nimrud*. London (Institute of Archaeology, University College, and The British School of Archaeology in Iraq) 2004

A4 format, 181 pages with approximately 15 scans per page and an accompanying CD.

Price £18.00 (\$US 30.00) + postage and packing.

All BSAI publications, except the Journal *Iraq*, are available from **Oxbow Books**, Park End Place, Oxford, OX1 1HN, United Kingdom

Phone: +44 (0)1865 241 249 Fax: +44 (0)1865 794 449

Email: oxbow@oxbowbooks.com **Web:** <http://www.oxbowbooks.com>

OTHER PUBLICATION NEWS

Trading Encounters – From the Euphrates to the Indus Valley in the Bronze Age by Shereen Ratnagar. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004 (ISBN 0 19 566603 8). A BSAI grant was given to Dr Ratnagar in 2001 to enable her to work on this radical revision of her earlier book.

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