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(GERTRUDE BELL MEMORIAL)

المعهد البريطاني لدراسة العراق

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CONTENTS

Chair of Council's Introduction pp. 3 -4

Obituary Note p. 5

University and Museum Engagement Grant Reports pp. 6 - 7

Academic Grant Reports pp. 8 -15

BISI - Nahrein Network Visiting Iraqi Scholarships pp. 15 -19

New Publications p. 20

BISI Grant Notices and Deadlines p. 21

BISI Team p. 22

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CHAIR OF COUNCIL'S INTRODUCTION



Despite what has been unquestionably a year of taking stock in the aftermath of a pandemic and with considerable challenges around the world, what is evident from the contents of this Newsletter is that BISI's work has continued apace. With additional financial support from the British Academy, the Institute has been able to increase the amount of our individual research grants so as to encourage greater ambition and variety from applicants. Crucially, much of our work continues to be in collaboration with friends and colleagues in Iraq, helping to build partnerships and networks.

A return to normality means that BISI's regular in-person lectures and other events have become possible again. Professor Dirk Wicke was able to join us in November to talk on bronze bowls and ivory carvings excavated at Nimrud. The enjoyable evening was made extra special in being an opportunity to present Dr Georgina Hermann with a Festschrift to honour the extraordinary contributions she has made to our understanding of not only the cultures of ancient Iraq but those of the wider Middle East.

It is always a pleasure meeting the Institute's members in person at such events. One advantage, however, to talks online is their ability to reach a global audience. I was, therefore, very pleased at the end of last year to chair a virtual conference that was truly international.

It marked the centenary of Sir Leonard Woolley's first season of excavations at the city of Ur in 1922 and was organised in a collaboration between the BISI, the Iraqi State Board for Antiquities and Heritage (SBAH) and Penn Museum. We were very honoured that the first talk was provided by Dr Laith Hussein, Deputy Minister of Culture and Director General of SBAH. This was followed by papers by colleagues from the UK, Iraq, Europe and the US. Despite some technical challenges, it was a rewarding two days with many new insights into a remarkable site. The proceedings, edited by Professor Nicholas Postgate, will be published in due course.

Our partnership in support of the Basrah Museum remains an important strand of the BISI's in-country engagement. Members will recall that the development of three of the four galleries was funded by the UK government's Cultural Protection Fund (CPF). At the start of this year, the CPF awarded another grant for an evaluation of the project and its impact. Managed by our then Vice Chair, Joan Porter MacIver, and our Executive Officer, Ali Khadr, the evaluation team undertook an intense five-day visit to Basra. It was an important opportunity to reflect on the successes and lessons of many years of work.



The evaluation team at the entrance of the Basrah Museum alongside the new Director, Mr Mustafa Al Hussiny - from left to right: Mr Mustafa Al Hussiny, Dr Geraldine Chatelard, Mrs Joan Porter MacIver, Ms Tamara Alattiya, Mr Wissam Al Maiahi - (image courtesy of Ali Khadr)

The Museum continues to be an important part of Basra's cultural landscape, not least during important moments of the year – I am writing this during the month of Ramadan when the Museum's opening hours have been extended into the evening. With increasing footfall in the galleries, it is important that the exhibits are made as accessible as possible for local audiences. I'm therefore very pleased to report that a series of text panels written by several BISI Trustees intended to introduce the cultures represented in the collections - Sumer, Babylonia, Assyria and the local story of Basra – have been translated into Arabic and are now in production for installation later this year.

In February I was delighted to meet with Dr Ahmed Fakak al-Badrani, Iraq's Minister of Culture, Tourism and Antiquities. He was visiting the UK with Dr Laith at the invitation of UCL's Nahrein Network and I welcomed them both to the Ashmolean Museum and the British Museum. It was an opportunity to highlight the work of the BISI, especially our partnership with the Nahrein Network in the Visiting Iraqi Scholarships Scheme.



Dr Ahmed Fakak al-Badrani, Iraq's Minister of Culture, Tourism and Antiquities at the entrance of the Ashmolean Museum (image courtesy of Nahrein Network)



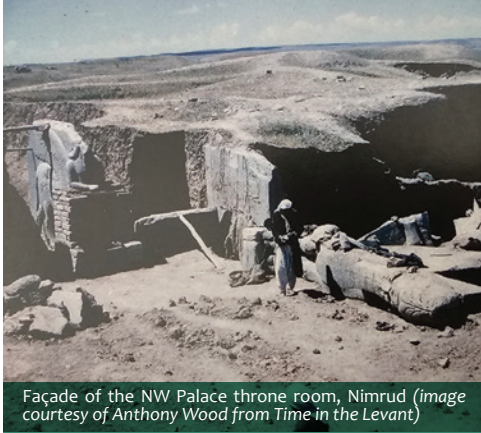
Dr Ahmed Fakak al-Badrani and Dr Laith Hussain at the British Museum (image courtesy of Nahrein Network)

Finally, I am very pleased to report that we are upgrading our website. It is a work in progress but over the coming months the pages will be updated with a new design and text. Please bear with us as these changes are put in place. The aim is to provide a much friendlier and more informative window into the work of the Institute and I look forward to your comments and suggestions as it develops.

Prof Paul Collins
Chair of Council

ANTHONY R WOOD

Obituary Note



Facade of the NW Palace throne room, Nimrud (image courtesy of Anthony Wood from *Time in the Levant*)

Anthony (“Ant”) Wood, a long-standing member of the Society who for a while took part in the Nimrud excavations, died on 5 October 2021 at the age of 89.

Ant Wood was deeply rooted in Oxfordshire. His father was Vicar of Charlbury; he was educated at St Edward’s School and Worcester College, Oxford; he did his National Service in the Oxford & Bucks Light infantry; for a while he ran an art gallery in Burford; and in retirement he knocked two cottages into one to form a home in Ascott-under-Wychwood.

However, as he recorded in his memoir *Time in the Levant* (Troubadour Publishing, 2019), he was inspired in his last year at Oxford, coming across a paperback about the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, to pursue “a thoroughly 19th century enthusiasm for the Levant”. He wrote to all the archaeologists listed in Whitaker’s Almanac in the hope of getting on a dig. This led to his meeting Professor Max Mallowan and his wife Agatha Christie in Wallingford, and eventually to his travelling to Nimrud on a route that included the Simplon Orient night train, the SS Istanbul or Turkish Maritime Lines from Naples to Beirut, service taxi to Baghdad and the Taurus Express to Mosul.



The British School of Archaeology in Iraq’s (now BISI) new house in Baghdad taken from a boat on the Tigris at Karadat Mariam, 1956 (image courtesy of Anthony Wood *Time in the Levant*)

Ant Wood described the staff on the Nimrud dig as “a very learned and interesting lot”. The head, Professor Mallowan, was “known to all as Max, a figure from the heroic period of archaeology in Iraq... Max carried this awesome reputation lightly; he must have worked very hard but he was unassuming, sometimes very funny, always cheerful, encouraging and forgiving of lapses”. Agatha “was the matriarch of the camp. She unobtrusively organized the quite excellent catering of the dig... More importantly, she also kept the catalogue of dig finds and, I think, typed up Max’s notes”. Ant considered the kindness with which Max and Agatha ran the dig “inspirational”.

Time in the Levant offers further entertaining material about the dig, including the reported thawing of the “initially austere” David Oates, “particularly after the arrival of an American girl, Joan Lines, with fair straight hair and blue eyes”. Ant was present later at their engagement in the Station Hotel, Mosul.

Ant went on to fill a number of official posts throughout the Middle East – the Gulf, Libya, Aden, Iraq, Iran and Oman. His experiences are entertainingly written up in *Time in the Levant*, including those of his time as Political Officer in Abu Dhabi in the days of the redoubtable Shaikh Shakhbut bin Sultan Al Nahyan. Throughout his life he maintained the sense of adventure and interest in people, places and culture that had first fired him to set off for the Levant. His cultural interests included singing: he sang in choirs wherever he could and eventually was a member of the Bach Choir. He enjoyed the artifacts to be found wherever he went. He records in *Time in the Levant* how in May 1963 in Mukalla (Hadramaut) he “picked up a delightful carved wooden door/window frame for 25/- on the beach”; this may or may not be the same door as is now to be found in the kitchen of the house in Ascott-under-Wychwood.

Sir Harold Walker

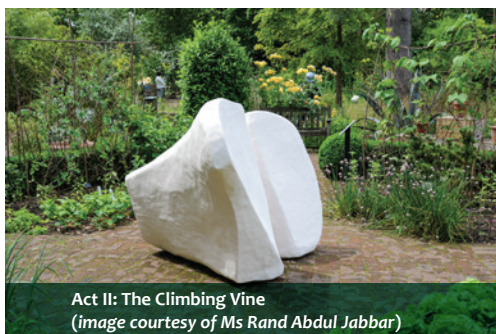
UNIVERSITY AND MUSEUM ENGAGEMENT GRANT REPORTS

Every Act of Recognition Alters What Survives

I feel grateful to have received the British Institute for the Study of Iraq's University and Museum Engagement Grant in support of researching, creating and sharing findings of my artistic project *Every Act of Recognition Alters What Survives*, commissioned by Shubbak Festival. The project emerged from a participatory workshop titled *Memories of Home* which engaged women of the Iraqi and Arab diaspora in London in dialogue and discourse around perceptions of identity as related to place, history and memory. The aim of the workshop was to encounter, extract and record individual narratives to produce a series of written, oral, and visual 'recordings' that describe tensions associated with the loss of, and longing for 'home'. Through a constructive engagement with the past, we worked towards reclaiming a sense of ownership over their personal and collective experiences. The results of the workshop were a series of personal recordings that reveal glimpses of each participant's personal experiences, and describe her emotional connection to a construct of home. The collection of drawings, photographs and texts have all been archived and presented on the project website: www.actsofrecognition.com

Following the conclusion of the workshop, I was commissioned by Shubbak Festival to conceive and develop an artwork for the 2021 festival in response to the findings of *Memories of Home*. The resulting artwork *Every Act of Recognition Alters What Survives* consisted of two interventions within the Chelsea Physic Garden, London's oldest botanical garden. In Act II: *The Climbing Vine*, three sculptures are set in dialogue with the plants in the garden and provides sites for contemplation and reflection as well as coordinating points for a performative reading of *The Climbing Vine*, a personal text written by Entissar Hajali, one of the original *Memories of Home* workshop

members. In her text, Entissar recalls memories of the jasmine tree and grapevine that grew in her family's garden in Syria and points to memory's transporative power to defy spatial and temporal boundaries, reactivating within the present moment, cherished experiences from distant places and times. Through metaphor and symbolism, a reflection that is deeply personal is transformed and woven into a larger collective narrative around displacement. Rather than recapturing the past, its retelling facilitates its adaptation, inventing a new set of anchors that help enrich, affirm and realign our sense of self. While reciting her text, Entissar invited visitors to contemplate the sensory and emotional qualities of the garden, as well as engage and interact with the series of site-specific sculptural interventions that I produced in response. The work unfolds through an experiential dialogue between recollection and reimagination, and utilizes performance and sculpture to affirm and represent both individual and collective experiences of displacement.



The second intervention, Act III: *The Garden Scene* is a reimagining of the relief of Queen Libbali-Sharrat's Gardens at Nineveh (also known as *The Banquet Scene*) currently in the British Museum. Depicting King Ashurbanipal within the predominantly feminine space of the palace and composed of botanical specimens symbolising his vast geographic reign, it suggests nature's divine endorsement as represented in the feminine form. In this sculptural response, made to the same size as the original, conveys the collective experience shared by the group of women who are undertaking the journey of *Every Act of Recognition Alters What Survives* together. Through it, I attempted to capture and honour the journey of the 14 women who participated in the project, each holding their own object and symbolizing their contributions.



Act III: The Garden Scene
(image courtesy of Ms Rand Abdul Jabbar)

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the BISI for their support of this project, and acknowledge the inspiring women who participated in the *Memories of Home* workshop – Amal, Alaa, Arwa, Ashtar, Asmaa, Dania, Diyan, Fawzia, Hakimeh, Maha, Maysoun, Nadia, Nedal, Nazli, Rasha, Rayya, Sanaa, Shezza, Souad, Yasmin and Zainab; as well as those who engaged with the subsequent conversations – Alaa, Gheed, Mysa, Sarah Joy and Tara, for their time and generous contributions.

Rand Abdul Jabbar

Owning the Past: From Mesopotamia to Iraq

Owning the Past re-examined the origin of the modern Middle East in the context of the region's archaeology and heritage. It introduced voices and stories of people not previously visible in displays devoted to the very histories of their homelands.

Owning the Past, the Ashmolean Museum's first dual language (Arabic and English) exhibition, examined the role Oxford University had during the early 20th century in the formation of Iraq – previously Mesopotamia – and the long-lasting impact of the ancient past on the present. Comprised of a selection of objects, maps and diaries, the exhibition explored how the borders of the state of Iraq were established following the First World War when British control of the region included a fascination with its ancient past – one that led to a colonisation of Mesopotamian antiquity as much as living communities.



Owning the Past Exhibition
(image courtesy of the Ashmolean Museum)

The exhibition opened with a commissioned installation by the British artist Piers Secunda. His powerful artwork was created from a reproduction of the Assyrian relief of a bird-headed spirit from Nimrud, Iraq, that now dominates the entrance to the Museum. The work acted as a metaphor for the wider destruction of individual and community identities resulting from war, colonialism, oppressive ideologies, and neglect.



Assyrian relief reproduction by British artist Piers Secunda
(image courtesy of the Ashmolean Museum)

We are enormously grateful to The British Institute for the Study of Iraq for their support of *Owning the Past: From Mesopotamia to Iraq* (12th December 2020 – 22 August 2021), which was essential in enabling this important show to meet the ambitions of our curatorial team – supporting the exhibition display and design.

Owning the Past was curated by Dr Paul Collins with support from Oxford residents from the Middle East and a number of leading Academics.

ACADEMIC GRANT REPORTS

Early Islamic Basra

Summary Report

The remains of early Islamic Basra are located approximately 15 kilometres to the south-west of the present city of Basra near the modern town of Zubair. The location of the early Islamic city has not been forgotten over the centuries and was certainly known to early European travellers such as Carsten Niebhur. There are a few monuments in the vicinity of the site including the tomb of Hassan al-Basri, the Talha ibn Zubair shrine (destroyed June 2007) and the mosque of Zbair ibn 'Awam. The most important surviving monument is the Mosque of Ali represented by the fired brick remains of a corner of the mosque which appears as a tower. Although the location of the early Islamic site is known its precise extent and the nature of the sub-surface remains are poorly understood. This is despite a large number of small scale excavations which have been carried out by the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage since 1979. The excavations have only been reported in a summary form and the structural remains encountered have not been dated either by stratigraphy or analytical scientific methods (e.g. C14). During two field visits to the site we have been able to define the limits of the ancient site, develop some ideas about different periods of occupation, document the nature and location of some of the earlier excavations and produce a highly detailed drone survey of those parts of the site which have not yet been built upon (we were not allowed to fly over inhabited areas).

Detailed Report

Two sessions of fieldwork have now been carried out at the early Islamic site. During the first session we carried out a rapid survey of the whole site and the surrounding region to get an idea of how the site relates to the complex local topography, in particular ancient canals, earlier pre-Islamic sites, standing monuments and shrines, as well as the natural environment which includes wetlands and stony desert. This first season was funded by the BISI and is reported on in an article published in *Basra: Its History, Culture and Heritage – Proceedings of the Conference Celebrating the Opening of the Basrah Museum*, published

by BISI in 2020. The second season, financed by the Max Van Berchem Foundation, comprised a detailed aerial photogrammetry as well as a surface survey. The field work took place during May and June 2018. The priorities were:

1. Defining the extent of the early Islamic site.
2. Identifying the location of previous archaeological excavations.
3. Examination of surface material to identify occupation in different areas of the site.
4. Produce a detailed photogrammetric survey of the site using a drone

1) It is assumed that the mosque of Ali stands at or near the centre of the early Islamic site but the outer boundaries are not well known. The State Board for Antiquities and Heritage have produced a map showing the legal boundaries of the archaeological site which seems to relate to property ownership rather than the actual limits of early Islamic remains. In any case the precise boundaries of the ancient city were not well understood. However examination of 1970's satellite images as well as 1930's maps indicated a defensive wall two and a half kilometres to the west of the Congregational Mosque. The wall only appears on the western and southern sides of the site (marked in red on Fig 2) and appears to pass through the town of Zubair. Examination of this feature on the ground indicated that the wall was at least three metres high and approximately two metres wide (Fig 1). The wall appears to have been built predominantly of pisé although mud bricks and fired bricks were also present.



FIG1 Remains of city wall (red line in Fig 2)

The eastern limits of the site can be defined by a line describing the edge of the land subject to flooding either on a daily (tidal) or seasonal basis (marked in blue on Fig 2). Also of interest is a deep channel which

also runs from north to south (marked in yellow on Fig 2). Within the darker area (area of inundation) to the north-east there are a series of white lines which may indicate ancient areas of cultivation as well as ancient roads.

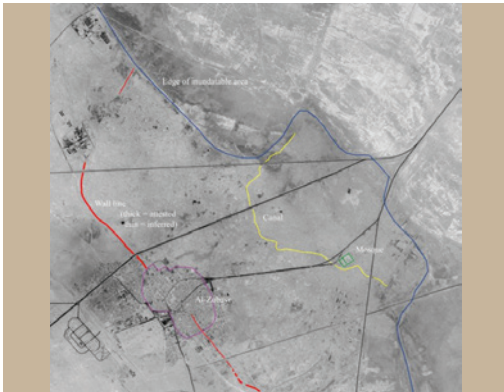


FIG 2 Corona Image showing line of city wall (red) ancient canal (yellow) and edge of flood zone (blue)

2) One of the main priorities of this fieldwork was to identify the location and character of archaeological excavations which have already been carried out. Summary publication of numerous excavations carried out in Basra during the 1970's to 1990's have appeared in SUMER (The official journal of the State Board of Archaeology and Heritage). In addition, there is information on archaeological work in Basra in a book published in Sharjah by Abd al-Sattar al-Azawi. The excavations reported in SUMER give approximate details of location of excavations but little information on any structures or finds within the excavated areas. The publication by 'Abd al-Sattar deals primarily with the mosque excavations as well as the restoration work carried out. In addition to these known archaeological excavations there appear to have been numerous investigations since the 1990s which are unpublished.

During the course of the field work we were shown six excavated sites (excluding the Congregational Mosque) which have been conserved and in one case provided with a roof.

Plans of some of these buildings appear in the summary publications and in other cases plans have been located in the archives in Baghdad. One of the conserved buildings had the remains of a serdab (underground chamber) located in the courtyard. Unfortunately the date of the excavated buildings was in most cases unclear although

ceramics in the vicinity indicate that they could be related to later occupation (see below).



FIG 3 Fired brick remains in excavation in Area B

3) The ceramics of old Basra are important both as an indicator of the dating for various parts of the site and also because Basra was known as a very important ceramic production centre. Given the huge size of the site and the need to gain some idea of any differentiation of occupation over the area the site was divided into three zones (A, B and C) separated by the three major roads which lead east to west. There is a possibility for adding further zones as well as subdividing each zone into small areas. During this first phase of fieldwork collection of ceramics was limited to areas around known excavation sites in order to get some idea of the dating and character of these areas. All diagnostic sherds were photographed and drawn.



FIG 4 Site of Early Islamic Basra Divided into Survey Areas

Preliminary results indicate ceramics from the thirteenth century (e.g. Iranian stone-paste) to eighth century (white ware) and earlier. As all the ceramics collected were surface material they can only be taken as indicative rather than definitive evidence of occupation in particular areas of the site.



FIG 5 Ceramic finds from Area A -- Sherds A and B are Iraqi White ware bowl fragments, C is a fragment of a small Chinese Porcelain bowl

4) The UAV survey was carried out using a Phantom Quadracopter at a height of 150 metres and photographed the two main unoccupied areas of the site (security restrictions meant that we were unable to use a fixed wing drone which would have covered a much larger area). The resultant set of overlapping images were then linked to fixed points on the ground which were located using a Differential GPS Total Station. The accuracy of the terrain modelling was then checked using a mobile antenna. The resultant photomosaic which is still being processed will give a 3D relief map of the surveyed areas with an accuracy of 2cms. This will form the base for a archaeological map of the whole site which will include information derived from survey work, previous excavations and archive material.



FIG 6 Frank Stremke (UAV Specialist) calibrating camera on drone

Professor Andrew Petersen
University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Tepe Kalan: A Bronze Age Centre in the Upper Diyala/ Sirwan River Valley

In April-May 2019, supported by the Sirwan Regional Project (SRP) and representatives from the Garmian Civilizations Museum in Kalar, Iraqi-Kurdistan, I conducted two weeks of archaeological investigation at Tepe Kalan (SRP018). Due to Covid-related travel restrictions, a further two weeks of data recording and analysis was delayed until August 2022.

Tepe Kalan is located in the Upper Diyala/Sirwan River Valley, approx. 25km southwest of the modern city of Kalar, close to the southern limit of the SRP's survey area (Fig 1). Surface collections carried out in 2012 showed that this 20-hectare site was occupied during the Middle and Late

Bronze Age (ca.2000-1150 BCE). This was a dynamic period across Mesopotamia, encompassing phases of urban competition, large-scale site abandonment, and imperial expansion (e.g. Charpin 2021). Until recent years, we've had little understanding of how these wider historical events and processes played out in this marginal geographical zone, where open plains meet rocky foothills, where vital trade and transit routes linked Mesopotamia with the Iranian plateau, and where diverse cultural identities came into contact and were actively negotiated.



FIG 1 Map of sites located in the Sirwan Regional Project survey area, including Tepe Kalan (modified from Casana and Glatz 2017: 5, fig 3)

My project set out with two primary aims: firstly, to carry out test excavations to identify Tepe Kalan's occupational sequence, and, secondly, to investigate the site's material culture, especially the pottery, to assess how localised craft traditions compared with those identified in surrounding regions: the Mesopotamian heartland, the Lower Diyala, and the Shahrizor.

Contemporary context

Tepe Kalan is made up of a prominent 4.5-hectare main mound, rising twenty-five metres above the surrounding plain, and a sprawling lower mound to its north (Fig 2). Both mounds show various type of damage: the main mound has been flattened at its peak to provide a platform for a modern military base, while the lower mound has been cut around its edges by tank hides. Across the lower mound, there is also evidence for small-scale looting, as well as plough damage, restricted to its southwestern extent. Tepe Kalan was an important locale during the Ottoman period, with two standing domed shrines and numerous brick-lined graves placed around them. To avoid disturbing these features, test trenches were placed on the fringes of the lower mound.



FIG 2 Oblique drone photo, showing location of Test A and B, and other features discussed in the text (facing SW)

Middle Bronze Age: Tests A and B

Test A

Test A (4 x 3m) was cut into a tank hide in the southeast of the lower mound, which helped to rapidly expose of the site's stratigraphic sequence in this area. After removing the overlying slopewash and removing approximately 10-20cm of deposit, the top of coherent mudbrick architecture was discernible (Figs 3-4); a rectilinear structure, comprised of Wall 1, running NE-SW, and Walls 2 and 3, running NW-SE.



FIG 3 Test A under excavation, showing mudbrick Walls 1-3 in the west of the trench and a collapse deposit running along the southeast face of Wall 1 (facing SW)



FIG 4 Annotated ortho-photo - Test A

To the north of Walls 1 and 3 was a trampled earth surface on which sat a smashed jar. To the southeast of Wall 1, a dense grey-brown deposit was identified running parallel to the wall and sloping down the mound reaching up to 1.2m away from the wall. This probable wall collapse contained a mixed concentration of dark, ashy material, including burnt animal bone, and a high concentration of jar sherds relating to several vessels. Several sealings were

also recovered, two of which were baked/burnt on their reverse; these were most likely associated with the smashed jars. Together, this material suggests relatively small-scale storage activities took place in this area of the site, while the burning may point to a destruction event that accompanied the end of this latest MB occupation horizon.

The collapse deposit was removed and two small steps were excavated to the southeast of Wall 1 to reach earlier MB levels. The upper step came upon a trampled earth surface and several associated Walls (4-6). It was, however, difficult to determine a coherent association between these walls in this small exposure. Finally, a small sounding (1 x 0.5m) was cut through the lowest occupation surface, up against the southeast baulk, as to test the depth of the occupational deposits in this area of the site. This sounding revealed a lensed deposit of rapid occupational build-up, in which a crude figurine, perhaps a bovine or equid (Fig 5), manufactured of low-fired clay, was recovered. Excavation of the sounding was stopped arbitrarily ca.30cm deep, although deposits likely continued.



FIG 5 Rough zoomorphic figurine from Test A sounding

Test B

Test B (5x2m) was placed approximately 300m from Test A, in an area of recent ploughing in the southwest of the lower mound. Once the upper deposits of mixed slopewash and architectural collapse was removed, it was possible to define the broad line of mudbrick wall, running NW-SE across the centre of the exposure (Fig 6). While tracing the wall line, a fine ware cup (Fig 9.a) was found upturned. The composition of the wall, approximately 40cm (two bricks) thick, is typical, but its direction is unusually curved and follows the contours of the mound. It may be that this was a retaining wall for the settlement. Directly abutting the wall on its southwest face, offset by 0.4m but

following its curved alignment, was an unbaked mudbrick pavement. A small posthole alongside the pavement may point to the original presence of a cover/awning associated with the pavement.



FIG 6 Annotated plan - Test B



FIG 7 Ground stone tools north of Wall 1



FIG 8 A drainage gully running N-S beneath Wall 1 and mudbrick pavement

To the north of Wall 1 is a hard, well-preserved floor. Lying on this floor was a concentration of pottery, a quern stone, and a grinding stone (Fig 7), suggestive of food-processing activities. A rough cut was located directly to the north of this material cluster, running E-W and filled with a grey, clayey deposit. It is possible that this was a drainage pit, designed to catch liquid run-off, subsequently channelling it under Wall 1 and out of the small drainage channel to the south (Fig 8). Across the exposure to the south of Wall 1, although plough damaged, appears to have been an open, multi-functional space. This interpretation is supported by a diverse range of pottery vessels, including a ridge-bodied jar (Fig 9-g), a cooking pot, the rim of a probable brewing vat and a fragment of a sieve. Furthermore, embedded into the floor, running under the western baulk, was a large, inverted jar, chipped away at the neck: this may have operated as a sump to aid drainage in this area.

Pottery

The pottery is internally consistent in style between Tests A and B. The most common vessel types are:

- 1) flat-based bowls/platters with shallow bodies and inwardly bevelled rims (Fig 9.a-c), vessels that would most likely have been used for communal eating. These vessels are common across Mesopotamia, in the cities of the south, such as Ur and Larsa, to Tell Halawa and Tell Yelkhi in the Hamrin Basin, and Tell al-Rimah and Kurd Qaburstan along the Trans-Tigridian corridor (Armstrong and Gasche 2014: pls.1-9; Schwartz et al. 2022: fig.22.1-4)
- 2) stump-footed cups with rough string-cut bases, occasionally decorated with incised lines around the shoulders (Fig 9.d-f). These vessels were suited to individual drinking and are most readily found at sites along the Lower and Middle Diyala, at Tell Asmar, Ischali, Tell Halawa and Tell Yelkhi (e.g. Delougaz 1952: pl.170; Yaseen 1995: pl.130-2; Gabutti 2002-3: tavola 67-9).



FIG 9 A selection of Middle Bronze Age I pottery types from Tests A and B. a-c) shallow bowls/platters; d-f) stump-footed cups; g-h) jars

While these vessels have tended to be considered as typical of the late MB I and MB II periods (ca. 1800-1600 BCE), a collection of C14 dates collected from Tests A and B fall consistently between 2000 and 1850 BCE. Clearly, the community at Tepe Kalan bought into an extensive south and westwards facing cultural network at this time, as expressed through their eating and drinking habits. They were not, however, partaking in the same practices as contemporary sites northwards along the Diyala/Sirwan, at Khani Masi (SRP094) or Gird-i Shamlu. A detailed analysis of this phenomenon, which considers MB sites across the SRP survey region, is currently being prepared for publication (Calderbank and Glatz in prep.).

Late Bronze Age: Test A and Main Mound Scrape

Tests A and B were both abandoned following the MB I occupation outlined above. In Test A, a 1-metre deep slopewash deposit, laid down over approximately 500 years, is visible in section. The next occupational horizon, found only in a narrow 0.4m strip in the northwest of Test A, is comprised of a pebbled surface set in a soft grey fill above a thin lens of ash (Fig 10). A tall LB II goblet, typical of Kassite Babylonia, was found lying on this surface, and a charcoal sample collected nearby was radiocarbon dated to the 14th century BCE. The rest of the LB pottery assemblage shows a degree of cultural mixing; other typical Babylonian types, such as wavy- and ripple-sided bowls, were recovered, alongside nipple/button-footed cups (Fig 11), which are far more at home in the Middle Assyrian repertoires of northern Iraq and the Syrian Jazirah (e.g. Pfälzner 2007: pl.28.318-21).



FIG 10 Tall goblet lying on a Late Bronze Age pebbled surface

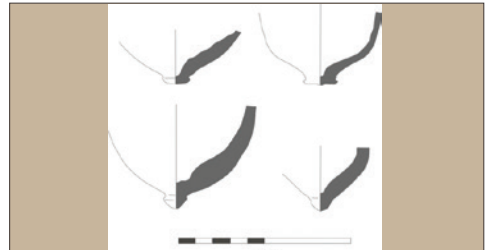


FIG 11 A selection of button/nipple footed cups from Tepe Kalan

To identify the extent of Bronze Age activity across both mounds at Tepe Kalan, exposed sections were scraped at regular intervals up the side of the main mound. One section, approximately 15-metres above the surrounding plain, yielded pottery types dating to the Late Bronze Age. This suggests the presence of Late Bronze Age occupation high up on the main mound, with a commanding view of the surrounding plain. The nature of this occupation requires further investigation.

Conclusion

The fate of the Upper Diyala/Sirwan River Valley during the Middle Bronze Age is traditionally assumed to have been dictated by the whims of external events and processes, stemming from the distant alluvial plains, where the city-states of Isin and Larsa vied for political supremacy, and from the Lower Diyala, where a period of inter-competition ostensibly resulted in the emergence of Ešnunna control and expansion (Charpin 2021). This historical context has been complicated in recent years by a range of more localised archaeological evidence, including the recovery of the ‘Shamlu ware’ phenomenon at Gird-i Shamlu in the Shahrizor (Mühl 2012: fig 15), as well as a series of rock inscriptions/reliefs found across the Zagros foothills, at Bitwater, Darband-i Gawr, Darband-i Belula, and Sarpol-i Zohab (Glatz and Casana 2016: 133-4). Together, this evidence points toward a dynamic and still poorly understood mosaic of MB power negotiations at play along the Sirwan River Valley. Excavations at Tepe Kalan add to these much-needed localised perspectives.

Tepe Kalan was a significant centre of the MB I and LB II periods. Occupation at the site aligns with a period of competing city-states in the wider region. We currently have little understanding of the political context of life at Tepe Kalan, but its community appears to

have bought into a broader cultural sphere, as represented by the use of similar eating and drinking vessels to communities across the region, recognised especially from sites in the Lower/Middle Diyala and the Trans-Tigridian corridor. While the abandonment of Tepe Kalan in approximately 1850 BCE coincides with historical attestations for Ešnunna's expansion, the driving forces behind this phase of abandonment, the following period of hiatus, and the site's reoccupation in the Late Bronze Age, are likely to be far more complex and require further investigations on both a site-wide and a regional scale.

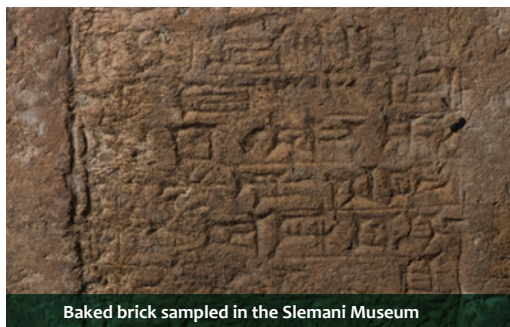
Dr Daniel Calderbank
University of Glasgow

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Understanding Nippur's Paleobotanical Remains

We had initially planned to carry out field research at Nippur, Iraq in 2020. However, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, we were forced to change our plans. Subsequently, waiting for our work to commence proved fruitless. Therefore, we changed the nature of our project and conducted work at the Slemani Museum in Slemani, Iraqi Kurdistan. The work focused on recovering baked brick samples from the museum to conduct archaeomagnetic analysis. The purpose of the analysis is to help create an absolute dating capacity in Iraq using ceramics, which are far more common than datable carbon or other absolute dating materials.



Baked brick sampled in the Slemani Museum

In this work, we sampled over 120 baked bricks in the museum with inscriptions from different parts of Iraq, with most of these bricks attributed to specific Mesopotamian kings between the 3rd and 1st millennium BCE. This will allow us to anchor specific archaeomagnetic signals with given kings' reigns, which allows us to create a fairly reliable and datable timeline of the Earth's magnetic field and its effect on ancient Mesopotamia between the 3rd and 1st millennium BCE. This has now created the first reliable archaeomagnetic sequence for Iraq. Our results show that this sequence fits well with other Middle East archaeomagnetic timelines. This now allows one to recover more common ceramics and use the archaeomagnetic signal found within them to see if the signal present in the ceramic corresponds to the archaeomagnetic signal recovered from the baked bricks. This, we feel, could be transformational in enabling a new way to date objects in Mesopotamia.

We are now preparing the results for a major publication as the results provide highly insightful understanding of the Earth's magnetic field and we can more securely

date objects between the 3rd and 1st millennium BCE. The publication we are planning is intended to be high impact; we are targeting Science Advances or Scientific Reports. We believe in the long-term, these results will now help create a new way to date cultural objects in Iraq, opening a potential way to address major issues such as which chronologies (e.g., High, Middle, Low, etc.) are likely to be more accurate. This has been a long-standing and unresolved debate and we feel the results could address this issue.

Dr Mark Altaweel
University College London

BISI – Nahrein Network Visiting Iraqi Scholarships

The Visiting Iraqi Scholarship programme, designed to provide Iraqi academics and heritage professionals with the skills and knowledge to protect and further historical and cultural research on their country, continues to be a fundamental way in which the Institute encourages engagement and collaboration.

Over the last five-years the Institute has partnered with the UCL based Nahrein Network to help develop the capacity of Middle Eastern universities, museums, archives and heritage sites to enable cultural and economic growth in the region. With the generous support of the Nahrein Network, we have hosted four scholars since the lifting of pandemic travel restrictions.

Dr Dhiaa Kareem Ali Janaby, Lecturer at the University of Kufa and Head of the English Language Department, received a scholarship to research and explore the heritage of the Mandaean community in Iraq, known as the followers of one of the oldest monotheistic religions. Hosted by Professor Christine Robbins at The Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies (IAIS), University of Exeter.

Dr Dilshad Oumar Abdul Aziz, Assistant Professor in the Department of History at the University of Kirkuk received a scholarship to research the BP Archive: A Source for the Study of Contemporary Economic, Social and Cultural History of Kirkuk. Hosted by the BP Archive at the University of Warwick.

Mr Mabast Amin, Ancient Civilisations Archaeology at the University of Garmian, received a scholarship to assess environmental and human threats to the preservation of early prehistoric sites (Palaeolithic and Neolithic) in Iraqi Kurdistan and evolve mechanisms that will aid their preservation through dialogue with local communities. Hosted by Professor Douglas Baird and Professor Eleni Asouti at the University of Liverpool.



Mr Mabast Amin outside University College London
(image courtesy of the Nahrein Network)

Mr Shazad Jaseem, Architect at the Slemani Antiquities and Heritage Directorate, received a scholarship to research contemporary approaches to museum design and interpretation. Hosted by Professor Paul Collins at the British Museum and the Ashmolean Museum.



Mr Shazad Jaseem outside of the British Museum with his host, Professor Paul Collins (image courtesy of the Nahrein Network)

We would like to thank Professor Christine Robins, Professor Douglas Baird, Professor Eleni Asouti, Professor Paul Collins, and the staff at the BP Archive, for assisting with the Visiting Iraqi Scholarship Programme and building lasting links with our scholars and for lending resources and expertise.

The Mandaean in Iraq Today: Perceptions, Stereotypes, Prejudices, and Exclusions

Report by Dr Dhiaa Kareem Ali Janaby

Dr Dhiaa Kareem Ali Janaby a Lecturer from the University of Kufa and Head of the English Language Department, received a scholarship at The Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies (IAIS), University of Exeter in June 2022.



Dr Dhiaa Kareem outside of the University of Exeter
(image courtesy of Dr Kareem)

1) What were the main benefits of your scholarship?

The main benefits of my visiting scholarship were that I had the opportunity to share my research and findings with the staff and post-doctorate students at the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies (IAIS) and to raise the awareness of the challenges that Mandeans face in their daily lives. Besides, I had the privilege to attend the Institute's staff meetings, events, and the institute conference which helped in sharing my research, exchanging ideas, and expanding my academic networking with people who have the same research interests. I also had many meetings with my supervisor Prof. Dr. Christine Robins discussing my project and the potential outputs.

2) What was the main highlight of your scholarship?

While at the host university, I organized a series of webinars, in cooperation with the Nahrein Network, BISI, and some Mandaean experts who live in the diaspora. In these webinars we shed light on what the Mandaean religion is, what its rituals are and the challenges they are going through. Furthermore, I

am working on a paper on *The Mandaean in Iraq Today: Perceptions, Stereotypes, Prejudices and Exclusion* the aim of which is to have an understanding of the Mandaean community's perceptions of their future, heritage, and culture in Iraq and in the diaspora as well as to look at their representation in Iraq.

I was also fortunate to receive a visit from the Director of Nahrein Network Prof. Eleanor Robson to Exeter and meet my supervisor Prof. Dr Christine Robins. I also had the opportunity to meet Dr Jennifer Griggs and Vice Chair of Council: Mrs Joan Porter MacIver from BISI and the Nahrein Network deputy director Dr Mehiyar Kadhim in London.



Lunch with Professor Christine Robins and Professor Eleanor Robson (image courtesy of Dr Kareem)

3) What were the main things you learnt from your Host Institution?

I have learnt more about my supervisor's funded project: *The Worlds of Mandaean Priests* (<https://mandaeanspriests.exeter.ac.uk/>) which she worked on and has completed. Thus, I benefited from this archive as well as being in contact with some Mandaean experts and was able to deliver a talk on the Mandaean community.

The Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies has a wide range of areas within the field of Arab, Middle Eastern, and Islamic Studies and has many opportunities for potential collaborative projects in the future which I am thinking of and considering.



The entrance to the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies (image courtesy of Dr Kareem)

4) How has the scholarship helped you in your work in your home country?

Being a researcher and a lecturer at the University of Kufa, this scholarship was important to me as it raises my academic profile and enriches my CV. Besides, I am required to write a detailed report on my scholarship to be submitted to the Department of Scholarships and Cultural Relations as well as deliver a seminar to my colleagues at the Department of English to share my experience and my research outcomes. Not only that but these activities will, by extension, promote what the Nahrein network and BISI can offer to Iraq's history and heritage.

5) What will you do to continue your research in Iraq?

Now that I have returned to Iraq, I will work on organizing, in cooperation with the Nahrein Network, the last webinar inviting people from Iraq to talk about the Mandaean language and their heritage in Iraq. I published a paper entitled "The Mandaean in Iraq Today: Perceptions, Stereotypes, Prejudices, and Exclusion" - see the journal link <https://iasj.net/iasj/download/673323796bb7bac1>

Furthermore, I was awarded recently a grant on the project "Etched in Memory: Untold Stories of Mandaean's Past and Present Life in Iraq" from <https://rights4time.com/> which is based at the University of Birmingham/ UK. The project aims to:

1. Document the stories, nostalgia, and memories of the Mandaean who live in the diaspora, as well as those who live in Iraq, to create first of a kind archive of this community as well as document the challenges they face nowadays.
2. Record interviews with the surrounding communities in Iraq and listen to the accounts of their peaceful coexistence before and at the present time to get more in-depth view of the gap minorities left as a result of the displacement.
3. Raising public awareness in Iraq of the problems experienced by the Mandaean who experienced such tough situations.
4. Highlight the stories of peaceful coexistence and the common, shared history that brings the communities together and promotes tolerance to build a stronger cohesion by engaging in a variety of advocacy actions to raise awareness of these minorities and to promote them within the larger Iraqi population.

BP Archive: A Source for the Study of the Contemporary Economic, Social and Cultural History of Kirkuk

Report by Dr Dilshad Oumar Abdul Aziz

Dr Dilshad Oumar Abdul Aziz, an Assistant Professor in the Department of History at the University of Kirkuk, received a scholarship to study the BP Archive, University of Warwick, in August 2022.



Dr Dilshad Oumar Abdul Aziz at the University of Warwick (image courtesy of Dr Abdulaziz)

As part of this scholarship, I tried to accomplish my project aims through the following:

1. Reviewing and categorising all the collections related to the city of Kirkuk in the BP Archive.
2. Identifying and prioritizing the documents that support scholarly research on the economic, social, and cultural history of Kirkuk.
3. In-depth analysis and digitisation of selected documents during my in-person visits.
4. Writing and publishing an article titled *Iraq Petroleum Company Archive (IPC Archive): A Source for the Study of the Contemporary Economic, Social and Cultural History of Kirkuk*.
5. Developing and publicising a guideline for local professionals on documentation and archiving historical collections.
6. Delivering three workshops to local archive centers, libraries, museums, scholars, and professionals on BP Archive best practices and the collections they hold about Kirkuk and the rest of Iraq.
7. Developing, publishing and publicising a bibliography based on the reviewed collections and scanned documents.

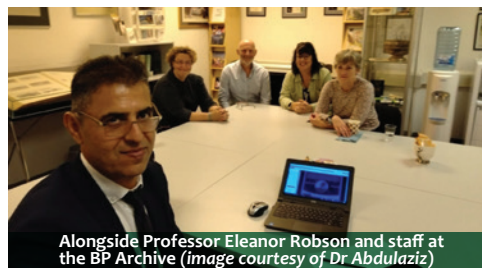
The scholarship helped me to achieve my research aims and main benefits:

During my stay at the BP Archive, University of Warwick, we scanned and documented files previously reserved through the archive's electronic database of some 6000 – 7000 documents. These files included historical papers of Iraq's economic, social and cultural history.



Dr Abdulaziz digitising archives at the BP Archive (image courtesy of Dr Abdulaziz)

I organised a webinar via Zoom on 28 September 2022, attended by more than 150 researchers and postgraduate students from Iraqi universities. During the workshop, the guidelines were launched, and the attendees were introduced to how to use the archive's electronic database. You can watch a recording of this workshop on the Network's YouTube channel.



Alongside Professor Eleanor Robson and staff at the BP Archive (image courtesy of Dr Abdulaziz)

My project has also captured the interest of several news outlets in the region. I conducted a 15-minute television interview with Kurdsat News TV. We talked about the importance of my project, outputs, and support of Nahrein Network and BISI. I also talked about experiences gained from the visit, and how to transfer them to the academic reality at the University Kirkuk and other universities in Iraq. You can view the interview in Kurdish on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=798706318116498&ref=sharing>

What was the impact of the scholarship on achieving the aims of my project after returning to Iraq?

Since returning from the UK, I have written an academic research paper titled, The Iraq Petroleum Company Archive: A Source for study the Economic, Social, and Cultural history of Kirkuk. It was published in *Ikilil for Humanities Studies Journal*, and to download the full text of the article, please use the following link: <https://www.iasj.net/iasj/article/259093>



Leaflets produced at the University of Kirkuk – a guideline for researchers and students (Image courtesy of Dr Abdulaziz)

I aim to disseminate the knowledge gained from my scholarship with the BP Archive, University of Warwick after returning by establishing a series of workshops tailored to researchers, professors, graduate students and employees of research centers and central libraries, especially at the University of Kirkuk and the Central Library in Kirkuk, raising awareness of the documents available in the archive and urging the community to communicate and to benefit from the material available in their future studies and research, For this purpose, the following workshops were held:

- A workshop at the University of Kirkuk, Faculty of Arts, Department of History, for lecturers and postgraduate students, to view: <https://youtu.be/bsVMrd-6XqY>
- The second workshop for local researchers and self-employed in the Kirkuk library, to view: https://twitter.com/oumar_dr/status/159474792967951557?s=21
- The third workshop was organized for local researchers and students of Garmian University, to view: <https://garmian.edu.krd/13125/>



Also, the output of my scholarship in the UK has had an impact on Kirkuk Society, where a 45-minute TV interview was held with the Kirkuk satellite channel to talk about the importance of our project, the supporting parties, and the principal output of our project achieved; to view the interview conducted in Arabic: <https://fb.watch/IS6qhoQCwT/?mibextid=2Rb1fB>

New Publications

Two Early Dynastic Houses: Living with the Dead

Abu Salabikh Excavations, Volume 5

ISBN: 9780903472388

British Institute for the Study of Iraq, 2023

572p, H297 x W210 (mm)

Edited by J. Nicholas Postgate, this fifth volume of Abu Salabikh Excavations is the definitive account of the excavation of two large domestic residences in the Early Dynastic III city at Abu Salabikh, in south Iraq, 15km to the north of Nippur. It describes and illustrates the houses and their contents, in particular the intramural burials, with coverage of the human osteology, and botanical, zoological and micromorphological studies.

Links to purchase:

Two Early Dynastic Houses: Living with the Dead (Abu Salabikh Excavations, Volume 5 part I and II) - £50
<https://www.oxbowbooks.com/oxbow/two-early-dynastic-houses-living-with-the-dead-abu-salabikh-excavations-volume-5.html>

Two Early Dynastic Houses: Living with the Dead (Abu Salabikh Excavations, Volume 5 part I) - £30
<https://www.oxbowbooks.com/oxbow/two-early-dynastic-houses-living-with-the-dead-abu-salabikh-excavations-volume-5-part-i.html>

Two Early Dynastic Houses: Living with the Dead (Abu Salabikh Excavations, Volume 5 part II) - £30
<https://www.oxbowbooks.com/oxbow/two-early-dynastic-houses-living-with-the-dead-abu-salabikh-excavations-volume-5-part-ii.html>

Members of the British Institute for the Study of Iraq are eligible to receive a 20% discount on the publication. For more information email the Executive Officer: bisi@britac.ac.uk

BISI GRANTS & PRIZES

BISI offers a range of annual grants to assist academic work and education on Iraq.

BISI University and Museum Engagement Grants

(normally up to £500 per grant)

BISI's University and Museum Engagement Grants are designed to support public engagement projects by staff and/or students of Higher Education Institutes and cultural heritage organisations that promote a greater understanding of Iraq's history, society and culture. **Annual Deadlines:** 1st of April and October

BISI ACADEMIC GRANTS Research and Conference Grants

(normally up to £6,000 per grant)

BISI provides funding to support Research and Conferences that concentrate principally on the lands and peoples of Iraq. We welcome applications from the full range of arts, humanities and social sciences subjects, and topics can cover any time period from prehistory to the medieval period to the present day. **Annual Deadline:** 1 April.

ANNUAL PILOT PROJECT GRANT

(normally up to £10,000)

BISI's Pilot Project Grant scheme is designed to support a short period of preliminary research - up to one year - that has the potential to grow into a longer-term, larger-scale project supported by a Research Council or other large funding body. Only one project per year will be funded under this scheme. **Annual Deadline:** 1 April.

To be eligible for a BISI Academic Grant, applicants should normally be employed by or have an official connection with a UK Higher Education Institution.

VISITING IRAQI SCHOLARSHIPS

The Nahrein Network will be financially supporting BISI's Visiting Iraqi Scholarships over the next 10-years. BISI and the Nahrein Network will be offering four to six visiting scholarships each year to enable academics, cultural heritage professionals and NGO workers from Iraq to visit the UK for 1-2 months for training and research. We welcome applications from Iraq-based scholars if their project relates to one or more of the Nahrein Network's five aims. Applicants must currently reside in Iraq and be able to converse and understand English to a working level to ensure that visits are a success.

On an exception basis, BISI may consider funding a separate Visiting Scholar whose research is not covered by the Nahrein Network's aim. Only exceptional applications with developed research proposals and pre-established links to a UK academic sponsor or university will be assessed.

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