

Dr Lamia Al-Gailani Werr

1938 - 2019



Dr Lamia al-Gailani-Werr grew up in Baghdad and studied at the University of Baghdad before coming to Cambridge on a Scholarship. She returned to Baghdad to work at the Iraq Museum in 1961 as one of the rare women archaeologists. Lamia later completed a second MA degree at the University of Edinburgh and her PhD at the University of London. In 2003 she returned to Baghdad after the looting of the Museum to assist Iraqi colleagues. She was an Honorary Research Associate of the Institute of Archaeology UCL and a recent research fellow at the Metropolitan Museum where she had been working on a book on the History of the Iraq Museum, amongst many other research topics.

In 2010 Lamia became a Trustee of the Friends of Basrah Museum with Sir Terence Clark and Dr John Curtis and other founding Trustees and had been working tirelessly on the project since that time. One gallery of The Basrah Museum was opened in September 2016, marked by a two-day BISI international conference. She was closely involved with the opening, even to the extent of arranging some of the objects in a display case. When the Trustees were subsequently awarded a large Cultural Protection grant in 2016 to further the project, Lamia continued to work tirelessly with many meetings at the Iraq Museum on the selection of objects. She also participated in two training programmes for the Basrah Museum staff and volunteers in January and December 2018 along with her daughter Dr Noorah Al-Gailani.

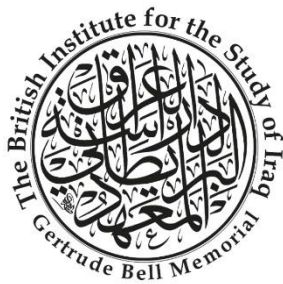
Lamia was a special advisor to the Co-directors of the acclaimed film on Gertrude Bell, *Letters from Baghdad*, and her archival work in the Iraq Museum provided important insights to the film directors. She was a speaker at BISI's 2013 conference *Gertrude Bell and Iraq – a life and legacy* and her paper on the Iraq Museum is a chapter in the proceedings published by the British Academy. Her talk to the BISI in November 2017 on the Story of the Iraq Museum is available to hear on the BISI website along with Dr Paul Collins' introduction on Lamia's accomplishments.

She has long been a particular friend of the BISI and was its only Honorary Life-time member. At its 76th AGM in 2009 the Institute awarded Lamia the Gertrude Bell Memorial Gold Medal "for outstanding services to Mesopotamian archaeology". She was the fifth recipient of this medal after Professor Sir Max Mallowan, Professor Seton Lloyd (1979), Professor David Oates (1997) and Dr Roger Moorey (2003).

In making the presentation to Dr Lamia al Gailani-Werr the then BISI Chairman, Professor Roger Matthews, cited in particular her unceasing efforts and invaluable advice and energies in sustaining academic and personal links between scholars in the UK and Iraq. Her continuing input into BISI's highly active Visiting Scholars programme has been fundamental to its great success in recent years, providing training and experience to a broad range of Iraqi colleagues who have taken their enhanced skills back to Iraq. Roger noted that Dr Lamia al-Gailani Werr was, a ray of intense and brave light in an age of darkness and difficulty – and that view has remained until now.

Lamia has been buried in Baghdad and a special procession was held from the Iraq Museum to the Gailani shrine, where she has been laid to rest.

May she rest in peace.



Dr Lamia Al-Gailani Werr

Memorial Evening

Wednesday 3rd of April 2019
at 6 p.m.

in the rooms of The British Academy



The Council members of the British Institute for the Study of Iraq and the Trustees of the Friends of Basrah Museum are honoured to hold this special evening with Dr Noorah Al-Gailani and Ms Hesn Werr to remember and commemorate the life and outstanding achievements of
Dr Lamia Al-Gailani Werr

SPEAKERS

Dr Paul Collins (BISI Chair & Ashmolean Museum)

Mr Nazar Mirjan Mohammed (Deputy Head of Mission, Iraq Embassy)

Dr John Curtis OBE FBA (BISI President & FOBM Chairman)

Professor Julian Reade (University of Copenhagen)

Ms Jane Arraf (NPR International Correspondent)

Professor Eleanor Robson (University College London)

Dr Hala Fattah (Qatar University)

Dr Georgina Hermann OBE FBA

Mrs Joan Porter Maclver (BISI Vice-Chair)

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