

**BRITISH SCHOOL OF ARCHAEOLOGY  
IN IRAQ**

**NEWSLETTER NO. 16**

**November 2005**



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

**REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 219948**

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The next BSAI Newsletter will be published in May 2006 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](mailto:bsai@britac.ac.uk) or fax 44+(0)20 7969 5401 to arrive by April 15, 2006.

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 15<sup>th</sup> April or 15<sup>th</sup> 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 BSAI Fieldwork & Research Committee can be contacted via the Secretary.

N.B. Individuals may not apply to the BSAI and the British Academy for the same research projects under current British Academy guidelines.

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: Dancing bear, accompanied by animal musicians, a detail from the sound-box of a bison-headed lyre buried in a tomb of the 'Royal Cemetery' at Ur. Early Dynastic Period. Illustration by Tessa Rickards from *Gods, Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia* by Jeremy Black and Anthony Green.***

It is a great pleasure to congratulate Dr Donny George, formerly director of the Iraq Museum, Baghdad on his appointment as chairman of the State Board for Antiquities and Heritage. We look forward to working with him and wish him every success in his new post.

The summer has been a time of mixed financial fortunes for the School. We heard that Mrs Rosalind Hicks, a good friend to the School, had very generously left the copyright of 'A Pocket Full of Rye', one of her mother Agatha Christie's Miss Marple mysteries, to us in her will. This is a valuable bequest which will bring much needed money to the School. On the other hand, the British Academy which is our major source of funds, has told us that it may not be able to fund us to return to Iraq, when it is safe to do so. This statement brings fresh urgency to our appeal as we need to build up our reserves to a level which will allow us to set up a new base in Baghdad even if the Academy is not willing or able to help us. This is, of course, in addition to our commitment to help in the training of younger Iraqi scholars. It would be a tragedy if we were unable to go back and help our Iraqi colleagues in their enormous task of caring for the heritage of Mesopotamia because of lack of funds. The first appeal letters have now gone out to our UK members and friends of the School and contacts of the Appeal Committee. The initial response has been very encouraging with almost £20,000 raised to date, but we are still a long way from our target. Our overseas members will receive an appeal brochure along with our newsletter and we hope they will wish to support our efforts too. Please do contribute as generously as you can and let us have the names of anyone else who you feel might be interested in donating.

The Bonham-Carter lecture in June took a new form this year and Fran Hazelton of the group *Zipang* gave a vivid rendering of the Lugalanda epic which was accompanied by Tara Jafar on the harp. Afterwards Tara played a piece on a replica of one of the harps from the Royal Graves at Ur recreated by Andrew Lowings. It was astonishing to see this beautiful working replica and to hear the sounds of a musical instrument whose design is more than four thousand years old. The evening, which was dedicated to the memory of Dr Jeremy Black, one of *Zipang*'s founder patrons and School council member, was extremely well attended and we were delighted to see so many of our Iraqi friends there.

It is with sorrow that we report the death of Professor H.W.F. Saggs, cuneiform scholar and long-time friend of the School. Nicholas Postgate's obituary of Harry Saggs follows together with his obituary of Barbara Craig, another distinguished supporter of the BSAI, who donated generously to our 'Books to Iraq' programme. There will also be an obituary of Professor Saggs in Iraq Vol. 67/part 2, which will be published shortly.

*Harriet Crawford*

Professor H.W.F. Saggs, FSA, FRAS 1920-2005

One of our senior Assyriologists, Harry Saggs, passed away peacefully at home in Long Melford on 31st August this year.

Born into an East Anglian farming family on 2nd December, 1920, he progressed with distinction through his local school at Weeley and then Clacton County High School, and in 1939 was accepted to read theology at King's College, London, which was evacuated to Bristol. He graduated from there in 1942 with the B.D., and chose to join the Fleet Air Arm, where he served as an "observer" or aircraft navigator. He broke his back in an accident in training at his base near Invergordon, in which the plane came down in the sea and the two other members of the crew lost their lives, but continued to carry out ground duties. In September 1946 at Elmstead near Colchester he married Joan Butterworth, whom he had known since they were at school together. Shortly afterwards his knowledge of Hebrew led to his attachment to the Palestine Police for 10 months, and gave him firsthand acquaintance with a part of the Near East for the first time. Returning to England at the end of 1947 to rejoin his wife and first daughter, at first he taught maths in a London school, and then with a Scarborough Studentship, provided by the government of the day in support of oriental languages, he was able in October 1948 to start an M.Th. with Prof. Guillaume at King's College, now back in the Strand.

During this time he began learning Akkadian (Assyrian and Babylonian) under the mentorship of Sidney Smith, and evidently found favour, since shortly afterwards he took up an appointment as Lecturer in Assyriology at the School of Oriental and African Studies. He received his doctorate from there in 1954 for a thesis entitled "A study of city administration in Assyria and Babylonia in the period 705 to 539 B.C., based on published and unpublished cuneiform texts". In 1952 he served as epigraphist on Max Mallowan's excavations at Nimrud. In this year the work was mainly on the North-West Palace, and led to the discovery of royal archives including the important (though difficult) original correspondence of the Assyrian kings Tiglath-pileser, Shalmaneser V and Sargon II. His first editions of the most significant of these "Nimrud Letters", as they came to be known, were serialized in subsequent years in *Iraq* and culminated finally in the definitive volume *The Nimrud Letters, 1952*, published by the BSAI in 2001 including a total of 240 texts.

Although he always retained his interest in Old Testament studies, and became a lay reader at his village of Roydon near Harlow, Saggs had become an authority on ancient Assyria. He had also acquired a deep affection for and interest in modern Iraq and was keen to return there. He revisited Iraq in 1954, and then in 1956-7 taught for a whole academic year at Baghdad University, accompanied by his wife and four daughters. During this time he met many Iraqi students, and these included Amir Suleiman, who later came to the

School of Oriental and African Studies to study with him for a doctorate in Assyriology, and then returned to teach at the University of Mosul. In 1965 he returned to northern Iraq to act as epigraphist on David Oates' excavation at Tell al-Rimah, rapidly publishing the Middle Assyrian business archive in *Iraq* 30 (1968). In the next year, 1966, he was called to the Chair of Semitic Languages at University College, Cardiff, and he remained there as head of department until 1983, when he took slightly early retirement and returned to his native East Anglia. During this time he maintained his strong links with Iraq. He visited, and for a while taught a Masters course at the College of Arts in Mosul University (publishing the Anzu tablet from Sherifkhan with the Head of Department, his former student Dr Amir Suleiman), and on his last visit with his wife in 1979 they travelled widely through the country. Back in Cardiff he welcomed a succession of Iraqi graduate students - most notably Farouk al-Rawi who worked on the Nuzi texts and became Professor of Assyriology at Baghdad University, but also other Assyriology students, and, together with his much valued colleague John F. Healey, students of Aramaic, including Adil al-Jadir who taught Hebrew and Aramaic in Baghdad University.

Although in addition to the Nimrud letters he published specialist text editions of a wide variety of cuneiform texts, much of his creative effort went into works addressed to a wider audience. Pride of place must go to *The Greatness that was Babylon*, all 562 pages, first published in 1962 which still holds its place on university reading lists more than forty years on. *Everyday Life in Babylonia and Assyria* followed in 1965. His inaugural lecture at Cardiff was published as *Assyriology and the study of the Old Testament* in 1969, and in 1976 he was invited by the School of Oriental and African Studies to give the Jordan lectures in Comparative Religion, and these were published in 1978 as *The Encounter with the Divine in Mesopotamia and Israel*. One serious reviewer praised the book for its lucidity and incisiveness, and the author for his freshness and integrity. After his retirement he was academically still very active, producing *The Might that was Assyria* in 1984, a revised edition of *The Greatness that was Babylon* in 1988, *Civilization before Greece and Rome* in 1989, and *Babylonians*, published by the British Museum in 1995. He was a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and of the Royal Asiatic Society, and a regular member of the governing Council of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq. A devoted family man, he is survived by his wife Joan, four daughters, nine grand-children and two great-grand-children.

[A slightly adapted version of this notice appeared in The Guardian for October 6, 2005]

*JN Postgate*

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## Barbara Craig

Barbara Craig, who was Principal of Somerville College, Oxford, from 1967 to 1980, was a dedicated archaeologist and a good friend of Iraq, where she revelled equally in the archaeology and the ornithology. She lived there with her husband James, who was working for the British Council, from 1951 to 1956, and would visit Max and Agatha Mallowan and his colleagues at Nimrud including David and Joan Oates and Harry Saggs. She graduated with a First in Greats at Oxford, winning the Craven Fellowship in 1938, but her academic career was disrupted by the war. After 1945, while she accompanied her husband on postings in different parts of the world, the Iraq experience reinforced her interest in archaeology (which she pursued despite the disapproval of some of the British Council ladies who did not think it proper for the mistress of a household to read books before lunch). From 1956 onwards the summer often saw her working with Alan Wace or Lord William Taylour at Mycenae. She was a long-term Member of the School, and was a very generous donor when funds were sought for academic publications to send out to the Directorate of Antiquities and the university departments which had been cut off by the international sanctions. She lived full of years and wisdom to the age of 89, but sadly not long enough to see the upturn in Iraq's fortunes which like all of us she desperately wished for.

Barbara D. Craig (née Chapman). 22 October 1915 to 25 January 2005. For longer obituaries see *The Daily Telegraph*, 4 February, 2005; *The Guardian*, 19 February, 2005.

*JN Postgate*

## BSAI GRANTS: reports from recipients

### Christianity in Iraq Seminar Day, Saturday 9th April 2005, SOAS

The Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre at The School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London was the venue for the second *Christianity in Iraq Seminar Day*, that was held on Saturday April 9th. The theme of this year's seminar was to investigate the diaspora communities of the Church of the East from its patriarchal base in Seleucia-Ctesiphon and later Baghdad.

By the fifth century, the missions of the Church of the East stretched across Iran to Afghanistan and Central Asia where the city of Merv served as the headquarters for missions east of the Oxus river, amongst both Turkic and Iranian peoples. Trade also played an important role in the spread of the Church of the East from southern Iraq down the Gulf to India. During the Abbasid period, the dioceses of the Church of the East included Yemen, Tibet and China. Although expelled from China at the end of the T'ang dynasty, the Church of the East returned several centuries later in the Mongol period. Syriac inscriptions at Tokmek and Pishpak provide remarkable evidence of

widespread medieval communities in Central Asia, whilst tombstones from Quanzhou in China are testimony of the expanse of Syriac Christianity up to the fourteenth century.

The Churches of Iraq have once again assumed a global dimension in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Diaspora communities have now emerged in Europe, England, north America and Australia. Like their venerable counterparts, they are faced with challenges of multi-culturalism, linguistic diffusion and competing religions as well as distance from each other and Iraq. Many of these challenges will take considerable effort to overcome, but the new electronic age provides some solutions. Far-flung congregations are now able to be linked by the internet and e-mail and maintain a new international identity.

After a brief welcome by Dr. Ulrich Pagel, Head of the Dept. for the Study of Religions, SOAS, Sir Terence Clark, British Ambassador to Baghdad between 1985–1990, opened the morning session that explored historical and archaeological aspects of the spread of the Churches of Iraq up to the fourteenth century. Prof. John Healey (Manchester) *Christians in the Gulf in the 7th century A.D.* discussed the presence and influence of Syriac Christianity in the Persian Gulf. Dr. Wassilios Klein (Bonn) provided an illustrated lecture entitled, *Syriac inscriptions from Tokmek and Pishpek, Central Asia*. More than 600 thirteenth century inscriptions were discovered last century, attesting the vigorous presence of Syriac Christianity in now what is modern Kirghizistan. Continuing along the Silk Route, Dr. Erica C.D. Hunter (SOAS/Cambridge) spoke on *Christian communities in Yuan dynasty China*. The final paper in the morning session was delivered by the Assyrian Metropolitan of India, His Grace Mar Aprem, who outlined the traditional links between Iraq and India in his paper, *The mission of the Church of the East to India*.

The afternoon session, chaired by Sir Harold Walker, focused on the problems and challenges encountered by the modern diaspora communities. The difficulties arising from this situation were discussed by various clergy, the Rev. Khoshaba Georges representing the Assyrians, the Rev. Habib al-Nawfali representing the Chaldaeans, the Rev. Safa' Habash representing the Syrian Catholics. The Rev. Toma Daoud was unable to attend due to urgent parish commitments, but the Syrian Orthodox position was outlined by Dr. Basil Assoufi. Some solutions to these problems were suggested in the paper of Dr. George Kiraz (Beth Mardutho Institute, USA) "*The role of the Beth Mardutho and the global aspects of bringing Syriac studies anywhere, anytime.*"

The Seminar Day, which was attended by one hundred and twenty people of all denominations, was concluded with an address by the Dean of Westminster Abbey, the Most Rev. Wesley Carr.

The generous donations by both *The British School of Archaeology in Iraq* and *The Anglican and Eastern Churches Association* ensured the success of this second seminar day which focused on an ancient religious tradition of Iraq. A third *Christianity in Iraq Seminar Day* is now being planned for Saturday May 6<sup>th</sup> 2006 and will explore Christian-Muslim dialogue in Iraq. The key-note speaker will be Prof. Sidney Griffiths (Catholic University of America, Washington D.C.) and it is very much hoped that the Chaldaean Bishop of Baghdad (Saidna Androus) will be also able to attend.

*Erica C.D. Hunter*

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### Iconography without Texts June 3-4, 2005 Warburg Institute

The BSAI generously helped fund a colloquium held at the Warburg Institute on June 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> this year. The theme of the colloquium was 'Iconography without Texts', a subject that had never been treated by a conference before. The question which the speakers were asked to address was simple to pose but hard to answer: how, if at all, can we reconstruct the meanings of imagery produced by societies that have left us no texts, or no texts that mention the meanings of images? A subsidiary question, which only one speaker (Denise Schmandt-Besserat) tried to tackle, was this: how, if at all, has the introduction of writing altered the ways in which images function?

Students of ancient Mesopotamia can identify by name some of the figures who appear on reliefs and cylinder seals, such as Ištar and Šamaš, and they know enough about the religious life of the region to form a rough idea of the activities of some of the individuals depicted, such as those bringing animals for sacrifice, or being presented to deities. The same cannot be said for many other visual traditions. In coastal Ecuador, for example, stone stelae appear in numerous places in the mountains. They appear to have been made over 1000 years ago, and represent anthropomorphic figures and monsters. We know nothing of the culture which made them, except that it must have been pre-literate, and as a result we cannot identify the figures represented, nor form an hypothesis about the function of the stelae. To try to say something about these mysterious images is an extreme example of textless iconography; at the colloquium, Colin McEwan of the British Museum was brave enough to construct a tentative theory about their use.

Some of the other speakers faced difficulties of similar magnitude. Palaeolithic European art is a classic example of a field where textless iconography leads to numerous conflicting theories of meaning, and Paul Bahn took us on an amusing tour of some of the less plausible examples. He then surprised everyone by proposing an ambitious theory himself; namely, that Palaeolithic images had a votive function.



This is an example of a tactic used by a number of the speakers; to take an activity which was well-documented in the area under study a few hundreds or thousands or tens of thousands of years after the image or design was made, and then argue that the earlier image might have referred to something along the lines of the later activity. This method was attempted on prehistoric Saharan cave paintings, Egyptian furniture, pre-colonial Hawaiian petroglyphs, New Ireland malagans, Chitimacha baskets, Moche ceramics and pre-Classic Mayan paintings, with varying degrees of approval from a rather assertive audience.

Obviously, the method has many pitfalls, and the first speaker, the Sinologist Robert Bagley, concentrated on the dangers. Discussing the wide variety of theories which have been used to interpret eye-motifs in Neolithic art, he argued, against in particular Ernst Gombrich, that it was impossible to find a single theory of meaning which would apply to them all. Although he focussed on just one example, he made it clear that a similar argument would apply to many other kinds of pre-textual motif. His robustly sceptical attitude was not unexpected; the phrase 'iconography without texts' was taken from one of his most influential articles, a similarly brilliant and sceptical analysis of theories of meaning in Shang ritual bronzes.

The ancient Near Eastern session, which was largely funded by the BSAI, featured papers from Jerrold Cooper, Denise Schmandt-Besserat and John Baines. Cooper admired Bagley's scepticism, and argued for a profound fissure between texts and images in ancient Mesopotamia. The only instance where he felt it likely that images and texts approached one another was in the analysis of cases such as Lord Aberdeen's black stone and the prisms of Esarhaddon. Here he endorsed the theory put forward by Michael Roaf and Annette Zgoll that the images on these artefacts should be read as 'astroglyphs', forming a rebus that spells out the name and title of the king. Where Cooper was largely cautious, Schmandt-Besserat was bold; she argued that after the introduction of writing the grammar of images changed, with the appearance of narrative structures which could not be found in earlier imagery. Understandably Cooper demurred, leading to a lively debate between the two, which was guided in a skilful way by the session chair, Harriet Crawford. John Baines, speaking third in this session, allied himself to the Bagley/Cooper camp, and claimed that the relationship between texts and images in Egyptian wall-paintings and reliefs was so loose that it is not clear the texts illumine the meanings of the images in any very obvious way.

The papers were so wide-ranging that nobody could be an expert in more than a couple of the areas discussed, and the participants were understandably exhausted at the end of two days. As a result, the final discussion was rather briefer than is sometimes the case at colloquia. It was evident that the speakers divided into two camps, the very sceptical and the extremely sceptical, and so to make constructive comments was not easy. The only thing that was evident

was that speakers and audience alike very much enjoyed the two days, and the proceedings will duly be published in the Warburg Colloquia series.

*Paul Taylor*

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ICP-MS analyses of basalt artefacts from Late-Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age contexts at Jerablus Tahtani, N. Syria.

Funding was provided by the BSAI to cover the costs of ICP-MS (Inductively Couple Plasma Mass Spectrometry) analysis of basalt samples from Late Chalcolithic/Uruk and Early Bronze Age levels at the site of Tell Jerablus Tahtani on the Upper Euphrates in northern Syria. ICP-MS analyses of samples from Jerablus constituted the first stage in a project to provenance the basalts used in the manufacture of grain-processing artefacts during these periods to the outcrop(s) from which they originated. Provenance studies of this kind have the potential to provide important insights into the movement of goods and raw materials, and by extension can feed into discussions of ancient exchange systems and the role of such trade in the emergence of complex societies. The basalts from Jerablus Tahtani were recovered from contexts that date to pivotal periods (c 3500-2000 BC) in the development of complex societies in the Upper Euphrates region. Further and future study of the basalt sources that were utilised during the Late Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age periods will assist in the interpretation of inter-group contacts, the transfer of materials and of ideas, and how these altered over time.

The analysis of twelve samples was undertaken at the Scottish Universities Research and Reactor Centre (SURRC) at East Kilbride. The samples were taken from twelve separate artefacts and analyzed for a suite of 19 rare earth elements (REE) (including Ce, Dy, Er, Eu, Gd, Hf, Ho, La, Lu, Nd, Pb, Pr, Sm, Ta, Tb, Th, Tm, U, Yb). The results of this analysis are available in spreadsheet form, a copy of which resides with the BSAI. Unfortunately the heterogeneity of the samples, which were full of xenoliths and alteration zones, together with their relatively small size has impacted on the representativity of the results. In addition, XRF and petrological analysis of the Jerablus samples are required. Until such analyses have been undertaken, in combination with a wider study of basalt sources in the Upper Euphrates region, it is impossible to draw any conclusions at the present time.

*Adam Jackson*

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**Donations to BSAI Library & to the Iraq Museum & Iraqi University and Museum Libraries** – courtesy of Robert Killick & Jane Moon  
*The Early Dilmun Settlement at Saar* edited by Robert Killick and Jane Moon, London-Bahrain Archaeological Expedition; Institute of Archaeology & University College London. First published in 2005 by Archaeology International Ltd., Ludlow, UK ISBN 0-9539561-I-3

The Archives from Nuzi (Iraq): Joint Publication of Texts and Seal Impressions - 3 week study trip to Harvard (May 2005)

With the support of a BSAI travel grant, the recording of seal impressions from Nuzi, that began in 2004 (see Newsletter no. 14), was completed during a second study trip to the Harvard Semitic Museum (Cambridge, MA) in May 2005.

This project focuses on two distinct groups of Nuzi tablets dating to the 14th century BC: the so-called Temple archive that was found in the temples of Ishtar and Teshup, and the charioteer lists that have been assembled from locations in the palace and the private house of Zike s. Akkuja. Composite drawings of the worn and often fragmentary seal impressions have now been made and are currently being inked, catalogued and studied in their archival context. The results will be published together with the texts in two joint publications with Brigitte Lion and Gudrun Dosch in forthcoming volumes of *Studies on the Culture and Civilization of Nuzi and the Hurrians (SCCNH)* edited by G. Wilhelm and D. Owen.

The systematic study of the Nuzi archives is an on-going project. Copies and transliterations of the texts have been made available in a steady stream of publications that began shortly after the end of excavations in the 1930s and continues in the series *SCCNH*. Comparatively few of the seal impressions on those same tablets have been published. Scholars wishing to consult unpublished seal impressions can refer to two sources: Edith Porada's sketches of all seal impressions on Nuzi tablets (*JEN/JENu*) housed at the Oriental Institute in Chicago (of which only a selection was published in *AASOR XXIV*); drawings by myself and others of all seal impressions on tablets (*HSS V, IX, XIII, XIV, XV, XVI, XIX, AASOR XVI*) housed at the Harvard Semitic Museum (HSM) prior to 1981. The sealings on tablets (EN 9) that were subsequently returned to the HSM have not been systematically recorded, but with each new project, I have added to the existing record of drawings stored at the museum. Those who intend to use these records for publication should first collate the drawings with the original impressions, in the same way that text copies and transliterations need to be collated with the original inscriptions.

The merits of consulting the Nuzi seal impressions with the texts reach far beyond matters of local prosopography, iconography and date. While each new archive contributes a different angle on the socio-economic and political situation in the province of Arrapha (modern Kirkuk) during the final decades of the Mittanian kingdom in the 14th century BC, the cumulative results have wider implications. During my last study trip to Harvard, I presented a lecture on some of the results that relate to the entire Syro-Mesopotamian periphery and touch on underlying aspects of Mesopotamian culture.

*Diana L. Stein*

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## **Web-site News:** Exploring the worlds oldest literature online

Literature four thousand years old from Southern Mesopotamia (Iraq) has joined the ranks of text collections available on the web. The corpus of Sumerian literature about 35,000 lines of myths, hymns, and proverbs is now available online thanks to the Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature (ETCSL) project in the Faculty of Oriental Studies, which has been running for nine years.

It is the first time a large corpus of literary texts in the world's first written language has been made universally available in such a thoroughly analysed form. Each word has been tagged with grammatical metadata, enabling every instance of a word within the corpus to be found regardless of how it is conjugated. It is as if we could search English texts to look for the verb to go and find all examples, whether they are written go, goes, going, went, or gone, explained Professor John Baines, who is directing the project.

Another recent milestone for the ETCSL project was the publication in 2004 of *The Literature of Ancient Sumer* (OUP), a selection of translations by the late Jeremy Black and others.

Both the translations and the corpus can be found on the projects newly revised website, <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk> which offers many ways to read and explore Sumerian language and literature online. Over the past three years, the project team has provided every single Sumerian word with an English translation. This, coupled with the prose translations of the texts freely available in full on the web, makes it possible to read Sumerian literature line by line in parallel with the English translations. Every Sumerian word is linked to an online dictionary at the University of Pennsylvania, and scholars around the world have contributed electronic editions of texts that have been integrated into the corpus.

The language Sumerian was first identified in the 1850s on cuneiform tablets from what was then the Ottoman Empire. Significant progress in understanding the literature was not made until the twentieth century, and work has gathered pace since the 1950s. The principal researchers on the current project, directed by Professor Baines, are Dr Graham Cunningham and Dr Jarle Ebeling. This website shows the potential of the Internet to bring new ways of working and to reach far more people than is possible with traditional publication, said Professor Baines. (June 2005)

**BSAI Web-site Maintenance & Design.** If there are any BSAI members who are familiar with Dreamweaver and web-site design and who would be willing to volunteer some time to the BSAI Web-site, please contact the Secretary for further information ([bsai@britac.ac.uk](mailto:bsai@britac.ac.uk)). This work can only be done in the British Academy on the BSAI computer – hence London based.

## **FORTHCOMING BSAI PUBLICATION**

### ***Studies in the Ancient History of Northern Iraq* by David Oates**

This is a facsimile reprint of the trail-blazing book by David Oates which has been out-of-print for far too long. It is primarily the report of his survey and excavation of sites in northern Iraq between 1954 and 1958. But it is at the same time a memorial to the great explorer, Sir Aurel Stein, whose pioneer fieldwork on the Roman frontiers in Iraq in 1938-39 provided the initial stimulus. Apart from preliminary summaries, this work remained unpublished in the difficult years between 1939 and Stein's death in Kabul in 1943.

Subsequent examination of Stein's draft-manuscript showed that further investigation and a more leisurely assessment were demanded by the range and importance of the subject and by changing perspectives. With the aid of the Stein Bequest to the British Academy, David Oates gave new substance to 'the lost traveller's dream', extending it widely into a more general account of the Mesopotamian scene from the Assyrian period in the second millennium BC to the struggles of Rome and Byzantium with the Parthians and Sasanians in the early centuries AD. The book concludes with a study of little-known Hellenistic, Roman and Parthian pottery, mostly from the author's excavations.

David Oates went on to serve the British School of Archaeology in Iraq as field director at Nimrud, director of the excavations at Tell al-Rimah, as Director of the School in Baghdad, Member of the Council, Chairman and President. David Oates died in 2003 and the reprinting of this volume by the School in his memory has been generously funded by The Charlotte Bonham-Carter Charitable Trust.

There have been no changes to the text or images (including a Foreword by Sir Mortimer Wheeler) and the pagination has remained the same. David's widow and long-time collaborator, Dr Joan Oates, has added a Preface illustrated by a photograph from the author's collection.

*The photograph on the jacket is of a stele of Adad-nirari III (811-783 BC) found at Tell al-Rimah.* (Price: £30 tbc) First Published 1968 by the British Academy; reprinted by the BSAI (Expected publication date December 2005)

**A special OXBOW BSAI Publications order form and flyer accompanies the November 2005 BSAI Newsletter.**

**All BSAI publications**, except the Journal *Iraq* are available from **Oxbow Books**, Park End Place, Oxford, OX1 1HN, United Kingdom  
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The two part publication of the Journal *Iraq* (Vol. LXVI & LXVII, part 1) *Nineveh: papers of the XLIXe Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, London.* ISBN 090347218X 2 Volume set (2005) (\$140) is available from [www.eisenbrauns.com](http://www.eisenbrauns.com).

## **BSAI LECTURES & FUTURE EVENTS**

**15 December 2005** – BSAI AGM & Lecture by **Dr Erica Hunter 'Hira** as a centre of Christianity during the Sassanid - Islamic periods' at the British Academy, 10 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1 at 5.30 p.m.

**28 January 2006** – **The Babylonians: Life in Ancient Southern Iraq** - Archaeology Study Day at Birkbeck College, London 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

- The World of Hammurabi and his Contemporaries: An Archaeologist's View - Dr Harriet Crawford, UCL, University of London
- Babylonia at the British Museum - Dr Irving Finkel, British Museum
- Gilgamesh: Translating the Masterpiece of Babylonian Poetry - Professor Andrew George, SOAS, University of London
- The Epic of Gilgamesh: The Story Retold by June Peters (storyteller) and Tara Jaff (harpist), ZIPANG
- Babylon's Ishtar Gate: The Threshold of the Land - Dr Diana Stein, Birkbeck, and Dr Frances Reynolds, University of Oxford

Tea and coffee are provided during the morning and afternoon breaks.

Places are limited, so early enrolment is recommended. Fee payable: £30 (£15 concessions). Please contact FCE Archaeology, 26 Russell Square, London WC1B 5DQ: Tel. 020 7631 6627 & [archaeology@fce.bbk.ac.uk](mailto:archaeology@fce.bbk.ac.uk)

**29 March 2006** – Lecture by **Dr Dominique Collon "Survival and revival of some Mesopotamian motifs"** at the British Academy, 10 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1 at 5.30 p.m.

**13 April 2006** – Lecture (title tbc) by **Michael Wood** – as a benefit for the **BSAI Appeal** at the British Museum (details tbc).

**15 June 2006** – **BSAI Bonham Carter** Lecture by **Dr Irving Finkel** (title tbc) at the British Academy, 10 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1.

### **NON-BSAI AFFILIATED EVENTS**

**5-7 January 2006** – "**Environments of Complexity**": British Association of Near Eastern Archaeologists - **BANEA Annual Meeting**, Hosted by Archaeology at the University of Edinburgh, Old High School, Infirmary Street, Edinburgh EH1 1LT, Scotland, UK. Contact [banea@arcl.ed.ac.uk](mailto:banea@arcl.ed.ac.uk) for general enquiries or [www.arcl.ed.ac.uk/banea](http://www.arcl.ed.ac.uk/banea) for further information and online registration

**20 - 22 April 2006** – **UBAID Conference: The Ubaid Expansion?** Cultural Meaning, Identity and Integration in the Lead-up to Urbanism  
Archaeology Department, University of Durham  
<http://www.dur.ac.uk/ubaid.conference/Ubaid%20conference/>

**ALL BSAI LECTURES ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. PLEASE FEEL FREE TO INVITE GUESTS TO ATTEND.**

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**Membership Note & Journal IRAQ LXVII**

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