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The next BISI Newsletter will be published in November 2009. Brief contributions are welcomed on recent research, publications and events. They should be sent to BISI by post or e-mail (preferred) to arrive by 15 October 2009. BISI Administrator Joan Porter MacIver edits the Newsletter.

Cover: BISI logo (المعهد البريطاني لدراسة العراق) was drawn by Taha al-Hiti.

#### **BISI EMAIL NOTICES FOR MEMBERS**

BISI sends out membership notices regarding forthcoming events and publications. A number of emails sent have been rejected. If you wish to receive these notices and have not been receiving them, please email [bisi@britac.ac.uk](mailto:bisi@britac.ac.uk) to provide your email address. Occasionally we sort notices for UK members only for last minute events. If our overseas members wish to receive those notices as well, please let the Administrator know. If you wish to unsubscribe from our email notice list, please just send an email requesting this.

#### **IJCIS 2009**

The 2009 *International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies* (Vol. 3.1) has not been published as of May 2009. It will be sent to BISI subscribers upon receipt from the publishers.

The variety of the reports in this newsletter demonstrate that the British Institute for the Study of Iraq (BISI) is continuing its involvement in a number of important research projects and conferences, as well as outreach efforts with different communities to promote an interest in Iraq and neighbouring countries via schools, museums, universities and the academic community in the broadest sense. Our finances are currently under significant pressure although we are aware that this applies to many other institutions in the current climate. BISI Council is determined to ensure that we continue with our work in all its diversity. We have had to cease our financial support for the Tell Brak excavations and are unable at this stage to fund major research projects. We are, however, initiating a pilot project scheme (see our Grants notices on pp. 31-32) to which applications are welcomed to support research on Iraq, in any field of the humanities or social sciences, concerned with any time period from prehistory to the present day. Projects related to the theme of *Exile and Return* are particularly welcome. We have been encouraged by the variety of applications to our research committee, which span archaeology, history, epigraphy, and social sciences more broadly.

The initiation of a 'development' grant scheme has permitted us to become involved in important educational efforts to promote Iraq, as attested here by the reports of the grantees. Amongst our development grants recently have been awards towards a paperback edition of the much-acclaimed book *The Destruction of Cultural Heritage in Iraq*, edited by Peter Stone and Joanne Farchach Bajjaly (p. 29), and support for a further Christianity in Iraq conference organised by Erica Hunter (p. 30). Other supported projects are reported on elsewhere in this newsletter.

The number of Iraqi visitors that BISI has sponsored over the past year has increased markedly. Currently we have two visitors and a third coming in June. Saba Al Omari from the Mosul Cultural Museum was training in the Education Department of the Fitzwilliam Museum in April and is spending May in the Education Department of the British Museum. Mustafa Hussein of the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage's Conservation Department is training with Chaz Morse of L-P Archaeology and has spent time with a field unit in Wales. The BISI Visiting Scholars programme has been formalised for applicants (See BISI Website). We also have the ability to assist others in the Iraqi Heritage sector and the past visits of Hikmat Al Basheer of the Mosul Museum (see pp. 25-26) and Mr Qahtan A. Al Hussein, Director of the Basra Museum, were part of this programme. Mr Al Hussein, was in the UK for three months until April, sponsored by the British Museum's Department of the Middle East and DCMS and supported by BISI for his English language training. His teacher at Language Link was Moyra Gardner, our former Appeal volunteer, and she proved as able a teacher as she was in assisting BISI in setting up its appeal process (p. 26). We will be funding the September visit of two archivists from the Iraq National Library and Archives (INLA) to attend training in the preservation of digital assets at the University of London Computer Centre (ULCC). As the holdings of the INLA are heavily

made up of digital surrogates this is extremely important. (95% of the Library and archives were destroyed during the occupation). Our grant has been in turn generously funded by Bashir Siman, a member of the BISI Appeal Committee. Do save the date of 4 February 2010 for a special lecture by Dr Saad Eskander, Director of the INLA, at the British Museum and 6 February for the Birkbeck-BISI study day with Dr Eskander as one of the main guest speakers (p. 31).

At the present time Jaafar Abdulhussein of Al-Qadissiyah University is here in the UK under a British Universities Iraq Consortium (BUIC) grant to work at UCL with Roger Matthews and at the University of Durham with Professor Tony Wilkinson and Dr Eleanor Wilkinson. They will also be working with our summer Iraqi Scholar on the Nineveh Digital Archive (See Newsletter No. 21 pp. 13-18) and she will have the opportunity to attend the British Museum's International Curatorial Programme with our financial support. All these visits are made possible through the important collaboration with colleagues at the British Museum and other institutions and we are very grateful to everyone who has assisted us on these programmes. The ties that we are developing with our colleagues in Iraq are vital in providing new opportunities to them and will open up further collaboration both here and in Iraq.

Since our last newsletter we have published *New Light on Nimrud* in association with the British Museum. This publication covers the proceedings of the Nimrud Conference which was held at the British Museum in 2002 with support a grant from the British Academy. The British School of Archaeology in Iraq provided financial support for the participation of many of the Iraqi delegates. The editors, Dr John Curtis, Dr Dominique Collon, Dr Lamia al-Gailani Werr and Henrietta McCall, deserve our thanks for bringing these important conference proceedings to fruition. We will shortly be publishing *Ivories from Nimrud VI: Ivories from the North West Palace (1845-1992)* by Georgina Herrmann, Stuart Laidlaw with Helena Coffey (see pp. 27-28).

Under its chairman Peter Davies, the BISI Appeal Committee is working hard to help raise the profile of BISI in the corporate community. We wish to be well situated when the economic situation improves and to ensure that companies working in Iraq, or hoping to do so, are aware of our work and our commitment to return to Iraq. We will need to obtain considerable financial support from many sources at that time. In the meantime we are focusing on raising awareness of Iraq's heritage, history, and culture here and in assisting our Iraqi colleagues through our continuing efforts to arrange programmes for them in the UK. We have just received very positive news that G4S are sponsoring our May BISI Appeal lecture with Patrick Cockburn, 'Iraq: is the age of wars over?', and G4S have also very generously offered to fund one of the future BISI Scholars. If you wish to help BISI in any of this work, please do contact us. We appreciate the support of all our members and our donors.

*Roger Matthews and Joan Porter MacIver*

## **Report on the PhD, ‘The Shia of Saudi Arabia: Identity Politics, Communalism, and the State’**

My PhD studies the relationship between the Shia community in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia and the Saudi state since the 1970s. This relationship has been difficult for various reasons, most importantly the close relationship between wahhabism and the Saudi regime. For many wahhabi religious scholars, the Shia are rejectionists and this legitimises discriminatory practices against them. The Twelver Shia are mainly located in the Eastern Province, where they constitute a slight majority of the citizen population. Initially, I wanted to study the relationship between the Shia and the state in both Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. However, I realised that it would be more fruitful to focus on one country, Saudi Arabia.

In the late 1970s and the 1980s Shia Islamist political parties emerged in Saudi Arabia that were attached to Iraqi political parties. After an uprising in 1979/1980, many Saudi Shia went into exile. During that time, Iran as well as the Shrine city of Sayyida Zeinab outside of Damascus played an important role for the Saudi Shia. Many Saudi Shia clerics were educated in a religious school (*hawza*) in Sayyida Zeinab and the political movements used the area as a logistical base. After this period of resistance Saudi Shia brokered a deal with the Saudi state in 1993 and tried to be accepted as Saudi citizens. Shia intellectuals championed Saudi nationalism and later engaged in the National Dialogue with other social forces. Yet, these attempts to integrate the Shia have been hindered by two obstacles. Firstly, they have been hindered by the unwillingness and inability of many Saudi political forces and institutions to ease the discrimination against the Shia. This goes hand in hand with the inability of Saudi nationalism based on wahhabism, tribalism and the royal family to serve as the binding element amongst diverse social groups.

This is related to the social structures and dynamics within the Shia community that undermine a better integration of the Saudi Shia. Indeed, Shia activists have tried to create a new ‘grand narrative’ to undermine Saudi nationalism. This historical myth tries to portray a suppressed Saudi Shia community with deep historical roots in the Eastern Province that has been conquered by Saudi forces. The orientation of Shia clerical leaders and many Saudi Shia towards the *marjaiyya* in Iraq, Iran and Lebanon is also undermining integration. The absence of a Saudi Shia *marja al-taqlid* (source of emulation) has added to the importance of these transnational ties. In addition, the ascent of Shia political parties in Iraq has raised the expectations of the Saudi Shia. My thesis will look at the preconditions and the outcomes of these different forms of interaction between the Shia and the state. The political and social structures inside the Shia community have changed in the last years, as has the Saudi state. The Shia political parties, for example, have undermined the role of the Shia notables. And the institutional expansion of the Saudi state has allowed many Shia to join the lower ranks of the

bureaucracy. Therefore, it is too easy to portray the 'Shia' and the 'state' as two distinct entities.

As part of my research, I travelled to the Levant and to Saudi Arabia. Many publications on Saudi Arabia as well as journals and books published by Saudi Shia are printed in Beirut. There, I was able to acquire a substantial amount of primary and secondary literature for my thesis. I was also able to conduct various interviews. In autumn and winter 2008 I carried out fieldwork in Saudi Arabia. I received the Visa for my fieldwork in Saudi Arabia through the King Faisal Centre for Research and Islamic Studies (KFCRIS), which is part of the King Faisal Foundation in Riyadh. I was able to use the library of the Foundation and several other libraries in Riyadh, including the King Fahd National Library. In Riyadh, I also interviewed academics and government officials. Although fieldwork in Saudi Arabia can sometimes be rather difficult, I was able to travel around the country, conduct more interviews and collect the relevant material for my thesis. I made several research travels to Jeddah and to the Eastern Province. At the end of my research I gave a talk on my findings at the King Faisal Foundation.

*Toby Matthiesen*

### **Society for Arabian Studies Biennial Conference 2008: Death, Burial, and the Transition to the Afterlife in Arabia and Adjacent Regions**

The conference took place at the British Museum on November 27-29, 2008 and was attended by 95 individuals from the Middle East, Europe, the USA, Australia, and the UK. A total of 38 papers were presented over three days in the main lecture series, with a further 9 papers presented in two workshops and 14 poster presentations.

The conference was organised to highlight the incredible richness of death and burial traditions in Arabia and to bring together researchers addressing this fundamental aspect of past and present societies in the region. Papers were presented from fields as diverse as archaeology, archaeological science, physical anthropology, ethnography, epigraphy, art history and poetry. As became clear over the course of the conference, this varied research had implications well beyond the confines of death and burial traditions themselves, and was of relevance to understanding much wider aspects of ancient and contemporary Arabian societies including health and diet, daily activities, belief systems, landscape modification, inter-cultural contacts and exchange systems. All conference participants deserve thanks for providing a fascinating insight into the subject.

To briefly review the content of the conference: presentations were scheduled according to chronology and geography. The first three sessions of Day 1 focussed upon SE Arabia, from the Neolithic period to the Iron Age. The final session focussed upon Bronze Age SW Arabia, a region which was the subject of an additional session on Day 2 examining the Sabaeen period. Day 2

witnessed, in addition, a session on the burial practices in Bronze Age Dilmun and two sessions on NW Arabian (especially Nabataean) burial traditions. Additional papers on material from the Levant and from Achaemenid Iran were included in these discussions. Day 3 was devoted to late pre-Islamic and Islamic Arabia, as well as the non-Islamic burial traditions of the region. The workshops allowed further presentations and discussion on particular themes of the conference. The workshop entitled 'Death and Burial in the Islamic World: from Spain to Bangladesh' provided a broad geographical background to the Arabian-focussed examples of Islamic burial traditions presented on the third day of the conference. The second workshop examined Bronze Age burial traditions in SE and SW Arabia, which have provided some of the most abundant and recognisable archaeological monuments from the region.

The proceedings of the conference are currently in preparation, and will be published in the Society for Arabian Studies monograph series (<http://www.societyforarabianstudies.org/monographs.shtml>). It is hoped that the Proceedings will not only form a primary source of information for those studying the archaeology and history of Arabia, but also provide a stimulus for further research on this subject. Moreover, we hope that the Proceedings will raise awareness amongst scholars working in neighbouring regions and disciplines of the richness of Arabia's archaeological and historical heritage, and of Arabia's important place in the cultural traditions of wider SW Asia. The conference could not have taken place without the generous financial support of the British Institute for the Study of Iraq, the University of Nottingham, and the British-Yemeni Society, in addition to institutional support from the British Museum and the Society for Arabian Studies. We would like to express our sincerest thanks to these sponsors.

*Lloyd Weeks  
Lecturer, Dept. of Archaeology  
University of Nottingham*

## **Conference Report: Culture Wars: Heritage and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Armed Conflict**

**Culture Wars** was a major international conference designed to explore the ways in which armed conflict of the sort recently witnessed in the Balkans and the Middle East become crucibles for struggles about cultural identity that are played out in relation to material manifestations of culture. Collaboration between CRASSH, the Getty Research Institute, the Macdonald Institute, and the Classics Faculty brought together experts from the British Museum, the British Library, the British Army, the Iraqi National Library, UNESCO, and the Aga Khan Foundation, along with archaeologists, journalists, and NGOs working in the field in Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo, and Lebanon. Speakers focused on ways in which sites and monuments become at once metaphorical weapons and physical casualties of war, offering a timely opportunity to test ideas and responses in relation to recent armed conflict in the Middle East, including the politics and ethics of intervention.

The conference shed particular light on the fraught intersection of material heritage, local geopolitics, and the universalist mission, asking how we manage ‘Culture’ in a culturally fragmented world. Much recent attention has been paid to the looting and illicit trade in objects from the Middle East. **Culture Wars**, by contrast, focused on damage to ‘immovable’ heritage: historical monuments, archaeological sites, and cultural and human landscapes. Questions included: how does the nature of modern armed conflict bear on immovable heritage? Are international conventions appropriate to recent scenarios? Why are sites destroyed and to what ends? Is intervention ethically justifiable? What are the appropriate uses of expertise? Does the intensity of the contest over heritage open paths to reconciliation? What new approaches to knowledge sharing could be adopted? What is involved in stewarding culture in a post-ownership world?

The conference opened with a lecture in the Fitzwilliam Museum by Professor Margaret Miles (Mellon Professor of Classical Studies at the American School of Classical Studies, Athens and Professor of Art History and Classics, University of California, Irvine). Margaret Miles, an expert on the history of cultural property, reviewed the debate about the repatriations after Waterloo among the British involved in the decision and showed how a fresh examination of their reasoning throws new light on current debates. Her lecture asked: what happens to art in time of war? Who should own art? Under what circumstances should victors in war allow the defeated to keep their art and other cultural property? Should the age-old idea of ‘to the victors go the spoils’ still be the common expectation in warfare? These questions go back to debates in antiquity, when the first legal case dealing with these issues was Cicero’s prosecution of Gaius Verres for extortion in 70 BCE.

Cicero had held up as models for behaviour conquering Roman generals who did not loot art or who repatriated art that had previously been looted. This ancient model of repatriation and abstention from plunder was discussed again in London newspapers in 1815, in the aftermath of Waterloo. Thanks to decisions made by the Duke of Wellington, a modern precedent was set for repatriating plundered art to Italy and other countries that had been invaded by Napoleon, later helping to inspire the legal basis for international agreements that exist today to protect cultural property in time of war. Concerns about nationalism as a basis for cultural identity, and for claims about cultural property, are again being debated as foreign governments demand the return of cultural artefacts.

During the two days of the conference that followed, contributions fell into two categories: general theoretical and critical papers which provided both context (including that of international law) and reflections on larger issues; and pragmatic and policy-focused papers which illuminated the on-the-ground conditions of heritage preservation in Iraq, Lebanon, Kosovo and Afghanistan. A number of threads emerged from these presentations, including the obsolete role of international organisations in terms of prevention and post-war reconstruction—for instance the slowness of UNESCO when it comes to



allocating funds for emergency action, or its inability to prevent bombing and looting of cultural heritage sites. A more general observation emerged that despite the precedents of Kosovo and Afghanistan, little has been learned; the destruction of cultural heritage had been even worse in the case of Iraq. Some of the policy-oriented papers from the conference proposed specific or concrete solutions that could help to prevent the destruction of cultural heritage in future situations. Others questioned the efficacy of such proposals and presented a pessimistic picture of current progress in specific regions.

The role of technology and IT emerged as a crucial strand in the conservation of cultural heritage, with its potential for creating inventories and lists of endangered sites as well as catalogues of missing or looted object. Projects undertaken by the British Museum and by the Getty showed how web-based GIS could be used to monitor activity and maintain a national inventory of endangered archaeological sites, to analyse digital data from large numbers of Iraqi sites, or to reconstruct monuments such as a destroyed Kosovan mosque using 3-dimensional imagery. These new technologies have implications for the future of cultural heritage conservation since they permit communities of scholars to rebuild websites (memory sites) about cultural heritage using collective information, as in the case of Samarra. Digitalisation of endangered texts or objects, along with translation and contextualisation resulting from such initiatives, also have the potential to turn artefacts of national (or regional) heritage into multi-lingual resources as well as changing their identity, purpose, and meaning. Finally, digital information has a bearing on the role of experts in preventing the destruction of vulnerable sites prior to conflict.

Some speakers emphasized that damage to cultural heritage may be inflicted not only during the war but by modernity itself—during post-war reconstruction and rapid modernization when implemented without concern for the preservation of heritage, e.g. by the development of roads, new apartments, and shopping centres (for instance in Afghanistan), by the uncontrolled extension of agriculture or local building (in Iraq), or simply by the neglect or rebuilding of traditional homes (in the villages of Southern Lebanon). On the other hand, educational and training projects could also lead to the preservation of cultural heritage, allowing local people to know about their own history and to help in the political process of national identity construction and historical memory outside the professional and political divide. Equally, there is a need to create and support local archaeologists and experts who will be able to continue to monitor endangered sites and take part in post-war reconstruction.

The first panel gave an overview of legal and international policies to safeguard cultural heritage. In some instances war crimes against humanity and culture have been successfully prosecuted. However, in other cases a claim of ‘military necessity’ has been made to justify cultural destruction and breaches of humanitarian law. In the second panel, Saad Eskander's presented his ‘Open Letter to the Director of Hoover Institute’

(<http://libraryjuicepress.com/blog/?p=439>) about the removal of Iraqi archives to US and restrictions which prevent Iraqi scholars having access to their own history. The importance of providing access and expertise was also illustrated by the Getty Conservation Institute's use of IT as an approach to conservation along with local training programmes for Iraqi archaeologists— which may, however, have mixed outcomes (for instance, in Afghanistan) where there is a lack of qualified or educated staff. The discussion surrounding post-conflict projects was particularly probing in relation to the joint project by the Ministry of Defence and the British Museum that showed how the nature of military interventions is changing, as increased professionalization and specialization requires the engagement of archaeologists.

The 'Operation Heritage' project in Southern Iraq, for instance, provided 800 photos showing evidence of looting and damage to archaeological sites from war or neglect. Different types of damage included the construction of defensive positions near the sites; the activities of coalition forces; looting; and neglect. John Curtis (Keeper of Middle Eastern Antiquities, British Museum) offered a reflection on what we can learn from engagement between scholars and military, arguing that for pragmatic reasons academics should be engaged in the wake of armed conflict, bringing their expertise to the field in an attempt to monitor and mitigate damage that had been done. Besides this project, he mentioned as an example his involvement in compiling an independent report on the destruction of Babylon and the list of missing objects from the Baghdad Museum (together with Donny George), some of which have now been returned. Curtis' position raised the question of whether collaboration with the military might prejudice the neutrality of NGOs and humanitarian organizations, as proved to be the case in Afghanistan.

Another question debated at length was whether (if at all) and how the army should be trained to deal with cultural heritage. Can the military make decisions about heritage? The Ministry of Defence emphasis was on collaboration by all sides (military, government, and academia) to achieve the preservation of cultural heritage. Other participants, however, questioned the end product of post-war reconstruction. If cultural heritage is socially constructed and part of shifting discourse about identity and sovereignty, who should decide how it should be organised? An example was the decision (in conjunction with the Basra authorities) to move the Basra Museum from the centre of Basra old town to the former Saddam palace on the periphery. Might this alienate future users? Others asked how far the perspective of the local Iraqi people was considered? Would the Iraqis themselves rather collaborate with the occupying forces in restoration than allow looting and destruction of their heritage sites?

The case of villages in southern Lebanon which had been bombed by Israel revealed that many traditional and historical buildings were later also destroyed by demolitions or by reconstruction: damage is done not only during the war but also by post-war reconstruction when implemented without concern for the preservation of cultural heritage. When financial incentives

exist to rebuild rather than restore, reconstruction could result in the loss of communal memory and identity. Here educational projects could do something to recover what had been lost. The systematic destruction of cultural heritage during the Balkan wars, including the case of Kosovo Museum—2000 objects were taken from Pristina and never returned to Kosovo—emphasized the frequent impotence of international organizations when it comes to military intervention. The example of the Balkan war was instructive from the jurisdictional perspective, as it provided the legal precedent for the indictment for destruction of cultural property (eg in the bombing of Dubrovnik).

Peter Stone's paper summed up some of the issues with a theoretical and quite personal exploration of the ethics of involvement with military. Can archaeology ever be entirely separated from politics? The failure to protect museums in Iraq was a political failure, not just a military issue. The moral dilemma facing the archaeologist was whether to collaborate before the conflict began, or afterwards (Stone vs. Curtis and 'Operation Heritage'). Stone emphasized the importance of preventive action and engagement with military both before, during and after the war, and the different modes of engagement by journalists, international law experts, and academics. In the case of Iraq, providing lists of endangered sites to the military had not proved effective (just as the failure to protect the Iraqi National Museum showed a lack of will to do so). Should such lists and inventories be provided in case of the future wars (e.g., with Iran)? If such lists and inventories were widely available on the web, the moral dilemma of 'embedded' archaeologists might even cease to exist.

The second day of the conference provided other examples of preventive action which could be taken by the academic community, such as the case of the individual researcher collecting and recording information about Samarra since 1983 in order to preserve knowledge in the face of political uncertainty. While wars cannot be prevented by academics, they can record their accumulated knowledge in case of conflict. When the Golden Dome was bombed in 2005 the greatest regret is that this monument had never been seriously recorded. Through satellite imagery, photos from soldiers in the field, and recurring visits by western journalists, it has been possible to build up a more detailed picture of events than elsewhere in Iraq. The Samarra website gathers information that creates a collective memory site, while showing that road-building and agriculture, as well as the building of Iraqi police barracks on the site, have made inroads on the site despite its listing by UNESCO on the World Heritage site list in 2007. Such instances are common despite their avoidability.

A paper by the British Library's Cultural Property Manager focused on the practical issues of conservation of endangered texts and the role of the British Library's collections as the 'DNA of civilisation'. The British Library has to operate in restrictive context of copyright rules and other legal and political issues. However, it tends to give a wide interpretation to these legal

restrictions, recognising an ever-expanding and complex non-legal environment in which collaborative partnerships help to offset the political context in which the library has to operate. The British Library's temporary acquisition scheme provides a safe-haven for resources in danger (storing material until it can be returned to its proper location, e.g. the case of indigenous manuscripts which can be also preserved by digitalisation). These practices allow the British Library to transform an artefact of national heritage into a multi-lingual resource, making it widely available to different constituencies as well as allowing its later restitution.

A number of speakers focused on the history of the destruction of cultural heritage in Afghanistan, including a compelling on-the-ground discussion of both the promise and perils of heritage preservation. Monuments remain unclaimed, unregistered and unprotected, while it is difficult to work in Afghanistan due to the security situation—three-quarters of the country is outside the governmental control—and because of tensions between conservation issues vs. development (including pressures from the commercial sector and threat to minarets in Kabul from new buildings and roads). Conservation issues also included the issue of 'living' heritage—Afghanistan's traditional practices and way of life. Central to the post-2001 narrative of a 'new Afghanistan' has been the notion of loss of cultural identity. In order to recover this identity, education is crucial, along with learning from and preserving street-level culture by involving local people who have knowledge of the heritage sites, and by participating in community life as anthropologists do. Local knowledge of history can also help in the political process of national identity construction outside professional and political divide.

Other papers explored the ethical issues of military interventions, for instance criticising the idea of 'humanitarian intervention' vs. traditional humanitarianism and defining the involvement of scholars in military operation as the risk of neo-imperialism. The problem of collaborating with the military, among many others, is the ambiguity it generates between armed forces and humanitarian aid. Another paper addressed the ways in which the Buddhist and Islamic heritage are intertwined in the history of Afghanistan's art and artefacts, as a perspective on the destruction of the Bamyān Buddhas: cultural heritage is hybrid, and local knowledge often acknowledges such hybridity. Here art historical and architectural expertise can provide an alternative perspective on sectarian and religious struggles in which cultural heritage is the deliberate target of destruction, or museums can preserve fragile artefacts that could not survive conditions in situ.

The conference ended with thoughtful reflections on the role of the museum and on legal ownership. One argued that contemporary conflicts tend to consolidate a normative role of the museum, which has otherwise been subjected to critique. Objects acquire new layers of meaning in the context of war. A similar point was made Marie Louise Sorensen—some objects become more valuable than others in the context of contemporary conflicts. Sites and

objects acquire iconic value and play a specific role in post-war negotiation and identity formation. Important distinctions can be made between the rhetoric of belonging as an extension of legal ownership and ‘being part of...’; between an archaeological object as data or as heritage; between local scale action and universal claims. The final point to be made was the need to move beyond an ‘ownership world’ to think in terms of dual ownership, ownership vs. guardianship, or even post-ownership—a cultural commons.

It is hoped to publish selected papers from the conference in the *Journal of Cultural Property* and in an edited collection.

***Convenors: Mary Jacobus and Joanna Kostylo***

### **The Cosmography of Paradise: The Other World from Ancient Mesopotamia to Medieval Europe**

The conference took place in London on 4–6 March 2009. It was organised by Alessandro Scafi (The Warburg Institute), in cooperation with Mark Geller (University College London). The opening evening lecture was given by Jan N. Bremmer (University of Groningen) at the Chadwick Lecture Theatre, University College London, followed by a two-day conference at the Warburg Institute. The event was supported by The Warburg Institute, The Institute of Jewish Studies, University College London, The British Institute for the Study of Iraq, the University of Thessaly (Volos) (for the air fare of Dimitris Kyrtatas), the University of Groningen (for the air fare of Jan Bremmer), and by the School of Advanced Study. Papers were given by 17 scholars, coming from England, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Sweden, and the United States. The conference attracted a substantial number of students, researchers and scholars from a variety of disciplines as well as a general audience. About 300 people attended the conference.

The aim of the conference was to examine the theme of Paradise, focussing on how, from the ancient Near East to the European Middle Ages, theories about the structure of the physical cosmos have shaped ideas about the nature of ‘the other world’. The broad comparative approach of the conference had not yet been attempted before. Participants of the conference investigated the emergence and development of the notion of Paradise from the ancient Near East to the European Middle Ages.

In the opening evening lecture, **Jan N. Bremmer**, Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Groningen, focused on the major trajectories of the connection between a garden or *locus amoenus* and the afterlife, starting with Homer’s Greek Elysian Fields (about 700 BC) and ending with the Christian vision of Paradise in the *Apocalypse of Paul* (about AD 400). Professor Bremmer pointed out that ‘paradise’ is originally a Median and Persian word that was adopted by Jews in a Greek-speaking milieu in Egypt. Within a few centuries that environment was conquered by the Romans and eventually became Christian. Not only did all these cultures and religions

influence our terminology and representations of Paradise, but, in the course of time, Paradise even became associated or identified with the heavenly Jerusalem.

Opening the first day at the Warburg, in a session chaired by Professor **Andrew George**, SOAS, **Mark Geller**, Professor of Semitic Languages, University College London, explored Sumerian and Babylonian views of the Realm of the Dead, showing their differences. Sumerians adopted a flat-earth cosmology in which the Afterlife was found in the ‘mountain’ or mountains while Semitic peoples ascribed to an Underworld or Netherworld which became the dominant cosmological model (Hades, Sheol, Hell, etc.). **Nicolas Wyatt**, Emeritus Professor of Ancient Near Eastern Religions and Honorary Fellow of New College, University of Edinburgh, examined the evidence for the presence of symbolism of royal power in the biblical Eden story (*Genesis* 2-3), and attempted to set the tradition within the wider ancient Near Eastern ideological context. **Annette Y. Reed**, Assistant Professor, Department of Religious Studies, University of Pennsylvania, focussed on the earliest extensive Jewish cosmographies — namely, the Enochic Astronomical Book and the Book of the Watchers (ca. third century BC). **Antonio Panaino**, Professor of Iranian Philology, University of Bologna – Faculty for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage, focussed on ideas about Paradise in the Iranian pre-Islamic framework. **Emilie Savage-Smith**, Professor of the History of Islamic Science, University of Oxford, explained that Paradise, as envisioned in Islamic theology, is an after-world with a specific structure and concrete characteristics, many reflecting earthly physical phenomena. She explored the role of Paradise in medieval Islamic cosmology, and discussed some late-medieval or early modern attempts to illustrate the Islamic Paradise. **Nanno Marinatos**, Professor and Director of Studies, Classics Department, University of Illinois at Chicago, talked about Odysseus’s Vision of the Blessed and the Damned in *Odyssey* 11. **Dimitris Kyrtatas**, Professor in the History of Late Antiquity at the University of Thessaly (Volos), explored early Christian discussions about the location and nature of Paradise, in particular in the communities living in fourth-century Egypt. **Einar Thomassen**, Professor of Religion, Department of Archaeology, History, Culture Studies and Religion, University of Bergen, explained that, even though Gnostic texts are remarkably vague about the topographical features of the place where the redeemed will rest, several sources describe the journey towards that place.

On the second day at the Warburg, **Michael Paschalis**, Professor of Classics, Department of Philology, University of Crete, discussed Roman notions of paradise. **Jens Braarvig**, Professor in History of Religions, Department of Cultural Studies and Oriental Languages, University of Oslo, surveyed the different views on the hereafter according to Buddhist faith. **Veronica Della Dora**, Lecturer in Geographies of Knowledge, School of Geographical Sciences, University of Bristol, focussed on different ‘mappings’ of the Aristotelian cosmos on Byzantine and post-Byzantine icons. **Florentina Badalanova-Geller**, The Royal Anthropological Institute, Centre for

Anthropology, The British Museum, considered the cosmography of Paradise in Slavonic apocryphal writings. **Danuta Shanzer**, Professor of Classics and Medieval Studies, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, discussed some of the intellectual problems involved in employing all five senses in Paradise in Late Antique Christian tradition. **Corin Braga**, Head of the Department of Comparative Literature, and Dean of the Faculty of Letters, Cluj, Romania, talked about Ecstatic Voyages in the Afterworld in Irish Celtic-Christian Mythology. **Anders Hultgård**, Professor Emeritus in History of Religions, University of Uppsala, Department of Theology and Religious Studies, attempted to look for afterlife ideas in ancient Scandinavian religion that broadly corresponded to the common term 'paradise'. **Rudolf Simek**, Professor of Medieval German and Scandinavian Literature, Institut für Germanistik, vergleichende Literatur- und Kulturwissenschaft Abteilung für Skandinavistik, Universität Bonn, discussed geographical idea about the location of Paradise and surveyed medieval cartographical material.

The conference focussed on how the relationship between Paradise and the physical universe has been understood in various traditions. The emphasis was on the cosmographical context of the history of the idea of Paradise in the ancient Near Eastern and European traditions. The event has helped to consolidate a dialogue between scholars coming from different disciplines and one of the outcomes, it is hoped, will be to continue this dialogue. It is intended that the proceedings of the conference will be published in the series *Warburg Institute Colloquia*. An article on the conference, with explicit reference to the British Institute for the Study of Iraq's contribution, has already been published in *L'Osservatore Romano*, the official daily newspaper of the Vatican, 9/10 March 2009, p. 5 ('Paese che vai paradiso che trovi').

*Alessandro Scafi*

### **Artists in residence from Iraq, 20 October – 14 November 2008**

Hemin Hamid at Yorkshire Sculpture Park and Reben Majeed at Toynbee Studios with Arts Admin and Live Arts Development Agency

Two Kurdish artists from Iraq, Hemin Hamid and Reben Majeed, were invited to be artists in residence in the UK for a month from 20 October 2008, to develop their work, explore British culture and contemporary art, and present their practice and culture to a British audience.

This residency programme was organised by ArtRole, a UK-based art organisation creating international culture and contemporary art exchanges and education programmes with the Middle East. The residency was part of phase 3-2008 of ArtRole's exchange programme, which divided into three phases. The two residencies are hosted by well-known art venues and organisations ArtAdmin and Live Arts Development Agency in London and

Yorkshire Sculpture Park in Yorkshire, which have been continuous partners in ArtRole's projects.

This residency programme comprised talks, workshops and exhibitions addressed to a UK audience and art professionals, offering personal and general accounts of the lives and work of the artists, the circumstances encountered following the First Gulf War, as well as the cross-cultural activities run by ArtRole in the region. The residency, sponsored in part by BISI, included a range of free events that were open to the public, with presentations and workshops by the artists and discussions on the cultural exchange programme with ArtRole.

Hemin Hamid is an installation and video artist based in Erbil, whose work plays with the notion of difference, inviting us to find similarities in oppositions in subjects as wide as religion, culture and urbanism. He is a lecturer at the Institute of Fine Art in Erbil, part of the younger artists' generation of the post-Saddam Hussein era, who expanded their practice outside the gallery space to the public realm. He was for instance involved in art events in Freedom Square in Baghdad. During the month of Hemin's residency, which mainly explored English landscape, he also visited Manchester, Leeds, the Liverpool Biennale and London. He met artists, curators and art student, and he visited galleries, museums and art festivals. The idea was to introduce him to the nature of the arts events in different parts of the UK. He documented his journey and we gathered information on those events, as part of the programme that the artists use for their presentations back in Iraq. At YSP Hemin also met artists, and gave a talk for refugees and asylum seekers as part of YSP education and community project.

Back in Iraq Hemin organised a number of talks and presentations for artists and art students in various cities especially in Iraqi Kurdistan.

These residencies are part of a three-year cultural exchange programme between the UK, the US and Kurdistan-Iraq, which started in May 2007 with a visit by a group of Kurdish artists to the UK and was followed up by two journeys to Kurdistan-Iraq and a programme of talks in the UK by a group of British and American artists. Through its activities ArtRole aims to challenge misconceptions and offer opportunities for cross-cultural exchanges and dialogues with Middle-Eastern countries. ArtRole is planning to expand its activities to the rest of Iraq, believing it can support the country via art and education, and it is also working on the development of similar activities within Iran and Lebanon. This residency programme is supported by Arts Council Yorkshire, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the British Institute of the Study of Iraq, and Allan and Nesta Ferguson.

*Adalet R. Garmiany*  
*ArtRole Chief Executive Officer*  
*[www.artrole.org](http://www.artrole.org)*



## **Babylon in the community: a programme of workshops for supplementary school children**

Under the direction of Kate Kelland, the Schools and Young Audiences Education Manager for the British Museum, this programme of workshops and partnerships brought together four groups of children from London, children in Iraq, members of the BM's Learning and Curatorial teams and a freelance artist. It was designed to encourage and increase interaction between local supplementary school students (aged between 8 and 13) and the British Museum's *Babylon: Myth and Reality* exhibition. The aim of the project was to inspire these groups to learn about ancient Iraq and recognise the Museum's collections as a resource relevant to them for future independent learning.

Each workshop consisted of an introduction to Babylonian culture from one of the curators Jon Taylor or Irving Finkel, followed by a practical session where the children practised writing in cuneiform. Students were encouraged to think about how languages relate to each other (Babylonian and Arabic in particular) and how these languages can be written in cuneiform and alphabetic scripts. Armed with a lollypop stylus and a generous lump of air-drying clay the children wrote their own names and those of friends or family. They were able to take their completed cuneiform tablets home to show their families.



The workshops were rounded off with an art workshop led by freelance artist, David Alsop. The resulting creative art work would be displayed in the Museum's Clore Education Centre whilst *Babylon: Myth and Reality* was open, alongside that produced by children inside Iraq itself, utilising curator Jon Taylor's relationships with groups based in Iraq. They worked to the theme: 'What does Babylon mean to you?'

The first workshop brought together children from the Iraqi Association and the Young Muslim Academy. In this workshop, *fabulous animals*, the children took the famous glazed-brick dragon exhibited in *Babylon: Myth and Reality* as inspiration. Students created their own personalised brick, on one side of which was part of a template with drawings representing different animal fur, skin or scales. During a short break David put the templates together, and much to the surprise of the children, created a mythical Babylonian animal –

the dragon! This dragon was displayed in the Museum alongside art produced by children working with Iraq-based NGO, Culture for All.



In the second workshop students from the Bangladesh Woman's Association in Haringey explored the Babylonian study of animal organs to predict the future. Taking the mask of Huwawa as a starting point, students created their own omen masks by adding organ shapes, animal skin, fur or scales and other creative touches to a mask outline. They were also asked to write an omen or warning to protect or describe their mask. The resulting masks were wonderfully colourful and varied, and the omens often enough to ensure the adults would not dare to touch them!



At the third workshop curator Irving Finkel took the children from the Arabic Language School for All on a special gallery tour. They all spoke Arabic and were impressed at how similar the Babylonian and Arabic languages are. This group also produced masks inspired by the Huwawa omen mask.

The masks from the second and third workshops were displayed alongside artwork produced by children from internally displaced families within Iraq, organised with the assistance of the Assyrian Aid Society. This display was designed to coincide with an Assyrian themed event which was held at the Museum in February.

The display of all the art work created by children in London and Iraq formed the culmination of the project. The varied artworks, images of students taking part in the workshops and explanatory text was combined by the artist in to a rich and unique display. The artwork display was installed in the Clore Education Centre of the Museum from November 2008 to March 2009 where it was enjoyed by children, family groups and adult visitors to the Museum. Most importantly, the students were invited back to view their work transformed into the display with their families alongside an invitation to a free and exclusive private view of the exhibition.

The Communities Partnership Team would like to thank BISI and BIFS for their generous sponsorship which enabled this exciting project to take place.

*Laura Phillips  
Community Partnerships Manager  
The British Museum*

## **Imperial College Iraqi Society Report: Iraqi Cultural Exhibition**

The Imperial College Iraqi Society is a student-led, voluntary organisation made up of Iraqis of all backgrounds and heritages from Imperial College, London. Our aims are simple – to provide a service for Iraqi students in London (more specifically in Imperial College), to broaden our knowledge of Iraq and its past, present and future outlook, and finally to attempt to extend this to other Iraqi-related organisations from across the UK.

A young and enthusiastic Iraqi Society committee was given backing from the Imperial College Student Union to plan and organise events across the academic year. Besides from the numerous talks, cultural excursions and social activities we provide to our members, we attempted to disembark on a particularly challenging project, entitled the Iraqi Cultural Exhibition.

This was an audacious attempt to try and bring together organisations, be they Iraqi or otherwise, and provide a platform onto which they would be able to interact on a large scale. Each organisation would have a stall, and the potential to give a brief presentation about their work to everybody else. Indeed, this proved to be a challenging exercise with such a young and inexperienced committee who had never carried out such an event before. With very few affiliates, it was proving difficult to tap into the web of Iraqi contacts that we so desperately needed.

Yet as we started advertising to the public and generating interest in what seemed to be a very vague event with no reputation or history attached to the organisers, we received a positive response from many organisations who not only pledged to attend, but also recommended others who would also be interested. This got the ball rolling for this huge networking event and each day we were getting more emails from people who expressed interest to attend. We needed to organise catering, and amongst all the commotion in organising we were able to bring a young Iraqi ‘Oud player (Khyam Allami) and a young Iraqi Poet (Ali Fadhil). Suddenly we were finding out about all these organisations that existed in and around London, and we attempted to make the most of it!

One of these ‘random’ organisations we bumped into was in fact BISI. With the committee mainly consisting of British-born Iraqis, some of whom are more integrated into the Iraqi community than others, it was safe to say that nobody had heard of BISI prior to the event, and we weren’t entirely sure why! Yet, we wanted to hear more about them and they were duly invited. Surprisingly, they made us aware of a Development Grant that they could supply to us for this event, and we gratefully applied and were generously rewarded, and thus the event could expand.

We invited artists, charities, academia and cultural societies, making the Iraqi Cultural Exhibition a truly unique event with a surprisingly large turnout. The full list of invited organisations included:

- BISI – *Joan Porter MacIver & Helen Taylor*
- The British Museum – *Dr Jonathon Taylor*
- Culture for All – *Mehiyar Kathem*
- Student Iraqi Medical Association (SIMA)
- Kurdish Society and Students Organisation (KSSO)
- Iraqi Prospect Organisation
- Iraqi Orphan Foundation
- Kubba Foundation
- Calligraphy – *Aziz Al-Naib*
- Probsthain Books
- Iraqi Professionals UK
- Zipang
- Iraqi Association
- British Red Cross
- Henna – *Sarah Fazal*
- ‘Oud – *Khyam Allami*
- Poetry – *Ali Fadhil*

The Imperial College Iraqi Society was extremely honoured to host all of these organisations, and for that we are tremendously grateful to BISI for encouraging us and giving us the opportunity to expand our events and delve into untouched territories. We hope this will be the start of a great relationship between the two societies, and we hope to invite members of BISI to attend and present academic lectures in the future.

As for the future of the Imperial College Iraqi Society, we have already started planning further events this summer further to our AGM last month, and hope to really expand in the next academic year and build upon the success we have attained this year.

*Mohammed Jawad*  
*President, Imperial College Iraqi Society*

**The British Institute for the Study of Iraq, Birkbeck College Faculty of Lifelong Learning Archaeology Department & Egypt Exploration Society Study Day on ‘From Babylon to Amarna: Ancient Middle Eastern Interactions in the Days of Akhenaten’**

BISI, Birkbeck FLL and EES co-sponsored a study day in February on the Middle East in the 14th century BC that focused on the relations between the Babylonian, Mitannian, Hittite, Canaanite and Egyptian cultural and political spheres of influence. Babylonian, which was the international language of the age, was the language of the Amarna letters of Akhenaten, and these letters were central to the day’s discussion. Dr Kate Spence of the University of Cambridge provided an archaeological and historical context for Akhenaten and his capital in Amarna, and shared her own recent discoveries in the field at

Sesebi, a site contemporaneous with Amarna and linked closely to the royal capital. Dr Paul Collins of the British Museum examined the Mitanni from an archaeological perspective, and also relations between the Mitanni and Babylonians, while Dr Frances Reynolds of the University of Oxford set the historical scene in Babylonia in the second millennium BC, while also analysing closely one of the Amarna letters that involved Burnaburiash II, a Babylonian king and contemporary of Akhenaten. Fran Hazelton and Tara Jaff of ZIPANG re-told the story of *Nergal & Ereshkigal*, a copy of which was found in the Amarna archive, as well as singing *The Ballad of the Former Heroes*, a melancholic poem of Sumerian origin that had been turned into a drinking song by the Levantine scribes of the Amarna Age. Dr Jack Green of the Ashmolean Museum focussed on the Egyptian presence in the Levant, discussing archaeological finds from many sites (including Tell es-Sa‘idiyeh) in order to illustrate the chronological and regional variations of the phenomenon. The day ended with a lecture by Dr Daniel Schwemer of the School of Oriental and African Studies, who presented a vivid account of the historical relations between the Hittites and the Egyptians, paying particular attention to the reign of Suppiluliuma I and the aborted marriage alliance with an Egyptian queen-widow (the ‘Dahamunzu Episode’) in the light of new chronological evidence. This fourth Mesopotamian Archaeology Study Day helped set Mesopotamia into a broad historical perspective, examining her diplomatic and linguistic relations with her neighbours.

*Frans van Koppen*

(organised by Mariana Giovino and Frans van Koppen)

### **Report in Conclusion of the Development Grant for the Lyre of Ur Project**

We were contacted by Marcus Tristan Heathcock who is an English composer residing in Russia who composes for the St Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra about a composition using our sounds to create a new work.

We discussed this with John C. Franklin, University of Burlington, Vermont, who we originally envisaged doing this work and John felt that it might be better if the better-qualified person Marcus were to create this work rather than him. Marcus came to the UK twice at our further invitation to visit us and has sent over his 10 minute composition for Lyre and Horns. We are lucky enough to have the Peterborough Symphony Orchestra try it out late in 2008.

We also have the work on a sound file by way of marketing, which we now are pursuing under the ‘Mesopotamian Music’ website. The eventual public performance, with a complete symphony orchestra remains our aim. We actively market this music for film, television and radio usage, as there is a real need for more authentic sounds and this would give us some income to the project.



We spent three days recording music in Gloucestershire for a CD for which we are only awaiting closure of a few formal literature-permissions, before being able to release it. This was all as a direct result of some funding towards these costs.

We have continued to be in close contact with Ihsan Adham in Denmark and he has placed his art-work at our disposal for our stage work, which is a huge honour for us. We use his calligraphy everywhere on our postcards and marketing material and we have now some event backdrops available as a result of the BISI grant.

We now use three Sumerian poems translated into Arabic. One of these was recited by the long-time television newsreader of Iraqi TV Ms 'Gladys' at the Smithsonian event last month in front of the Iraqi audience alongside The Gold Lyre of Ur and was hugely well-received.

Our latest new poem was sent to Iraqi community in Michigan who obtained the services of an ex UN interpreter to translate it into correct Arabic for our future use in similar events. Such translations go far for gaining new interest and provide interest against the sound and sight of the Gold Lyre. The BISI grant for such translation has really developed this aspect of what we do.

The grant from BISI has of course helped with these specific aspects, but actually has as much helped forward our visibility in the worlds of archaeology, musicology, music and art where we wish to present ourselves. The world of ancient Mesopotamia and its music, literature and arts is not well-known, yet deserves far better recognition. This is especially true now that Iraq is trying to again become a stable and mature country beside the other nations of the world, and we take great pride in contributing a little towards this.

Since last year we have travelled to Berlin with our four person performance team for the International Study Group for Musical Archaeology; we have given papers at the British Museum, at the Brussels Museum and the Library of Congress Washington DC; we performed at the British Museum, the Bolivar Hall London, Vermont University and Canterbury England. Radio Canada CBC covered us with their Dispatches News radio programme last month. Yet, we are keen to do more to bring interest and generate some funding towards Iraq through our project.

We have been approached recently to make another overseas visit possibly to the UAE and America but most excitingly of all, (though this is still early days) to Iraq itself.

*Andy Lowings  
Chairman, Gold Lyre of Ur team*



Photo: Dr. Donny George Youkhanna, Visiting Professor, Stony Brook University New York; Dr A Hadi Al Khalili, Cultural Attaché Embassy of Iraq, and Mrs Al Khalili; Andy Lowings, Chairman Lyre of Ur Project; Jennifer Sturdy, Chief Examiner and Administrator of the Lyre of Ur Project on stage at the Smithsonian Museum of the American Indian Theatre. The concert took place as part of the celebration of the Iraqi community's academic successes in USA.

### **Fellows Report on my time in the UK and BISI Fellowship**

I was honoured to receive a fellowship from BISI to visit the United Kingdom from 25th October to 30th November to work on my programme. The BISI covered all the institutional fees, boarding (I stayed with BISI member Ed Ross) and all travel fees in addition to a daily allowance for living expenses.

- I would like to express my thanks to Mrs Joan Porter MacIver Administrator of BISI, who organized all of my visit. She arranged my work in the libraries of the BM and SOAS in order to get the benefit of my time and work on my program to look for references concerning my new book 'The Legend of Supernatural Men in Ancient Mesopotamia' which comprise three chapters: The searchers for immortality; The Deification of kings; and The Half-Human creatures. So it was wonderful to spend time in the UK under the auspices of BISI.
- I attended a two week intensive English language training (18 hours) at Language Link.
- I spent three days visiting Durham University with Dr Lamia al-Gailani Werr to participate with Dr Eleanor Wilkinson in the link to the Digital Nineveh Archive Project (as part of a BUIC grant).
- I spent three days visiting Cambridge to meet colleagues, where I was hosted by Dr. Erica Hunter and Mrs MacIver at their homes. I visited the Fitzwilliam Museum to meet Dr. Timothy Potts, the Director of Museum, and see the museum systems, the storage rooms in the museum and to see the Conservation and Education departments. Concluding my visit, I had a nice lunch meeting with Dr Joan Oates, Professor Nicholas Postgate, Joan Porter MacIver, Dr Augusta McMahon, and Ghanim Wahida and Dr Harriet Crawford, who arranged the visit.



- I would like to thanks Dr John Curtis, Keeper of the Middle Department in the British Museum, who gave me great facilities to use the libraries of BM in order to see references and to make photocopies of the articles which interested me.
  - Many thanks to Professor Andrew George who supported me to get a library pass for SOAS in order to use this library, to collect a lot of references concerning my research.
  - I had a nice lunch meeting with Professor Roger Matthews, Chairman of BISI, on 24th November and I thank him for his guidance during my visit to the UK.
  - On 26th November, I attended Dr Vesta Curtis' talk at the British Academy, entitled 'Fascination with the past: images of ancient Persia in modern Iran' and met Professor Robert Hillenbrand.
  - I had a generous invitation to attend the inauguration of Babylon Exhibition at the British Museum joining the Iraqi delegation.
- Remember me to all the colleagues and many thanks to them, and to you.

*Hikmat Basheer Al-Aswad*  
*Director of Mosul Museum,*  
*Mosul - Iraq*

### **Letter to the BISI Administrator from the Director of the Basra Museum**

I want to thank you and BISI so much for all the help that you gave me. I cannot express how grateful I am to you. From the start of my trip in Jordan and the help you offered regarding my stay at ACOR (American Center of Oriental Research ([www.acorjordan.org](http://www.acorjordan.org))) for 9 days and the other help I received from Dr Barbara (Porter), director of ACOR. In addition the welcome I was given in London was wonderful and I want to thank you particularly for enabling me to do the English course. This was extremely useful for me. At the British Museum Dr Curtis was very happy with the progress that I made and I feel much more confident now in my ability to communicate. I am also very grateful for all the gifts that I received from BISI: the books and the computer in particular which helped me so much to improve my English and also enabled me to work on the Basra museum project.

I hope very much that we will remain in touch and continue to work together in the future. Thank you and BISI also for helping Iraqi visitors in this way - we appreciate it so much. We look forward very much to welcoming you in Basra in the future. We are ready to help you in Iraq in any way. Best wishes and again many thanks and I look forward to meeting you again.

*Qahtan al-Hussain*  
*Director, Basra Museum*

## BISI RECENT & FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS

***NEW LIGHT ON NIMRUD: Proceedings of the Nimrud Conference 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> March 2002***, edited by J.E. Curtis, H. McCall, D. Collon and L. al-Gailani Werr (December 2008). £40.

This book publishes 34 papers by international and Iraqi experts given at a conference on Nimrud at the British Museum in 2002. Excavations at the important Assyrian capital city of Nimrud have continued intermittently since 1845, culminating with the discovery in 1989-90 of the tombs of the Assyrian queens with astonishing quantities of gold jewellery. All aspects of the excavations and the various finds and inscribed material from Nimrud are considered in this volume, with particular attention being paid to the tombs of the queens and their contents. The evidence of inscriptions and the results of paleopathological investigation are brought together to identify the bodies in the tombs. There is much previously unpublished information about the tombs, and the jewellery is fully illustrated in eight colour plates. Finally, the significance of Nimrud as one of the greatest sites in the Ancient Near East is fully assessed.

336 pages, 9 pages colour plates, 8 pages plans & 295 b/w illustrations. Hardback, A4 ISBN 978-0-903472-24-1 Price £40.

***Ivories from Nimrud VI: Ivories from the North West Palace (1845-1992)*** by Georgina Herrmann, Stuart Laidlaw with Helena Coffey (June 2009). £75.

The great ninth-century palace which Ashurnasirpal II (883-859 BC) built at his new capital of Kalhu/Nimrud has been excavated over 150 years by various expeditions. Each has been rewarded with remarkable antiquities, including the finest ivories found in the ancient Near East, many of which had been brought to Kalhu by the Assyrian kings. The first ivories were discovered by Austen Henry Layard, followed a century later by Max Mallowan, who found superb ivories in Well NN. Neither Layard nor Mallowan was able to empty Well AJ: this was achieved by the Iraqi Department of Antiquities and Heritage, who retrieved arguably the finest pieces found at Nimrud. Finally, an interesting collection of ivory and bone tubes was found by Muzahim Mahmud, the discoverer of the famous Royal Tombs, in Well 4.

This volume publishes for the first time the majority of the ivories found in the Palace by location. These include superb examples carved in Assyria proper and across the Levant from North Syria to Phoenicia and provide an outstanding illustration of the minor arts of the early first millennium. In addition ivories found in the Central Palace of Tiglath-pileser III and fragmentary pieces found in the domestic contexts of the Town Wall Houses are also included.

In addition to a detailed catalogue, this book also aims to assess the present state of ivory studies, discussing the political situation in the Levant, the excavation of the palace, the history of study, the various style-groups of ivories and their possible time and place of production. This volume is the sixth in the *Ivories from Nimrud* series published by the British School of Archaeology in Iraq (now the British Institute for the Study of Iraq).

Format: 444 pages; 148p prelims & text, 134 pp catalogue & appendices, 138 pp B/W plates & 24 p colour plates. Size 25 x 31 cm

ISBN 978-0-903472-26-5 Price: £75

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## **BOOK DONATIONS FOR THE BISI LIBRARY**

Arbuthnott, Hugh, Terence Clark and Richard Muir, *British Missions Around the Gulf, 1575-2005: Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman*, Folkestone: Global Oriental Ltd, 2008. ISBN 978-1-905246-588.

Black, Jeremy A. (†) and Gabriella Spada, *Texts from Ur kept in the Iraq Museum and in the British Museum* (NISABA 19), Messina: Dipartimento di Scienze dell'Antichità dell'Università degli Studi di Messina (Di.Sc.A.M.), 2008. ISBN 88-8268-010. (Additional copies will be sent to the Iraq Museum Cuneiform Library by BISI.)

Ramsay, William. M., and Gertrude L. Bell, *The Thousand and One Churches*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 1909 reprinted 2008. ISBN 978-1-934536-05-0.6

Wicke Dirk, *Vorderasiatische Pyxiden der Spätbronzezeit* (Alte Orient und Altes Testament, 45), Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2008. ISBN 978-934628-74-8.

## OTHER PUBLICATIONS

### *The Destruction of Cultural Heritage in Iraq*

**Edited by Peter Stone & Joanne Farchakh Bajjaly**

Discussion of the issues surrounding the destruction of cultural property in times of conflict has become a key issue for debate around the world. This book provides an historical statement as of 1st March 2006 concerning the destruction of the cultural heritage in Iraq. It outlines the personal stories of a number of individuals who were—and in most cases continue to be—involved. These individuals are involved at all levels, and come from various points along the political spectrum, giving a rounded and balanced perspective so easily lost in single authored reports. It also provides the first views written by Iraqis on the situation of archaeology in Iraq under Saddam and an overview and contextualisation of the issues surrounding the looting, theft and destruction of the archaeological sites, the Iraqi National Museum and the libraries in Baghdad since the war was launched in 2003

#### **Reviews of the hardback:**

*An extraordinary achievement that will stand as the definitive account of the desperate, avoidable cultural tragedy of Iraq for many years to come.*

THES

*This book is mandatory reading for anybody who expresses an opinion about archaeologists and the invasion of Iraq.*

BRITISH ARCHAEOLOGY

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Editor's Note: The printing of the paperback version of this book was made possible in part by a grant from BISL. We are very pleased to be associated with it.

***The Christian Heritage of Iraq: Collected papers from the 'Christianity of Iraq I-V Seminar Days', ed. Erica C. D. Hunter (Gorgias Press, Piscataway, NJ) xx, 328 pp. ISBN 978-1-60724-111-9,***

This volume collects papers from the *Christianity in Iraq I-V Seminar Days* (2004-2008) that were held at the Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre, School of Oriental and African Studies under the sponsorship of The British Institute for the Study of Iraq (BISI) and The Anglican and Eastern Churches Association (AECA). The heritage and contribution of Syriac Christianity to Iraq is explored in the following range of papers:

- John HEALEY explores the testimony of contacts between Christian communities in the Gulf with Muslims during the early centuries of the Islamic era.
- John WATT and Sidney GRIFFITH analyse the Christian input into the transmission of Aristotelian philosophy.
- Florence JULLIEN, Sebastian BROCK and Suha RASSAM discuss the monastic heritage.
- Alexei SAVCHENKO presents archaeological evidence of the Church of the East from Urgut, in Uzbekistan whilst Wassilios KLEIN shows the Christian presence in Kirghizstan to the thirteenth century.
- Mark DICKENS surveys Bible manuscripts from Turfan, written in Syriac, Christian Sogdian and Christian Uighur.
- Heleen MURRE-VAN DEN BERG and Amir HARRAK examine the contributions of the communities during the Ottoman era, before the atrocities that took place in the opening decade of the twentieth century which are detailed by Martin TAMCKE.
- Erica HUNTER discusses the use of amulets by the nineteenth century communities in Kurdistan and connection of magico-medicinal practices with monasteries.
- Geoffrey KHAN focuses on the Neo-Aramaic dialects that are now seriously endangered.
- Robin BET SHMUEL summarises religious education in Assyrian schools in twentieth-century Iraq.
- Antony O'MAHONY provides a comprehensive survey of the situation of the Christian communities up to 2003.

Christianity has made a valuable and vital contribution over eighteen hundred years to the culture and society of Iraq. However, as His Grace, Louis Sako, Chaldean Archbishop of Kirkuk, reminds in the *Foreword*, today the Christian communities survive under very difficult and perilous circumstances, facing an uncertain future and with a real possibility that they will disappear entirely from Iraq.

***Erica C. D. Hunter***

## **2009 & 2010 BISI LECTURES & FUTURE EVENTS**

**18 May, 6 p.m.** - BISI Appeal Lecture: **‘Iraq: is the age of wars over?’** with **Patrick Cockburn**, Middle East correspondent of *The Independent* and author of *The Occupation: War, Resistance and Daily Life in Iraq*, at the British Academy.

**1 June, 6 p.m.** - British Iraqi Friendship Society Lecture by **Dr Salah Al-Shaikhly**, former Iraqi Ambassador to the UK, on **‘The Changing Face of Iraqi Politics’**, at the Middle East Association, 33 Bury Street, London W1. BISI members are welcome. For further information, please email: [info@britishiraqi.co.uk](mailto:info@britishiraqi.co.uk)

**17 June, 5.30 p.m.** - BISI Bonham-Carter Forum and Lecture - **Dr Eleanor Wilkinson & Professor Tony Wilkinson FBA**, **‘Archaeology in Iraq: Preservation, Visualisation and Access’**, at the British Academy, 10 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1

**17 September, 6.00 p.m.** - BISI Appeal Talk with **Professor Jim Khalili**, **‘Science and Rationalism in 9th Century Baghdad’**, at the British Academy, 10 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1. (An invitation form will be sent to members and posted on the BISI website)

**10 December, 6 p.m.** - BISI AGM and Lecture - **Dr Karen Radner**, **‘The Neo-Assyrian imperial project: mechanisms of coherence’** Venue: J.Z. Young Lecture Theatre, Anatomy Building, University College London, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT.

**4 February 2010, 6 p.m.** - BISI Appeal Lecture in association with the British Museum – **Dr Saad Eskander**, Director of the Iraq National Library and Archives, on **‘The looting and the destruction of Iraq’s historical records - the use and the abuse of the records of the former regime by Iraqis and non-Iraqis’** at the British Museum. (An invitation form will be sent to members and posted on the BISI website.)

**6 February** - **‘Seven Years On: The Iraq National Museum & Cultural Heritage in Iraq’**, BISI & Birkbeck Mesopotamian Archaeology 2010 Study Day Organised and chaired by Dr Mariana Giovino, Collège de France

**10 March** - BISI and the Department of Adult and Continuing Education (DACE) of the University of Glasgow Day School: **Mesopotamia: Exploring Ancient Iraq**

**11 March** - BISI Lecture (tbc)

**12- 16 April 2010** - The 7th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East (**7ICAANE**) London Website: [www.7icaane.org](http://www.7icaane.org)

**BRITISH INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF IRAQ**  
**(Gertrude Bell Memorial)**

**GRANTS:**  
**RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, AND**  
**ACADEMIC VISITORS**

The Institute promotes, supports, and undertakes research and public education relating to Iraq and neighbouring countries, carrying out work not covered by other BASIS-sponsored institutions. Its coverage includes anthropology, archaeology, geography, history, languages, and related disciplines within the arts, humanities, and social sciences from the earliest times until the present. It has over 700 subscribers to its journal *Iraq* and members may also subscribe to the *International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies*. Membership with its benefits is open to all with special student rates. For more information about the Institute and its grants see: <http://www.britac.ac.uk/institutes/iraq/>

**BISI RESEARCH GRANTS**

The Institute invites funding applications twice a year for grants in aid of research and for the organisation of academic conferences. Applications are welcomed to support research or conferences on Iraq and neighbouring countries not covered by other BASIS-sponsored institutions, in any field of the humanities or social sciences, concerned with any time period from prehistory to the present day. Awards will normally fall within a limit of £4000, though more substantial awards may be made.

In addition, the Institute particularly welcomes funding applications for pilot projects preliminary to larger research projects, especially on the theme of *Exile and Return*. Funding of up to £8000 is available, for one pilot project a year. The Institute will also offer assistance to the award-holder in drafting a full research proposal to submit jointly to other funding bodies.

Applicants must be residents of the UK or, exceptionally, other individuals whose academic research closely coincides with that of the BISI. Two academic references are required. All applications and references must be received by **31 October and 31 January annually**.

**BISI DEVELOPMENT GRANTS**

Grants are available to support development events and projects, such as lectures, study days, and popular publications that relate to Iraq and neighbouring countries and to the areas of interest covered by BISI. A Development Grant application should normally be for an amount up to £500 but more substantial grants may be made. Applicants need to submit an application form and two references to the BISI Administrator. Applicants must be residents of the UK and preference is given to activities taking place

in the UK, or in Iraq or a neighbouring country. The deadlines for applications and references are **15 October and 15 April annually**. In special circumstances BISI will consider urgent applications at other times.

### **BISI VISITING IRAQI FELLOWS & SCHOLARS GRANTS**

BISI offers two or three grants each year to be held in the UK by visiting scholars from Iraq in the fields of archaeology, ancient languages, museum and heritage studies, and other disciplines within the humanities and social sciences. The academic focus must relate to the study of Iraq and priority is given to scholars at an early stage of their careers. Applications are due by **31 October and 30 April annually**.

All grant requirements, conditions, and application forms, as well as membership forms, are available from: BISI Administrator, 10 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AH, United Kingdom and the BISI website: <http://www.britac.ac.uk/institutes/iraq/> e-mail: [bisi@britac.ac.uk](mailto:bisi@britac.ac.uk)  
Tel. + 44 (0) 20 7969 5274 & Fax. + 44 (0) 20 7969 5401

### **THE START OF A DIGITAL ARCHIVE?**

We have received a collection of glass slides donated via Dr Stephanie Dalley and kindly transported by BISI member Rosalind Wade Haddon from the Oriental Institute, Oxford to London.

In sorting through her office Dr Stephanie Dalley discovered a box of 55 slides of general views of Iraq, taken between World War I and World War II, and another small group of Mesopotamia. The glass slides, which were deposited in the Oriental Institute by Roger Moorey, and put under the care of Peter Hulin, were then 'simply dumped in a cupboard'. Although there are no dates on them, they are labelled with the place-names where they were taken. Dr Dalley hopes that the BISI will consider digitising them, perhaps as the start of a broader digital collection of photographs. She feels that many colleagues who worked in Iraq in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s have colour slides which now have some historic value, and she feels sure that she is not the only person who would gladly lend slides with pictures of sites and excavations. Maybe a website with free access to the pictures is feasible?

BISI has received offers in the past to handle such digital projects. At the moment we do not have the capacity to do so but feel this could be a very important resource. If any members would wish to consider helping out on this, please get in touch. In the mean time the box of slides is residing in the BISI office at the British Academy and we hope to be able to digitise them as soon as possible or find a volunteer to do so.



**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP PAYMENT FORM**

**NAME** .....

**ADDRESS** .....

**E-MAIL** .....

If you do not wish to receive BISI e-mail notices, please tick here. ☐

If you are a non-UK member and wish to receive BISI voting papers, please tick here. ☐

In addition to my Membership I wish to make a donation to BISI of £ .....

*giftaid it*

If you Gift Aid your basic membership fee and any donations, BISI will continue to receive an additional 28p. BISI can claim Gift Aid tax relief of 25p on every pound you give. HMRC will also be operating transitional provisions for Gift Aid donations made from 6 April 2008 until 5 April 2011, paying a Government supplement of 3p on every pound you give. Please treat this and all donations I make hereafter to BISI as Gift Aid Donations. I am a UK taxpayer.

**Signature (for Gift Aid)** ..... **Date** .....

☐ I enclose a standing order on a UK bank account for £ .....  
Please complete a standing order form (available on the BISI website and from the Administrator). Full Members receive a £2 discount and help BISI – thank you.

☐ I enclose a cheque in UK Sterling for £ .....

☐ I have made a Giro payment in UK Sterling for £ ..... plus £2.50 to cover charges to Giro account no. 00344 6255 (Sort Code 72 00 00) on ..... (date).

☐ I have sent Sterling from abroad and have paid the bank charges. BISI's account is # 40626384 (Sort Code 20-10-53) at Barclays Bank PLC, Bloomsbury & Tottenham Court Road Branch, Bloomsbury & Chancery Lane Group, PO Box 11345, London W12 8GG, UK. IBAN GB31BARC20105340626384 BIC/SWIFT BARCGB22

☐ I wish to pay by Visa / MasterCard / Switch / Amex (please delete as applicable)

I authorize you to debit my account with the amount of £ ..... Card Number

Security No. on reverse of card  Issue No. (Switch only)

Start Date of card MM/YY ..... / ..... Expiry Date of card MM/YY ..... / .....

Name (as on card) .....

**Signature** ..... **Date** .....

(If your card address and the mailing address above are different, please note as such and provide the credit card mailing address.)

**Full-time Student Applications:** Please send a copy of your current student card or provide a note from your institution confirming your full-time academic status and the expected completion date of your studies.

## **BISI Annual Membership Request Form**

Please complete this request and tick the type of BISI Membership you would like.

Name: ..... Date: .....

### **Membership with the journal *Iraq***

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> UK BISI Membership with the journal <i>Iraq</i>             | £37 (£35*) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> UK BISI Student Membership with the journal <i>Iraq</i>     | £15        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-UK BISI Membership with the journal <i>Iraq</i>         | £40 (£38*) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-UK BISI Student Membership with the journal <i>Iraq</i> | £20        |

The journal *Iraq* is also available to Non-Members at the full rate:

UK orders for the journal <i>Iraq</i>	£45
Non-UK orders for the journal <i>Iraq</i>	£50

### **Membership with *The International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies***

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> UK BISI Membership with the journal <i>IJCIS</i>                | £45 (£43*) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> UK BISI Student Membership with the journal <i>IJCIS</i>        | £30        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other European BISI Membership with the journal <i>IJCIS</i>    | £54 (£52*) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rest of the world BISI Membership with the journal <i>IJCIS</i> | £57 (£55*) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non UK BISI Membership with the journal <i>IJCIS</i>            | £39        |

### **Membership with *Iraq* and *The International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies***

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> UK BISI Membership with both journals             | £57 (£55*) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> UK BISI Student Membership with both journals     | £40        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-UK BISI Membership with both journals         | £72 (£70*) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-UK BISI Student Membership with both journals | £54        |

A £5 annual discount on *IJCIS* is included in BISI membership rates and is available **only** to BISI members who order *IJCIS* **with** their membership. The publisher sets the *IJCIS* rates and will discount further if over 100 BISI members subscribe. Format: 3 issues per year from 2007.

- |   |            |
|---|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Membership <u>without a journal</u></b> | £20 (£18*) |
|---|------------|

\* All full members paying by standing order from a UK bank account receive a £2 annual discount. Paying by standing order is a considerable help to BISI – Thank you.  
All BISI membership rates include postage and packaging.

### **BISI Membership Benefits**

- Two BISI Newsletters
- 20% discount on BISI occasional publications
- Invitations to three BISI lectures and receptions in London (without fees)
- Invitations to BISI special events and joint study days as available (fees may apply)
- BISI Annual Report and Accounts
- Full voting rights at the BISI AGM in person or by postal ballot

### **How to Become a Member of BISI**

Please post a completed Membership Request Form **and** accompanying Membership Payment Form to the Administrator. Our Membership year starts in January and we send renewal notices the previous November. You are very welcome to become a Member at any time during the year and will receive the appropriate journals for that year.

Further information, including discounts for Members resident in Iraq: Mrs JP MacIver, BISI Administrator, 10 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AH, UK. Tel: +44 (0)20 7969 5274  
Email: bisi@britac.ac.uk Website: www.britac.ac.uk/institutes/iraq

**BRITISH INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF IRAQ  
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**BISI Committee Abbreviations:**

A= Appeal Committee; D = Development Committee; F = Finance Committee; P = Publications Committee; R = Fieldwork and Research Committee; V= Visiting Scholars Committee; & W = Working Committee