
THE BRITISH INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF IRAQ

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The next BISI Newsletter will be published in spring 2013. Brief contributions are welcomed on recent research, publications, members' news and events. The BISI Assistant Administrator, Lauren Mulvee edited this Newsletter with kind assistance from others. An A4 version of the newsletter will be available on the website. However if you would like to read the text in a larger print, please get in touch at bisi@britac.ac.uk/020 7969 5274.

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CHAIR OF COUNCIL'S REPORT

The past few months have been an exciting time of transition and innovation for BISI. Our new Assistant Administrator, Lauren Mulvee, has settled marvellously into her post, and I hope that by now you've had a chance to get to know her a little, whether through her online communication or in person. She has taken a great deal of the day-to-day burden away from our ever-invaluable Administrator Joan MacIver, who is now able to concentrate more fully on finance, planning and strategy.

Most importantly, the BISI Appeal has reached its target of £250,000, funding 25 Iraqi Visiting Scholars to come to the UK for training and conferences. Robert Irwin's fascinating and well-received lecture on Mediaeval Basra on 27 September thus marked the end of this phase of Appeal work. We are most grateful to him for providing a fitting finale. Many congratulations to the Committee, and especially to its initiator Dr Harriet Crawford. She, Dr Lamia al-Gailani Werr, Mr Iain D. Cheyne and Sir Terence Clark are now retiring from the Appeal with, I hope, the satisfaction of a job well done. Dr Crawford is also stepping down from the Visiting Scholars Committee but will kindly act as consultant to the Appeal Chairman Mr Peter Davies. I'm also very pleased to welcome Mr Imad Burhan and Ms Laura Curtis (no relation to our President, as far as I know!) as new members of the Appeal. In the spring we will be launching a big new fundraising initiative; more on that in the next Newsletter.



Mohammad Kasim Mohammad Jwad, the Al-Burhan Group visiting scholar, talks to Sherry Doyal and Monika Harter at the British Museum's Organics Laboratories in April 2012 Photo: Joan Porter MacIver

We are also recruiting for a new Honorary Treasurer at the moment to replace Mr Iain D. Cheyne, who is leaving us after many years of superlative service to the Institute and its predecessor. If you think that you, or anyone you know, might be interested and qualified for this voluntary post, have a look at the details on our website or email Joan MacIver (bisiadmin@britac.ac.uk).

I'm also thrilled to report that we have recently agreed a series of collaborative ventures with the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft (German Oriental Society), a charitable organisation very like BISI which funds and publishes research into the archaeology and history of the pre-modern Middle East. In the first instance we have agreed to offer joint Visiting Scholarships to eligible Iraqi scholars, one a year to begin with, along the lines of our current scheme. Please see the BISI website for further details if you think that you, or someone you know, might be eligible and interested.

The long campaign for UK ratification of the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Heritage in the Event of Armed Conflict, 1954, continues with ever-increasing urgency given current events in Syria. Led by Peter Stone, Professor of Cultural Heritage Studies at the University of Newcastle and a good friend of BISI, a consortium of UK heritage organisations, including the Institute, have been lobbying the Minister of Culture, Media and Sport for several years now. The recent incumbent Jeremy Hunt had become increasingly receptive to the idea. Let us hope that the new Secretary of State, Maria Miller, brings a bill to the Commons during the coming parliamentary term. This summer's events have included a series of lectures and a revival of the exhibition *Catastrophe!* on the 2003 Iraq War's impact on the country's cultural heritage, hosted by the Great North Museum in Newcastle. The exhibition was a version of one first put on by the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute in 2008. We hope to repeat it in London in the coming year.

After my marvellous trip to Kurdistan last spring, which I mentioned briefly in the last Newsletter, I will shortly be returning to southern Iraq for the first time since 2001. While some of my time will be spent on personal academic business, Dr Lamia al-Gailani Werr and I will also be continuing a conversation with recent Visiting Scholar, Mohammed Kasim Mohammad Jwad about ways to develop long-term co-operation with him and his colleagues at the Al-Kafeel Museum in Al-Abbas Holy Shrine, where he currently works on secondment from the Iraq Museum. I shall also meet the latest UK



A view of the Lower Zab river, taken from a tea-house on the Erbil-Sulaimaniyah road during the chair's trip to Kurdistan in spring 2012 Photo: Eleanor Robson

Ambassador to Iraq, Simon Collis, who has kindly agreed to become our new honorary Vice-President. His predecessor in both roles, Michael Aron, was of great service to BISI and I am very grateful to him for the care and time he has taken over Institute business, given the demands entailed in his work as Ambassador.

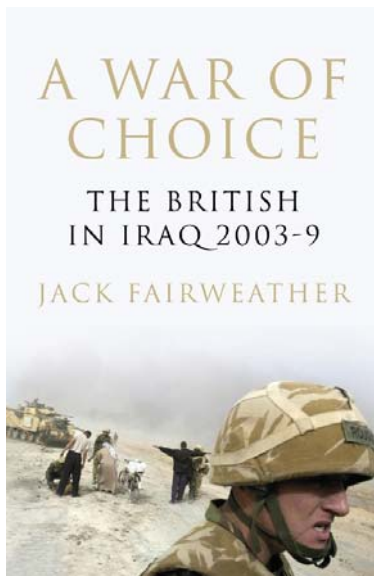
I'm aware that this report is more about things to come than past events, but I hope it is more tantalising than frustrating to read. I will keep in regular touch about these and other developments (for there are more in the pipeline) both here in the Newsletter and in my occasional blog, bisi1932.blogspot.com. And of course I also look forward to seeing and talking to you at one or more of BISI's many upcoming events.

Eleanor Robson

EDITORIAL

Since the Spring Newsletter, activity has continued apace at the Institute and our support for fieldwork and research into both historic and modern Iraq can be seen in the reports included in these pages.

At the end of May, our Al-Burhan Group visiting scholar Mohammad Kasim Mohammad Jwad finished his placement at the Centre for Textile Conservation at Glasgow University. Mohammad, who works as a textile and carpet conservator at the Iraq Museum, writes on p. 25 about the invaluable insights and experience he gained. The success of his placement was very much due to the wonderful practical programme ran by Dr Anita Quye of Glasgow University, and Jane Rowlands, Helen Hughes and Noorah al-Gailani at the Glasgow Museums. In addition, Professor Nick Pearce of Glasgow Museum and Dr Ellen McAdam of Glasgow Museums must be noted for the important part they played in planning and facilitating the placement in the early stages. Before he travelled to Glasgow, Mohammad spent time with Dr Monika Harter and staff at the British Museum's organics laboratories. He also presented a talk on his work in Iraq before staff from the museum's Middle East Department. We would like to thank everybody who gave their time to support Mohammad's placement.



In June, we were fortunate enough to have Jack Fairweather, the Former Baghdad Bureau Chief for The Daily Telegraph, as the speaker for the 30th Bonham Carter Lecture. 'A War of Choice: Lessons from Britain's War in Iraq 03-09,' analysed Britain's armed intervention in Iraq and raised many questions about British foreign policy. Much of the content was based on Jack's critically-acclaimed book *A War of Choice: The British in Iraq 2003-09*, which is due out in paperback in October and BISI thoroughly recommends it to members.

In the same month, BISI supported Gulan's lecture, *My Father's Paradise* with Professor Yona Sabar and his son, the author Ariel Sabar. The lecture, which was based on Ariel's award-winning book of the same name, offered a

fascinating insight into the history of the Jews of Kurdistan. You can read Gulan Trustee, Sarah Panizzo's full report of the lecture on pp. 19-21. BISI are delighted to be collaborating with Gulan again on **Thursday 25 October** on a lecture called **Erbil: Research, Interpretation and Conservation of the World's Oldest City**. The speakers are David Michelmores, an expert in the management and conservation of heritage sites, and Dr John MacGinnis, a specialist in the archaeology and epigraphy of ancient Mesopotamia. Prior to the lecture, from 6.00 pm onwards, there will an exhibition of Anthony Kersting's remarkable photographs of Kurdistan in the 1940s.

Summer also saw the launch of the Iraqi Cultural Centre (ICC) in Shepherd's Bush, London and the beginning of BISI's association with the centre. BISI has organised a trio of family events that will be held at the ICC over autumn/winter 2012. The aim of the events is to introduce children and young people to ancient Iraq. Indeed, Dr Robson's Back to Babylonian School session for 9 year olds and above has already taken place at the time of printing. However there is still just about time for 5-11 year olds to create character masks and join in a performance of the **Epic of Gilgamesh** with Rana Ibrahim of the Ashmolean Museum on **Saturday 20 October** and 7-11 year olds can learn about the **Royal Couriers** of ancient Mesopotamia with Jennifer Hicks of UCL on **Saturday 3 November**.

Another important project for the administrative team in the second half of the year was the development of the new website (which will soon be available at the usual address www.bisi.ac.uk). BISI has also branched out into social media. There are now many ways to keep-up-to-date with our latest news, including our new pages on Facebook and Academia, as well as by following us on Twitter. You can even gain an insight into what it is like to be the chair of the Institute, through Dr Robson's blog at bisi1932.blogspot.com.

This year's November lecture will be delivered by Dr Ali A. Allawi. **Faisal I, Gertrude Bell and Sat'i al-Husri: The Politics of Archaeology in Iraq** on **Thursday 22 November** will explore the evolution of Iraq's identity as a modern state and the role of archaeology in this process during the Faisalian era (1921-1933). Bookings are now open, so do get in touch with the Administrator to avoid disappointment.

We also advise members to 'save the dates,' of our **Gertrude Bell and Iraq: A Life and Legacy** conference on **11-13 September 2013**, which we will be holding in partnership with The British Academy. Opening with a panel discussion at the Royal Society, followed by a 2 day conference featuring papers from academics around the world and a film showcase, this will be a major occasion for BISI. Preparations are already underway for the conference and what we hope will be another exciting year for the Institute.

Lauren Mulvee

FACEBOOK:

To keep up-to-date with the Institute through the **BISI Facebook page** – simply search for The British Institute for the Study of Iraq (Gertrude Bell Memorial) – and feel free to show your support by 'liking' us.



*The perimeter of Erbil Citadel by Anthony Kersting – one of the photographs to be included in BISI & Gulan's joint event on Erbil
Courtesy of The Courtauld
Institute of Arts Conway Library.*

OBITUARY ANTHONY R. GREEN (25 APRIL 1956 - 19 JUNE 2012)

Anthony (Tony) Raymond Green, field archaeologist and expert in Ancient Near Eastern religious iconography, passed away on the morning of 19 June in Berlin. He had been suffering for a long time from a kidneys insufficiency and had been fighting his illness courageously over the years. He will be remembered as a straightforward character, meticulous researcher and as a person who never lost his humour until his very last days.

After doing a B.A. degree in Ancient History and Archaeology at the University of Manchester, he wrote his Ph.D. thesis on 'Neo-Assyrian apotropaic figures with special reference to the human heroes and human-animal hybrids' (1983). This thesis, supervised by Charles Burney, defined one major thematic aspect of his further scholarly work. Based at Oxford's Wolfson College, subsequently he became a Wainwright Fellow, before he was awarded the prestigious Humboldt-Fellowship in 1996, which marked the starting point for his German based activities, where he was affiliated to the Institute of Near Eastern Archaeology at the Free University of Berlin. Thereafter he was based in Berlin, and in about 1998 he was awarded a long-term fellowship by the Miho Museum, Japan, to edit the work of Igor Pitchikiyan on the so-called Bactrian Gold, a large collection of gold work apparently contemporary with the Oxus Treasure, and also to undertake further research himself on this material.

Starting with his thesis, partly published in *Baghdader Mitteilungen* 17 (1986), a major part of his publications focused on ancient Near Eastern religious iconography, an issue he discussed in publications (e.g. *Iraq, Reallexikon der Assyriologie, Altorientalische Forschungen*) and presented in many lectures all over the world. The book *Gods, Demons and Symbols in Mesopotamia - An illustrated dictionary* (1992), jointly written with Jeremy Black with illustrations by Tessa Rickards, became a standard work of scholarly literature. It saw a second edition (1998) and was translated in several languages. He was co-editor of the widely-quoted congress volume *The Archaeology of Death in the Ancient Near East* (a conference he co-organised with Stuart Campbell in Manchester in 1992).

At the time of his death he was still working on a volume on the figurines found at Nimrud by the British School excavations between 1949 and 1963. This volume was in an advanced state of preparation and hopefully it will be published posthumously.

His excavation career was mostly confined to Iraq where he participated in a number of excavations of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq, notably at Abu Salabikh (his edited publication of the Ash-tip published in 1993). Later, he joined the British Museum excavations at Kirbet Khatuniyeh (Curtis and Green 1997) and Nimrud (Curtis, Collon and Green 1993). He also worked at some other small sites in the Eski-Mosul-Region (contributions in Ball et al. 2003). In 1999, a result of his work in the region, he published a model for settlement patterns in the 'Ninevite countryside' in a volume on Iron Age Pottery in Northern Mesopotamia. In 1997 he participated in the German excavations at Tell Sheikh Hamad, Syria, and from 1998 onwards he developed a British-German collaboration (with A. Hausleiter, then

Free University Berlin) at the site of Tell Ahmar/Til Barsip, Syria, where the lower town was for the first time investigated by means of a surface survey (Green and Hausleiter 2000 and 2001).

The last ten years of his commitment were already characterised by his illness, preventing him from further participating in archaeological field work, but Tony turned out to be a 'survivor' and never lost track.

He is survived by his wife, her daughters from her previous marriage and their 14 year old daughter. The funeral took place in Berlin-Steglitz on 6 July 2012. Arnulf Hausleiter and John Curtis are proposing to produce a memorial volume in honour of the deceased.

Arnulf Hausleiter

This obituary was distributed on the Agade network on 19 June 2012

OBITUARY DR BENHAM ABU AL-SOOF (1931-2012)

Behnam was born in 1931 to a Christian family in Mosul, not only the major city in Northern Iraq but also a city with a lengthy history and many Christian churches. His surname means 'father of wool' and his known ancestors were Christian wool traders from the area around Diyarbakr in southeastern Turkey. He was raised and educated in Mosul. The ancient site of Nineveh lies immediately across the Tigris River from the old city of Mosul, and his interest in archaeology may have begun with his exploration of this ancient site which had been a major city of the ancient Assyrians as well as, more recently, housing a shrine to the Biblical Jonah.

Early in his youth, however, Behnam decided that he wanted to be a pilot or perhaps a ship's captain, but when he went to Baghdad for further education, a chance meeting with the late Tariq Madhlum¹ and Qadham al Janabi guided him in the direction of the University's Committee for Archaeology. Thus, in 1955, he graduated from the Faculty of Arts, Baghdad University, with a degree in archaeology that led directly to a position in the Directorate General of Antiquities, then housed near the suq together with a small museum organised long before by Gertrude Bell. Behnam's first serious archaeological field work was with Mohammed Ali Mustafa, one of the most able and interesting archaeologists of the earlier generation in Iraq. This involved a survey of the Rania plain in Kurdistan, an area re-surveyed this past year by the Institute of Archaeology (London).

Following the 12 July revolution (1958), there was in 1959 no British excavation at Nimrud. Behnam had returned to Mosul, not only in order to continue the Iraqi restoration work at Nimrud, initiated by the Antiquities Department some years before, but also to excavate a number of rooms including the unexcavated portion of the throne room in the great palace of Assur-nasir-pal II, where he made several

¹ Tariq Madhlum received his Ph.D. in London under Professor Max Mallowan, the first Director of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq. After some time in the Baghdad Department of Antiquities, during which he helped to direct the restoration of both Ctesiphon and the gates of Nineveh, Tariq had also become well-known as a distinguished artist and sculptor.

contributions to the plan. In 1960 David Oates, who had taken over the Excavation Directorship at Nimrud in 1958, arranged for Behnam to come to Cambridge as a graduate student at Trinity College with a view to obtaining a Ph.D.

Behnam spent some time in Cambridge (I was his Supervisor) and eventually chose to write a thesis on the distribution of both early and late archaeological sites in the North, from the Neolithic to the Islamic. He returned to Mosul where he carried out an extensive survey not only by going through all the records reporting finds on both excavated and unexcavated ancient mounds in the north but also by visiting as many of these as possible, a very extensive field exercise. He returned to Cambridge, completing his dissertation in the autumn of 1966, and was awarded his well-earned Ph.D. He then returned to Baghdad, where he was to become not only a hard-working and well-known archaeologist in the Directorate-General of Antiquities, but also a very popular and easily recognised voice on the television.

Behnam was responsible for several archaeological projects but it was his work at the early prehistoric site of Tell es-Sawwan (near modern Samarra) that was undoubtedly the most important among his many contributions to the subject. Excavation at this extraordinary site began in 1964 and ended in 1968. His last published paper on Tell es-Sawwan (*Sumer* 27, 1971) was not simply an excavation report as such but the first paper concerning the excavations in which was proposed the discovery of a previously unknown period, the earliest lowland Mesopotamian neolithic phase known at that time (and it remains still the earliest in southern and central Mesopotamia).

I last saw Behnam in Baghdad in 2001 when David and I had the pleasure of a private outdoor dinner with him and two other close friends - the artist and sculptor as well as archaeologist, Tariq Madhloum, our Government Representative at Nimrud for a number of seasons, and Abdul Qadir al Tikriti, then a senior official in the Antiquities Department, both old friends. The dinner was in the garden of the Alwiya Club, once the British Club in Baghdad where only local government officials could be invited. After the 1958 revolution it was taken over by the Iraqis and Behnam had been President of the Club for many years. He was therefore able to demand an outdoor table situated in the gardens but well away from any possible listening devices. It was a lovely evening but, regrettably, the last time David and I saw our Iraqi friends.

Behnam was very well-known in Baghdad. His extraordinary deep voice was easily recognised on the radio, and he was also a well-known television figure, with the massive physique of a heavy athlete. His contributions to archaeology were extensive, with the early Neolithic site of Tell es-Sawwan perhaps the most important. We had been in touch quite recently when he sent (from Jordan) a book in which he had had reprinted all of his published papers (he wrote in English). His funeral was on 22 September in Amman, where he had recently gone to live. Both Iraqi archaeology and television will be the poorer without him.

Joan Oates

Fieldwork, Research & Academic Conference Grant Reports

FIELD RESEARCH VISIT TO DOCUMENT THE MATERIAL CULTURE OF TWO QADIRI SUFI SHRINES IN BAGHDAD AND 'AQRA

With kind support from BISI, who awarded me a research grant, I was able to conduct field research in Iraq between 10 December 2011 and 3 January 2012 to fulfil a part of my Ph.D research into the material culture of Sufism in Islam. The



Shaikh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani Shrine, courtyard, minarets and clock-tower Photo: Noorah al-Gailani

focus of my studies is the Qadiriyya Sufi Order and two of its shrines in Iraq, that of Shaikh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani in Baghdad and Shaikh Abd al-'Aziz ibn Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani in 'Aqra in the Kurdish region, as contemporary examples of Sufi material culture. The thesis will address how this material culture is used, in what esteem is it held, and the role it plays in forming a Sufi identity.

The original aim of this research trip - the fourth so far - was to access public administrative archives held

at the Directorate of Sunni Religious Endowments in Baghdad and the archives of the District of 'Aqra in Kurdistan, in relation to the two Qadiri shrines mentioned above. Unfortunately, contacts established and promises secured in my third research trip in spring 2011 failed to deliver. For Baghdad, there seems to have developed a general reluctance, if not fear, of giving access to archival material that belonged to the Ba'ath period (mid 1980s - early 2000s), the period which saw a rise in support for, and manipulation of, Sufi groups in Iraq, and led to major patronage in the form of construction works and refurbishments of a number of shrines including that of the Shaikh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (470 - 562 AH / 1077 - 1165 AD), the eponymous founder and patron saint of the Qadiriyya Sufi Order. 'Aqra's district archives, administratively part of Duhok Governorate in Kurdistan Iraq, proved as difficult, though the shrine there had not attracted the attention of the central or the regional government during the Ba'ath era, escaping their influences to a much greater level.

Despite this major disruption to the aims of the trip, I was able to make invaluable use of my time in Baghdad and in 'Aqra, in investigating and recording the wider geographical context and Sufi associations of these two shrines - an area of research that had been planned for a subsequent visit.

A Few Words about the Order:

The Qadiriyya Sufi Order emerged in Iraq and Syria during the 13th century. It was first organised by posthumous followers of Shaikh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, who had gained legendary qualities soon after his death, and was crowned as its founder and patron saint.² The order's identity was consolidated during the 14th century; and from the 15th century onwards it spread far and wide around the Islamic world, from western and Sub-Saharan Africa, right across the Middle East and parts of the Balkans and the Caucasus, to the Indian Subcontinent and Central Asia, and to China and Southeast Asia.³



The Minaret of Shaikh Abd Al-Qadir al-Jilani Shrine
Photo: Noorah al-Gailani

Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, was a Hanbali theologian and instructor, popular preacher and Sufi shaikh, who made of Baghdad his abode and resting place.⁴ He was born in northern Iran, in Nif, a village in the province of Gilan (pronounced Jilan by the Arabs), south of the Caspian Sea.⁵ At the age of 18 he travelled to Baghdad to pursue his religious studies, and was tutored by several prominent scholars in the traditional religious sciences: *hadith* (Prophet's traditions), *kalam* (theology), and *fiqh* (jurisprudence) according to the Hanbali School of Jurisprudence. His Sufi training followed, and he received his "khirqa" – the investiture cloak of the Sufis – from his tutor Abu Sa'id al-Mukharrimi, the judge of Bab al-Azaj district of Baghdad, where the shrine is situated today.⁶ In the early 1130s Abd al-Qadir was offered al-Mukharrimi's *madrasa* (theological

school) to run and teach in. It became his base and was extended by him with a *ribat* (hospice) to accommodate his family and students;⁷ and when he died in 1165 he was buried in its portico. This *madrasa* subsequently became the shrine of Shaikh Abd al-Qadir that is known today, and the subject of my thesis. The significance of Shaikh Abd al-Qadir lies in him being a classically trained orthodox Hanbali jurist and a Sufi shaikh at the same time. He was in a unique position that enabled him to bond Sunni orthodoxy with the Sufism of his time, leading to him becoming a symbol for both in subsequent times.⁸

² Abun-Nasr, Jamil M., *Muslim Communities of Grace, the Sufi Brotherhoods in Islamic Religious life*, Hurst & Co., London, 2007, pp. 82-83.

³ Esposito, John L. (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, etc., 2003, p.251.

⁴ Braune, W., "Abd Al-Kadir Al-Djilani", *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Brill, Leiden, Vol.1, pp.69-70.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Knysh, Alexander, *Islamic Mysticism, a short history*, Brill, Leiden, 2000, pp.179-183.

⁸ Nasr, Seyyed Hossein (ed.), *Islamic Spirituality, Manifestations*, SCM Press Ltd., London, 1991, vol.2, pp.6-7.

The Shrine and Mosque of Shaikh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani is situated on the east side of the river Tigris within the walls of the old city of Baghdad. The neighbourhood that surrounds it was historically known as Bab al-Azaj, but today is known as Bab al-Shaikh, after him and his shrine. The multi-domed shrine-complex comprises of the main burial chamber of Shaikh Abd al-Qadir, the burial chambers of two of his sons and several of his descendents; five prayer halls; two large accommodation quarters for Sufi lodgers and pilgrims; reception rooms; two soup kitchens; a sheep-pen; ablutions facilities; administrative offices of the Qadiriyya Waqf (endowments of the shrine); a funerary parlour; family burial chambers and a graveyard; three minarets and a clock tower; and a public library that boasts some 86,000 printed volumes – excluding periodicals and the collections of books in foreign languages – and some 2,500 Arabic manuscripts, in every field of knowledge.

As for the shrine in 'Aqra, it is that of Shaikh Abd al-Qadir's son Abu Bakr Abd al-'Aziz al-Jilani (1137 - 1206 AD).⁹ Very little is known and written about him, but he is mentioned by the contemporary historian Sharaf al-Din Abu al-Barakat Ibn al-Mustawfi al-Irbili (1167 - 1239 AD), an influential native of Erbil who wrote a key work on the history of the city.¹⁰ In it he describes Shaikh Abd al-'Aziz as having been one of those who had a *zawiya* (Sufi lodge) and who were withdrawn from life for spiritual reasons, and was outwardly religious too. He learned and transmitted *hadith* – Prophet Muhammad's traditions and sayings – and was heard in Erbil (Erbil), which he visited a number of times, as well as other cities in the region. Al-Mustawfi also says that Shaikh Abd al-'Aziz lived for a while on the outskirts of Sinjar; and goes on to say that he himself had listened to Shaikh Abd al-'Aziz lecturing in Erbil. The 20th century Iraqi historian Ibrahim al-Durubi (see footnote 9) names his tutors, which include Shaikh Abd al-Qadir; and dates the year in which Abd al-'Aziz migrated to Hiyyal, a village in Sinjar, as being 1184 AD. Al-Durubi states that Abd al-'Aziz participated in the campaigns against the Crusaders in the Levant, and was at the recapturing of 'Asqalan (Ashqelon) in Palestine by Saladin's army in 1187 AD.

'Aqra (also spelt Aqrah and Akre), is a Kurdish town in mountainous northern Iraq, and the administrative headquarters of the district named after it. Shaikh Abd al-'Aziz's shrine is situated in one of 'Aqra's mountain enclaves which is named after him 'Galli Abd al-'Aziz'. The site is topographically higher than the town and nestles at the top of the mountain just below its rim. It encompasses four sets of court-yarded buildings: the domed burial chamber of Shaikh 'Abd al-'Aziz, his cave and lodging rooms; the *takkia* (main Sufi lodge) with its reception rooms, prayer hall and library; the female reception rooms, which also include the

⁹ Al-Durubi, Ibrahim bin Abd al-Ghani, *Al-Mukhtasar fi Tarikh Shaikh al-Islam sayedna Abd al-Qadir al-Gailani wa awladuh*, Baghdad, 1956; re-published by Tahir 'Ala' al-Din al-Qadiri al-Gailani in Karachi, Pakistan, p.108. The same author also wrote *Al-Baz al-Ashhab*, in which he describes the brief biography of Shaikh Abd al-'Aziz in a similar fashion on pages 18-19 and referred to in Yunis al-Shaikh Ibrahim, *Shaikh Abd al-Qadir al-Gailani, his life and his legacy*, published by al-Awqaf al-Qadiriyya, Baghdad, 1982, pp.34-35.

¹⁰ Ibn al-Mustawfi, Sharaf al-Din Abi al-Barakat bin Ahmad al-Lakhmi al-Irbili, *Tarikh Irbil, Al-musamma Nabahat al-balad al-khamil bi-man waradahu min al-amathil*, Dar al-Rashid lil-Nashr, Baghdad, 1980, p.95.

kitchens; and a private residence for the family of the caretaker of the shrine. The site also includes an orchard, a burial ground, and a number of small ancillary buildings for ablution facilities and for electricity generating. The caretakers of the shrine on behalf of the Qadiriyya Endowments in Baghdad, are the leaders of the Qadiriyya-Wulianiyya Sufi Order, a Kurdish order led by the Al al-Wulianis, a Barazanchi family, whose base is in the village of Rovia a few miles south-east of 'Aqra, where they have a Qadiri *takkia* and shrine.

As far as can be established, there is no written history of the shrine of Shaikh Abd al-'Aziz in 'Aqra, in particular there were no records of how it came to be there, and how it evolved into a place of pilgrimage. The fragmentary anecdotal information, based on oral-transmission and collective memory that has been collected from the interviews I conducted in 2009 and 2010, is too basic to be adequate. The documentation I was able to access in the Baghdad shrine does not go back before the 1960s. Access to the 'Aqra District archives would have helped in addressing this issue.

In addition to conducting several interviews with members of staff and visitors at both shrines, and having an opportunity to double check the accuracy of oral-history material and observations of ritual practice, which I had documented on previous visits, I was able to carry out the following through my field trip.

1. Visits to Two Rival *Takkias* and one Shi'i Mosque

In Baghdad I was able to visit and interview the caretakers of two neighbouring Sufi lodges and one Shi'i *Hussainiyya* (prayer house) to that of Shaikh Abd al-Qadir's shrine. These were the *Takkia* of Abu Khumra al-Hindi, the *Takkia* of Hassan al-Tayyar and the *Hussainiyya* of al-Ahmadi. The first belongs to the Rifa'iyya Sufi Order, and includes the burial chamber of its founder, which is peculiarly submerged in water, and a cause for visitations by devotees seeking cures from ailments. The second is an independent Qadiri *takkia* belonging to the Al al-Tayyar family that includes lodging rooms, a garden and reception hall. The third is a Kurdish-Faili Shi'i mosque, which had developed a dependency on the Shrine of Shaikh Abd al-Qadir (who is of course a Sunni saint) to supply it – and to supply 1,000 of its congregation's homes – with free electricity since the 1991 Gulf War! These three crucially important visits enabled me to further investigate the dynamics between the Shrine and key rival religious institutions within a stone's throw of its walls. I was also able to consolidate these visits with research into historical sources relating to them held at the public library in the Shrine of Shaikh Abd al-Qadir.



*Shaikh Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani
Shrine & Takkia*

Photo: Noorah al-Gailani

2. Filming the Characteristics and Atmosphere of Three Neighbourhoods

These three Baghdad neighbourhoods: Bab al-Shaikh, 'Agd al-Akrad and al-Saddriyya, surround the Shrine of Shaikh Abd al-Qadir; and their communities use the shrine for a variety of needs. On previous visits I had interviewed visitors from these neighbourhoods at the Shrine, but had not been able to arrange safe access into their areas.

3. A Vaccination Campaign, Two Funerary Services and a Burial Ground

In the Shrine of Shaikh Abd al-Qadir, I was able to spend time recording secondary services that the shrine offers a space for, though they are not relevant to Sufism and its practices. An inspection and interview at the funerary parlour within the shrine was an eye-opener to the funeral profession and the methods it provides to the public at large for a nominal fee – the equivalent of £50 per-corpse. I was able to observe two funerary prayers being conducted, before the coffins were taken away for burial elsewhere in the city. The manager of the parlour was also responsible for the family burial chambers and graveyard at the shrine, and was able to explain the burial practices peculiar to it. And finally I was able to observe and record one of the regular vaccination campaigns against measles that are carried out by the local health authority in Baghdad, where the marble bench that surrounds the foot of the minaret in the central courtyard of the shrine becomes the location of the temporary clinic. Health-service vans with loudspeakers tour the streets of the neighbourhoods surrounding the shrine calling upon the locals to bring their children to Shaikh Abd al-Qadir's for free vaccinations.

4. A Visit to the *Takkia* of Shaikh Isma'il al-Wuliani in Rovia

As it quickly became clear that I was not going to be able to access the district archives in 'Aqra, I requested permission to visit the shrine of Shaikh Isma'il al-Wuliani (died c.1737), a Qadiri Sufi saint and the founder of the al-Tariqa al-'Aliyya al-Qadiriyya al-Wulianiyya – the Qadiriyya Wulianiyya Sufi Order – in the village of Rovia. As he was the ancestor of the caretakers of Shaikh Abd al-'Aziz's Shrine in 'Aqra, it was important to see and understand how they presented, used and managed their ancestor's shrine in comparison with Shaikh Abd al-'Aziz's. I found that the main focus of the site of Shaikh Isma'il's *takkia* and shrine is his large domed burial chamber, in which is also buried Shaikh Abd al-'Aziz's son, Muhammad al-Hattak (died sometime in the second half of the 13th century) and several other members of the Wuliani family. The site also includes a mosque, a Sufi lodging quarter, a functions hall and courtyard, library, garden and family burial ground.

My preliminary findings show an interesting similarity in reverence and regard for the two shrines under the Wulianis' control; and an identity-based attachment to the son and grandson of Shaikh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, their ultimate patron-saint. This invaluable visit helped me to better understand the territory of this branch of the Qadiriyya Sufi Order, which had under its religious influence some 80 villages in the District of 'Aqra and the surrounding region alone. Interviews with the Order's leaders revealed an influence that also stretched over the wider

Kurdistan region and on both sides of the borders between Iraq and Syria and between Iraq and Turkey, with a claim to the allegiance of some 200,000 followers. I found out that since the 1960s when the Wulianis were first commissioned with the caretaking of the Shrine of Shaikh Abd al-'Aziz, a gradual shift in importance had taken place between these two shrines, from Rovia's towards 'Aqra's, with Shaikh Abd al-'Aziz's shrine becoming the Order's spiritual headquarters, even though the current head of the Qadiriyya Wulianiyya himself did not live there, nor in Rovia, but in Mosul.

This field trip, in both its Baghdad and its 'Aqra parts, has been truly indispensable to my research needs, even though I was not able to achieve the original aims I had set for it, which remain outstanding, waiting for another opportunity or route to meet them. I sincerely thank BISI for supporting me to achieve the fourth of my research trips.

Noorah al-Gailani
Ph.D student at the University of Glasgow

OBSERVATIONS ON POLITICAL FIELD RESEARCH IN THE KURDISTAN REGION OF IRAQ

An often quoted Kurdish proverb says, 'the Kurds have no friends but the mountains.' In the 1990s and early 2000s when they struggled with a double embargo imposed by Saddam Hussein on them and by the UN on Iraq, Iraqi Kurdish leaders were grateful for any international media attention they could get. Masoud Barzani and Jalal Talabani went out of their way to accommodate the few journalists such as Edgar O'Ballance, Jonathan Randal, and Quil Lawrence who took on the hardship to cover their plight. My own supervisor, Gareth Stansfield, the first scholar to conduct on the ground political research in Iraqi Kurdistan since the 1970s, enjoyed unprecedented access to political decision makers there. Today, matters are different. Iraqi Kurdistan is a federal region of Iraq whose status is enshrined in the Iraqi Constitution and, to some degree, is backed by Western powers. Investors and journalists have been flocking there since 2003, the region is prospering, and its leaders are courted by presidents, chancellors, and CEOs around the globe. They can afford to be quite selective about whom to consider a friend, and while they endow Western universities with generous donations to promote research on the Kurds, they, like all public or private donors, expect favourable headlines and positive coverage to result from this bargain. One cannot help but being reminded of court writers in mediaeval times, who authored panegyrics of their rulers when confronted with the expectations of Iraqi Kurdish politicians towards scholars studying Kurdish nationalism.

When I embarked three years ago on my research project at the University of Exeter on the 'intra-group dimension of ethnicised conflicts,' by way of a case study on the relations between the Iraqi Kurdish nationalist parties and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), I somewhat naively wondered why nobody had yet tackled such obvious a research question as to analytically examine the relations between Kurdish parties as an aspect of Kurdish nationalism at large. Today, I no longer

wonder. The issue is considered too sensitive, not in line with the narrative Iraqi Kurdish leaders wish to see propagated about their struggle for self-determination. Consequently, I encountered many obstacles and closed doors during my field research in Iraqi Kurdistan, in particular during my last stay in October 2011, generously funded by a BISI research grant. Despite the strong and cordial connections between the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and my home institution, the Institute for Arab and Islamic Studies at the University of Exeter – home to the only academic research cluster on Kurdish Studies in the world – as well as preparatory communication over months, an extensive network of political gatekeepers on the ground, and the generous endorsement of the office of foreign relations of the KRG, several politicians such as the Minister of the Interior, Abdul Karim Sinjari, and Goran Party leader, Newshirwan Mustafa, refused to be interviewed. These difficulties were exacerbated by the KRG in 2011 introducing severe limitations to access the Qandil Mountains, the PKK hideout and bases at the Iraqi-Turkish-Iranian border, and Turkish military incursions in October last year, rendering my planned research visit to Qandil impossible.

Nonetheless, thanks to the generous financial support granted by BISI, I managed, during my stay in Iraqi Kurdistan, to conduct interviews crucial to my research. These interviews were with, among others, the Turkish Consul in Erbil, the brother of PKK founder Abdullah Öcalan and several former PKK commanders in Sulimaniyah and the founders of the Party of Free Life of Kurdistan (PJAK). Talks held in Turkey in November 2011 and May 2012 (also made possible through BISI's support) with party leaders of the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), the foreign policy spokesperson of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP), leading scholars on the issue in Turkey such as Dogu Ergril and Abbas Vali, as well as local Crisis Group representative Hugh Pope, and quantitative research at the KRG Ministry of Trade, were fundamental to the successful completion of my Ph.D field research in the region. They rendered material information and led to some unique findings on Turkey's relations with the KRG, the internal power struggles in the post-1998 PKK, and the role of the Iraqi Kurdish politicians in the 2009 so called 'Kurdish Initiative' of the AKP government. Consequently, I want to use this opportunity to thank BISI for its pivotal support, without which the completion of my research would not have been possible. These findings will be made available in my Ph.D thesis, to be submitted at the University of Exeter in June 2013, titled, 'Performing Ethnicity, Enacting Sovereignty: The Kurdistan Region of Iraq between Group Solidarity and De Facto State Building.'

As to the future of independent political field research in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, though, it saddens me to say, I am pessimistic. Legendary White House Correspondent Helen Thomas observed in her critique of American media in the run up to the Iraq War (*Watchdogs of Democracy?* 2007, Scribner) that the fourth estate in the U.S. too easily fell in line with the official narrative for the war and failed to scrutinize alleged weapons of mass destruction as the *casus belli* out of fear of losing access to the Bush White House. The same can be said for political field research in Iraqi Kurdistan, where despite a proliferation of scholarly publications

on Kurdish nationalism over the past ten years, the official narrative of the KRG remains largely untouched in the academic discourse – on the contrary it is journalists and NGOs, not academics, who progressively question the myth of the Kurdistan Region as the ‘success story of the Iraq War’ by revealing the deteriorating human rights record of the KRG together with systematic corruption and nepotism that excludes the population at large from the current investment boom. Since the public mass protests in Sulimaniyah last year associated with the larger socio-political changes in the Middle East, colloquially summarized as ‘Arab Spring’, the KRG increasingly feels under siege and ramps up its pressure and intimidation of local journalists, civil society organizations, and human rights activists – for December 2011, for example, *Reporters Without Borders* observed a peak in illegal arrests and physical attacks against media representatives. Given this situation we as social scientists conducting political research in Iraqi Kurdistan, have a moral and intellectual obligation to critically examine our field research methodology, and not to trade our aims of impartiality for convenient access to informants and gatekeepers.

Hannes Artens

Ph.D Researcher and Assistant Lecturer, University of Exeter

Outreach Grant Reports

ECOTOURISM STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP, FEBRUARY 2012, DUHOK, KURDISTAN



*Workshop participants drew ideas on different coloured cards, following the Ketso technique
Photo: Ahmad Qasari*

As part of a study examining the potential for ecotourism development in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, a one day participatory workshop was held on 21 February 2012 in the Cultural and Social Centre at the University of Duhok, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, with the financial assistance of the BISI. Within the region, there are numerous undeveloped areas with natural attractions and cultural heritage which offer potential ecotourism activities for both national and international tourists. Three such sites have recently been proposed for development as ecotourism destinations. An ecotourism industry has

great potential to contribute to the region’s environmental and economic improvement. However, for this potential to be realised, experience from elsewhere suggests early consultation with stakeholders is important, hence the need for the workshop. Specifically, I wanted to understand what the participants knew and

thought about ecotourism and community development and what they thought the best ecotourism assets were in Kurdistan.

In total 9 delegates participated in the workshop, drawn from different institutes and governmental agencies. These participants were invited based on the relevance of their work and their ability to influence the tourism/ecotourism industry in the region. A participatory workshop planning toolkit known as Ketso (www.ketso.com) was adopted to run the workshop activities. Ketso was developed through Economic and Social Research Council funding and has been used in various countries to support stakeholder consultation, particularly in environmental management.

The participants used different coloured cards to record ideas relating to key themes:

- **Brown** what works well / existing assets
- **Green** new ideas and future possibilities (creative thinking)
- **Grey** problems and limits / key challenges
- **Yellow** goals or positives / action points

After recording an idea on a card, the participants themselves physically organised the cards into themes (economics; activities; social; built and natural environment; and landscapes), each represented by a different flipchart or 'workspace' in Ketso terminology. Participants also identified potential ecotourism destinations on a map of the region.

In total 184 ideas were generated through this process. The highest number of ideas was developed under the 'Activities' theme, with the least ideas under the 'Economics' theme.

Several cross-cutting themes emerged in the analysis of the data. Participants considered many desirable characteristics of ecotourism e.g. biodiversity, archaeological sites, natural landscape, and customs and traditions of people. At the same time they also proposed some potential ecotourism places and activities in Kurdistan e.g. Erbil Citadel, Hawraman's nature, Gara Mountain climbing, and Kurdish traditional food and costumes. The section on key challenges was generally the most animated part of the workshop and created the most discussion and debate as the participants shared ideas. The participants in the workshop referred to many problems, including most importantly a perceived lack of awareness of the environment and cultural heritage among some government authorities and some local people, which in turn affects environmental regulation and protection. Financial constraints and a lack of suitably trained staff, both in environmental management and tourism, were mentioned on many occasions by the participants.



Potential ecotourism activities expressed on pieces of paper and stuck on the map

Photo: Ahmad Qasari

Participants made several suggestions to improve environmental awareness, including the idea that environmental studies should be incorporated as a core subject into all educational levels to raise environmental awareness among all youth. One other matter which was highly debated concerned the lack of transparency of decision-making within the sector. A need emerged for greater cooperation and understanding among all stakeholders and even better communication among the staff members within any individual organisation, whether governmental or private.

Relevant literature suggests the local community is an important stakeholder in the ecotourism industry. However, the local community was very seldom referred to, either through critical or positive comments. This could be because the region has little experience of ecotourism, suggesting a need for promoting environmental and tourism awareness and education among all stakeholders including the local communities.

As a way to run a workshop in Kurdistan, Ketso made the participants feel that they were all involved and able to share their ideas. The participants remarked on the uniqueness of this participatory process. The nature of the Ketso workshop activities allowed for individual thinking whilst simultaneously enabling sharing of ideas and discussion.

To investigate this subject further, a more detailed study of local community views of ecotourism is planned for later in the year.

*Sarook Sarky
Ph.D Student, University of Southampton*

THE JEWS OF KURDISTAN - 'MY FATHER'S PARADISE'

Gulan held a memorable evening at the Royal Geographical Society in Kensington on Thursday 28 June 2012 as part of its celebration of the Jewish community of Kurdistan. This was the fourth in a series of events which Gulan has held devoted to Kurdistan's minority religions. Previous evenings having focused on the Yezidis, the Faylee Kurds and the Ahl-e Haqq.

This was a major event for Gulan and the development grant from BISI gave the Gulan trustees important encouragement at an early stage of their planning of the evening and was a significant contribution towards the substantial costs of the venue and travel for the speakers.

The Royal Geographical Society's premises provided the setting for a magnificent display of the historic photographs of Kurdistan in the 1940s taken by Anthony Kersting and exhibited in public at this event for the first time. They were generously made available to Gulan by the Courtauld Institute of Art Conway Library. They included images of the synagogue at Al Kosh which is said to contain the tomb of the prophet Naham, and of Jewish traders in the market of the town of Amadia. Some 250 people were able to explore the venue before and after the talk, to see the exhibition and to enjoy a drink in the RGS Map Room and outside on the terrace overlooking the garden.

The talk began with a reading by Professor Yona Sabar in Aramaic of a Jewish prayer from ancient Babylon, *Yequim Purqan (May Salvation Come)*, followed by a reading of the prayer in English by Gulan Trustee, Carla Garnelas.

The title of the talk, *My Father's Paradise*, is the title of the award-winning book by Ariel Sabar, copies of which were on sale during the evening. Ariel is an author and journalist. He lives with his wife and two children in Washington DC. He was an award-winning staff writer for the Baltimore Sun and the Christian Science Monitor. His work has appeared in many other publications including the Boston Globe, the New York Times, and the Washington Monthly.

My Father's Paradise was his first book and has won many awards, most notably the National Book Critics Circle Award for autobiography.

Ariel spoke about the Jews of Kurdistan and his own family's history. It was at once a fascinating historical outline of a little known experience of the Jewish people and also highly personal.

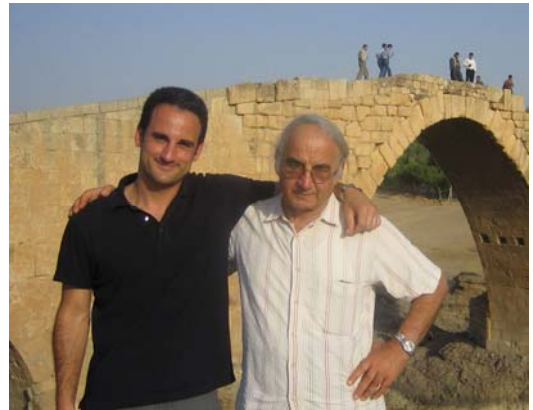
The Jewish community of Kurdistan have been described as 'The Lost Tribe of Israel.' They had lived at peace with their neighbours in the area for many hundreds of years until this was tragically brought to an end by oppression after the formation of the state of Israel.

Ariel also spoke about the personal story of his father's journey from a primitive home in the town of Zakho near the border between Turkey and Iraqi Kurdistan, to becoming Professor of Hebrew and Aramaic at UCLA.

Yona, Professor Sabar, was born in Zakho in 1938. He and his family spoke Aramaic. He moved to Jerusalem with his family in 1951. 12 years later he received his BA in Hebrew and Arabic from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He obtained his Ph.D at Yale and is now Professor of Hebrew and Aramaic at UCLA. No-one can rival him in Kurdish Jewish linguist scholarship. He has had some 90 papers published, and his books include *The Folk Literature of the Kurdistan Jews*, and his major work, a *Jewish Neo-Aramaic Dictionary*.

Professor Sabar chose instead of making a speech to use a more informal conversation mode with Gulan Trustee Sarah Panizzo and with Ariel. This drew out memories of his early life and that of his family and community, the hard life of Kurdish women, his early schooling and the relationship between the Jewish community and their Sunni neighbours.

The questions afterwards gave members of the audience the chance to share their memories, as well as highlighting Professor Sabar's remarkable knowledge of Aramaic and its variations and historical forms. As he acknowledged, he is possibly one of the few people living who could have conversed with Christ in the Aramaic



Son and Father, Ariel Sabar and Professor Yona Sabar at the Dalal Bridge, Zakho, in 2005, courtesy of Ariel Sabar

of his time. Ariel signed copies of his book with the words *Treasure Your Memories*, which was the theme of the evening.

The Kurds are not particularly well known to us here in the UK. They may often be misunderstood. But to know them through their culture and history is to begin to understand them. Gulan hopes that the Jews of Kurdistan event was a step towards better understanding. Video coverage of the whole lecture can be seen at: www.gulan.org.uk/news-jews-of-kurdistan-video-02.html

Sarah Panizzo
Gulan Trustee

DISCOVER MESOPOTAMIA THROUGH STORY TELLING

The 3-year **Discover Mesopotamia through Storytelling** project 2009-2012 was funded by a Development Grant from BISI and a Your Heritage Grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). In the words of the London HLF chairperson Sue Bowers, 'by exploring the Mesopotamia collections at the British Museum through storytelling, this project aims to help Iraqis engage more fully with the heritage of their homeland, and non-Iraqis to appreciate the world heritage role of ancient Iraq.' The project focussed on the Assyrian narrative friezes, clay tablets with narrative texts written on them, and objects that provided visual clues to the story-world of Mesopotamian literature.

A programme of 30 Zipang Days Out (ZDOs) was delivered on Saturdays throughout the three years of the project. A ZDO consisted of a morning visit to the British Museum, using a heritage trail to find story-clues, followed by a Mesopotamian storytelling workshop at the Poetry Café in Covent Garden. Each ZDO featured a different Mesopotamian story. In the afternoon storytelling workshops, project participants were first quizzed on the story-clues they had found at the British Museum. Then they used fabrics, props and sound effects to imaginatively create the main locations in the story of the day. They listened to that day's story told by a Zipang storyteller then retold it in full, in groups, and in snippets, as solo storytelling performers. The workshop leaders were storytellers Fran Hazelton, June Peters and Badia Obaid, and musicians Tara Jaff, harpist, and Mazin Emad, oud-player.

The storytellers developed their oral versions of the stories from the academic translations. These oral versions were further developed through the responses of workshop participants. Three of the stories thus developed - Enmerkar, Lugalbanda and Gilgamesh - were further developed into a written version by Fran Hazelton and produced as the end-of-project book, *Three Kings of Warka*. This written version combines the narrative continuity acquired in the workshops with close references to the academic translations. It thereby strikes a balance between two objectives. One is to make the stories accessible to anyone who can read an English newspaper. The other is to convey their startling originality. *Three Kings of Warka* is illustrated with line drawings by Eleanor Allitt of story-clue objects found in the British Museum. It has an introduction by Stephanie Dalley.

The website www.zipang.org.uk was designed and developed throughout the **Discover Mesopotamia through Storytelling** project. Two on-line art exhibitions were organised showing art-work inspired by Mesopotamian art and mythology. More than twenty artists submitted work to these exhibitions and they attracted substantial peaks of traffic to the website from around the world. The exhibitions can be viewed at www.zipang.org.uk/artgallery

The **Discover Mesopotamia through Storytelling** project also produced two teachers' packs to encourage and enable teachers of children at Key Stage 2 (10-11 year olds) to choose Ancient Sumer or The Assyrian Empire for their World History Study. The teachers' packs were devised by Simon Clemenson, a Birkbeck College student of Sumerian and Akkadian who became a class-room teacher. They include prepared lessons that use the Smart Notebook software available to teachers in school class-rooms, links to the British Museum website for teachers, and suggestions for cross-curricular topics.

The **Discover Mesopotamia through Storytelling** project was organised by the Enheduanna Society (ESoc). This is a small charity registered in 2002 with the educational purpose of 'popularising the literature of ancient Iraq through the art of oral storytelling'. To continue fulfilling this purpose ESoc is planning three new projects. These are a Mesopotamian storytellers' award course, a Young Roots digital GilgameshToday project, and an Enheduanna poetry festival. Information about these project proposals and how to contribute to their development and delivery is available on the New Projects page of www.zipang.org.uk

*Fran Hazelton
Chairperson, The Enheduanna Society*

Visiting Scholars Programme

SOUND OF IRAQ PROJECT: STEP 1 - TRAINING AT THE BRITISH LIBRARY SOUND ARCHIVE

The Sound of Iraq project (SOI) is an initiative to create and support a new Iraqi National Sound Archive (INSA) as part of the Iraqi National Library and Archives (INLA) in Baghdad, Iraq. Instigated in September 2010, the project is a response to the mass looting following the 2003 war, when the Iraqi National Radio and Television stations' sound recordings disappeared into private hands and/or the black market (along with much of Iraq's cultural heritage including



*The visiting scholar, Ayman Jawad at the
British Library's audio studio
Photo: Joan Porter MacIver*

books, artworks, and other critical cultural productions). This saw private collections of sound recordings scattered around the world, especially with the mass migrations of Iraqis to exile. To prevent further loss, the Sound of Iraq project aims to create a proper system for the archiving, research and collection of Iraq's musical history - a significant piece of Iraq's cultural heritage, collective memory, and rich artistic legacy.

Thanks to generous support from the BISI's Visiting Iraqi Scholars programme, the British Council - Iraq in Baghdad, and the British Library, the project was able to begin its activities properly in late 2011.

During the period between 16 Oct 2011 and 16 January 2012, Waleed Al-Naqshabandi and Ayman Jawad, both IT department staff at the INLA, took part in a 3 month sound archiving internship at the British Library Sound Archive (BLSA) in London.

Their training was led by Russell Gould and based on the BLSA's international internships programme. In the same period, they were also enrolled in English language classes to develop their language skills for future research, training and international collaboration, starting with an intensive two week general English course and followed by evening classes for the length of their stay.

The overall aim of the BLSA's trainee programme was to provide a thorough grounding in the handling and care of audio carriers and the production of archival digital audio objects. This began with the principles of how sound is produced, and the history of sound recording from the earliest wax cylinders through to the development of electric recording and the introduction of vinyl, tape and digital mediums. This was presented using various digital presentations, handouts and audio examples, and complemented by hands-on experience with all the various types of analogue and digital audio carriers, giving Waleed and Ayman the opportunity to relate theory to practice and to gain access to old and rare audio carriers such as wax cylinders, wire tape and various acetate and lacquer discs.

Following the introductory sessions, Waleed and Ayman were shown how to handle, care for, preserve, and digitally capture the audio content of various audio carriers to international archival standards. This included Compact cassette tape, 1/4" analogue tape, Microgroove (vinyl) discs, Coarsegroove (shellac) discs, Instantaneous (aluminium & lacquer) discs and digital media such as minidisc, DAT & optical disc (CD/DVD). Audio carriers are a complicated and diverse medium with each type requiring specific technical knowledge and handling methods, from identification, cleaning and handling, to replaying correctly and understanding routine maintenance activities on both the audio carrier and its replay equipment. To balance theory and practice, they were also taken through, and regularly referred to, the two principle documents by the International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives (IASA) technical committee, which outline the recommended international standards for audiovisual archiving and preservation: *TC03: The Safeguarding of the Audio Heritage: Ethics, Principles and Preservation Strategy* and *TC04: Guidelines on the Production and Preservation of Digital Audio Objects*.

Alongside the daily training sessions, their trainer Russell Gould was also kind enough to arrange various trips to other studios and archives so that Waleed and Ayman could see and experience a diverse range of institutions, each with a different specialisation. This included visits to the BBC Arabic service studios, the famous Abbey Road studios, the EMI sound archives and the British Film Institute. At each location they were able to meet with experts in the field, and were taken through the various daily tasks conducted at each facility and discussed various aspects of audiovisual production and archiving. This included discussions on the construction of professional studios and archival facilities through to the latest technical developments in the field and their effect on practice.

In an attempt to maximise the results of the training, Waleed, Ayman and myself began to create a dual language Arabic/English glossary of sound archiving terminology during each training session, in which I was present to interpret and help with explanation. We also began developing a skeletal version of the database structure to be used at the INLA for both analogue and digital sound carriers.

Since Waleed and Ayman's return to Baghdad, the SOI project has been offered its first donation of Iraqi sound recordings which are located in London. These are from a private collection of commercially released shellac discs and are yet to be catalogued, but are estimated to be approximately 300 discs. We have also utilised a BISI research grant and a donation by the Centro Incontri Umani from ticket sales of a concert I gave in Ascona, Switzerland to translate the article, *Non-Assistance to Endangered Treasures - On the Centre for Traditional Music in Baghdad - A testimony* by the Iraqi ethnomusicologist, Scheherazade Qasim Hassan from the original French version. The English translation is now published on the newly launched Sound of Iraq website www.soundofiraq.org which was also developed using the aforementioned grants. The next steps for the project are to work with the Italian NGO Un Ponte Per to fundraise for the purchase of digitization equipment to send to the INLA in Baghdad in order to begin digitizing a rare and fragile collection of reel-to-reel tapes at the Directorate of Musical Arts in Baghdad and the shellac discs in London.

We also need to complete the Arabic/English sound archiving glossary, the INLA database structure to accommodate the analogue and digital audio carriers, and create a document regarding the romanization of modern standard Arabic and Iraqi colloquial Arabic, in Arabic, based on the Library of Congress romanization system. In addition we would also like to work on a translation of IASA's TC03 from English to Arabic. To conclude we would like to thank the BISI, particularly Joan Porter MacIver, the British Library and the British Council Iraq for all their support. For more information on the Sound of Iraq project, its aims and activities, or to make a donation, please visit www.soundofiraq.org.

Khyam Allami
Sound of Iraq Project

VISITING IRAQI SCHOLAR REPORT APRIL - JUNE 2012

I would like to thank BISI for giving me this important opportunity to visit the United Kingdom to learn about the textile conservation and restoration techniques used in the major museums and institutions of Scotland.

The programme of research and training was prepared by BISI in conjunction with the Centre for Textile Conservation at the University of Glasgow and the Burrell Collection, Glasgow Museums.

The first part of my visit included a tour of London's museums and scientific institutions, with an afternoon spent observing behind-the-scenes at the British Museum's organics lab. I was delighted to present a lecture on my work at Iraq Museum's central laboratory before staff from the Middle East Department at the British Museum.

On 21 April, I arrived in Glasgow, accompanied by Dr Lamia al-Gailani Werr for the second stage of my placement. Dr Lamia and her daughter Noorah al-Gailani kindly showed me around the city. I underwent a 15 day training programme at the Centre for Textile Conservation at the University of Glasgow, where I learned a great deal about the restoration methods taught to students and the centre's textile conservation techniques in general. I visited a range of research museums and centres of industry and the final stage of my placement took place at the Burrell Collection, Glasgow Museums, in the south of the city. I would like to thank Frances Lennard and Dr Anita Quye for organising my placement.

My visit to the UK was of great importance to me. When I return to the Iraq Museum, where I work as a conservator, I will be able to draw on my time in the United Kingdom in order to raise the standards of textile conservation and to share good practice with my colleagues. Hopefully, my enhanced skills and knowledge will also help me to realize my dream of completing a large study on scientific restoration and conservation as a Masters or a Ph.D. This is a big dream for me.

Mohammad Kasim Mohammad Jwad



Mohammad and Staff from Glasgow's Centre of Textile Conservation wait for their guided tour around Holyroodhouse Palace in Edinburgh

From left to right: Sarah Foskett, Margaret Maran, Visiting Scholar Mohammad Kasim Jwad, Frances Lennard, Dr Margaret Smith and Dr Anita Quye

BISI GRANTS: ACADEMIC, VISITING IRAQI SCHOLARS & OUTREACH GRANTS

The Institute promotes, supports, and undertakes research and public education relating to Iraq and neighbouring countries. 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. For more information on the Institute and any updates to grant applications, please consult the BISI website (www.bisi.ac.uk). For all its grants the Institute reserves the right to consider applications outside the deadlines on an exceptional basis.

BISI ACADEMIC GRANTS

The Institute invites applications for grants in aid of research and for the organisation of academic conferences and for one annual pilot project. Applications are welcomed to support research or conferences on Iraq and neighbouring countries **not** covered by other British Academy BASIS-sponsored institutions (www.britac.ac.uk/institutes/orgs.cfm), 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 and the Pilot Project award may be up to £8000. The Institute will also offer assistance to a Pilot Project 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.

Applications and references must be received by **1 February annually**.

BISI VISITING IRAQI SCHOLARS GRANTS

BISI offers two to 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 and references must be received by **1 March annually**.

BISI OUTREACH GRANTS

Grants are available to support outreach 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. An Outreach 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 to the BISI Administrator and two references are required. 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 (please check for eligibility prior to applying).

Applications and references must be received by **1 October annually**.

BISI 2012-2013 LECTURES & OTHER FUTURE EVENTS

Please visit the BISI website for updates and full details of events.

Saturday 20 October, 2pm: BISI and The Iraqi Cultural Centre Family Event

'Epic of Gilgamesh: Mask-Making and Performance,' for 5-11 year olds with Rana Ibrahim of the Ashmolean Museum

Venue: The Iraqi Cultural Centre, Threshold and Union House, 65-69 Shepherd's Bush Green, London, W12 8TX

Thursday 25 October, 6pm exhibition, 6.30pm lecture: BISI and Gulan Event

An exhibition of photographs by Anthony Kersting and a lecture by David Michelmore and Dr John MacGinnis on 'Erbil: Research, Interpretation and Conservation of the World's Oldest City'

Venue: The British Academy, 10 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AH

Saturday 3 November, 2pm: BISI and The Iraqi Cultural Centre Family Event

'Royal Courier, Start the journey! Sending Letters Home in Ancient Mesopotamia' for 7-11 year olds with Jennifer Hicks of UCL

Venue: The Iraqi Cultural Centre, Threshold and Union House, 65-69 Shepherd's Bush Green, London, W12 8TX

Thursday 22 November, 6pm: BISI Lecture

Dr Ali A. Allawi on 'Faisal I, Gertrude Bell and Sat'i al-Husri: The Politics of Archaeology in Iraq'

Venue: The British Academy, 10 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AH

Thursday 28 February 2013, 6pm: BISI Lecture

Dr Joan Oates FBA on 'British Archaeology in Iraq 1951-1969'

Venue: The British Academy, 10 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AH

Saturday 19 January 2013: Oxford University's Department for Continuing Education Study Day

'Kingship and the Gods: The Origins of Egypt, Mesopotamia and Iran,' organised by Dr Paul Collins, chair of BISI's Outreach Committee

Venue: Oxford University, Department for Continuing Education, Rewley House, 1 Wellington Square, Oxford OX1 2JA

Saturday 16 March 2013: BISI and Glasgow University's Centre for Open Studies

Study Day on 'Mesopotamia: The Babylonians of Ancient Iraq,' with Dr Frances Reynolds

Venue: Glasgow University, Centre for Open Studies, Scotland, G12 8QQ

Thursday 20 June 2013, 6pm: BISI Lecture

Mike Laird on 'The Mudhif Cultural Preservation Project'

Venue: The British Academy, 10 Carlton House Terrace, London, SW1Y 5AH

BISI COUNCIL & COMMITTEE MEMBERS & BISI OFFICERS

<i>Patron:</i>	The Rt Hon Lord Lamont of Lerwick
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<i>BISI Committee Abbreviations:</i>	A = Appeal Committee; O = Outreach Committee; F = Finance Committee; P = Publications Committee; R = Fieldwork and Research Committee; V = Visiting Scholars Committee & GB = Gertrude Bell Conference Steering Committee

BISI MEMBERSHIP FORM

NAME

ADDRESS.....

.....

E-MAIL

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

If you are a worldwide member and wish to receive voting papers, please tick here.

In addition to my Membership I wish to make a general donation to BISI of £ _____. If you wish BISI to reclaim tax on your membership fee and/or donation through Gift Aid, please sign this declaration. Please treat this and all donations I make hereafter to BISI as Gift Aid Donations. I am a UK taxpayer.

Signature _____ Date _____ *giftaid it*

I have set up or amended my standing order on a UK bank account directly with my bank.

I am enclosing a standing order.

Please set up/amend your standing order to our account # 83896803 (Sort Code 20-10-53) at Barclays Bank. You may obtain the form on the BISI website or directly from the Assistant Administrator, but it is preferred if members do set up standing orders directly with their banks. Full Members receive a £2 annual discount if paying by standing order.

I enclose a cheque in UK Sterling for £ _____

I have sent a direct bank payment for the full amount and have paid the bank charges.

The Institute's bank account is # 83896803 (Sort Code 20-10-53) at Barclays Bank PLC, Kings Cross Branch, 23 Euston Road, London NW1 2SB, United Kingdom
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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 MEMBERSHIP REQUEST FORM

All members of the BISI can opt for a choice of journals: IRAQ (annual) and/or the International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies (IJCIS, three issues per year).

Name: **Date:**

Corporate Membership £100

UK Membership

UK Membership without a journal £20

UK Membership with the journal IRAQ £37

UK Membership with the journal IJCIS £45

UK Membership with both journals £57

UK Student Membership

UK Student Membership without a journal £10

UK Student Membership with the journal IRAQ £15

UK Student Membership with the journal IJCIS £30

UK Student Membership with both journals £40

Worldwide Membership

Worldwide Membership without a journal £20

Worldwide Membership with the journal IRAQ £40

Worldwide Membership with the journal IJCIS £54

Worldwide Membership with both journals £72

Worldwide Student Membership

Worldwide Student Membership without a journal £10

Worldwide Student Membership with the journal IRAQ £20

Worldwide Student Membership with the journal IJCIS £40

Worldwide Student Membership with both journals £54

All **full** members paying by standing order from a UK bank account receive a £2 annual discount. Please contact the Administrator for more information.

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 Assistant Administrator, Miss Lauren Mulvee. To be a member for the year 2013, we kindly request that you return the forms by 30 January.

THANK YOU

BISI is very grateful for donations, both large and small. Here we would like to thank all those who have given to the Institute so far this year – from our major donors to the kind contributions of our members. We also wish to thank all our past donors for their support over the years.

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VOLUNTEERING WITH BISI

In January 2013, we hope to invite two Visiting Iraqi Scholars to the UK. We are looking for volunteers to assist us to make their stay as enriching and enjoyable as possible. Activities might include taking the scholars to museums and heritage sites, arranging meetings with academics or simply acting as a 'cultural ambassador,' offering information about the UK. If you are interested in helping out, please contact the Assistant Administrator for more information on bisi@britac.ac.uk.

IRAQ

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**The British Academy
10 Carlton House Terrace
London SW1Y 5AH
Email: bisi@britac.ac.uk
www.bisi.ac.uk**