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(GERTRUDE BELL MEMORIAL)

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CONTENTS PAGE

Chair of Council's Introduction pp. 3-5

Outreach Grant Reports

Ahmed Mukhtar and Francesco Iannuzzelli, *Discovering the Iraqi Maqam on the Oud: An Introduction and Recital by the Taqasim Music School* pp. 6-7

Richard Wilding, *Erbil Citadel Photography* pp. 8-10

Fran Hazelton, *The Gilgamesh Epic Project* pp. 11-12

Visiting Iraqi Scholarships p.13

Academic Grant Reports

Dr Claudia Glatz, *Tracing the Emergence of Social Complexity in Southern Mesopotamia: The Sirwan/Upper Diyala Regional Pilot Project* pp. 14-15

Mohammad Ali Shabani, *Shi'a Brothers, Shi'a Rivals – Competition and Cooperation between Iran and post-Saddam Iraq* p. 16

Dr Eleni Asouti, *The Eastern Fertile Crescent Project* pp. 17-20

Richard Dumbrell, *Fourth Babylon Festival for International Cultures and Arts* pp. 20-22

BISI Publication: *The Archaeological Atlas of Samarra: Samarra Studies II* by Alastair Northedge and Derek Kennet p. 23

BISI Events – Save the Dates p. 24

BISI Grant Notices and Deadlines p. 25

BISI Supporters p. 26

BISI Team p. 27

CHAIR OF COUNCIL'S INTRODUCTION

It is now well over a year since ISIS invaded northern Iraq. Since that time we have witnessed the systematic, deliberate destruction of much of the region's celebrated cultural diversity: the persecution of the Shi'a, Christian and Yezidi communities, and demolition of their most sacred places; the dismantling and plunder of the secular infrastructure of heritage and learning, including libraries, museums, universities, and archaeological sites. Many of our friends, families and colleagues have suffered untold loss of life and liberty. The lucky ones have fled but do not know when they will see their homes and loved ones again. It is difficult to get regular, reliable news from ISIS-occupied areas, and it is difficult too to see a swift end to the crisis. Nevertheless, it is important not to give up hope, nor to give up our work in Iraq, and with Iraqis. Here is a short resumé of some of our activities in the period since our last newsletter.

Over the past few months you will undoubtedly have seen, heard or read one or more of BISI's Council members in the news media, helping to explain and contextualise the importance of northern Iraq's cultural heritage, and the importance of not succumbing unthinkingly to ISIS's all too spectacular and effective visual propaganda.

We have also been active participants in a media campaign headed by the UK Committee of the Blue Shield, to persuade the new government to ratify the 1954 Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. At the time of writing they have publicly agreed to do so but have not yet set a parliamentary timetable to pass the necessary legislation. This new law will require the British armed forces to include cultural heritage protection in all future conflict planning. It probably comes too late to have much impact on current events in Iraq but it will protect against a repeat of the 2003 fiasco, which left the Iraq Museum and southern archaeological sites all too vulnerable to looting.

Meanwhile BISI's Visiting Iraqi Scholarships have been expertly managed, thanks to the dedication and hard work of the programme co-ordinator, Kristian Girling. We regret that Kristian is stepping down from the role later in the autumn to focus on his own research and teaching, and wish him all the best for the future. In the summer the Charlotte Bonham-Carter Charitable trust made a donation specifically for the scheme, for which we are extremely grateful. You can read more about our recent work with Iraqi scholars on p.13.

BISI has also been helping to plan the first training visit in our collaboration with the Imam Hussein Museum in Karbala. Over the winter Dr Timothy Stanley of the Victoria and Albert Museum will offer training to museum staff from all over Iraq, and scope the needs and prospects for a continuing series of courses, mentoring schemes and research projects. If you are a heritage professional with any expertise in the material culture of Shi'a Islam, and are interested in getting involved, please do drop us a line.

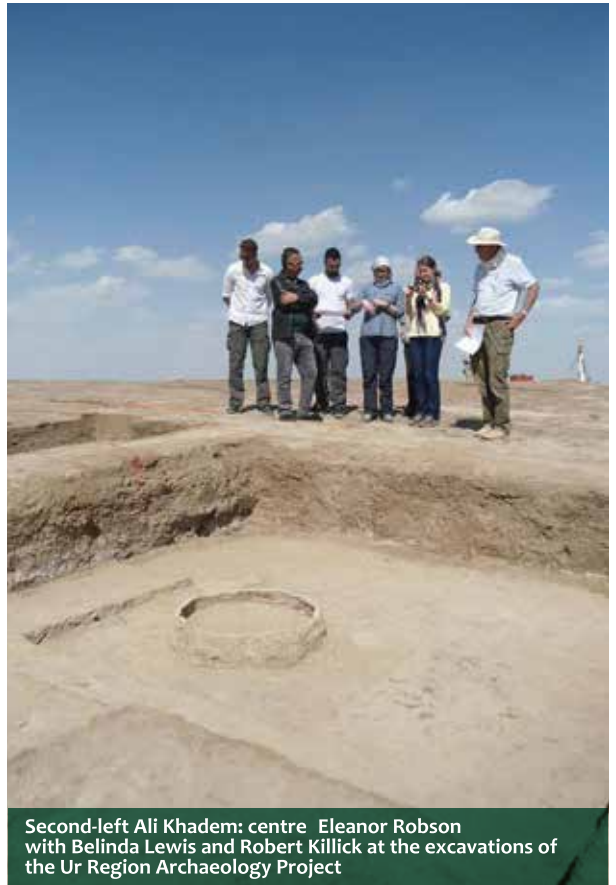
Earlier in the year, I had the privilege and pleasure of spending a week with the Ur Regional Archaeology Project (URAP) at Tell Khaiber in Dhi Qar province. BISI contributes funding to their work, directed by Jane Moon, Robert Killick and Stuart Campbell for the University of Manchester, in collaboration with Ali Khadem, the Senior Archaeologist at Ur. But I also have a personal involvement as the project's epigrapher. This year the team uncovered around 50 cuneiform tablets, from an archive room in the main building they have been excavating, bringing the total to over 70.

This is the first international archaeological project in Iraq to discover tablets for over 25 years, so the find is very exciting just for that. But because the tablets confirm the dating of the site to the mid-second millennium BC they are set to transform our understanding of southern Babylonia 3,500 years ago. The so-called Sealand Dynasty, who conquered the marshes from Hammurabi's son Samsu-iluna, have mostly been known only from later cuneiform tradition. Now we have archaeologically contextualised contemporary evidence for the very first time. There is much more work still to do, both on site and in the post-excavation analysis, but it is already clear that this project will yield highly significant new discoveries.

While I was with the URAP team, we were privileged to receive a visit from British Chargé d'Affaires Belinda Lewis and her staff, who drove all the way down from Baghdad to Nasiriyah to visit the site and our workspace at Ur. It further cements the good relations between BISI and the Embassy in Iraq.

On my way home, I was hosted by Mr Andres La Saga of Schwob's Basra Industrial Community (BIC), which houses the international staff working at North Rumaila oil field. Straight from the field, I gave a special evening lecture at the BIC about the exciting work currently being done at Tell Khaiber, and helped to raise the profile of BISI among the large and vibrant business community in the Basra region.

I have also been working to strengthen ties and collaboration between BISI and the Iraq British Business Council (IBBC), with the particular support of their Associate Director, Dr Alastair Niven. In November I spoke at their London conference on the role that international businesses can play in developing Iraq's humanities and heritage infrastructure. More recently, I lectured at their summer retreat at Cumberland Lodge. Here, I was able to meet many senior individuals from companies working in Iraq, many of whom were delighted to hear of our current projects. Our main goal is now to turn this very successful profile-raising into productive partnerships.



Second-left Ali Khadem; centre Eleanor Robson with Belinda Lewis and Robert Killick at the excavations of the Ur Region Archaeology Project

In all of my fundraising and profile-raising efforts over the past two years I have been ably assisted by Dr Adam Stone. He is now moving - though will stay involved in the Outreach Committee - and the recruitment process for a new Development Co-ordinator is well underway. This is a good time to say a heartfelt thank you to Adam for helping BISI initiate a new phase in its development and public relations, and to wish him well in his new projects.

Regretfully, I must report that this year two friends of the Institute passed away: Professor Tony Wilkinson (1948-2015) and Nicholas Kindersley (1939-2015). Tony was Assistant Director of the BSAI from 1989 to 1992, and greatly contributed to the School's work in an impressively wide range of projects and places. His impact on landscape archaeology, in Iraq, in the Middle East, and beyond, is simply enormous. Nicholas Kindersley was a crucial member of staff during the 1961-1965 fieldwork of the BSAI. He participated in the last three seasons of excavations at Nimrud, and in the first two seasons of the excavations at Tell al Rimah. Much of what was achieved in those years was only possible through his hard work and determination. Obituaries of both men will be published in IRAQ 77 (2015).

In the spring we also said a sad farewell to H.E. Faik Nerweyi, Iraq's first ambassador to the UK for several years, who is now serving in Moscow. He was our first Iraqi Honorary Vice-President and was most committed to his role, helping BISI in several practical ways. At the time of writing we are still waiting to find out who his successor in the Embassy will be.

Over the winter we also lost and gained an editor of our academic journal IRAQ. Dr Michael Seymour, along with co-editor Dr Jon Taylor, has handled the sometimes tricky transition to publication with Cambridge University Press with great good humour and dedication to the journal's core academic values. The baton now passes from New York to Oxford, where Dr Paul Collins (until recently our Chair of Outreach and Council member) will at least not have to battle a five-hour time difference when planning editorial meetings!

In February, Council Members Dr Harriet Martin, Dr Glen Rangwala and Professor Emilie Savage-Smith stepped down after six years of sterling service. We also accepted the resignation of Honorary Treasurer Peter Davies. We shall miss them all—but not irredeemably, as I am delighted to welcome several new recruits onto Council: Dr Gareth Brereton of the British Museum; Peter Defty, our new Honorary Treasurer; Daniel Lowe of the British Library; archaeologist Dr John MacGinnis; and Alasdair Watson of the Bodleian Library. As well as their subject area expertise, and potential to develop partnerships with some of UK's most eminent cultural institutions, they each bring great enthusiasm and fresh ideas to the Institute, at a time when Iraq particularly needs our energy and commitment.

Finally and most importantly, thank you too for your continued investment and involvement in BISI. The Institute would be nothing without its members and volunteers and benefactors. Your time and money and passion for Iraq are what keep us all motivated, even through the most difficult of times.

Eleanor Robson



Photo of the courtyard of the Balkuwara Palace at Samarra. Another highlight for BISI this year was the publication of the *Archaeological Atlas of Samarra: Samarra Studies II* by Alastair Northedge and Derek Kennet. Full details of the volume can be found on page 23.

OUTREACH GRANT REPORTS

Discovering the Iraqi Maqam on the Oud: An Introduction and Recital by the Taqasim Music School



Ahmed Mukhtar and Francesco Iannuzzelli in performance

Photo: Anna Nicoli

We launched Taqasim Music School in 2011 with the aim of providing affordable education on Middle-Eastern music, in particular on the Oud, the fretless lute so popular in the Middle-East.

Although offering a generalist introduction to Arabic music at beginners level, at higher levels we specialise in the modern Iraqi tradition of Oud playing, inspired by the generation of soloists who emerged from the 40s in Baghdad. Iraqi musicians like Munir and Jamil Bashir brought the instrument to international fame, revealing at the same time the rich tradition of Iraqi music.

Following on their path, we wanted to bring this tradition and this style of Oud playing to a wider audience, offering a recital by teachers of Taqasim Music School accompanied by professional musicians in a venue in Central London.

Given our educational mission, we also wanted the event to be informative and provide an accurate introduction to Iraqi music culture.

The funds granted by BISI were key in securing a beautiful venue like St. Ethelburga's Centre, in proximity of Liverpool Street Station. The centre is well-known as a cross-cultural and inter-religious meeting point, often hosting world music events. We were keen in making attendance free to the public, relying also on the school's small funds to cover additional expenses.

The programme of concert focused on Iraqi Maqam, a traditional urban vocal repertoire said to have roots datable to the 10th Century. In the Iraqi Maqam genre, a singer ('reciter') is accompanied by a small band, the traditional chalghi ensemble, consisting of: two percussionists, joza (a type of fiddle) and a santoor (a large flattish sound box, traversed by strings hit with mallets).

This repertoire forms also the basis of the instrumental adaptations and improvisations on the Oud by the Iraqi school of Oud playing. For this concert, we opted for a more modern ensemble, with strings and percussions, arranging the repertoire accordingly.

We wanted to give a varied representation of Iraqi Maqam together with a selection of folk songs that are usually performed after each Maqam. Seven Iraqi Maqams were prepared (Ajam Aushiran, Awj, Dasht, Jamali Hijaz, Khanabat, Orfa, Penjigah), providing a good variety of rhythmic and non-rhythmic Maqams. They were performed on the Oud by the teachers of Taqasim Music School (Ahmed Mukhtar, Francesco Iannuzzelli, Julian Harris) accompanied by Julia Ana Katarina on cello, Lucile Belliveau on double bass and Elizabeth Nott on percussions.

The performance was preceded by a short introduction on Iraqi music tradition, the Iraqi Maqam genre and the Oud, given by the school's director Ahmed Mukhtar.

While some of the attendees were familiar with both the Iraqi music tradition and the instrument, for many persons this event was a unique opportunity to discover the Oud and the traditional repertoire of Iraq. In organising this concert, not only have we reached a wider visibility for the educational activities of Taqasim Music School, but we also have shown an aspect of Iraqi culture which is mostly unknown despite its deep beauty and long history.

*Ahmed Mukhtar and Francesco Iannuzzelli
Taqasim Music School
Outreach Grant Award-Holder 2013*



Ahmed Mukhtar addresses the audience
Photo: Anna Nicoli

Erbil Citadel Photography

In November 2013 I was awarded a BISI Outreach Grant in support of my photography of Erbil Citadel for a future joint publication with David Michelmore, Advisor on Conservation and Revitalisation to the High Commission for Erbil Citadel Revitalisation.

I had visited Erbil in spring 2013 when I travelled to Iraqi Kurdistan with Gulan, the UK charity established to document and promote the culture and heritage of Kurdistan. I was touched by the fragile beauty of Erbil's citadel and impressed with the efforts being made to protect and restore it. With the aid of the BISI Outreach Grant I was able to return in spring 2014 and photograph the citadel more extensively.

Erbil Citadel is dramatically situated on top of a mound, or 'tell', of accumulated archaeological layers, visually dominating the modern city of Erbil, which radiates out from below in concentric rings of expansion. The citadel therefore occupies an important position geographically and culturally, forming a magnificent backdrop to Erbil's annual Newroz festivities in which the citizens join arm-in-arm to dance around its base.

Believed to have been in existence for at least 6,000 years, Erbil correlates to ancient Arbela, an important Assyrian political and religious centre. The current buildings on the uppermost layer of the tell date back to the mid-18th century, the period when fortifications surrounding the town were replaced with houses. The urban fabric however reflects a much older pattern, as individual buildings have been levelled and rebuilt on the same site over successive eras, the process which also caused the tell to grow from the surrounding plain.

The citadel mound is elliptical in shape and rises 25 - 32 metres above ground level. The town on top of the tell measures approximately 430 x 340 metres, with a labyrinth of streets and narrow alleyways radiating out from the main south gate. The approximately 100 houses that are built on the citadel perimeter form a continuous exterior wall, still giving the outward appearance of a fortress.

The original inspiration behind my photography of Iraqi Kurdistan, and the Erbil citadel in particular, was the British photographer Anthony Kersting. In 2011, whilst undertaking research in the Conway Library at the Courtauld Institute of Art, in London, I came across a large number of prints and even more unprinted negatives of Iraq and the Kurdistan region taken by Kersting in the 1940s. A selection of these images were exhibited by Gulan in our exhibitions at the Royal Geographical Society in 2012 and 2013.

The scenes that Kersting photographed in the Erbil Citadel would not have looked unfamiliar to a former inhabitant from the birth of urban civilisation thousands of years previously. Many of these streets and buildings are still recognisable today, but whilst in Kersting's time the citadel was a busy, functioning town, it is now largely closed to the public.

The number of inhabitants gradually declined during the 20th century as the city below grew, and the citadel became less compatible with modern life. In the 80s and 90s, squatters driven out of their villages by the previous regime found refuge in the citadel and considerable damage was inflicted on the buildings.

In 2007, the High Commission for Erbil Citadel Revitalisation (HCECR) was established by the Kurdish Regional Government to protect and

restore the citadel. The remaining 840 families were resettled, leaving just one family to hold on to Erbil's claim of being the World's oldest continuously inhabited city. Restoration work began in 2010, under the leadership of Dara Al Yaqoobi, head of the HCECR. It is planned to re-establish the citadel as a centre for culture, tourism and recreation in the heart of modern Erbil.

The restored Hashim Chalabi house is occupied by the Kurdish Textile and Cultural Museum, founded in 2004 by Lolan Sipan. One of the few buildings in the citadel now open to the public, the museum displays a large number of carpets and other local crafts.



The perimeter walls of Erbil citadel viewed from below the 'tell'. The buttresses give the impression of fortifications, but they support the exterior walls of houses built on the edge of the citadel mound. *Photo: Richard Wilding*



The Sheikh Jamil Afandi house is a mansion from the late-Ottoman period. The large courtyard is surrounded on three sides by an arched portico supporting a roofed passage. *Photo: Richard Wilding*



The harem of Abdulla Pasha Al Naqib contains two late-period Ottoman rooms, of which the south room is more richly decorated. The niches have arched heads in the shape of scallop shells and there is an inscribed poem above the central niche. *Photo: Richard Wilding*



The diwakhana of Rashid Agha is dated by an inscription to 1903-05. The main reception room is richly decorated with moulded plasterwork, arched niches and blue-on-white painted decorations. *Photo: Richard Wilding*

In 2014 the incongruous and oppressive south gate, built in 1979 of concrete faced in brick, was replaced with a reconstruction of the Ottoman grand gate which had been demolished in 1958. The citadel was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in June 2014.

For the past year, work on the citadel restoration has largely come to a halt due to logistical and budgetary constraints caused by the emergence in the region of ISIS during 2014.

In February 2015 I gave a photographic presentation at Leighton House Museum, London on the fragile heritage of Iraqi Kurdistan and Saudi Arabia, and the conservation efforts being made in difficult circumstances. I included several photographs of the Erbil Citadel, and also the related lower city in Erbil. Forthcoming lectures and exhibitions will also feature these images.



The late-Ottoman harem of Muhammed Karim Agha Asaadi incorporates a magnificent reception room with a panel of small niches in four tiers, surrounded by a richly moulded frame. *Photo: Richard Wilding*

In addition to BISI and Gulan, I would like to thank David Michelmores, Dara Al Yaqoobi, Ranan Khasraw Tawfiq and Dr John MacGinnis for their support and advice.

Richard Wilding
Creative Director at Gulan
www.gulan.org.uk
www.richardwilding.com
Outreach Grant Award-Holder 2013

The Gilgamesh Epic Project

In April 2015 two Gilgamesh epic evenings took place which were funded by an Outreach Grant from BISI and hosted by the Iraqi Cultural Centre in London (ICCL). They were organised by the Enheduanna Society (ESoc), a heritage education charity which popularises the literature of ancient Iraq (Mesopotamia) through the art of oral storytelling.

The second evening, on Saturday 25 April, was in Arabic and English. Dr Martin Worthington, an Assyriologist from St John's College, Cambridge, gave a lecture in English which pointed out tricks in the texts of the Gilgamesh epic. He also explained the significance of how and by whom characters are named in the story. The lecture was illustrated with a bi-lingual oral storytelling performance. Zipang storytellers Badia Obaid and June Peters mixed English and Arabic to tell the Sumerian story of Gilgamesh, Enkidu and the Netherworld.



Professional Story-Tellers Badia Obaid and June Peters at the Iraqi Cultural Centre in London

The first evening, on Saturday 11 April, was entirely in Arabic. Muzahim al-Jalili, an Assyriologist from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) gave a lecture in Arabic explaining how, when, and where the Gilgamesh epic was written in Mesopotamia. The lecture was illustrated with an oral storytelling performance in Arabic by the Zipang storyteller Badia Obaid. She told the story of Adapa, a character in Mesopotamian mythology who, like Gilgamesh, gained everlasting wisdom but not everlasting life.

These two Gilgamesh epic evenings each attracted an audience of about a hundred people, mainly Iraqis. They launched the Gilgamesh epic project for young people. This Young Roots project, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), provides a programme of activities which runs from May 2015 to October 2016. During these activities the project's registered participants hear, interpret, explore and renew the Gilgamesh epic. They communicate its cultural legacy to others in their own pictures and words, both

spoken and written. The activities are conducted in English and Arabic.

The Gilgamesh epic project for young people is organised by ESoc as a heritage organisation in partnership with two youth organisations. These are the Iraqi Women's League UK Youth Group and the Dr Esmat as-Saeed Saturday Arabic School. At the start of the project there are twenty-five registered participants mainly recruited from the two youth organisation project partners. Fortnightly Saturday afternoon heritage activity sessions are hosted by ICCL and other venues. In sessions from May to September 2015 young people will hear and tell the Gilgamesh epic in English and Arabic. They will illustrate the scenes, dreams, actions and characters of the Gilgamesh epic with artwork and creative writing. They will create Humbaba masks and learn to write cuneiform signs.

In October 2015 their artwork will be displayed in an exhibition. This will be opened at an event which includes the first public performance by the Zipang Young Mesopotamian Storytellers (ZYMS). This event will also launch the online exhibition in a narrative website. From late 2015 this exhibition will be open for submission of contributions to an online 21st century version of the Gilgamesh epic.

In early 2016 the number of registered project participants can increase to fifty, including the original twenty-five. All fifty will have the opportunity to participate in at least one Chocolate Films workshop similar to those provided for the

Geffreye Museum. At these workshops the young people will make short videos and animations which illustrate the Gilgamesh epic and will be contributions to the online 21st century version.

Later in 2016 there will be ZYMS performances of the Gilgamesh epic to audiences outside the Iraqi community hosted by non-Iraqi storytelling and youth clubs. ZYMS performers will also have the opportunity to be prepared and assessed for a Zipang Introductory Mesopotamian Storytelling Award (ZIMSA). These awards will be presented at an event in October 2016 to celebrate the conclusion of the project and the first screening of the online 21st century version of the Gilgamesh epic created by project participants.

Throughout the project there will be visits to the British Museum to discover the material world of the Gilgamesh epic in the Mesopotamia galleries. Project participants will go behind-the-scenes into the Tablet Room. They will meet the curators and see the clay tablets from King Ashurbanipal's library on which the Gilgamesh epic was written in cuneiform script 3,000 years ago.

*Fran Hazelton
Zipang Mesopotamian Storyteller
Chairperson of the Enheduanna Society
Outreach Grant Award-Holder 2013
www.zipang.org.uk*

VISITING IRAQI SCHOLARSHIPS

Salwa Al-Amin
Researcher Baghdad
University
May-June 2015

BISI sponsored Salwa Tawfeeq to spend four weeks at the University of Oxford. With the help of academic mentors she was able to prepare for a research project on the history, archaeology and architecture of several ancient mausoleums and religious shrines in Iraq.

During her scholarship, Salwa was able to view resources that were essential to her research at the Bodleian and the British Library. She also had the opportunity to attend a wide variety of seminars and events in Oxford connected to her field of studies ensuring a very successful visit with opportunities to develop a network of academics with shared interests and who can support her work into the future.

For a decade now BISI's Visiting Iraqi Scholarships have enabled Iraqi scholars and cultural heritage professionals to engage in training and research in the UK. You can help us to continue the programme and assist more scholars like Salwa by making a donation at www.bisi.ac.uk

“ I owe thanks and gratitude to The British Institute for the Study of Iraq for their constant help, active and successful communication that put my dream into a reality.



Salwa Al-Amin on a visit to the British Museum

ACADEMIC GRANT REPORTS

Tracing the Emergence of Social Complexity in Southern Mesopotamia: The Sirwan/Upper Diyala Regional Pilot Project

The second field-season of the Sirwan Regional Project (SRP) took place in late May/early June 2014 with a team composed of Dr Claudia Glatz (University of Glasgow), Dr Jesse Casana (Dartmouth College), Dr Kathleen Nicholl (University of Utah) as well as Glasgow and Arkansas postgraduate students. With support from a BISI Pilot Project Grant, one of the main objectives for this season was to investigate the Sirwan/Upper Diyala River Valley's prehistoric landscapes and settlements in order to begin to address questions about the development and expansion of early complex societies in the Mesopotamian-Zagros interface.

SRP's research region comprises ca. 4,000km² and stretches from the Qara Dagh Massif in the north to the plains surrounding the town of Kalar in the south. This landscape, dissected by the course of the Sirwan/Upper Diyala River, presents a transitional cultural and environmental zone that connects the piedmont and uplands of the western Zagros Range to the north and east with the alluvial plains and marshlands of Mesopotamia to the south. The region today is home to a variety of agricultural traditions, including rain-fed dry-farming more common in the north and intensive irrigation more typical in the south. The river also presents an important communication corridor, whose north-south course connects the fertile Shahrizor high-plateau with southern Mesopotamia. Branching off from the river valley are two

further important routes that lead north to the Upper Mesopotamian plains and east into the Iranian highlands and ultimately into Central Asia. As a result of its strategic location, the Sirwan region offers a unique topographic, environmental and geopolitical laboratory for the investigation of highland-lowland relationships, which underwrite many of the key themes in the region's occupation history.

During an initial field season in May 2013, we recorded several promising sites, which have yielded ceramic evidence suggesting they represent a series of relatively short-lived settlements occupied successively in the Hassuna, Halaf, Ubaid and Uruk periods (c. 7000-3000 BC). Each of these sites, all within a 2km radius of one another and situated in the fertile, spring-fed Sozboluq area south-east of the town of Kalar, is an extensive low mound with little occupational overburden from later periods. The aim for 2014 was to explore this rare window into prehistoric settlement using a combination of surface survey, geophysical prospection and test-excavations.

In 2014, we carried out extensive magnetic gradiometry surveys at three of the four prehistoric sites: SRP 22, 28 and 36. SRP 36 yielded the most promising magnetometry results, which suggested the presence of a multi-roomed building near the top of this ca. 1 ha low-mound. A 1x4m sounding was excavated to investigate a burnt feature at the centre of the structure and in order to collect samples for radiometric dating and stratified artefactual and environmental samples. The trench revealed a circular mud-brick feature, an ashy pit covered with broken pottery and what appear to be several consecutive hearths. The majority of the pottery from the site appears to be proto-Hassuna to Hassuna in date. The analysis of the pottery and lithic assembles as well as archaeobotanical and

zooarchaeological data is currently in progress. Several attempts to radiocarbon date charcoal and bone samples as well as two charred pulses were unsuccessful, most likely due to the acidic soil at SRP 36. Further bone samples have been selected and will be submitted to Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre (SUERC) in due course.

At SRP 22 and 28 magnetic surveys revealed small rectilinear buildings, which we plan to investigate through test excavations in future seasons. A multi-period site (SRP 46), whose main occupation appears to date to the mid-late second millennium BC, was also investigated in this manner.



Darband-i-Balula rock relief
Photo: Dr Claudia Glatz



Multi-period mound near Darband-i-Balula
Photo: Dr Claudia Glatz

In tandem with these site-based investigations, we continued our regional survey, adding ca. 40 new sites, a large number of which range in date between the Neolithic and the Bronze Age. We also recorded a series of large multi-period mounds, Sassanid and later villages as well as special purpose sites such as irrigation and water-management systems. A preliminary geomorphological survey of the area was also carried out and modern environmental samples collected in order to begin to build a geochemical framework for future isotope analyses of archaeological samples.

To sum up, we are very pleased with the outcome of the 2014 season, which has yielded important results, both with respect to the development and execution of our multi-scalar field methodology and with regards to the archaeological results this approach has produced. This includes a large number of prehistoric and Bronze Age sites that allow us to begin to address fundamental questions of highland-lowland interaction on the one hand, and investigate the region's pathway(s) towards social complexity on the other.

Encouraged by the 2014 results, we plan to continue and expand our work in the Sirwan River Valley in August 2015. This will include a continued focus on the southern plains and their rich archaeological record as well as a more intensive and systematic investigation of the northern part of our survey region. A short visit on the last day of the 2014 field season revealed several previously undocumented mounds near the Darband-i-Balula rock relief, while numerous caves and rock-shelters also await exploration in this part of the survey area.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank BISI for supporting this research.

Dr Claudia Glatz
University of Glasgow
BISI Pilot Project Grant Award-Holder 2014

Shi'a Brothers, Shi'a Rivals – Competition and Cooperation between Iran and post-Saddam Iraq

Literature which displays an understanding of the foundations, dynamics and direction of Iran-Iraq relations is scant. While academic material superficially touching on the topic exists in chapter format, a full-length thesis or book on the subject matter is not readily available. The current state of academic work on relations between Iran and post-Saddam ill-befits the stature of the two countries.

My PhD research examines the hitherto surprisingly unexplored topic of relations between Iran and post-Saddam Iraq. Utilising an approach that takes both the materialist as well as ideational concerns and motives of both states into account, my analysis offers a nuanced understanding of the complexities of the two states' relationship, void of the conventional overemphasis on either power politics or identity alone. Dissecting the myths of Arab-Persian rivalry and Shi'a cohesion, I examine how and why the mainstream assumptions that Iran and post-Saddam Iraq will either automatically become rivals on account of their divergent ethnic identities or cordial allies based on their shared sectarian identity are both erroneous.

Over the course of 2013-14, I was able to conduct extensive fieldwork for my PhD thanks to kind and generous support from BISI. Much of my fieldwork was concentrated in Iran, where I conducted interviews with senior current and former officials with direct oversight and experience of the formation and implementation of Iranian policy towards Iraq.

Among the Iranian officials I conducted interviews with were three consecutive Foreign Ministers,

including the current Foreign Minister, a former President, numerous diplomats as well as figures active in the field of foreign policy with close relations to both Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as well as Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps-Quds Force General Qassem Suleimani.

I also travelled to the United States to conduct interviews with figures with experience in Iraq as well as lay the groundwork for interviews with senior American officials.

Due to extraordinary security conditions, I had to alter my initial travel plans which included a trip to Iraq. However, I remain committed to visiting Iraq, including territory controlled by the Kurdistan Regional Government, to conduct the interviews I have planned.

The data I have collected thanks to the generous support from BISI has allowed me to contribute empirical knowledge to the academic literature on the contemporary Iran-Iraq relationship. Most of all, I wish to express my gratitude to BISI for making it possible to offer insight into the Iranian-Iraqi relationship largely built on primary sources.

Mohammad Ali Shabani
PhD Candidate SOAS

BISI Research Grant Award-Holder 2013

The Eastern Fertile Crescent Project: A Summary of the First Results of Archaeological Propection, Survey and Excavation at Karim Shahir, Turkaka and Palegawra (KRG, Northern Iraq)

Propection May 2013

In May 2013 we undertook an initial propection of the archaeological sites of Karim Shahir and Turkaka in the Chamchamal valley, the Palegawra rock-shelters near the Bazian Gates, and the Besar cave north of Lake Dukan in the Ranya District (see also Fig. 1).

This initial propection confirmed the potential of these areas for locating new sites and better understanding prehistoric settlement patterns in order to address the key aim of the Eastern Fertile Crescent project: to excavate a sequence of prehistoric sites dating from the late Palaeolithic to the early Neolithic in order to understand the transition from foraging to sedentism, cultivation and herding in the northwest Zagros.



Fig 1

In April 2014 Asouti and Baird returned to Sulaimaniyah in order to survey and excavate the site of Karim Shahir and also undertake a preliminary survey of Turkaka in the Chamchamal valley. Karim Shahir had been previously excavated by the Chicago Oriental Institute expedition led by Robert and Linda Braidwood, while Turkaka had been located via field survey (Braidwood and Howe 1960; Braidwood et al. 1983). The 2014 season team consisted of five archaeologists: Eleni Asouti, Douglas Baird, Amanj Hama Amin (representative from the Directorate in Sulaimaniyah), Anastasia Akerman, Caroline Raynor and two local trained staff, Aziz Sharif and Abdul Rahman Sabir. Topographic survey was undertaken by Caroline Raynor using a Trimble differential GPS. In addition to excavation and survey, we also established a machine-assisted water flotation system and a base for further fieldwork planned in future seasons.

Karim Shahir - Excavation

In eight days of excavation at Karim Shahir we dug two test trenches. Area A (a 3 x 3m trench) was located just to the south-west of the Braidwoods' main area of excavations. Underlying the top 10 cm of plough soil was a leached light red brown deposit with low density spreads of small cobbles that corresponded to the main phase of site occupation. This set of deposits was 25-40 cm deep in Area A and was excavated in 10 cm spits. Finds comprised mostly chipped stone and a very small amount of heavily mineralised and eroded bone. These deposits seem to have built up as dump and some slope wash on the edge of the main area of occupation. These overlay a lighter brown clay with dense calcareous inclusions and grits. This appears to be a natural soil with very low densities of artefacts, some of which may be intrusive. This was excavated in a 1.5 m wide strip along the eastern half of the trench to a maximum depth of 10 cm.

Area B (Fig. 2) was excavated on the eastern edge of the site, near the cliff edge and immediately south of the long section excavated in the 1950s. This trench started as a 2 x 2 m square and was expanded by 0.5 m to the north to become 2.5 m north-south and by 2 m to the west to become 4 m west-east. We removed c. 10 cm of topsoil and then excavated a further 25 cm of leached light brown site deposits to reveal a dense concentration of small cobbles (context BAE) in the centre of the eastern part of the trench. This corresponds to a specific occupation phase and may represent the creation of a compact living and working surface or the dumping of occupation material. This phase of activity was preceded by c. 12 cm of occupation deposits, which we excavated in three arbitrary spits. Bone was found in greater density in the lowest spits. The chipped stone in all of these contexts was oriented in several different ways, vertical and on edge, suggesting dumping and rapid accumulation of these sediments, with some movement through slope effects. The natural deposits, consisting of a light brown deposit with dense calcareous inclusions sloped down the south, following the same angle as the modern slope. We also excavated a slot 2.5 m north-south and 1.35 m east-west in the western part of Area B separately and took this down 15 cm into the natural soil.



Fig. 2 Stone concentration in Area B, context BAE

Sampling

291 litres of excavated sediments from above BAE to the natural soil were processed by machine-assisted water flotation. Furthermore, 100% of the excavated soil from the deposits immediately above and all deposits below the cobble layer (BAE) other than the samples processed by flotation were dry sieved. This was done to ensure the retrieval of the smallest chipped stone tools as well as debitage.

Turkaka

Two days were spent at Turkaka. A topographic survey was completed. Three collection circles (each of 4 m radius) were laid out along the south-west to north-east oriented ridge that comprises the site. All artefacts were collected from the surface of these collection units. Then c. 1 cm of surface soil was scraped from approximately one third of these collection units and sieved to control for recovery of the smallest artefacts. Artefacts were in highest density on the surface (probably through deflation processes) while smaller elements were recovered equally from the surface as well as from the sieved sediments. Material was least dense at the north-eastern (higher) part of the ridge. In addition, a general surface collection was carried out across the whole site, whereby a team of five walked in a line with team members spaced at c. 3 m apart. The site surface survey was completed in three transects: 1) the upper ridge and upper southern slopes, 2) the lower southern slopes, 3) the northern slopes. We also surveyed the next ridge/promontory c. 40/50 m to the north of Turkaka; no artefacts were retrieved and recorded from this area.

The survey indicated that the highest density of finds occurred along the lower-lying south-western strip of the ridge top and the eroding south facing slopes immediately below the ridge line. A small area of prehistoric pottery was located on the lower south-western slopes, potentially representing a later site. Close by this area of pottery, c. 20 m to the north-west, on the

south-western spur of the ridge, were found two small circular patches of stones, possibly graves.

Chipped stone assemblages Karim Shahir

The assemblage at Karim Shahir has a significant element of pressure debitage producing elongated, narrow, pointed bladelets. Significant frequency of pressure debitage cores, but also rejuvenation elements from pressure blade cores (see also Fig. 3) attest to on-site pressure production. This utilised a fine-grained grey flint, quite often glossy, which along with other characteristics may suggest heat treatment. Primary debitage for the production of these cores seems to be absent from the excavated areas, therefore the cores might have arrived already shaped as preforms.



Other reduction strategies include single platform blade and flake production, using a variety of materials. Most of the knapped materials were not locally available.

Pressure blades were retouched into tools with fine retouch and notches; notched areas were often elongated. Other blanks were also most frequently turned into notched pieces by deliberate retouch or use. Small flake scrapers also occur. Other more formal tool classes include bilaterally backed small and large piercing tools and microliths.

Microliths consist of backed bladelet fragments and backed bladelets with oblique concave

truncations, perhaps manufactured on the trihedral points produced in the microburin technique. The backed bladelets are all broken so they might also be fragments of these obliquely truncated microliths. The microliths often have fine retouch on the non-backed edge.

The microliths along with the other technological and typological attributes suggest that the site might date to the 10-9th millennia cal. BC.

Turkaka

The Turkaka chipped stone assemblage is at a very preliminary stage of study. As a preliminary observation the absence of pressure debitage and both flake and blade/bladelet production is noted. End scrapers and burins are present, rare backed bladelets, but no clear-cut geometric microliths; these features suggest a late Upper Palaeolithic occupation, possibly extending into an early Epipalaeolithic date for the assemblage.

Small finds Karim Shahir

Two ground and polished axes were retrieved from Karim Shahir: one from the surface and one from Area B (see Figures 4-5). Two marble ring ornaments were retrieved from Area B: one was an especially small fine example from sorting heavy residue from flotation (Fig. 6). A part of a sub-rectangular shell pendent was also found in cobble layer BAE.

A small stone bead with multiple drill holes, rather like a button was retrieved from Turkaka. This may be late Palaeolithic but it is not possible to rule out a later date as it was a surface find.



Fig. 4,5 & 6

Archaeobiological remains

A very small animal bone assemblage was retrieved from Karim Shahir (comprising mostly goat and deer) which is currently being studied by Louise Martin at UCL. Animal bone is poorly preserved in heavily mineralised form, likely as a result of leaching. This is further supported by the initial results of phytolith analyses, undertaken by Emma Jenkins at Bournemouth University, which have indicated minimal phytolith preservation. Flotation samples are currently being sorted at the Archaeobotany Laboratory of the University of Liverpool by Eleni Asouti and Ceren Kabukcu. While find density is very low, it has been possible to identify *Pistacia* charcoal flecks in the Karim Shahir samples, alongside charred small grass seeds.

Future work

We plan to recommence fieldwork (interrupted during 2015 due to the recent deterioration of

the security situation in the wider region) in the spring of 2016, over a period of six weeks, in order to excavate the terraces associated with the Palegawra rock-shelters, and also sink test trenches at Turkaka aimed at assessing its potential for archaeobiological sampling and the preservation of plant and animal remains.

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BISI Research Grant Award-Holder 2014*

Fourth Babylon Festival for International Cultures and Arts

The New Babylon Festivals (Babylon Foundation) were initiated four years ago by Dr Ali ash-Shallah, MP for the province of Babylon, presently Director of Media for the Republic of Iraq, and an acclaimed poet.

There is no relation whatsoever between the Babylon Festivals organised by Saddam Hussein and the present occurrences. The new festivals include international cultural exchanges, devoid of any propagandist events, and integrate all forms of the arts and cultures without any political, religious, or other dictates. The focus is on peace, human rights, gender equality, reconciliation. One of the objectives of the festivals is the inclusion of the site of Babylon in the UNESCO World Heritage List from which it has been excluded to this day.

The Babylon Foundation which organise the Babylon Festival also work actively in the restoration of 'Abbasid, and Ottoman architecture and have just completed the reconstruction of a typical late Ottoman house in Old Baghdad (Abu Nuwas) which is now the site of concerts and exhibitions as well as offering accommodation for international students, scholars and artists.

The main events of the festival take place in the 'neo-hellenistic' theatre at the site of Babylon where around 1,500 spectators gather for both opening and closing evenings. All other events take place either in the museum courtyard at the site of Babylon, at a school at Hillah and in other local theatres. Participants of the festival are usually hosted in the palatial infrastructures

built, in the gardens of Babylon just below Saddam Hussein's palace built on top of an artificial tell.

The Babylon Festivals are covered by the Iraqi national and other TV channels and by the daily local and national press. The Festivals are highly regarded throughout the country and appease differences through a shared culture.

One of the main concerns with the Babylon Festivals is funding which is a difficult task in a country at war, and where the conservation of culture is felt as a luxury that people cannot afford.

The BISI Conference grant enabled myself, Ahmed Mukhtar (Oud master) and Dr John Macginnis (Current BISI Council Member) to travel to the festival to give a lecture to students of archaeology at Babylon University. We were invited by the chancellor of the university, Professor al-Baghdadi, to speak at the main lecture theatre of the university which was packed with professors and students. The event was presented on national television.

The focus of my talk was on the contribution of Akkadian, Babylonian and Assyrian theory of music, to the development of Western music.

During the Akkadian Period, mathematical cuneiform texts excavated at the Temple Library of Nippur, by Wolfram Hilprecht at the beginning of the twentieth century and dated from about 2,300 BC, showed lists of regular numbers extracted from the sexagesimal mathematical system. These numbers gave values to the nine notes of the Akkadian scale: 36; 40; 45; 48; 54; 60; 64; 72 and 81. Most interestingly these numbers can be taken as units of string lengths or reciprocally as units of frequency. The ratios which they generate between them, that is $40/36$, can be converted into musical cents, a method developed in the late nineteenth century by Alexander John Ellis, from an earlier eighteenth century method devised by the French scientist Prosnier. $40/36 = 182$ cents which is the minor tone; $45/40 = 204$ cents which is the just major tone and $48/45 = 112$, which is the semitone. These numbers which were conceptualised over 4,000 years ago give the exact values of the harmonic, or natural scale, a scale which was invented about 1,500 years before Pythagoras was born.

The Old Babylonian period produced a tablet excavated from the site of Ur by Sir Leonard Woolley (Fig. 1). This text is a method by which nine different scales, or sets, can be generated from a fundamental set by simple re-arrangement of some of the pitches in each set. The resulting scales have been wrongly named 'modes' by some scholars, for reasons which are beyond the purpose of this short text. Other texts were written during the Assyrian period, in the first millennium, but would have been copies of much earlier Babylonian originals. These texts give the names of intervals of fifths and thirds which were the forerunners of the Arabian Ajnas of the Maqam system. Another cuneiform text of unknown provenance, hosted at the University Museum of Philadelphia (Fig. 2) has the earliest evidence for the construction of a heptatonic scale system of eight 'modes' in all points similar to the seven liturgical 'modes' of our Western Middle Ages. The tablet has a drawing etched onto it describing a tuning device consisting of two discs rotating one against the other to generate the seven modes based on the heptatonic system (Fig. 3). This tablet is the earliest evidence of the construction of a heptatonic scale by means of alternation of fifths and fourths, much before Euclid.

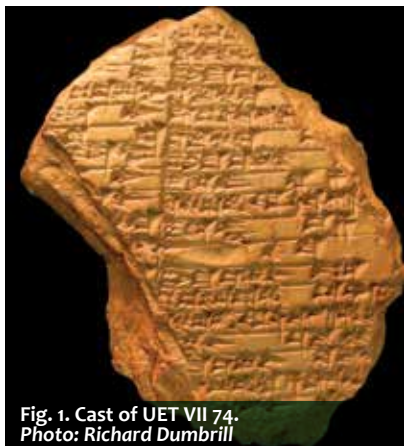


Fig. 1. Cast of UET VII 74.
Photo: Richard Dumbrill



Fig. 2. CBS 1766.
Photo: Piotr Michalowski



Fig. 3. Photo montage by Richard Dumbrill showing to the left the replication of the tuning device described on the tablet

It has become evident that Greek scholars visited the city of Babylon from the eighth century BC, to study, during what is called the Orientalizing Period, and brought back to Athens the Babylonian system which further spread to the West in the course of time, and ended up in the liturgical systems of Christendom, as well as in the Synagogues.

Richard Dumbrill
Director of the International Conference of Near and Middle Eastern Archaeomusicology & Advisory Board Member of the Babylon Foundation
BISI Conference Grant Award-Holder 2015

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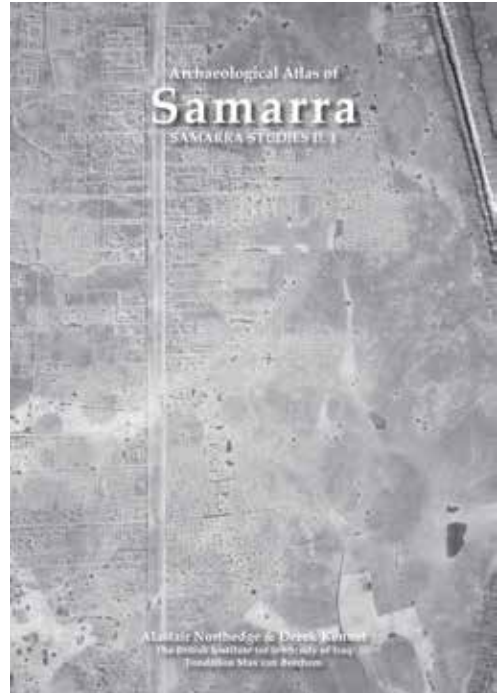
Archaeological Atlas of Samarra: Samarra Studies II by Alastair Northedge and Derek Kennet

Published by The British Institute for the Study of Iraq in conjunction with the Fondation Max van Berchem

The Archaeological Atlas of Samarra sets out to map and catalogue the site and buildings of the Abbasid capital at Samarra in the period 836 to 892 AD, preserved as they were until the middle years of the 20th century. Site maps and catalogues are provided of all the approximately 5819 building and site units identified. This is the first time that it has been possible to catalogue nearly all the buildings of one of the world's largest ancient cities, from the caliph palaces to the smallest hovels.

Alastair Northedge is Professor of Islamic Art and Archaeology at Université de Paris 1 (Panthéon-Sorbonne). He has worked in Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, and conducted projects at Amman in Jordan, Ana in Iraq, and Misriyan in Turkmenistan, in addition to Samarra. He is the author of *Studies on Roman and Islamic Amman*, and joint author of *Excavations at Ana*.

Derek Kennet is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Archaeology at Durham University where he has been since 1998. His research area includes the later pre-Islamic to Islamic periods of Iraq, the Gulf and the western Indian Ocean. He has conducted fieldwork in Iran, India, Kuwait, the UAE and Oman.



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Wednesday 16 December 2015, 6.00pm at the British Academy

Dr Birger Ekornåsvåg Helgestad & Dr Jon Taylor *Walking in Woolley's footsteps: Ur brought to life for the digital age*
Wednesday 24 February 2016, 6.00pm at the British Academy

All of the above event are free of charge. BISI members will be notified as soon as bookings open.



Sir Leonard Woolley with plaster cast of harp
Copyright: British Museum

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