

THE BRITISH INSTITUTE FOR
THE STUDY OF IRAQ
(GERTRUDE BELL MEMORIAL)

المعهد البريطاني لدراسة العراق

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CHAIR OF COUNCIL'S INTRODUCTION



A year ago, I found myself reflecting in our Newsletter on positive developments that saw a continuing expansion in opportunities for the Institute to support academic research and public engagement on Iraq. What a difference 12 months makes! In February we held our regular Council meeting at Carlton House Terrace and enjoyed a marvellous lecture by Professor Nicholas Postgate on his work at Abu Salabikh. But the following month the British Academy's building went into lockdown and since then our Executive Officer, Ali Khadr, has been managing the Institute from his home; our June Council meeting was inevitably online.

The pandemic has of course affected BISI in other ways. A number of projects that we supported with grants have been unable to proceed as planned and our Visiting Iraqi Scholars Programme with UCL's Nahrein Network has been put on hold, not least because our Iraqi colleagues have faced similar restrictions at home. We very much look forward to a time when we can restart these significant strands of our work, the latter having proven to be a very successful model for linking UK and Iraqi researchers.

There are, however, numerous 'reasons to be cheerful', many highlighted in this newsletter which captures our broad range of activities.

I am happy to report that the Friends of Basrah Museum charity, which has helped so successfully to establish the Basrah Museum as an important cultural landmark in southern Iraq, has merged with the BISI. It will retain a separate identity in the form of a sub-committee reporting to Council and continue to support the Museum through dedicated projects, initially in helping to install the British School of Archaeology in Iraq's library into an impressive space on the upper floor of the building.

While our public lectures at the British Academy have been halted due the pandemic, we are developing a series of talks on Zoom. The first was delivered by Dr Eva Miller and explored the magnificent palace reliefs from Assyria. We will keep you informed about the programme and I look forward to welcoming you to these lectures, albeit virtually.

Another great civilization of ancient Iraq, that of the Sumerians, has also been the focus of the Institute this year. A children's book, *Discover Ancient Sumer*, sponsored by BISI and Dangoor Education, has recently been published by the Ashmolean Museum. We hope it will be a useful resource for primary school teachers (but also a great present for anybody aged around 9 years and up). An Arabic version of the book is currently in production which we hope will also be available for sale in Iraq.

Another link between the Ashmolean and BISI will take the form a temporary exhibition at the

Museum called *Owning the Past: From Mesopotamia to Iraq*. Supported by the Institute, it is scheduled to run from 14 December 2020 to 16 May 2021 and will explore the origin of the modern country through the lens of heritage. The exhibition will focus on the British occupation of Mesopotamia during the First World War, the excavation and removal of ancient objects to Oxford, and the drawing of Iraq's borders between 1919–1932. Co-curated by Oxford residents originally from the Middle East, it will be presented alongside an installation by contemporary artist Piers Secunda.

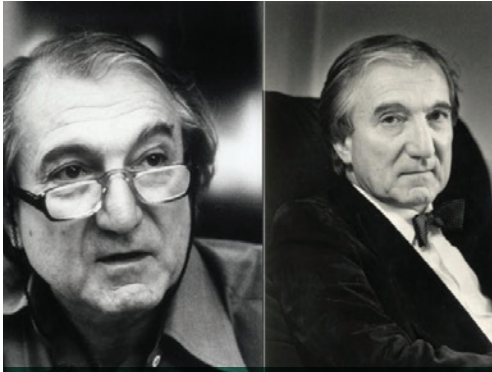
Let me end with more good news. We have long enjoyed the benefit of having Sir Terence Clark as a Patron; his knowledge of Iraq is invaluable to BISI. He will now be joined in the role by Ms Maysoon Al-Damluji, Cultural Adviser to the Iraqi President Barham Salih. Maysoon has maintained an interest in our work for some time, especially through our much-missed friend and colleague Dr Lamia Al-Gailani Werr. I am therefore delighted that she has agreed to join us to share her experience and advice.

Dr Paul Collins
Chair of Council



Professor Nicholas Postgate delivering the Annual Mallowan Lecture on *An Iraqi city in the 3rd millennium: Abu Salabikh resurrected*, Wednesday 26 February 2020. Image courtesy of Ali Khadr.

In Memory of Rifat Chadirji (1926-2020))



The architect, Rifat Chadirji.

Image: Rifat Chadirji Archive, courtesy of Aga Khan Documentation Center, MIT Libraries (AKDC@MIT)

Chadirji: the Baghdad Trend Setter

Most people knew Rifat as a renowned architect and researcher, however, for several decades many also recognised him as a trend setter in Baghdad.

When I was growing up in Baghdad in the sixties and seventies, a time of relative peace and tranquillity in the city, there were a handful of people that my generation looked up to, to sense the latest trends in fashion and lifestyle. Rifat Chadirji was certainly one of them.

Rifat and his friends established a cultural club in a suburb north of Baghdad. Al-Jamiya Al-Baghdadiya occupied an old farmhouse with a motor pump, it was a heavenly venue surrounded by water streams and palm trees. Members of the club were able to enjoy a fine drink with their barbecued dinner, watch a vintage Hollywood movie or a censored play, or join endless discussions on art, architecture, or any other topic with the avant-garde of sixties Baghdad. Rifat himself designed the outdoor cinema, bar, and many of the other unique features of the club. Alas, the project came

to an abrupt end when the ruling Baath party put its hands on it in the early seventies.

Rifat's architecture practice was a haven of young and well-dressed architects of both sexes, from every ethnic and religious background, not that anyone cared in those days. The latest western music played on the finest hi-tech loudspeakers of the time, while young architects rushed around with their T-squares and blueprints. It was a privilege for any graduate to practice for a year or two at Rifat's firm, regardless of pay, before being released to the wide world of contracts and clients.



Elevation of Rafidain Bank (1971, Baghdad), from *The Architecture of Rifat Chadirji: A Collection of Twelve Etchings*.

Image: Rifat Chadirji Archive, courtesy of Aga Khan Documentation Center, MIT Libraries (AKDC@MIT)

Next to his office was his furniture shop named after the Sumerian deity, Ea. Rifat designed every piece in the collection, using local materials combined with imported timber and fabric, to create modern comforts that every trendy house in Baghdad had to acquire.

I should also add that he was a close friend of my family. As a child, during many weekends, I had the privilege of attending day trips to palm tree farms that surrounded Baghdad, and

longer trips to various historic parts of Iraq, arranged by Rifat and his team. He always took the time to explain to us, the children in the group, the meaning behind the rubble and ruins that were once magnificent buildings in ancient Mesopotamia.

I worked with Rifat in the late eighties as an assistant researcher on his book *The Ukhaider and the Crystal Palace*. He had plenty to teach especially on the ethics of the architectural trade and problem solving. Productivity was part of a process unique to his way of thinking. Every single detail had to be explored within a system of communications and exploration. This was before the age of the internet, emails and Google searches.

I knew many of the residences where he and his partner Balkis lived, from the one next to his father's in Baghdad where he applied his architectural theories, to the converted squash court, to a modernised fisherman's hut at the shore of the Mediterranean in Lebanon, to his flat in a crowded neighbourhood in Beirut, and finally to his scenic house on the River Thames in Kingston. Every one of them had to have a unique touch in arrangement of space, light, furnishing and choice of paintings on the walls.

Chadirji, like other pioneers of his time, viewed architecture within a wider context that included almost every aspect of life, and spread it around generously to everyone who knew him.

Maysoon Al-Damluji

BISI Patron and Cultural Advisor to the Iraqi President, Barham Salih

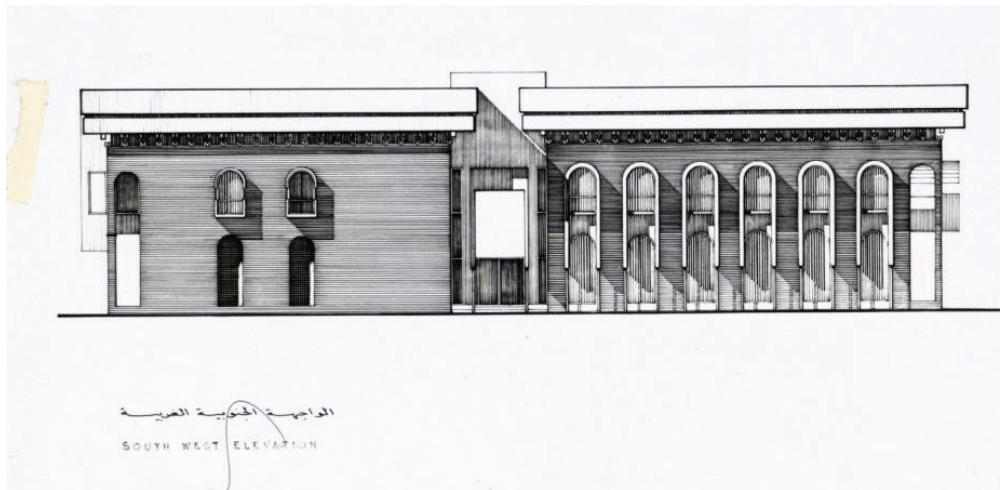
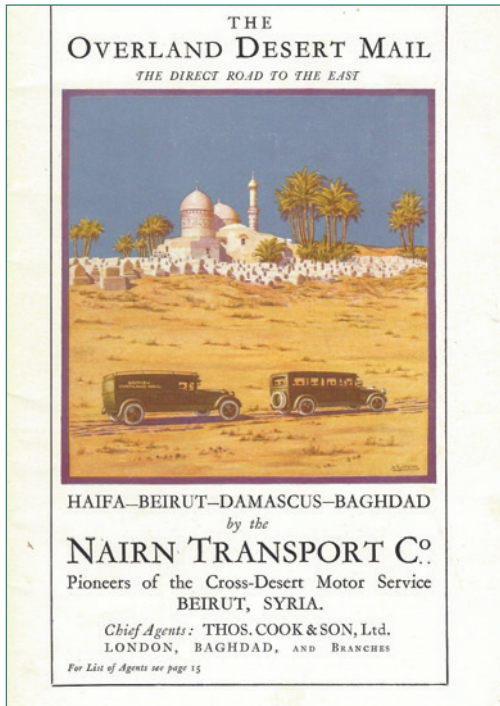


Photo 4: Iraqi Scientific Academy Building.

Image: Kamil and Rifat Chadirji Photographic Archive, courtesy of Aga Khan Documentation Center, MIT Libraries (AKDC@MIT)

ACADEMIC GRANT REPORTS

Tourism in Iraq: Reading Modernity and Antiquity in the Thomas Cook Archives



The Overland Desert Mail, the front cover of a tourist's brochure, advertising the Nairn Transport Company's motor services, in partnership with Thomas Cook, to and from Baghdad

In May of 2019, I had the opportunity to travel to Thomas Cook's Peterborough headquarters just days before their archivist Paul Smith was made redundant. This decision precipitated what I was told would be a "temporary closure." Little did I know that I would be the last researcher to use the company's internal archive; months later, the Peterborough headquarters closed its

doors for the last time. Without the generous assistance of the BISI, I would have not had this chance.

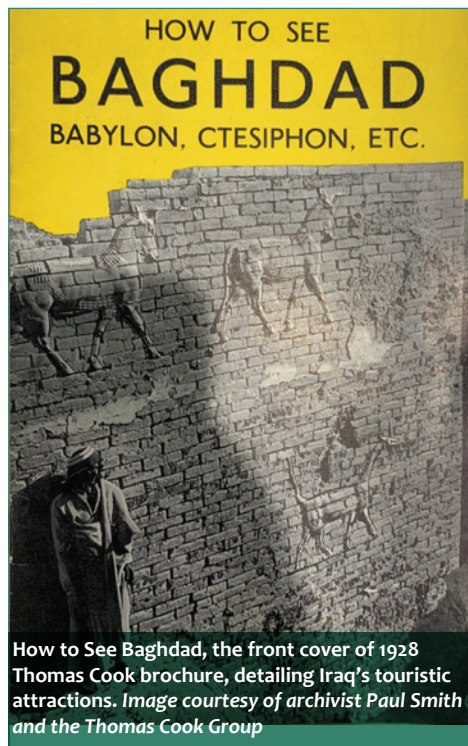
Tourism in Iraq: Reading Modernity and Antiquity in the Thomas Cook Archives, written with the use of Thomas Cook's extensive archival collection, documents how the British travel firm used a network of materials - from guidebooks and travelogues to ephemeral written and visual sources, including pamphlets, magazine articles, maps, and colourful advertisements - to construct a specific image of Iraq as a tourist destination. This was of a land simultaneously "modern" - boasting the latest amenities in the interwar hospitality industry, accessible thanks to novel developments in transportation infrastructure - and "frozen in time," where history could ostensibly be experienced simply by being there. Each genre of source produced by Thomas Cook played a role in framing Iraq in these terms, working in concert with one another as part of a cohesive marketing strategy bolstering this specific impression: both to encourage potential (primarily British and American) tourists to make the trip, as well orienting them once they had arrived in the country.

This research serves as a novel (yet still preliminary) contribution to multiple historiographies. Within the history of tourism generally, my project further refines our understanding of Thomas Cook's worldwide presence while also explicating the nature of its multimedia network, thus contributing to a fuller portrait of interwar tourism's mechanics more broadly. Within the extant scholarship on Thomas Cook's history, the past two decades have witnessed an increased focus on the firm's practices in the Middle East, culminating in a small but

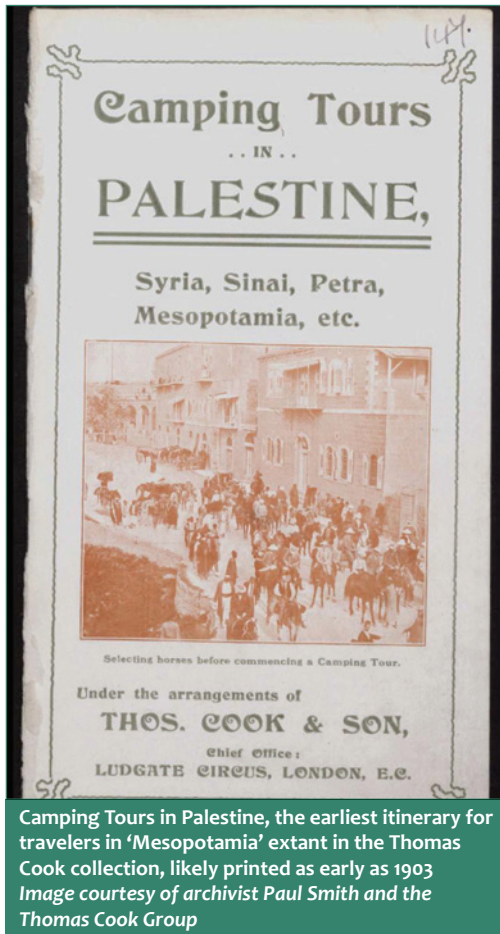
growing subfield. In the face of the broader historiography's European- and American-centric tendencies, these contributions absolutely succeed in drawing attention to Thomas Cook's operations in the Middle East, thus working towards filling a critical lacuna in the field. Despite broadening one geographic frame, however, much of the extant literature inadvertently restricts another: it focuses almost exclusively on Egypt and Palestine, often at the expense of other destinations in the region. While these destinations did represent major stops on a regional itinerary, they were not the only ones open to the fledgling industry. I hope that if nothing else, *Tourism in Iraq* succeeds in promoting the baseline recognition of Iraq's place in early-twentieth century tourism; to my knowledge, it is the first research project devoted to doing so.

During my time in Peterborough, I poured through the archive for every mention of Iraq I could find and found a plethora of uncatalogued and neglected material. Threaded throughout these seemingly disparate texts is a consistent narrative: the twin portrayals of Iraq as simultaneously modern and ancient. Three articles published in the December 1923 issue of Thomas Cook's periodical *The Traveller's Gazette*, for example, encapsulate this dual image. One article promises tourists speedy and luxurious modern transit - enabled through Thomas Cook's monopoly partnership with the Nairn Eastern Transport Company - in the form of "comfortable, well-upholstered seven-seater Cadillac automobile," bringing tourists from Damascus to Baghdad "in the space of fifty-five hours - an achievement which brings Baghdad within nine days of London." A review of E.S. Stevens' 1923 travelogue *By Tigris and Euphrates*, published in the same issue of *The Traveller's Gazette*, effusively praises

Stevens' handling of "the infinite variety and complexity of Iraq," with special attention to the nation's archaeological sites. The reviewer ends the article by immediately connecting the nation's omnipresent antiquity with the cutting edge of hospitality infrastructure, writing that "the places described by Mrs. Stevens are no longer difficult of access: it is now possible to go by automobile from Beyrout [Beirut] to Baghdad, and to all the chief sites of Mesopotamia by the Iraq railway system, which has given special attention to the needs of tourists." *The Traveller's Gazette* parallel recourse to modernity/antiquity simultaneously is but one example of the type found throughout Thomas Cook's printed work, which *Tourism in Iraq* explicates in further detail.



How to See Baghdad, the front cover of 1928 Thomas Cook brochure, detailing Iraq's touristic attractions. Image courtesy of archivist Paul Smith and the Thomas Cook Group



Taken together, Thomas Cook's printed materials form a cohesive narrative about what the firm wanted tourists to expect in Iraq: the most comfortable, modern amenities possible alongside what effectively amounted to a country-wide archaeological amusement park. This discourse formed concurrently with the solidification of Iraq's modern borders. Thus, studying this corpus sheds light on a particular subsection of Western society's attitudes towards the new nation, attitudes otherwise absent in a historiography primarily focused on political sources. In an era in

which print media presented Iraq primarily as either a site of violent instability or an arena for sanitized economic development, Thomas Cook's literature offered a different set of projections onto the nation. These materials tapped into existing literary topoi, connecting to a broader sphere of popular cultural imaginations about Iraq and the Middle East more broadly: a land of history and magic, still to be found in a world otherwise sanitized by rational modernity. These impressions, the tourists they inspired to visit, and their role in structuring specific Western attitudes toward modern Iraq, warrant even further study; this source-based analysis serves as a first step.

In being a first step, gaps and omissions plague Tourism in Iraq. As with any primarily archival project, the present study has been constrained by what materials managed to survive, and of those, which have been deemed worthy of preservation within an official archive. The Thomas Cook company first made a concerted effort to form its own centralized archive in the 1950s, sending a call to each of its global offices for their records and documents. This initial call, alongside subsequent, smaller-scale, acquisition efforts, have set the parameters for the archive's current collection. When the firm's Baghdad office closed a few decades later, their documents did not get sent back to England; their location remains a mystery to this day. Even within my primary source base, the very nature of "ephemera" speaks to the impossibility of archival completeness; the brochures, magazines, and scattered visual advertisements extant in the Thomas Cook archives are the items (luckily) preserved, not the complete sum of texts the company produced. Extensive digging in other (likely uncatalogued) collections, personal records, and even vintage ephemera markets will

likely turn up more sources for future research. These realities and limitations undergird my study, presenting a necessarily incomplete image of Thomas Cook's material on Iraq.

Guidebooks, magazines, and pamphlets led British and American customers to expect specific things from Iraq, but this exchange - at least, as told through the firm's materials and archive - appeared entirely one sided. Within these texts, there is no room allotted for Iraqis to respond to the firm's discursive strategies about their country, either in praise of its accuracies or to refute its falsehoods. These voices fall outside of the purview of the present study, but further research into the history of Iraqi tourism must grapple with, and ultimately rectify, this omission.

I am incredibly grateful for BISI's generous contributions, without which this project would have been impossible. Since submitting *Tourism in Iraq* as my dissertation for a Master's degree in History at SOAS, University of London last year, I have continued my research at the doctoral level. I have just completed my first year in the joint Ph.D. program in History and Middle Eastern Studies at New York University, under the supervision of Dr Sara Pursley and Dr Zachary Lockman. At NYU, I am tackling many of the questions emerging from my Master's dissertation, filling in the project's lacunae while broadening my overall scope. Though still in the very early stages of my doctoral research, I intend to write a comprehensive history of archaeology and tourism in modern Iraq.

Laith Shakir
PhD Student New York University



Baghdad to Basra ticket, a Thomas Cook tourist coupon for railway travel between Baghdad and Basra. Image courtesy of archivist Paul Smith and the Thomas Cook Group



1956 Staff Magazine, a photo in the September-October 1956 issue of Thomas Cook's Staff Magazine, advertising the company's new Baghdad office on al-Saadoun Street. Image courtesy of archivist Paul Smith and the Thomas Cook Group

The Study of Zooarchaeological Material from Abu Salabikh

In May 2019 Dr Tina Greenfield and her team of specialists (Dr Jane Gastra, and Mr Eleuterio De Sousa), embarked on a two-week trip to Diwaniyah, Iraq to study the animal bones which had been salvaged from the dig house at Abu Salabikh in 2017 and are now stored in the premises of the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage Inspectorate at Diwaniyah. The research is supported by a grant from BISI, with matching funds from both Cambridge (Cambridge Humanities Research Grants), and Dr Greenfield's base, St Thomas More College, University of Saskatchewan. The overall aim of the study was to triage, identify the assemblage, and begin the initial analysis of specific contexts (especially houses 5G and 6H) out of a total of 30 crates of archived zooarchaeological material. After securing their visas, the three arrived in Diwaniyah to the capable hands of Mr Jacob Jawdat from the SBAH with much practical assistance from Professor Abbas Al-Hussainy of the University of Al-Qadisiyah. The team is greatly indebted to both of these colleagues who helped secure access to the material housed in the Inspectorate and facilitated the study in various ways. Without their help and guidance this research would not have been possible.

The identifications: The corpus of material was initially sorted to extract animal bone and teeth recovered from excavation contexts in two large Early Dynastic houses (6H and 5G). Each individual bone was identified to element and species and any available information regarding the age or sex of the individual recorded. Identified bones were also analysed to record

information regarding bone modifications (pathological or anthropogenic) as well as pre-and post-depositional fragmentation rates and surface alterations in the form of butchery marks, burning or taphonomic changes to bone surfaces. The identification of element, species, age and sex was done using the aid of standard texts (Boessneck et al 1963, Grant 1982; Payne 1973, Zeder and Lapham 2010, Zeder and Pilaar 2010) as well as digital reference collections belonging to the analysts.

Further scientific analyses: In addition to the traditional identification of animal bones and teeth recovered from these selected contexts, several specimens were chosen for further scientific analyses using the specialist expertise of the three members. A study of the butchering marks were conducted by Mr De Sousa. Specimens that were identified with cut marks on their surface were further analysed under a dinolite microscope to measure not only the length of cut into the bone's surface, but also to identify the profile of each cut mark via images recorded with the microscope. Analyses such as these help to determine what materials were used in the butchering process of the animal, in addition to the identification of potential patterns of specific butchers. This information also informs on the overall processing and distribution activities of animal parts within and across a settlement. Dr Gastra selected intact astragali (ankle bones) of sheep and goats for photogrammetric 3D morphometric modelling (GMM). This builds models of each specimen, which will allow for comparisons of sheep and goat breeds present at Abu Salabikh and those from Early Bronze Age sites in other regions of the Middle East, to determine levels of regional variation and/or integration of breeding practices. Dr

Greenfield selected specimens for stable isotope and trace element analyses to be carried out in her Saskatchewan laboratory. Isotopic studies on animal teeth can shed light on various valuable issues related to the mobility and management of animals.

Faunal material has only rarely been collected and published from Mesopotamian urban sites, and the virtue of this assemblage is that it belongs in a very well understood context, that is, the rooms of elite urban family residences. While the bones reflect diet, they also allowed the team to see to what extent the society of the mid-3rd millennium city was integrated with the surrounding agricultural population. Zooarchaeologist, Sebastian Payne has already shown that pigs were roaming the city streets, but in later centuries it is clear that the countryside was controlled by a managerial class based within urban centres. We know from the cuneiform tablets that the temple at Abu Salabikh owned over 13,000 sheep and goats, the isotope data may reveal whether an animal was kept inside the city compounds for fattening and eventual consumption, left to roam, pastured on an agricultural landscape close to the city, or marched seasonally hundreds of miles north in search of pasture, as happened at other times in the history of south Iraq. It was with these larger questions in mind that Dr Greenfield and her team set out to analyse the material in Diwaniyah.

Further research and publication: Unfortunately, despite obtaining the necessary authorization from the SBAH in Baghdad, the team were prevented from exporting the samples selected for isotope (and other) analyses at the airport as they left in May in the absence of documentation from the Customs (which had never previously been required). Subsequently our supportive Iraqi colleagues have negotiated the necessary documentation, but for various reasons have so far been unable to arrange for the samples to be despatched to Canada. This report has been delayed in the hope that this could be remedied, but in the absence of definite news it is time to submit regardless.

While the separate specialist analyses will be reported in appropriate zooarchaeological contexts, the overall identifications accomplished by the team, relating to assemblages from 130 different contexts will be included in Volume V of *Abu Salabikh Excavations* which is scheduled to be submitted to BISI later this year.

Prof Nicholas Postgate
Cambridge University

Protest and Repress: Issue Politics, “Militia-zation” and Toxicity of Everyday Life in Iraq

This project examines the context following the Islamic State invasion in Iraq characterized on the one hand by the “militia-zation” of the Iraqi regime and on the other hand by the strengthening of movements of civil protests. My argument here is that these polarised social and political phenomena need to be analysed by looking at neoliberal economic politics (privatisation, job crisis etc.) the political economy of war (milita-sation, militarisation etc.), and the “toxicity of everyday life” - defined here as the structural conditions of everyday life and livelihood such as health and sanitary infrastructures and environmental conditions.

While this research project considers the importance of sectarian, ethnic and religious identities in contemporary Iraq, it also argues that there is a need to explore contemporary and recent Iraqi social, economical and political realities beyond communal and identity-based categories. In line with recent research (Ali 2018, Dodge 2018, Jabar 2018). I argue that while the context following the invasion and occupation of Iraq is clearly characterised by the institutionalization of communalism (sectarianism, ethnic and religious divisions) through the muhasasa system, there is a shift away from identity politics in civil society protests ; and it is necessary to adopt a wider historical perspective rather than focus on the post-2003 context. I also argue that it is equally important to analyse communal identities as relational (existing in relation to one another), changing and dynamic.

Thus, this project intends to:

1. broaden transnational feminist theoretical perspective in providing an analysis of the political economy of militarization and ethnosectarianism relying on recent research such as Joseph Sassoon (2016), Bassam Yousif (2016, 2010) and Fanar Haddad (2014, 2011), especially in the context following the Islamic State organisation invasion of parts of northern and western Iraq in June 2014. I sought to understand and analyse how women, youth and civil society activists have addressed this particular context of crisis and exacerbated militarism. I explore what is commonly called “military capitalism” (Amar, 2018) and analyse how the ethnosectarian hypermilitarist dominant political realities shape youth and civil society movements: their definition of nationhood, sense of belonging, citizenship, notions of social justice and equality and of course the class dynamics of these movements.

2. explore the articulation between different forms of structural violence, senses of belonging, and competing discourses and concrete practices of activism developed by women, youth, civil society social and political activists within the current southern uprising and more generally in Iraq today. I believe that an ethnographic approach of the southern and October uprisings coupled with the analysis of the continuum of ethnosectarian, political, economic and social violence in Iraq since at least the 1980s is needed to understand the current conjuncture.

3. examine the relationship between civil society mobilisations and the “toxicity of everyday life” resulting from the lack of health and sanitary infrastructures (Al-

Mohammad 2011, 2007), the water and electricity crisis as well as the pollution of oil exploitation and remains of war and conflicts (Dewachi 2017, 2013). How is the “toxicity of everyday life” shaping civil society activists’ mobilisations and demands? To what extent does it inform social and political developments in Basra, Baghdad, Nasiriyah and the rest of Iraq?

Research Context

In summer 2018, a spontaneous protest movement emerged in the south of Iraq. Similarly, to the demonstrations in 2015 and 2011 that I explored in my recent research (Ali 2018, 2016), this movement of protest was launched from the oil-rich province of Basra. In addition to experiencing a shortage of drinking water and electricity as well as a high rate of unemployment, Basra also suffers from pollution, and serious sanitary and health phenomenon (Al-Mohammad 2011, 2007). However, unlike previous ones, the spontaneous movement of protest spreading in the Shi’a south remains away from formal political groups and any centralised organisation. Composed predominantly of young men, its slogans are more radical than the demands for functioning state services. From sentences such as “There is no homeland!” to the slogan “No, no, no to parties!”, protestors call for radical political change (Ali & Khalaf 2018).



Uhud Mountain, Baghdad. Courtesy of Zahra Ali



Tahrir Square, Baghdad. Courtesy of Zahra Ali

An essential feature of the protest movement is its violent repression by the Iraqi security forces and its attendant armed groups and militias. On 8 July 2018, a group of young unemployed men gathered around the foreign oil companies’ offices in the north of Basra to demand employment. The Iraqi security forces violently repressed the demonstration killing the 26 year old father of 3 Saad Al-Mansuri pushing the local population to take to the streets followed by other major cities of the south of Iraq. In the first two weeks of protests more than a dozen protesters were killed at the hand of the security forces and various armed groups, more than 600 wounded and 600 have been arrested, many released after being brutalised and threatened (IOHR 2018). Tanks and armoured vehicles, American trained anti-terrorism forces that were involved in Mosul, Iraqi national police as well as various armed groups and militias attacked the demonstrators (HRW 2018). For more than 10 days, the government cut the internet and telecommunication representing a loss of more than 40 million dollars a day. Protesters were depicted by Iraqi authorities as “saboteurs” and led by “foreign agents” or Ba’th affiliates.

This violent repression carried not only by the state security forces but also by militiamen and armed groups indicates an important shift in the post-election Iraqi context that I call “militia-zation” of the

Iraqi regime: the institutionalisation of various armed groups and militias after their involvement in the front against the Islamist State in Mosul since June 2014. The normalisation of these groups such as the paramilitary Iran-backed Hadi al-Ameri's al-Badr, Qais al-Khazali's Righteous League, Ammar al-Hakim's Ashura Brigades, Kataeb Hezbollah or Moqtada al-Sadr's militia, was reinforced through their participation to the general parliamentary elections in May 2018.

These protests paved the way to a major political phenomenon: the Iraqi October uprising. From October 2019, spontaneous protests turned into a massive uprising in Baghdad and major cities, mainly in the southern provinces of the country, such as Najaf, Karbala, Nasiriyah and Basra. While this movement has a lot in common with previous movement of protests' especially the ones in 2015 and 2018, it is unprecedented in its scale, form and nature. It is a leaderless movement demanding functioning state services from clean water and electricity provision, to health and education services. It rejects the muhasasa political system and widespread corruption and quickly gave way to more radical demands and calls for a revolution, with protestors chanting slogans 'We want a country'.

More than 700 unarmed protestors have been killed and more than 25,000 wounded by government and paramilitary groups using live ammunition, machine guns, stun grenades, hunting guns, anti-riot tanks and military grade tear gas. This violence can partly be analysed in looking at the hyper militarization of the Iraqi state and various armed groups following the Islamic State invasion. More generally, since 2003, weapons have been widely distributed among various actors such as tribal leaders, militia groups and paramilitary forces. What makes this violence pervasive and generalised is that protestors are not facing a coherent regime as the Iraqi state does not constitute a strong centralised state or regime, but rather militarised fragmented entities in which various political groups compete for power.

Despite the repression, protestors have demonstrated a firm commitment to non-violent civil disobedience. The protests are led by the youth and the disenfranchised, including many women and tuk-tuk taxi drivers from lower-class neighbourhoods, but its ranks have also been joined by Iraqis from all backgrounds and regions across the country. Unions, syndicates, and students of all levels have been on strike and calling for civil disobedience. They call for the appointment of an independent interim Prime Minister that would organise elections to form a new parliament and government and draft a new constitution. Protestors also demand the investigation and prosecution of the ones responsible for the killing of unarmed protestors and the end of the rule of militias and armed groups tied to the political elite that have been attacking journalists, civil society activists and protestors.



Protestor's Street Art. Courtesy of Zahra Ali



Protestor's Street Art. Courtesy of Zahra Ali

What BISI's grant allowed me to do

As mentioned in my initial research project, I obtained a grant from the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) Conflict Research Program of \$22000 in 2018 that allowed me to be on research leave (through a teaching buy out of two courses) in the Spring 2019 semester and afford part of the cost for fieldwork. Both SSRC and BISI's grant of £2605 allowed me to conduct **fieldwork in Baghdad, Najaf-Kufa, Karbala, Nasiriyah and Basra from February 26 and March 20 2019** and with what was left of BISI's grant I conducted fieldwork in **Baghdad, mainly in Tahrir Square from December 2019 to January 2020.**

Based on the fieldwork conducted in spring 2019, I managed to write a peer-reviewed academic article titled 'Under Peer-Review: From Recognition to Redistribution? Protest movements in Iraq in the age of 'new civil society'. It was accepted for publication and is now under a second peer-review with the *Journal of Intervention and State Building* for a special issue on Iraq prepared in collaboration with a group of researchers gathered in a workshop organized by the Frederick S. Pardee School of Global Studies for the Institute for Iraqi Studies at Boston University in April 2019. I also collaborated in a workshop titled *Religion, Violence, and the State in Iraq* organised by the Project Middle East Political Science & Crown Center for Middle East Studies at Brandeis University in April 2019 that concluded in the publication of the article "Feminist activism in Post-Da'esh Iraq" *POMEPS Studies* n°35, pp: 85-89. I also authored "Iraqis demand a country." *Middle East Report* n° 292/293, pp. 2-5.

I also presented papers based on this research in international academic conferences such as the Middle East Studies Association annual

conference, as well as workshops dedicated to the study of contemporary Iraq gathering scholars from Europe and the US. In order to make my research accessible to the general public, I also published pieces in online non-academic platforms and webzines such as the *Washington Post*, *Middle East Eye* and *Open Democracy*.

Articles for a general audience based on these recent fieldwork trips

"You have to walk in the path of life and in the path of death at the same time. I walked both paths and I survived" On the recent uprising in Iraq. *Versopolis*, February 2020.

Iraqis have been holding peaceful mass protests. The U.S. strike and its aftermath are undermining that. *Washington Post*, January 2020.

How US-Iran tensions have undermined Iraq's peaceful uprising. *Middle East Eye*, January 2020.

"We demand a homeland". The Revolution of the Youth of Iraq. *The Funambulist Magazine*, no 27, pp. 2-5, January 2020.

(with Safaa Khalaf) **In Iraq, demonstrators demand change and the government fights back.** *Washington Post*, October 2019.

Protest movements in Iraq in the age of 'new civil society'. *LSE Blogs & Open Democracy*, London, October 2019.

Papers presented in 2019 based on these recent fieldwork trips

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"Militia-zation" and Protest movements in post-2014 Iraq, *Middle East Studies Association Annual Conference*, New Orleans, Louisiana, November 2019.

الحراك النسوي في العراق في ظل حركة الاحتجاج Conference titled « السلوك الاحتجاجي في العراق » organised by Baghdad Academy for Human Sciences and Iraqi Association of Political Psychology, Baghdad, June 2019.

Women and Protest Movements in Iraq. International Workshop Religion, Violence, and the State in Iraq, organised by the Project Middle East Political Science & and Crown Center for Middle East Studies, Brandeis University, April 2019.

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VISITING IRAQI SCHOLARSHIPS

The Visiting Iraqi Scholarship programme, designed to provide Iraqi academics and heritage professionals with the skills and knowledge to protect and further historical and cultural research on their country, continues to be a fundamental way in which the Institute encourages engagement and collaboration.

Over the last twenty-four months the Institute has partnered with the UCL based Nahrein Network to help develop the capacity of Middle Eastern universities, museums, archives and heritage sites to enable cultural and economic growth in the region. With the generous support of the Nahrein Network, we have hosted 9 visiting scholars from Iraq.

Professor Nasser Jassim, Director of the Unit for the Study of Istisharaq (Orientalism) at the University of Mosul. To research and compile a dictionary of British contributions to the study of Iraqi history and civilisation. Hosted by the History Department at University College London.

Dr Sadiq Khalil, Advisor in the Prime Minister's Office, Iraq. To look into ways to build effective advocacy through case-studies of endangered Iraqi heritage. Hosted by the Material Culture Research Centre, Kingston University of Arts, Kingston University.

Dr Ali Naji Attiyah, Assistant Professor at the Civil Engineering Department of the University of Kufa. To look into the relationship between tangible and intangible cultural heritage and ways to increase the awareness of its importance. Hosted by the Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL.

Dlshad A. Mutalb Mustafa, Cultural Heritage Officer with the Directorate of Antiquities of Soran (Soran Province, Iraqi Kurdistan). To research museum displays and look into models for outreach activities which can be implemented at the Shanidar Cave site. Hosted by the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, at the University of Cambridge.

Mr Ali Al Makhzomy, Founder of Bil Weekend Tour Company in Baghdad. To undertake research on developing new methods to strengthen Iraq's tourism infrastructure.

Dr Rozhen Mohammed-Amin, Head of the Digital Cultural Heritage Research Group, Research Centre Coordinator and a Lecturer at the City Planning Department at Sulaimani Polytechnic University, Iraq. To assist with work on the EMOTIVE project at the University of Glasgow

Dr Alaa Hamdon, Lecturer and Researcher with the Remote Sensing Center at the University of Mosul. To work with Oxford University's Endangered Archaeology in the Middle East and North Africa (EAMENA), with the aim of updating and obtaining a better understanding of the present condition of the archaeological site of Hatra

Dr Maher Al-Helli, Professor at the History Department, Al Mustansiriyah University, Baghdad. To revitalise the teaching of medieval history in Iraq, through observation and discussion with UK colleagues and through visits to universities, libraries and medieval heritage sites across the UK.

Mr Mohammed Jasim Aal-Hajiahmed, former Director of Mosul University Libraries. To help develop a management plan for the Mosul Library. Mr Jasim will be researching digitisation and documentation of the surviving collection, acquisition strategies, and staff training. *Hosted by the British Library*



Dr Ali Naji Attiyah delivering a talk at UCL. Courtesy of Ali Khadr



Dr Rozhen Mohammed-Amin delivering a public lecture at the University of Glasgow. Courtesy of Dr Mohammed Amin

BISI-Nahrein Visiting Scholar Report

Report by Dishad A. Mutalb Mustafa

Awarded Scholarship to research museum displays and look into models for outreach activities which can be implemented at the Shanidar Cave site

Edited by Ali Khadr

I was grateful to be given the great opportunity through the BISI-Nahrein Visiting Iraqi Scholarship Scheme to come to the UK for two months, to do research at the University of Cambridge. My research focused on the Shanidar Cave and outreach activities, to look into how an important site like the Shanidar Cave can be better presented to the public in a very simple and comprehensive way to the local population and to international tourists.

During my time, under the supervision of Professor Graeme Barker of the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, and with the help and support of the BISI and Nahrein Network team, Professor Eleanor Robson, Dr Mehiyar Kathem, Mrs Joan Porter MacIver, and Ms Isobel Ransome, I successfully completed intensive research outlining the public engagement priorities for the Shanidar Cave' for the Shanidar Cave and how to achieve it. Before coming to the UK, I had some ideas about the management of the site, but coming to the UK to undergo research, being provided with access to vast libraries and literature, visiting exhibitions and museums, meeting with museum professionals, visiting archaeological sites in the UK and attending wonderful seminars and classes at the University of Cambridge, have all together broadened my horizon and enriched my knowledge and experience, not only on how to best present the Shanidar Cave, but also about heritage management in general and how to deal with heritage management issues.

After two months of research at the University of Cambridge, I feel very satisfied with the results and I can certainly say that I am now able to develop a detailed proposal and plan for what should be done at the Shanidar Cave site and how it can be presented to the public. A lot of thought has gone into what kind of structure is required for the visitor centre, its size, location, its main objectives, the kind of information that will be available there, the number of galleries and sections, and what objects to use to tell the site's story. All of this will help with demonstrating the scientific aspects of the site and to educate the public. The detailed proposal will help us make decisions on whether to build the project ourselves by partially or fully contracting local or potentially international companies. The

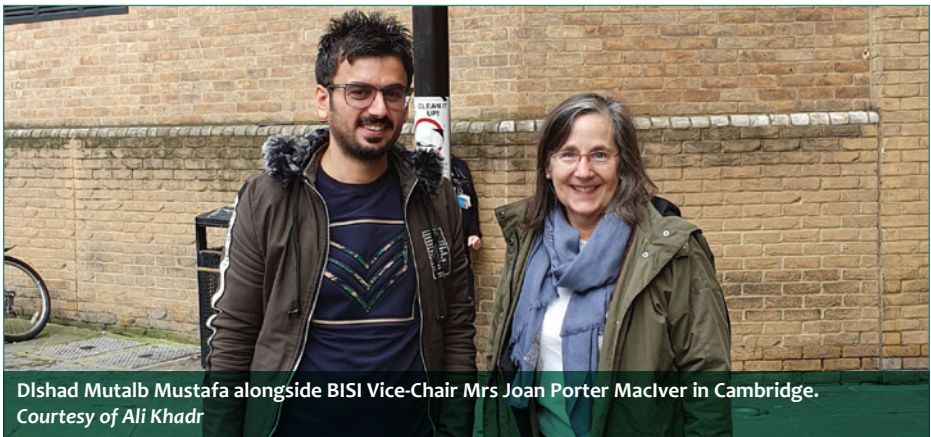


proposal includes many ideas, suggestions, advice, options (including advantages and disadvantages). It will help guide our authorities and decision makers in the Directorates of Antiquities in Soran and in Erbil when making decisions about design/project proposals from companies. Companies will also find great use for the proposal.

Furthermore, I had the opportunity to attend seminars and classes related to heritage and heritage management at the Department of Archaeology, University of Cambridge. I benefited greatly from this opportunity, in many ways, I was able to witness how academics deal with heritage and how heritage issues are handled academically. I was also able to compare how heritage is taught at a university like Cambridge with how it is taught back home. Teaching at the University of Cambridge strongly encourages critical thinking, making arguments, and asking questions, which is very different to what is taught in my country. It should be said that I have personally tried to come to the UK to study for a degree, with no success. The BISI-Nahrein Scholarship made it possible for me to realise my dream, in that I was given the opportunity to do research in the UK for two months to get an insight into the academic atmosphere in the west.

Being in Cambridge for two months also allowed me the opportunity to improve my personal research skills, as well as writing academic work with scientific standards, which I will utilise for writing scientific work in the future. These skills will also help me when it comes to any further academic studies.

Last, but not least, during my time in the UK I was able to make many strong connections with academics and professionals in the UK who combat illicit trafficking of artefacts. This, in my opinion, is very important and should be taken seriously. It should not be underestimated or ignored. We as professionals and heritage managers know what is happening in Iraq and we know what should be done and how it should be managed. I am therefore hoping that we continue to collaborate, help and support one another, to unite our efforts to save our heritage and reach our goals of protecting heritage in Iraq.



Dishad Mutalb Mustafa alongside BISI Vice-Chair Mrs Joan Porter MacIver in Cambridge.
Courtesy of Ali Khadr

New Publications

Basra: Its History, Culture and Heritage Proceedings of the Conference Celebrating the Opening of the Basrah Museum, September 28-29 September 2016

Edited by Paul Collins

The British Institute for the Study of Iraq 2020

ISBN 978-0-903472-36-4

Paperback, pp. 80, A4

Copy available for £12 – if you are interested in

ordering a copy please contact BISI's Executive

Officer on bisi@britac.ac.uk

The publication is available to read and download

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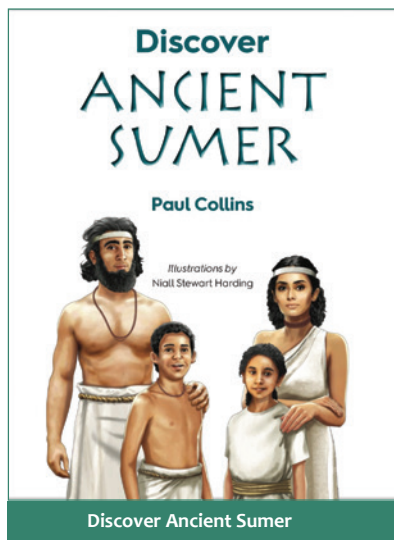
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BISI GRANTS & PRIZES

BISI offers a range of annual grants to assist academic work and education on Iraq.

BISI University and Museum Engagement Grants

(normally up to £500 per grant)

BISI's University and Museum Engagement Grants are designed to support public engagement projects by staff and/or students of Higher Education Institutes and cultural heritage organisations that promote a greater understanding of Iraq's history, society and culture. **Annual Deadlines:** 1st of March, June, September, and December

BISI ACADEMIC GRANTS Research and Conference Grants

(normally up to £4,000 per grant)

BISI provides funding to support Research and Conferences that concentrate principally on the lands and peoples of Iraq. We welcome applications from the full range of arts, humanities and social sciences subjects, and topics can cover any time period from prehistory to the medieval period to the present day. **Annual Deadline:** 1 February.

ANNUAL PILOT PROJECT GRANT

(normally up to £8,000)

BISI's Pilot Project Grant scheme is designed to support a short period of preliminary research - up to one year - that has the potential to grow into a longer-term, larger-scale project supported by a Research Council or other large funding body. Only one project per year will be funded under this scheme. **Annual Deadline:** 1 February.

VISITING IRAQI SCHOLARSHIPS

Annual Deadlines: The Visiting Iraq Scholarship Scheme is currently closed and we will not be accepting any new applications.

The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funded Nahrein Network will be financially supporting BISI's Visiting Iraqi Scholarships over the next year. BISI and the Nahrein Network will be offering four to six Visiting Scholarships each year to enable academics, cultural heritage professionals and NGO workers from Iraq to visit the UK for 1-2 months for training and research. We welcome applications from Iraq-based scholars if their project relates to one or more of the Nahrein Network's five aims. Applicants must currently reside in Iraq and be able to converse and understand English to a working level to ensure that visits are a success.

On an exceptional basis, BISI may consider funding a separate Visiting Scholar whose research is not covered by the Nahrein Network's aim. Only exceptional applications with developed research proposals and pre-established links to a UK academic sponsor or university will be assessed.

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BISI is very grateful for donations, both large and small.
Here we would like to thank all those who donated to us in 2020

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The following have volunteered their time to help BISI this year, and we are sincerely grateful for their support:

Zainab Mehdi
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