



TAARII NEWSLETTER

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MODERN ART IN IRAQ: FROM THE PIONEERS OF THE 1930s TO THE LOOTING OF 2003

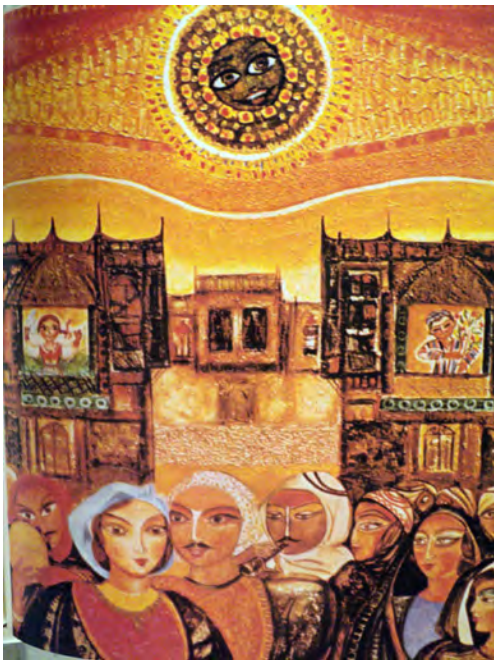


Figure 1.1. Artworks stolen in 2003 that have yet to be recovered include those of (from upper left to lower right): Jawad Saleem, Alaa Basheer, Atta Sabri, Faraj Abou, Fouad Jihad, and Hafidh al-Dorooby

Following the collapse of the Ba'ath Regime in 2003, over 7,000 artworks in Iraq were damaged or stolen. Only about 700 have been recovered. The history of modern art in Iraq, the looted artworks, and the efforts to recover them were the topics of a TAARII-sponsored lecture tour in three states in February and March 2012 with Salam Atta Sabri, an Iraqi artist, founder and Director of the Iraqi Pioneers Committee, and the Director of the National Museum of Modern Art in Baghdad. Sabri drew

on his own experience and that of his father, Atta Sabri, a pioneer of modern Iraqi fine arts. The lecture tour was made possible by the collaboration of local partners and funding provided by the Council for American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC) through a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

Salam Atta Sabri was invited to the United States as one of the twenty recipients of a Getty International Travel Award from the College Art Association (CAA) to attend its annual meeting in Los Angeles and learn ways to promote the teaching of art history in their own countries. The CAORC-Carnegie funding allowed TAARII to expand the audiences that benefitted from his visit to the United States. The Middle



Figure 1.2. Salam Atta Sabri gave three public lectures during his U.S. visit, including one at Portland State University (Photo credit: Karen Lickteig, Middle East Studies Center, PSU)

East Studies Center of Portland State University, Dr. Nada Shabout of the University of North Texas, and Dr. Magnus Bernhardsson of Williams College helped arrange lectures and visits in their local areas.

Salam Atta Sabri's public lectures at Portland State University (PSU), the

University of North Texas (UNT), and Williams College began with a brief overview of the breadth of modern Iraqi art followed by a detailed account of the looting of the artworks from such locations as the Baghdad Center for the Arts, Baghdad International Airport, Al-Rashid Hotel, and former palaces. Sabri described the various efforts to recover the lost artwork, his own involvement, and the successes they have had. Many of the audiences' questions and comments centered on ways that they can help support the recovery of the stolen art.

Along with his public lecture at PSU and an extensive tour of the Portland Art Museum, Sabri visited two of Portland Community College's (PCC) campuses and the Pacific Northwest College of Art (PNCA). He addressed a painting class about elements of Iraqi modern art

and art history students and faculty members about the history and development of modern art in Iraq. At PNCA, Sabri spoke to students and guests in a seminar on the "Theory of the Object." He also visited several art galleries with the students, sharing his experiences and exchanging ideas. Sabri also met with members of the Iraqi community in Portland, including two artists.

In addition to a public lecture sponsored by the Contemporary Arab and Muslim Cultural Studies Institute



Figure 1.3. In his public lectures, Salam Atta Sabri gave a brief history of the pioneers of modern Iraqi art, including his father, Atta Sabri, who painted the above untitled picture in 1942 (Photo credit: Modern Art Iraq Archive [<http://artiraq.org/maia/>])

(CAMCSI) and the University of North Texas (UNT), Sabri participated in a dual interview in the Dallas-Fort Worth area with Dr. Nada Shabout for a local news station, Channel 8 WFAA-ABC, on a story regarding the recovery of looted artworks. In this interview, Sabri communicated his optimism about the recovery process, as well as his commitment to the recovery in the risky years ahead. Sabri visited the arts district of both Fort Worth and Dallas and met with various members of the Iraqi-American community.

At Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts, Sabri gave a public lecture on campus. He also presented to an undergraduate class on Iraq and Iran in the twentieth century an overview of daily life in Iraq and what he thought young people could do to improve the situation there. Afterwards, he discussed with several students specifically what they could do. Sabri encouraged two students who were considering going to Jordan this summer to work at a sports camp for Iraqi refugee girls and three other students who spoke with him about the possibility of putting

up a small show at the Williams College student center about the missing art works from Iraq in order to raise awareness.

Sabri also visited the nearby Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MassMoca), a large contemporary art museum set in an old textile factory that closed down in the 1960s. MassMoca not only houses interesting art but also serves as an intriguing economic experiment. MassMoca has led the revival of the city of North Adams, demonstrating that culture and art can be a positive contributor to economic development, an idea that interested Sabri for the future of Iraq. Sabri also toured the Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, a first-class art museum that is known for its collection of impressionist art. In addition, Sabri discussed plans

for the National Museum of Modern Art in Baghdad to partner with Williams College Museum of Art on an exhibition in the summer of 2014.

At the end of his visit to the United States, Salam Atta Sabri met with administrators at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City and visited the Metropolitan Museum of Art, all before heading to the airport to return to Iraq.



Figure 1.4. Salam Atta Sabri (center) joined Dr. Nada Shabout (left) and Dr. Robert Milnes (right), Dean of the College of Visual Arts and Design of the University of North Texas, at a dinner celebrating his visit. (Photo credit: Nada Shabout)



Figure 1.5. Salam Atta Sabri addressing students at the Pacific Northwest College of Art (Photo credit: PNCA)

IRAQ'S ARTISTIC HERITAGE: FROM HAIFA STREET TO THE BERKSHIRE MOUNTAINS

NIRALEE SHAH, IMAN LIPUMBA, LAURA VILAFRANCO,
ASEEL ABULHAB & JAVIER MARISCAL

March 7, 2012, was a unique day for our history class on Iraq and Iran with Professor Magnus Bernhardsson at Williams College. The rustling of bookbags and papers calmed, ears perked up, and bodies perched forward as Salam Atta Sabri, director of the National Museum of Modern Art in Baghdad, began his story of the looting and destruction of this great Iraqi national landmark.

Students at Williams College, a small liberal arts college nestled in the rural Berkshire Mountains of Massachusetts, often complain of being cut-off from the “real world.” During our time at Williams, we exist in a shell of security and privilege, which at times causes our educational experience to lack the on-the-ground, human perspective of the issues we discuss. However, March 7 was different. As Sabri described the state of Iraq’s largest modern art museum, the real human impact of the looting was palpable.

Sabri’s visit to our class and the encouragement of Professor Bernhardsson

moved a group of us to expose ourselves and the Williams community at large to this unknown and too-often overlooked face of the 2003 invasion of Iraq: the destruction and looting of Iraq’s artistic heritage. Following Sabri’s visit, we created an art exhibit displaying works from the National Museum of Modern Art. Though there were over a hundred premier Iraqi artists from which to choose, we limited our exhibit to five individuals: Mahoud Ahmad, Layla al-Attar, Khaled al-Jader, Faraj Abbu, and Rafa al-Nasiri.

On the evening of April 27, 2012, in a study lounge in an academic building chosen for its retro gallery vibe, we created a space for Iraqi art and culture. Multiple collages placed throughout the lounge exhibited works by each of the featured artists, along with the information that we managed to gather on the works and their creators. We displayed articles about the museum and set up a laptop where the public could watch a clip of Sabri discussing the museum’s trials and



Figure 2.1. First-year student views Iraqi art exhibition (Photo Credit: Niralee Shah)

asking the international community for assistance. Another laptop displayed the Modern Art Iraq Archive (MAIA), an online project to collect and archive information on the lost art. A reel of slides projected onto the wall covered additional works by other Iraqi modern artists. The exhibit remained on display for one week.

What moved us about Sabri’s visit was not only his heartfelt passion and grief over Iraq’s artwork, but also his personal account of the difficulties of everyday life in Iraq. It highlighted what we take for granted here in our academic “bubble”: electricity, safety and security, and even the online excess of information on the most minute things. The event felt even more significant after we learned about the bombings near Sabri’s home on Haifa Street in Baghdad. Sabri’s perseverance and dedication inspired us to join his efforts, and in return we hope to have inspired others to appreciate Iraqi art and culture — a topic that seems so detached from our own reality, but one that teaches us about the human connection we share with Iraqis.



Figure 2.2. Professor Magnus Bernhardsson, Arabic TA, and friends accompanied the students at the opening night of the exhibition at Williams College (Photo Credit: Niralee Shah)

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

MCGUIRE GIBSON

In the past few months, American scholars and research teams have initiated projects in Iraq. Elizabeth Stone and Paul Zimansky's Stony Brook team began excavations at a small site near Ur (see p. 17) and Jason Ur of Harvard established the groundwork for a survey in the vicinity of Erbil (see p. 20). Carrie Hritz has a permit to do archaeological work at the ancient city of Girsu (Tello) and hopes to be in the field later in 2012. We hope that these are signs of a return to a more normal research situation in Iraq. As the security situation keeps improving, we can make a case to our funding agency to lift the restriction that prevents TAARII from funding American fellows for work inside Iraq.

TAARII has been engaged in a number of activities that should bring the organization and our institutional members into a closer working relationship with the educational institutions in Iraq. In February, at the invitation of the Iraqi Embassy and the Iraqi Cultural Center in Washington, D.C., I took part in and chaired a session at the Iraqi American University Conference. Attended by the deans of eleven Iraqi universities and more than fifty representatives of American universities and educational organizations, the conference was designed to strengthen already existing relationships between U.S. and Iraqi universities, which have been accepting Iraqi students for several years, and to expand the group of U.S. institutions that will train the next generation of Iraqi academics and researchers. Although skewed toward medicine,

engineering, and the sciences, as Iraqi education has historically tended to be, there is a commitment to training Iraqis in a wide variety of fields. The impetus for the meeting is an Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education program to send, over the next two years, thousands of fully funded Iraqi students abroad to earn graduate degrees. A percentage of those students will be coming to American universities. The U.S. contingent in the meeting was composed mainly of state universities, only a few of which are members of TAARII. I hope that more of our institutional members will become involved in this program. During the conference, I met all of the Iraqi deans, five of whom expressed an interest in sending students for social science and humanities training. They also sought to make agreements on bilateral exchanges of faculty. During the meeting, I met briefly with the Iraqi Minister of Education and I will follow up with him to further introduce TAARII and our plans to move our activities to Iraq when the situation allows.

In March 2012, Beth Kangas, TAARII's Executive Director, was invited by the Iraqi Cultural Center in Washington to participate in their Iraqi-American Women's Day event. The evening program included short presentations from various Iraqi women based in the United States — journalists, artists, poets, writers, and others. Kangas introduced the audience of about eighty people to TAARII and invited them to participate in TAARII's three main activities: research fellowships, conferences, and its oral history project.

In April, TAARII, along with the director of the Columbia Center for Oral History (CCOH), received funding from the Hollings Center for International Dialogue to develop guidelines for the collecting and curating of life stories in environments and populations that have been ravaged by political conflict and violence. The small grant project features a six-way collaboration and a topic that build directly on the recent Hollings Center Higher Education Dialogue in Istanbul on Oral History in the Middle East and Central Asia (see the article p. 9). Dialogue conference participants Mary Marshall Clark of the Columbia Center for Oral History (CCOH), Doug Boyd of the Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History at the University of Kentucky Libraries, Ramazan Aras of Mardin Artuklu University in Turkey, Mohammad Mohaqqeq of Kabul University, and Lucine Taminian, TAARII's Resident Director, along with Beth Kangas, will meet in New York City in June 2012 to begin crafting the guidelines. The June 2012 meeting coincides with the second week of the CCOH summer institute in New York City on "What is Remembered: Life Story Approaches in Human Rights Contexts," an opportune working environment and expansion of resources and discussion on which the Hollings-funded team can draw to produce its guidelines.

One last item: This year, TAARII awarded six research fellowships to Iraqi scholars in several universities in Iraq. The disciplines of the Iraq fellows include literature, sociology, psychology, community medicine, history, and biology.

2011–2012 U.S. FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENTS

ALDA BENJAMEN, HISTORY, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND COLLEGE PARK

“Contextualizing Assyrians in Iraq’s History”

HILARY FALB, HISTORY, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA BERKELEY

“Educators in Iraq, Jordan and Palestine; the Formation of State and Subject 1917–1958”

AMY GANSELL, ART HISTORY, EMORY UNIVERSITY

“Dressing the Neo-Assyrian Queen in Identity and Ideology”

KAREN WILSON, ORIENTAL INSTITUTE, UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

“Inanna Temple Publication Project”



ALDA BENJAMEN

Benjamin’s doctoral thesis will be the first comprehensive study that contextualizes the Assyrians in Iraqi history by analyzing their role in ideological and social movements of the twentieth century. In her study, Assyrians will be contextualized within the broader intellectual and social movements of Iraq, including the Iraqi Communist Party, the Kurdish uprising, and nationalist movements, from the period following World War II up until the 1980s. Benjamin is interested in the role of women in these movements and their portrayal by intellectuals. Her project will also analyze the interaction of the state with the Assyrians, and their inclusion and/or exclusion during this period. For her study, Benjamin will draw on a variety of sources, including those located at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, Library of Congress, National Archives at College Park, Public Record Office in the United Kingdom, and the Modern Assyrian Research Archive (MARA) at the University of Cambridge. In addition, Benjamin will conduct oral history interviews with activists in Assyrian organizations and political parties operating in the second half of the twentieth century, along with singers, producers, and musicians in the West.

HILARY FALB



Falb’s dissertation offers a new account of education and political culture by examining school teachers and administrators employed by the British Mandates for Iraq, Palestine, and Transjordan throughout the seminal period of state creation in the Middle East, 1917–1958. Using oral histories, social history, and discursive analysis, Falb will analyze the politics and pedagogical techniques of these educators across imperial and national boundaries. British policies were remarkably similar with regards to education in all three Mandates. Yet, the outcome of schooling in each Mandate and later nation varied widely due in large part to the educators who implemented, undermined, or adapted British educational policies and syllabi. Falb will use her TAARII fellowship to fund research for the portion of her study relating to Iraq. She will spend two months in London, dividing her time between interviews with Iraqis and ongoing archival work at the British Library and the National Archives. By analyzing education in Iraq in the context of the British Mandates, Falb’s dissertation will highlight the importance of individual educators to the consequences of schooling throughout the region. These educators provide a unique perspective into how identity and affiliation become resonant in a colonial framework.

These fellowships are funded by the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs through a sub-grant from the Council of American Overseas Research Centers.



AMY GANSELL

In 1988 and 1989, Iraqi archaeologists discovered four royal tombs beneath the Northwest Palace at Nimrud. They contained Neo-Assyrian burials dating to the ninth and eighth centuries B.C. Inscriptions identified some of the dead as the mothers and wives of kings. Gansell's project focuses on the hundreds of luxury items related to dress that were found in their sarcophagi. Based primarily on the published archaeological evidence, and supplemented by visual and textual records, her project will reconstruct royal female assemblages of dress through technical illustrations. These models, then, will provide a basis for interpretations of the women's identities and the ideological messages conveyed through their dress, in life and death, at Nimrud.

KAREN WILSON

Wilson, in cooperation with a team of scholars, will prepare a final report on the excavation of the Inanna Temple at Nippur. The site of Nippur is located on the southern Mesopotamian floodplain 180 km south of Baghdad. From 1951–1962, the University of Chicago excavated the temple of the main Mesopotamian goddess, Inanna, at Nippur. These excavations yielded the longest continuous archaeological sequence currently available for Mesopotamia, with more than twenty building levels spanning the time from roughly 3500 B.C. to the second century A.D. This material includes architecture, sculpture, relief, cylinder seals, and vessels of ceramic and stone that will enable scholars to make badly needed refinements to the chronology of early Mesopotamia and will shed new light on many aspects of life and culture in ancient Iraq.



FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The annual deadline for submission of applications to both the *U.S. Fellows Program* and the *Iraq Fellows Program* is **December 15**, for projects beginning as early as March of the following year. Applications from U.S.-Iraqi collaborative teams are welcome on a ROLLING basis.

For additional information, please visit the TAARII website: www.taarii.org/fellowships. To submit a collaborative proposal, contact info@taarii.org.

LANGUAGE ANNOUNCEMENT

As readers may be aware, TAARII is committed to producing a bilingual newsletter in English and Arabic. We regret that we are now printing our newsletter in English only. We are seeking funds to resume printing a bilingual newsletter and to include full Arabic translations of English-language newsletters on our website. We appreciate your patience and understanding in the meantime.

TAARII PROGRAM: RESEARCH AFFILIATES IN JORDAN

TAARII invites applications for a Research Affiliate status for U.S. scholars working on Iraq while based in Amman, Jordan. As increasing numbers of American researchers undertake Iraq-related research in Jordan, TAARII aims to support their needs and work and to include them in the broader TAARII community. To apply for Research Affiliate status, please submit a brief project statement, together with a CV, to beth@taarii.org. There is no deadline and scholars can apply for Affiliate status on a short-term or long-term basis.

EXCAVATOR OF THE ASSYRIAN QUEENS' TOMBS TOURS U.S.

The discovery of tombs under rooms in the domestic wing of the Northwest Palace of Assurnasirpal II at Nimrud, near Mosul, drew widespread attention in 1988 and 1989. With inscribed items in the tombs, there was evidence, for almost the first time, of the names of several queens, from about 850–620 B.C., who had been buried with many items, including gold jewelry of astounding beauty and expert craftsmanship. Although a few magazine articles indicated the importance of the finds, and there was one short German report with great color photographs in a publication from Mainz, the First Gulf War prevented the full analysis and publication of the tombs, as well as canceling of a projected tour of some of the material that was to be in the U.S. in 1994–95.

As part of its project to publish Iraqi archaeological reports in English and Arabic, TAARII took on the preparation and publication

of Muzahim Hussein's manuscript on the tombs and his other work at Nimrud, which is currently being edited for publication as a full-color book. The Oriental Institute Press will publish the work, with a subvention from a grant given by the State Department and administrated by IRD, an Arlington, Virginia, NGO.

The book will expand on the author's earlier book, *Nimrud, a City of Golden Treasures* (Baghdad, 2000), which unfortunately has inadequate illustrations due to



Figure 3.1. From left to right: Atheer Abood Al Saedy, Third Secretary at The Embassy of Iraq; Dr. Muzahim Hussein; Dr. Eric H. Cline, Director of The Capitol Archaeological Institute; Katie Paul, director of programs at The Capitol Archaeological Institute (Photo Credit: Shmulik Almany at ImageLink Photography)

printing problems. The new book, translated by Mark Altaweel and edited by McGuire Gibson, will be submitted to the press in 2012.

In order to make it possible for the author and the editor to work over details in the manuscript, TAARII sponsored a trip by Hussein to the U.S. from November 12 until December 5, 2011. After an initial few days in Chicago, which included a lecture by him on his work, he attended the ASOR meeting in San Francisco where he again gave a talk, then another at the Cotzen Institute at UCLA. He returned to Chicago over Thanksgiving and worked with Gibson again before delivering lectures at George Washington University in Washington, D.C., at the University of Pennsylvania, and at the Columbia University seminar. TAARII is grateful for the cooperation of colleagues at all the venues.



Figure 3.2. Dr. Muzahim Hussein showing a woven gold diadem from Tomb II at The Capitol Archaeological Institute (Photo Credit: Shmulik Almany at ImageLink Photography)

TAARII REPRESENTED AT ORAL HISTORY WORKSHOP IN ISTANBUL, TURKEY

LUCINE TAMINIAN, TAARII SENIOR RESEARCHER IN RESIDENCE, AMMAN, JORDAN

In February 2012, the Hollings Center for International Dialogue organized a four-day workshop in Istanbul, Turkey, on “The Future of Oral History in the Middle East and Central Asia.” The workshop brought together participants from the U.S., Middle East, and Central Asia who were new to the field of oral history with those who have long experience in collecting oral histories, and those who are experts in the use of oral history in education and in archiving and digital technology.

On the first day of the workshop, the participants discussed the essential components of oral history projects: planning, conducting interviews, archiving, and using oral histories in teaching and scholarship. The participants stressed the dialogic nature of the interview and the ethics of conducting interviews, both in general and in conflict and post-conflict situations in particular. How

can the safety of interviewees living under tense security circumstances be ensured, especially once the interviews are made available to scholars and the public? How do the measures taken for this purpose, such as pseudonyms, omitting all references that might reveal the identity of the interviewees, etc., devalue oral history as a legitimate scholarly source? How do the legal requirements for archiving jeopardize the safety of the interviewees?

The workshop was a great opportunity for participants to exchange ideas and best practices on the diverse uses of oral history in teaching and scholarship. For example, Columbia University’s Center for Oral History, which offers an M.A. in oral history, makes their oral history archive available to the public through online exhibitions and to school and community educators through

their “Telling Lives” program. The Innovations for Successful Societies program at Princeton University uses case studies to support public servants in low-income and post-conflict countries to be able to carry out their core tasks more effectively. The Arab American National Museum in Dearborn, Michigan integrates the oral histories of the Arab American community in their exhibits aimed at educating the public on Arab American history and culture. Researchers in Turkey use the oral histories of Turks and Armenians to encourage the two communities to speak to each other. In Afghanistan, historians are preserving oral traditions in order to make history a living experience. In Tajikistan, oral histories are helping to build and enhance women’s networks.

A workshop session on “Access, Preservation, and Technology” was particularly informative. The



Figure 4.1. Participants in the Oral History Workshop, Istanbul, Turkey (Photo credit: David Trilling)

discussion here focused on the use of digital technologies at two phases: first, in transcribing, editing and indexing, and second, in making oral history available to scholars, educators, and the public. Douglas Boyd, the director of the Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History at the University of Kentucky Libraries, presented the Oral History Metadata Synchronizer (OHMS) system, an open source that synchronizes text with audio and video online.

The hard work of the Hollings Center staff and their meticulous planning made attending the workshop a very productive and pleasant exercise, even with the cold weather of Istanbul.



Figure 4.2. TAARII Senior Researcher in Residence Lucine Taminian participating in the Oral History Workshop
(Photo credit: David Trilling)

GENDER AND CITIZENSHIP IN MODERN IRAQ

ORIT BASKIN, UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Karen M. Kern. *Imperial Citizen, Marriage and Citizenship in the Ottoman Frontier Provinces of Iraq*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2011. xiv + 186 pp. \$29.95 (cloth). ISBN 978-0-815-63284-6.

Gender relations are of immense importance in Iraqi history and society. In the modern era, Iraqi intellectuals, men and women alike, discussed such issues as emancipation, women's education, seclusion, suffrage, veiling, and family law. The conversations about the roles of women in Iraq have always been political, since conceptualizing their rights and duties was connected to Ottoman, Arab, and Iraqi considerations of citizenship, secularism, religion, and nationalism. In light of current debates in Iraq on women's rights, I will consider over several TAARII newsletters new publications on Iraqi women in the hope of generating discussion about gender relations

in Iraq. The first book I will review here is Karen M. Kern's outstanding *Imperial Citizen*, which deals with Iraqi women during the late Ottoman period.

In recent years, the study of Ottoman Iraq has emerged as one of the most exciting endeavors in the exploration of Iraq's social, political, and cultural histories. The important works of Dina Rizk Khoury, Hala Fattah, Thabit Abdullah, and Gökhan Çetinsaya, among others, illuminate the continuities in Iraqi history, and illustrate that processes relating to modernity, secularity, trans-regionalism, and identity formation which began in the late Ottoman period shaped, in many ways, the manners in which the Hashemite

and the Republican states defined their relationships to their subjects. Moreover, it seems that the field of Ottoman-Iraqi studies will take on even greater significance in the years to come, since the destruction of many Iraqi archives and the disappearance of press collections and private libraries after 2003 has magnified the importance of the Ottoman archives and their documents relating to Iraq.

It is with this framework in mind that Kern's excellent new study should be viewed. Building on sources available in Ottoman archives, the book offers a unique and original perspective from which to consider gender relations in Iraq. Kern's work examines how

the Ottoman Empire adopted and adapted concepts of nationality and citizenship to the geopolitical exigencies of controlling the frontier provinces of Iraq. Her work, then, investigates how the Ottoman state impacted gender relations in Iraq and how its politics with respect to women were shaped in a context of processes of centralization and new imperial definitions of citizenship and reform. The book does so by deftly analyzing a series of laws that prohibited the marriages of Sunni women to Iranian men.

The significance of this research is threefold. First, the book engages in an important conversation with theories of empire and nationalism and utilizes a rich theoretical literature regarding the connections between citizenship and gender. It likewise draws on the innovative works of Homi K. Bhabha, Selim Deringil, and Ussama Makdisi in reflecting on Ottoman imperialism and the Ottoman civilizing mission in Iraq, and in underscoring both the similarities and the differences between Ottoman imperial forms of governance and other imperial models.

Second, Kern's thoughtful reading accentuates the impossibility of considering gender as an exclusive category, by showing how the understanding of gender relations in Iraq was intertwined with perceptions relating to statehood and religiosity and the production of sectarian discourses. In other words, Kern convincingly demonstrates that the duties of Ottoman women as imperial citizens ought to be contextualized within the dynamic relationships between the Sunni and Shi'i communities in Iraq, as conceptualized by the Ottoman state. The book opens with a very trenchant discussion of Sunni-Shi'i relations;

yet Kern intentionally shies away from essentialized notions of these religious identities dating back to the seventh century, and grounds them instead within the conflict between two empires: the Ottoman, on the one hand, and the Safavid and the Qajar, on the other. Within this context, Kern also presents a very interesting discussion of the legal and religious Ottoman texts that challenged Shi'ism.

The book exposes the great anxieties of the Ottoman state concerning the spread of Shi'ism among the Iraqi population during the nineteenth century. It looks at Shi'i propaganda and Sunni counterpropaganda efforts, and the attempts of the state to prevent the spread of and conversion to Shi'ism, ranging from a ban on the printing of the Qur'an in Persian and the confiscation of pamphlets labeled propagandistic to the expansion of Sunni education. Kern recognizes that different rulers of Iraq during the Ottoman period faced these challenges in diverse fashions. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Da'ud Pasha tolerated Shi'i rituals, but processes of centralization that followed the Pasha's demise, especially during the era of Hamidian imperial nationalism, sought to counter the Shi'i expansion. Nonetheless, Kern establishes that the Shi'i community also learned to expect certain rights from the state. For example, she notes that in 1894, 270 Samara Shi'is petitioned the Ottoman court concerning some Sunni imams whom they claimed had threatened them; the court found the accusation to be substantiated and punished the imams.

Third, and most importantly, the book tells us much about the connections between the state's gendered policies and modernity.

Kern's endeavor to explore the legal actions of Ottoman bureaucrats and lawmakers as part of a modernizing imperial project sheds ample light on the ways in which legal institutions introduced modern methods of inspection that enhanced the ability of the state to control its subjects' lives. Modernity, in this book, is not simply a heroic tale in which male elites as its agents grant women more rights, but rather a domain in which the state intervenes to an increasing degree in women's marriages and their reproductive choices. Furthermore, Kern maintains that control over reproductive choices was an expression of the perception of women as symbols of the nation. Being an imperial citizen thus meant being subject to wider measures of the state's regulations and intercessions.

Kern focuses not only on the acts of legislation (although she does examine closely the various Ottoman, Islamic, and French codes that inspired the legislation about marriage), but also presents legal cases of Sunni women who married Iranian men, and discusses their interactions with the state. The Iraqi context in which the legislation prohibiting marriages to Iranian men was enacted was a very complex one. As Kern notes, accounts from 1888 by the governor of the Baghdad Province, Mustafa Asım Pasha, mentioned that 15,000–20,000 residents in the province were of Iranian origin, some of whom had migrated to Iraq or married into Iraqi families fifty years prior. To introduce new legislation prohibiting marriages to Iranians (who had retained their Iranian citizenship to avoid taxation and conscription into the army) into this Iraqi maze of citizenships was a rather

convoluted business. One of the more interesting features of the book is that it devotes attention to all the actors who figured in these inter-sectarian marriages, from the women themselves to the qadis and Ottoman officials (including those who performed these Sunni-Shi'i marriages, although they were not allowed to so legally), and the Iranian embassy, which went to great lengths to protect such marriages, notwithstanding the limited capitulatory rights Iran had within the empire. Moreover, Kern highlights cases in which women manipulated the system for their own benefit. For example, she discusses a case from 1899 regarding a certain widow, Fatma Zehara Hanım, whose father and husband were Iranian, and whose estate was claimed by the Iranian Embassy. Based on the fact that her father had immigrated to Istanbul and married her mother, Esma Hanım, who was an Ottoman citizen, the Ottoman cabinet actually ruled that Fatma Hanım and her son were Ottoman citizens, and thus their property did not belong to the state of Iran.

My only critical comments have to do with questions of context. The introduction, I think, could have benefited from additional attention to the literature on identity formation in late Ottoman Iraq, especially the works of Fattah and Khoury, so as to acknowledge that the state's efforts to shape certain sectarian identities were met with a variety of responses in Iraq, and also as a way of including further material on the Sunni and Shi'i subjects of the Iraqi provinces. Hopefully further collaborative projects, between scholars such as Kern and scholars familiar with Arabic chronicles and

studies in Arabic on this period (by 'Azzawi and Wardi, for instance) or scholars familiar with Persian accounts, would tell us more about the reception of these laws in Iraqi society beyond what was recorded in the official state archives. The three provinces of Ottoman Iraq included mixed tribes (Sunni-Shi'i) and a variety of Sunni and Shi'i 'ulama whose thinking about sectarianism and its relationship to marriage went through important transformations during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (as evidenced by the writings of the *salafi* Alusi scholars, for example). I also wonder whether the great anxieties regarding the spread of Wahhabism affected in some ways the anxieties of the state vis-à-vis Shi'ism in Iraq. Furthermore, the gendered dimensions of the Shi'i relationships with the empire were only one component of their complicated rapport with the state, as local and imperial developments, which were not always related to Iran, shaped these relationships. In the intellectual domain, Pan-Islamic ideas, especially those articulated by Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, were extremely important to Iraqi Shi'is and made for a more accepting policy towards Pan-Islamic Sunnis. Moreover, discussions about reform and constitutionalism and the support of Shi'i elites for the 1908 Constitutional Revolution, as well as the support expressed by Iraqi Shi'is for the Ottoman war efforts in Libya, the Balkans, and World War I, indicate the vast array of domains in which the state's policies were reworked in the Iraqi context by Iraqi Shi'is. Finally, at times there is a certain slippage between cases of Shi'is outside of the three Iraqi provinces, including

Alevis, and those in Iraq itself. The differences between such cases, I think, should have been emphasized more.

Nonetheless, as I have indicated, this book is a rich and exciting addition to our field. I hope many of us use Kern's book in our classroom discussions about modern Iraq. The book includes useful appendices, which offer Kern's translations of the rulings and laws regarding marriages between Sunnis and Shi'is of 1822, 1869, 1874, 1914, and 1926, thereby making the state's language accessible to students and scholars. As historians of Iraq, many of us are familiar with the attempts of the Hashemites and later of the Ba'th to use the Iranian citizenship of Iraqi Shi'is as a pretext for a variety of legal actions, especially the denial of residency in Iraq. Kern's remarkable work, however, presents us with new ways to reconsider the roots of these twentieth century phenomena and their connections to modernity and gender.

Next book reviewed in this series: Noga Efrati, *Women in Iraq: Past Meets Present* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

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RESEARCH AT THE IRAQI NATIONAL LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES

ALDA BENJAMEN, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND COLLEGE PARK

On December 6, 2011, I traveled to Baghdad, Iraq, to conduct research at the Iraqi National Library and Archives (INLA). Conducting this research contributed to my doctoral dissertation, which will contextualize the Assyrians in Iraqi history by analyzing their role in the ideological and social movements of the twentieth century.

Before my departure to Baghdad I had been in communication with Dr. Saad Eskander, the director of the INLA. I was informed that no procedure was required of foreign researchers to access the INLA facilities. Dr. Eskander also gave me his number and asked me to contact him once I arrived in Baghdad.¹

The INLA is set in a very busy and popular neighborhood (Bab al-Mu'azam), close to an open market, colleges, and the Ministry of Defense. According to Dr. Eskander, the archives' proximity to the Ministry of Defense, which has been targeted as recently as the summer of 2011, complicates the security situation for the archives. The ongoing construction

near the archives adds to the already busy Baghdadi traffic. Scholars should be wary of the security situation in the country when deciding to embark on a research trip to Iraq.

The INLA's archives are open to researchers from 8:00 a.m.–1:30 p.m. from Sunday to Wednesday. They close earlier on Thursday and are closed on Friday and Saturday. The INLA's library operates on a slightly different schedule. As I walked through the INLA building, I could not see any traces of the structural damage from the 2003 fires.² The building was well cared for and appeared to be in good condition. They have expanded with a new digital library to preserve Iraq's cultural history, in the format of music and film, along with a new national library for children. There is also a small cafeteria that extends outside to an enclosed garden; food and refreshments are sold there.

Upon arriving at the archives, researchers present their identification to guards at the gate. Once cleared, researchers walk to the building, have their identification rechecked, and register their names and the name of their institutions. Researchers' personal belongings are inspected and can accompany the researchers in the archives. The security measures taken are similar to those followed at research institutions in North America, such as the National Archives and Records Administration and the Library of Congress.

The archives room



Figure 5.2. Statue of Abu al-Tayyib al-Mutanabbī, 10th century Arab poet born in Kūfa, at Iraqi National Library and Archives (Photo credit: Alda Benjamin)

at the INLA, where I spent most of my time, was large enough to hold about seven microfiche and two microfilm machines. There was also a photocopying machine (15 copy limit per day, per researcher), a research computer, and two long tables to be used by researchers. Two assistants were available to help researchers find relevant sources and retrieve microfiches for them. Researchers provided the assistants with a reference number for a particular source. Assistants searched for the source promptly and handed it over to the researcher, sometimes in less than half an hour. If microfiches were missing, the reference number was forwarded to another department that held the original files. This search took much longer and most often the original files I requested were not found. Usually, no more than six researchers were present in the room at one time. Most researchers were locals; the INLA also welcomes researchers from other Iraqi provinces, and has had visitors from Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Researchers were allowed to use their own cameras



Figure 5.1. Exterior View of the Iraqi National Library and Archives (Photo credit: Alda Benjamin)

to take photos of microfiches/microfilm images and other material. A couple of the microfiche machines were set to print, but this option was not available when I visited.

Researchers interested in the history of twentieth-century Iraq will find archival material up until the 1960s or so in the INLA. I was told that sources not deemed “sensitive,” such as reports on agriculture, from the Ba’thist period are still available at the INLA. The overwhelming majority of Ba’thist documents are currently housed at the Hoover Institution in California. Readers of the TAARII newsletter are likely to be familiar with the ongoing dispute with regard to the Ba’thist archives in the U.S., and the demands of the Iraqi government officials and INLA staff to have them returned to Iraq.³ In Iraq, certain organizations have some Ba’thist sources as well. These include: Iraqi political parties, certain organizations (e.g., organizations dedicated to martyrs), and a few Iraqi professors.⁴ The lack of Ba’thist archives in the country makes it difficult for Iraqi graduate students and researchers to conduct research on their country’s modern history.

Many smaller libraries and publishing houses have useful material as well. In Baghdad, Nagem al-Mashriq’s publishing house (Chaldean Church) has a small library with a wide range

of periodicals from the twentieth century, focusing on religious and cultural material in Arabic, modern Assyrian, and Classical Syriac. The Dominican’s private library in Baghdad holds over 8,000 books, mainly in French. In Duhok, the Assyrian Cultural Center and the Oriental Cultural Center also have a good selection of periodicals and books published in Iraq in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In addition, numerous individuals have impressive private collections, which can be found through community and religious centers.

For more information on the Iraqi National Library and Archives researchers can visit the INLA’s website (<http://www.iraqnla.org/fp/News/news3.htm>) and contact them for further assistance.

¹ I wish to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Saad Eskander at the INLA, and his staff, Mrs. Dina Abbas, Mrs. Dawod, and Mrs. Shatha Ismail, for their hospitality and assistance. A grant from the History Department, University of Maryland, supported this trip and I am thankful for their generosity.



Figure 5.3. Staff Members of the INLA with the Author. From left to right: Mrs. Dawod, Alda Benjamen, Mrs. Shatha Ismail, and Mrs. Dina Abbas (Photo credit: Alda Benjamen)

² For an overview of the destruction of the INLA see: Nabil al-Tikriti, “‘Stuff Happens’: A Brief Overview of the 2003 Destruction of Iraqi Manuscript Collections, Archives, and Libraries,” *Library Trends* 55/30 (2007): 730–34.

³ <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2011/1071/re10.htm>; http://www.rferl.org/content/iraq_united_states_archives/24364123.html.

⁴ In a conversation with an Iraqi graduate student doing research at the INLA, I learned that a certain professor in Najaf has a collection of Ba’thist documents. According to her, graduate students contact him and he readily shares archival material with them.

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A GREAT MAN IN A GREAT LAND: SIR VICTORY HORSLEY IN MESOPOTAMIA

PROF. A. HADI AL KHALILI, IRAQI CULTURAL ATTACHÉ IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

An old Arab poem says: “Not every wish of a man comes true; the wind might not blow to the covet of the ship’s pilot.” Alas, this is what Sir Victor Horsley, British neurosurgeon, scientist, and professor, faced during his life trip. During World War I, he landed in Iraq after joining the British Army. After almost three months, he passed away in the city of Amara.

Goethe, the German philosopher and poet, said: “It is impossible to understand the present without knowing the past.” Many individuals in the past changed the history of humankind: Hammurabi as a lawmaker, and medicine’s Hippocrates, Avicenna, and Rhazes. More recent individuals in medicine include the great surgeon Ambroise Pare; Claude Bernard, with his extracellular fluid and catabolism; Lord Lister with his carbolic acid; and William Osler, the father of modern medicine. In neurosurgery, many individuals contributed to the development of surgical neurology. The pioneers were McEwan and Godlee in the U.K., Durante in Italy, and, more recently, Harvey Cushing in the modern era in the U.S.A. However, the father and founder of modern neurosurgery was Horsley.

Sir Victor Alexander Haden Horsley, the second son in a family of seven

children, was born in Kingston, London, on April 14, 1857. His parents were prominent writers and musicians with extremely high moral values. From his childhood, Horsley was an unusual person. He kept away from tobacco, alcohol, and “loose talk.” He was educated at Cranbrook school, attended University College Medical School in 1874, and graduated with a gold medal in surgery. As a medical student, he received several distinctive nicknames: “the Germ,” for his long hours in the lab; “Vulture,” for his keenness with postmortem; and “Archibald Right,” for his encyclopedic knowledge. While he was a house surgeon, Horsley studied his own subjective reaction to chloroform anesthesia, by being anaesthetized no fewer than fifty times, a heroic research project. He used to ask his junior colleagues in the doctors’ lounge to write down changes in his level of consciousness while he laid on an armed chair until he became unconscious.

In 1884, Horsley was appointed professor superintendent to the Brown Institute of the University of London. There, he made his great research contributions: the action of the thyroid gland, a protective treatment against rabies, and the localization of brain function. He was the first to prove beyond any doubt the action of thyroid gland. This followed his pioneering experiment of removing the thyroid from



Figure 6.1. Dr. A. Hadi Al Khalili by the wall listing the names of casualties (Photo credit: Dr. A. Hadi Al Khalili)

a monkey, which then showed myxoedema. He also grafted a sheep thyroid subcutaneously to treat such a condition. He was appointed secretary of the Commission on Rabies in the U.K. He went to Paris and learned from Pasteur all about rabies prevention. Then he was the Chairman of the Society for Prevention of Hydrophobia.

In 1886, Horsley was elected a fellow to the Royal Society and Professor of Pathology. Later that year, he was appointed surgeon to the National Hospital for the Paralyzed and Epileptic, Queens Square, London, a post that brought him to the leadership of the great field of surgery. He was only 29 years old, but was exceptionally well qualified for the position. His experimental work on monkeys with nothing to guide him except for the localization of function had familiarized him with cerebral surgery. Before the end of 1886, he had done ten cranial surgeries; nine of them were successful. In that year, he was elected as a fellow of the Royal Society.

In 1887, Horsley removed a tumor from a spinal cord, the first operation



Figure 6.2. Entrance of the Amara War Cemetery (Photo credit: Dr. A. Hadi Al Khalili)

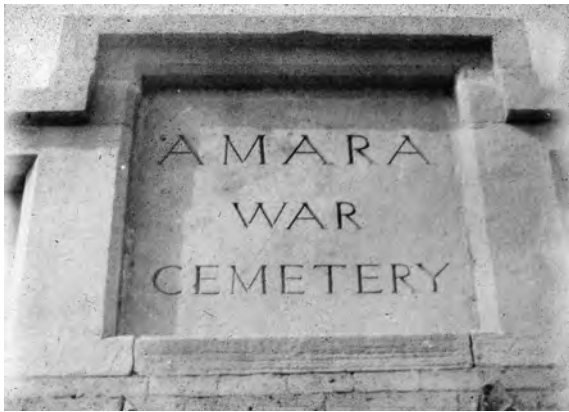


Figure 6.3. Top of the Amara War Cemetery Entrance (Photo credit: Dr. A. Hadi Al Khalili)

ever of its kind and an event that has a great place in the history of surgery. In 1893, he performed a long series of experiments on the effect of bullet wounds on the brain. The experiments proved that the cause of death was respiratory — and not cardiac — failure. Horsley standardized the operations for laminectomy, craniotomy, and the intradural division of the trigeminal nerve.

In 1902, Horsley was knighted and became Sir Victor Horsley.

In addition to his surgical work, Horsley published 127 articles of research, clinical observation, and surgical techniques. Dorland's Medical Dictionary lists under his name: "Horsley's operation," which is the excision of an area of the motor cortex for the relief of athetoid movements of the upper extremity; "Horsley's

trephine," which is trephine that can be taken apart and cleaned; and "Horsley's wax," which is a wax in petrolatum and phenol.

Horsley made time, even early in his career, to give himself actively to the politics of the medical profession. He was the president of the Medical Defense Union, which protected doctors from others, and one of the leaders of the British Medical Association and Counsel.

As a social reformer, Horsley

fought hard for the right of women to vote. In addition, in 1907, he proposed a resolution that was passed by the House of Commons "that the principles and practice of hygiene should form a part of the education of every citizen." This meant among other things that a doctor and dentist should do quarterly inspections on school children, a practice that has been applied all over the world. Horsley also took a leading role in campaigning against alcohol (and tobacco) in Britain and jointly published a book on "Alcohol and the Human Body."

During World War I, Sir Victor Horsley was sent to Egypt and then to India. On April 9, 1916, he left Bombay, India, and arrived on April 16 in the port of Basra in Iraq. Horsley was stationed as a doctor in Amara, a city near the marshes of southern Iraq, 190 miles from Baghdad. To see patients, he often had to walk long distances in the burning sun. On July 14, 1916, Horsley attended to

his last call on a sick officer whom he knew. The temperature was 43.3° C (109.9° F) in the shade. On July 15, he became ill and was moved to No. 2 British General Hospital. On July 16, his temperature rose rapidly and he became unconscious. Horsley died of heat stroke that evening, at the age of 59. He was buried in Amara city, with palm leaves laid on his grave, in a cemetery with 4,620 other casualties of World War I.

When a visitor enters Amara from the north and crosses the Kahla Bridge, he faces the cemetery where Sir Victor Horsley is buried. Interestingly, Kahla



Figure 6.4. Cemetery field with cross (Photo credit: Dr. A. Hadi Al Khalili)

Bridge curves ninety degrees in order to avoid the cemetery.

Horsley's death, although tragic indeed, came after his work in building the science and practice of neurosurgery had been achieved. A pupil of his who later became a colleague noted: "If we were to judge of a man's pre-eminence by the reputation of his work obtained both at home and in continental and foreign schools of medicine, few have equaled and none surpassed that which was universally acknowledged as having been earned by Sir Victor Horsley." This was the life of a unique individual, physician, and human being, whose grave can be found in Amara, Iraq.



Figure 6.5. Sir Victor Horsley's name on the wall (Photo credit: Dr. A. Hadi Al Khalili)

EXCAVATION AT TELL SAKHARIYA IN DHIQAR PROVINCE IN SOUTHERN IRAQ

ABDULAMIR HAMDANI, IRAQI STATE BOARD OF ANTIQUITIES AND HERITAGE;
PH.D. STUDENT AT THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT STONY BROOK

From late December 2011 through mid-January 2012, a joint team from the Iraqi State Board of Antiquities and Heritage (SBAH) and the State University of New York at Stony Brook under the supervision of Dr. Elizabeth Stone and Dr. Paul Zimansky began excavating at the late-third millennium through later-second millennium B.C. site of Tell Sakhariya, located 6 km northeast of the ancient city Ur in southern Iraq. The site of Sakhariya was chosen to find possible answers to questions related to the economic, political, and social relations between rural villages and small towns, and the nearby major urban center at Ur.

The expedition was the first foreign expedition to Iraq (outside of the Kurdistan/northeastern region) since the war of 2003. Following the 1991 war and throughout the thirteen-year economic embargo, the SBAH was isolated for political reasons from undertaking scientific collaboration and communication with international archaeological institutions. One of the goals of the five-week expedition was to reopen the scientific gate of cooperation that had been closed by the former Iraqi regime, and to rebuild cultural bridges between Iraqis and their international colleagues.

A second goal of the expedition was to use modern techniques in archaeology, such as satellite imagery, remote sensing, and

magnetic gradiometry, which had never been used before in excavations in Iraq.

In the first week of our work, the SBAH sent the directors of eight expeditions who had been working in the Marshes Salvage Excavation project to participate in our excavation in order to learn recently developed and modern techniques of excavation. Sharing these techniques with Iraqis was very valuable, as was introducing them to field photography techniques, systematic survey, total station (a device that measures electronically vertical and horizontal degrees and distance), and data collection. There were a series of lectures and demonstrations for them by various members of the international team: classification of ceramics; drawing and recording pottery; field and object photography; understanding Mesopotamian cities using GIS; remote sensing to determine settlement patterns; and new methods of survey and data collection.

The group also participated in the first

season's fieldwork, which consisted of a systematic survey followed by the excavation of several test trenches in order to understand the occupational phases of the site.

The excavation results demonstrated that the site dates back to the mid-second millennium B.C. The team collected animal bones and recovered seeds and plant remains by using a floatation machine in ways that had not previously been used in Iraq.

We spent one Friday visiting the central marshes, north of Chabaish, where we had been invited by engineer Jasim al-Asadi of the Iraq Nature Organization. In addition to seeing the natural wildlife of the marshes, we visited a large, late Mesopotamian archaeological site that is covered partially by water, and which has now become a residential base for fishers, water-buffalo breeders, and other dwellers (see <http://www.natureiraq.org/site/en/node/313>).

For the last two weeks of the expedition, there were two media crews who documented the work and the interactions among the joint team members. One crew was from official Iraqi TV and the other was a team of filmmakers and journalists including Micah Garen and Marie-Helen Carlton. The latter crew documented the excavation and made a documentary called "Digging Out: Archaeology Makes a Comeback in Iraq."

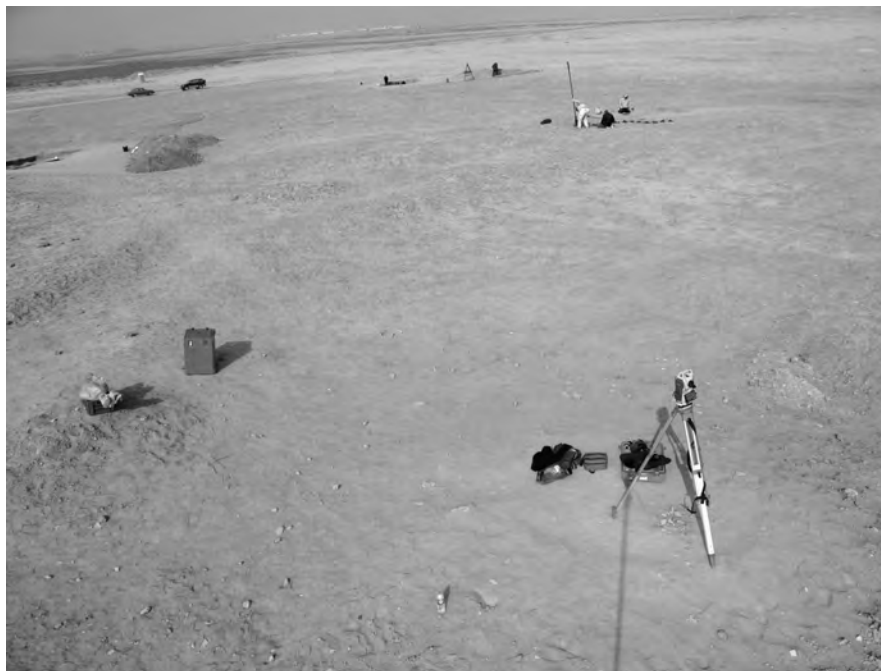


Figure 7.1. Field work at Sakhariya (Photo credit: Paul Zimansky)

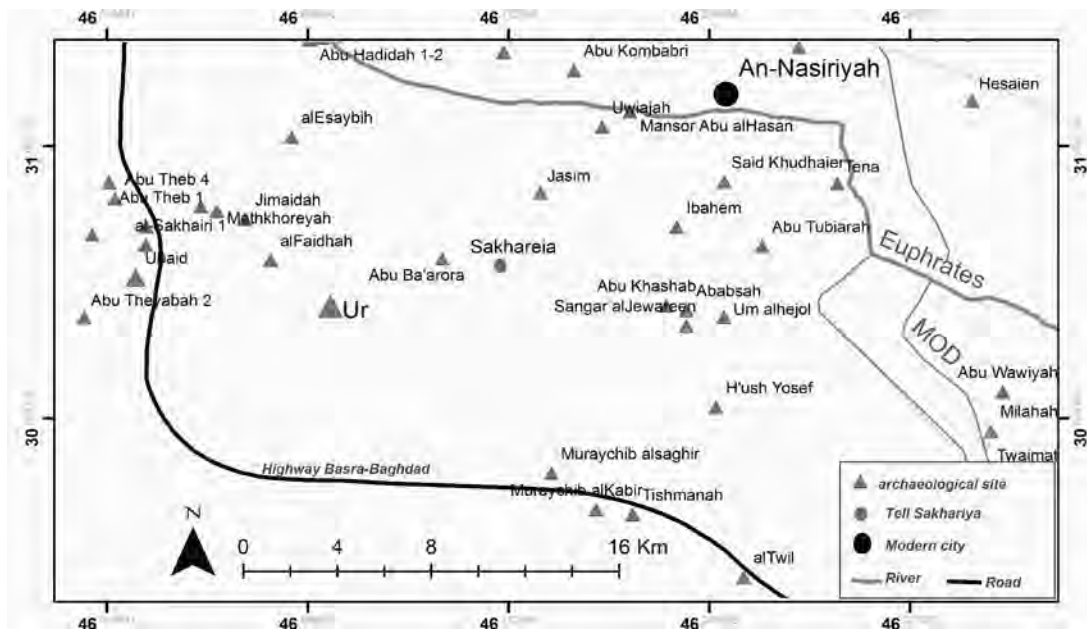


Figure 7.2. Map showing location of Sakhariya (Photo credit: Abdulamir Hamdani)

For more information, please visit http://www.fourcornersmedia.net/Four_Corners_Media/Home.html.

Several days before the end of the season, the Iraqi Writers Union in Dhiqar province held an event at the cultural center in Nasiriyah. This event included the opening of a fine arts gallery and the dedication of a statue of the late Taha Baqer, a very famous Iraqi archaeologist. In addition, Dr. Irene Winter of Harvard University, one of the expedition team members, gave a lecture about the relations between art and environment in Sumerian arts.

On the last day of the expedition, we visited additional archaeological sites north of Ur, including Lagash (Tell al-Hiba), Girsu (Tello), Shmit, and Umma (Tell Chokha).

Throughout the expedition, we were supported by the Iraqi government (represented by the National Security Council), which provided visas for the international team; the governorate of Dhiqar, which furnished us with the required logistics; and on top of that, the local people who were really very friendly, hospitable, and — most importantly — accepting of foreigners.

Overall, the coming four years of

the joint Iraqi-American project at Tell Sakhariya will lead to important and significant work that will shed light on the very critical — but not well-documented — period in Mesopotamian history, namely, the end of Old Babylonian period through the early Kassite period. After an analysis of bones and plant remains that have been recovered from the site and extracted by floatation, Dr. Elizabeth Stone will write a more detailed site report. Moreover, this project will be one of the promising steps in the new direction of Iraqi archaeology, from destruction to construction.



Figure 7.3. The whole team with laborers at the site of Sakhariya (Photo credit: Micah Garen and Marie-Helene Carlton [Four Corners Media])



Figure 7.4. The team during a visit to the Central Marshes near Chabaish (Photo credit: Jasim al-Asadi [Iraq Nature Organization])

Tell Sakhariya Project Members

Elizabeth C. Stone, Director

Paul E. Zimansky, Co-Director

Saleem Khalaf Unaied, Representative of the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage

Ali Kadim Ghanim, Representative of the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage

Wasan Abdulsahib Isa, Representative of the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage

Abdulamir Hamdani, Team Member

Irene Winter, Team Member

John McGinnis, Team Member

Demetrios Brellas, Team Member

Stephanie Rost, Team Member



Figure 7.5. The team on the central staircase of the Ziggurat of Ur (Photo credit: Micah Garen and Marie-Helene Carlton [Four Corners Media])



Figure 7.6. Poster of the cultural event and statue of Taha Baqir (Photo credit: Amir D. Jasim [Sindibad Bureau for Media])



Figure 7.7. Conducting a systematic survey of collecting surface assemblages (Photo credit: Stephanie Rost)



Figure 7.8. Mr. Qais Hussein Rasheed, chairman of the SBAH, visiting the site of Sakhariya and listening to the explanation of Dr. Elizabeth Stone, director of the Sakhariya excavation. From left to right: Abbas Fadhel Al-Ubaidi, director of excavation department at SBAH; Saleem Khalaf, director of archaeological investigations at SBAH; Mr. Qais Hussein Rasheed; and Muhsin Ali, deputy director of the Iraqi Museum (Photo credit: Saleem K. Unaied)

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THE PRESENT AND FUTURE OF ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE KURDISTAN REGION OF IRAQ

JASON UR, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

American forces have made their final departure from Iraq, and the country has seen increasing stability since the worst days of 2005. After a gap of almost ten years (and for Americans, more than two decades), foreign archaeological research is resuming. In the south, where sporadic violence still continues, some intrepid American and Italian missions are returning. The greatest resurgence, however, has been in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (hereafter the Kurdistan Region), comprising the northern provinces of Erbil, Sulaimaniya, and Dohuk. Since 1991, it has been administered in a semi-autonomous fashion, and has almost entirely escaped the post-2003 violence that swept the south.

This overview stems from a short visit to the Kurdistan Region in late October and November 2011,

in connection with an international conference. The visit gave me the opportunity to see the region for myself with an eye toward future research, and to get a sense of the possibilities of intellectual and academic collaboration with local scholars. I met with Director General of Antiquities for the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) Mala Awat, the directors of the Departments of Antiquities for all four of the KRG's provinces (Erbil, Sulaimaniya, Dohuk, and Garman), and President of the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage Qais Rashid. In addition, I met with the governors of Erbil and Sulaimaniya and First Lady of Iraq Hero Talabani. At Salahaddin University in Erbil, I was received by the president, vice presidents, and the chair of the Archaeology Department. I spent a week as part of the French Mission to

the Assyrian city of Qasr Shemamok and saw a range of important places, both ancient (Erbil, Khinis, and Bastora) and modern (Sulaimaniya, Dohuk, and Halabja).

For the first time in decades, archaeological research in the Kurdistan Region is flourishing. From October 31–November 2, Salahaddin University hosted the first International Meeting on Iraqi Archaeology (IMIA), organized with the Institut Français du Proche-Orient (IFPO) and the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage (SBAH) in Baghdad. Participants were treated to three full days of presentations on current and planned archaeological research, museum renovations, and monument conservation. Many projects in the Kurdistan Region projects were presented, generally by

foreign directors, and there was a large contingent of Iraqi archaeologists from the south, including the SBAH Director Qais Rashid. Impressive fieldwork is ongoing in the southern provinces, but remains unknown to international scholarship because of continuing difficulties that Iraqis have with gaining visas for international travel.

In Erbil, a Czech project has investigated the citadel and a German project is excavating a cemetery and a Late Assyrian residential area in the western lower town, within the fabric of the modern city. Of the core Assyrian cities, Erbil is least known archaeologically, and these works represent substantial advances. At the fringes of the rapidly expanding city, two small sites are being salvaged by Polish and Greek teams; the former, the site of Kilik Mishk, is doubling as training for Salahaddin University archaeology students. Near Erbil, a French team has initiated a major project at Qasr Shemamok (ancient Kilizu), an Assyrian provincial capital, and a team from Leiden University is excavating a Middle Assyrian city at Satu Qala on the Lesser Zab River.

In Sulaimaniya province, there are no fewer than three archaeological surveys underway: two German and one French. Excavations are proceeding at the Late Antique fortified site of Bazyan and the large multi-period mound of Bakrawa (CNRS and Heidelberg University, respectively). More excavations are planned by a University of Reading team in the Dokan region. Under the leadership of Kamal Rasheed, the Sulaimaniya Directorate has undertaken salvage excavations at several small sites threatened by the expansion of the city. Finally, in Dohuk province, a new University of Udine survey project will investigate the Assyrian landscape, including the great canal systems for Nineveh, starting in fall 2012.

I visited archaeological museums in Erbil and Sulaimaniya. Both museums



Figure 8.1. The International Meeting on Iraqi Archaeology (IMIA), held at Salahaddin University in Erbil. (Photo credit: Jason Ur)

have a smattering of collections from local sites (e.g., in Erbil, a nice collection of artifacts from the late 5th/early 4th millennium site of Qalinj Agha, upon which the museum sits), but generally their collections are the result of an attempt at constructing a single national past under the former regime, which installed a representative sample of Sumerian and Babylonian artifacts in all provincial museums. Sulaimaniya has plans for a complete reinstallation of its collections in the coming years.

A particularly successful — albeit unheralded — story is the state of conservation. Housed in the former Erbil Public Library is the Iraqi Institute for the Conservation of Antiquities and Heritage (IICAH). It was initiated with American Embassy funds, but now it operates under funding from Baghdad and the KRG. With academic oversight from the University of Delaware, the Walters Art Gallery, and the Winterthur Museum, visiting lecturers from the U.S. and Europe have trained over fifty conservation professionals from twelve Iraqi provinces since 2009.

The most visible elements of cultural

heritage in the Kurdistan Region are being preserved and developed. First and foremost is the ambitious project to conserve and restore traditional mud brick architecture on Erbil's citadel; when completed, visitors will have the unparalleled experience of moving through a city with standing architecture of the late Ottoman Period through the 1950s. In western Erbil, the Mudhafariya Minaret has been magnificently conserved and anchors a well-maintained park. These projects have been planned and carried out by foreign specialists, but local departments of antiquities are also undertaking work, for example, at the monumental Neo-Assyrian reliefs at Khinis. Here one can perceive an emerging conflict between foreign consultants and local antiquities officials over how these sites and monuments are to be enjoyed. Khinis, for example, now has a modern monumental entryway, a parking lot, and a stage and picnic facility; all three of these elements sit atop the ancient canal, which was the *raison d'être* of the monument itself. Furthermore, local landowners have constructed houses

overlooking the site, and a coffee house and picnic area upstream have completely transformed the landscape of the site. This conflict between cultural heritage and private property will emerge frequently in the future, as the Kurdistan Region continues to develop and its cities continue to expand.

At present, only a few American scholars are participating in this renaissance. One American project has begun at Tell Sakhariya, a small site near Ur (see p. 17), and a few Americans have been involved with other foreign projects. This situation seems surprising for the Kurdistan Region, given the warm and encouraging welcome that I received; in neighboring countries, official responses to Americans have varied between indifference, suspicion, and outright hostility. All government officials expressed a desire for collaborative research with American teams and scholars, especially if they opened doors for more general academic collaborations and exchanges. A perception of insecurity is almost certainly the reason for American reluctance. The security landscape is inescapable: roadside checkpoints ring towns and cities, and armed security personnel and concrete blast walls are common sights. This landscape is disconcerting, but it is not accompanied by violence. The Kurdistan Region in general, and Erbil in particular, has become a haven of normality for Iraqi Kurds and Arabs alike, for shopping and vacations. Large families on holiday in cars with Baghdad license plates are a very frequent sight. Investors have also

noticed, and the Kurdistan Region is developing at a breathtaking pace.

Should the current internal status quo persevere in Iraq, this may be the start of a real flourish for archaeology in the Kurdistan Region, and one that will hopefully expand to the whole of Iraq. This comes at an opportune time, since this burst of economic development throughout the country will come with major costs to its cultural heritage.

Iraqi Kurds are proud of the new society they have built over the last two decades, yet they seem remarkably open to writing their history together with foreign scholars. The past is inescapably embedded in the politics of the present, however, and the Kurdistan Region is no exception. In informal conversations with professional archaeologists and especially the next generation of students, it is clear that there has been a shift in which pasts are most valued. There is great interest

in the civilizations associated with speakers of non-Semitic languages, especially the Hurrians, the Mitanni, and the Medes, and a definite lack of identification with the Semitic-speaking ancient Assyrians. The exception is, of course, among the sizable Assyrian Christian community. In the Erbil suburb of Ainkawa, for example, ancient Assyrian iconography can be found in and on nearly every house, shop, and church. Indeed, the main street into Ankawa runs past the enormous new Lamassu Hotel, named after the human-headed winged bull that flanked doorways in Assyrian palaces. Regardless of whom they identify as their ancestors, we must hope that all groups in the Kurdistan Region will appreciate that they are jointly the stewards of its long and ethnically diverse history.

Many individuals helped make this trip a success, several of whom I must name directly. First and foremost,

Najat Abdullah, director of Community and Culture for the KRG's Washington, D.C., Representation was my escort and cheerful companion throughout my visit. Olivier Rouault and Maria Grazia Masetti-Rouault, co-directors of the French Mission to Qasr Shemamok, invited me to join their project and shared their experiences. David Michelmores, principal of the Consultancy for Conservation and Development in Erbil, shared his home and his unparalleled knowledge of the Erbil citadel. Jessica Johnson, academic director of University of Delaware Programs at the IICAH, offered friendly advice and an entrée into the intellectually vibrant expatriate community in Erbil. I am truly grateful to all of them.

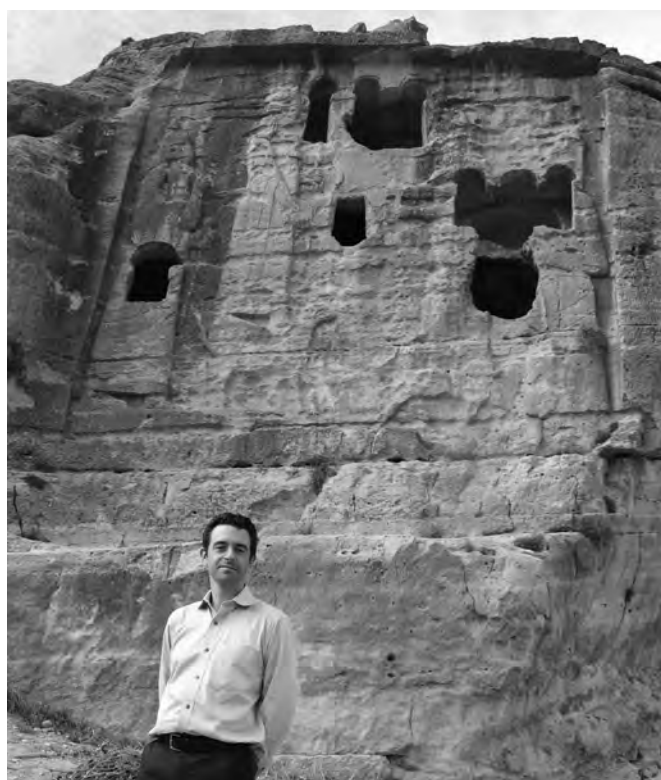


Figure 8.2. The author at the rock relief of the Assyrian king Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.) at Khinis in Dohuk province.

(Photo credit: Jason Ur)



Figure 8.3. (Left) Rock relief attributed to Naram-Sin, King of Akkad (ca. 2254–2218 B.C.), at Darband-i Gawr near Sulaimaniya. (Photo credit: Jason Ur)



Figure 8.4. (Above) Qasr Shemamok, the ancient Assyrian city of Kilizu, near Erbil. The massive 40 m high citadel (at right) is surrounded by a 50 hectare walled lower town (left). This site, excavated by a French expedition, is one of many in the new renaissance of archaeological research in Iraqi Kurdistan. (Photo credit: Jason Ur)

Figure 8.5. (Right) The western face of the Qaradagh mountains in Sulaimaniya province. (Photo credit: Jason Ur)



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