



# TAARII NEWSLETTER

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## RETHINKING THE 1958 REVOLUTION

*TAARII WORKSHOP AT WILLIAMS COLLEGE*

MAGNUS T. BERNHARDSSON, WILLIAMS COLLEGE

When is a revolution a revolution?

Fifty years after the events of July 14, 1958, a number of scholars from around the world attended a TAARII-organized workshop in October 2008 at the Elm Tree House at Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts. Set in the bucolic Berkshire Mountains, the Elm Tree House was a former summer residence of the Rockefeller family and offered an ideal venue for scholarly exchange. The primary purpose of this gathering was to assess what we now know about the 1958 revolution and to evaluate its impact on Iraqi society and history. After intense and informative discussions, the consensus was that the events of 1958 were of great significance. At the same time, the participants in this workshop, most of whom have conducted research into the period of the Hashemite monarchy from a variety of perspectives and disciplines, realized that much more research is needed and many questions are still unanswered about what happened in 1958, why it happened, and how the Revolu-

tion impacted the trajectory of Iraqi economic and political development.

The format of this workshop was unusual, yet one that sought to provide both time and space for extensive discussion. Instead of a number of panels featuring a whole host of papers, only three papers were presented at the workshop. The rest of the participants, who had received and read the papers in advance, all served as discussants. The pre-circulated papers thus became a springboard for discussion that proved to be fruitful and allowed everyone ample time and opportunity to evaluate the issues at hand.

The three papers that formed the basis of discussion were: "Some Thoughts on the Causes, Nature, and Conse-

quences of the Revolution in Iraq," by Peter Sluglett (University of Utah); "Why 1958? Whose 1958? Reflections on Remembrances and Meanings of the Revolution," by Dina Rizk Khoury (George Washington University); and "Abd al-Karim Qasim, Sectarian Identities and the Rise of Corporatism in Iraq," by Eric Davis (Rutgers University). In addition to the pre-circulated papers, Ervand Abrahamian of CUNY Graduate Center and Brooklyn College, delivered a keynote lecture the first night that explored the comparative and regional dimensions and implications of the 1958 revolution.

Peter Sluglett's paper stated that the causes of the revolution were well known. A small and generally unpopu-

lar, pro-British, urban elite was challenged by a number of anti-status quo forces. As Sluglett pointed out in his paper based on a sociological and class analysis, it is striking that there was no counter-revolution in Iraq in 1958 and "no obsequies for the *ancien regime*." Instead, Sluglett contended, the time was somehow



Figure 1.1. Participants at the TAARII Workshop at Elm Tree House, Williams College.

Photo Courtesy of Mina Marefat



Figure 1.2. From Left to Right: Peter Wien, Hala Fattah, Stephanie Platz, Reidar Visser, and Michael MacDonald. Photo Courtesy of Mina Marefat

ripe for change. Though people had a clear view of what they did not want, there was less of a consensus about the future, namely, what would happen “the day after” the revolution. Sluglett compared the events in Iraq to what had happened in Syria and Egypt in the early 1950s. Following Hanna Batatu, Sluglett pointed out that the leadership in these revolutions all had rural roots; these were “country boys” taking on the colonial metropole. Over the course of the first half of the twentieth century, the Iraqi government had no significant economic or political roots in the countryside. Therefore a large part of the rural population was excluded from the market economy. In 1958, Sluglett noted, Iraq was facing enormous social and economic problems for which the new Qasim government had few solutions. The post-revolutionary government had a difficult time working through these problems. The middle class remained weak, which enabled various groups to take over the state apparatus and manipulate state institutions — especially the army and the security services.

Dina Rizk Khoury’s paper focused on the memory of the 1958 revolution among Iraqi Arab secular intellectuals and especially the writer Ali Bader. Her paper problematized the distinction between memory and history and pointed

out how the context of that war infused memory narratives with a “sense of nostalgia for a past long gone, and a questioning, sometimes nihilistic, of the legacy of modernity.” Khoury suggested that if 1958 was the crucible for modern Iraqi memorial consciousness, then the Iran-Iraq war was the engine for its development and reification. The Iraqi intellectuals in the 1990s such as Ali Bader were critical of the intellectuals of the 1960s and of the outcomes of the revolutions. They therefore are offering fresh perspectives on what has happened in the past.

The tension between social justice and political freedoms in Qasim’s Iraq was the focus of Eric Davis’s paper. Davis started by evaluating Qasim’s legacy and pointed out that forty years after his death, Qasim still remains an enigma. When Qasim took power in 1958, his government suppressed many of the freedoms that had existed under the Hashemite Monarchy, such as the right to form political parties, freedom of the press, and the holding of parliamentary elections. Yet at the

same time, Qasim’s government also implemented many new social reforms and promoted a tolerant environment for various ethnic and religious groups. On balance, did the positive contributions outweigh the negative ones? Davis pointed out that although Qasim as an individual was modest and not corrupt, he was also a dictator. His rule set the stage for authoritarianism, widespread corruption, and subsequent human rights abuses.

In discussing these excellent papers, a number of significant points were raised. For example, some participants questioned whether the revolution should be called a “Revolution” with a capital “r” or whether it would be more accurate to label it an “overthrow” or a “coup d’etat.” In many areas, the Revolution did not introduce massive change even though the political elites were new. The participants debated why the Revolution did not happen sooner in Iraq and also noted the uniqueness of Iraq’s Communist Party and its role in Iraqi political development. Furthermore, the regional impact on the events of 1958 was also discussed and how such external pressures as the Pan-Arab rhetoric from Cairo, may have been influential. The bulk of the conversation, however, focused on the impact and implication of the Revolution for subsequent Iraqi politics. Though the participants did not fully agree in that regard, it was obvious that the Revolution of 1958 did mark the end of an era

out how the memory of the 1950s is clearly influenced by subsequent wars, sufferings, and disasters in Iraqi society. Khoury argued that the memory of the 1958 revolution is largely one of promise and disappointment. Her paper focused on how the memory of the Revolution was shaped by the Iran-Iraq war and



Figure 1.3. Mina Marefat (left) and Stephanie Platz (right) at the Workshop. Photo Courtesy of Mina Marefat

in Iraq. Like so many issues related to Iraq, the meaning of the Revolution has yet to be resolved and its meaning and significance keeps changing as Iraqi society keeps changing.

A few weeks later in November, at the Middle East Studies Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C., Eric Davis, Dina Khoury, and Peter Sluglett delivered their papers again at a pre-organized panel on rethinking the 1958 revolution. The purpose was to continue the conversation from the October Elm Tree House conference and thereby encourage further elaborations and discussions on the Revolution, in particular, and the Hashemite Monarchy, in general.

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## THE STATE OF IRAQI HIGHER EDUCATION TAARII PANEL AT RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

ABBAS KADHIM, NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL, MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

Iraq has one of the better educated populations in the Middle East. From its inception, the Iraqi state invested very generously in educating the populace, albeit in a selective way, with most of the educational opportunities going to the elite of a sectarian and ethnically divided society. By 1936, Iraq had provided higher education in law, engineering, education, medicine, and pharmacology at its own colleges, with the help of a predominantly foreign faculty. Afterwards, the graduates of these fields were sent to various European and American universities to earn advanced degrees and return to work alongside the foreign faculty or replace them.

The founding of Baghdad University (1957), Mosul University (1959), al-Mustansiriyya University (1963), and Basra University (1964) inaugurated an era of advancement in education not only for Iraqis, but for many Arab students as well. This progress reached its golden age in the 1970s as a result of the significant increase in revenues fol-

lowing the nationalization of Iraqi oil in 1973 and the rise of oil prices after the October War in the same year. Two decisions were instrumental in making Iraq among the most educated populations in the region: the law mandating school enrollment for all boys and girls at the age of six, and the law providing free education up to the Ph.D. level. By the 1980s, Iraqi universities began to educate students from all parts of society and to serve equal numbers of male and female students. New universities were founded to absorb the booming numbers of college students: the Technology University (1975), University Salah al-Din (1981), Kufa University, Qadisiyya University, and Anbar University (1987), Tikrit University (1988), and Babil University (1991), as well as many other teaching and research institutions.

In spite of the burdens imposed on Iraq by the prolonged war with Iran (1980–88), Iraq's universities continued their operations without any significant interruption; the only excep-

tion was the University of Basra whose proximity to the fighting theater caused its colleges to relocate and occasionally close their doors for some periods, especially when the fighting began to take place on Iraqi soil in the last years of the conflict. However, the war cast heavy shadows on many aspects of college life. While the regime of Saddam Hussein never tapped into the student population for the war effort, the possibility of such an act was clear and present throughout the war. Also, college rules were altered and new rules were introduced to meet the requirement of the wartime. Students were allowed to fail one year only and a student who failed in the final year was not permitted to repeat that year, almost under any circumstances. In 1987, the entire student body in all Iraqi universities was forced to spend the summer break (three months) in miserable boot-camps around the country to receive basic military training as the officials remained completely reticent concerning the rationale for this policy and



whether newly trained students were going to the front or to their college seats in September. The question was not answered until the last minute when the good news arrived. Only students who failed to participate in the training or missed two-thirds of the period were expelled from their colleges, in accordance with Directive 420 of 1987, signed by Saddam Hussein.

Iraqi universities continued to adopt a highly structured hierarchy and the curricula were centralized and standardized. Except for some very special cases, professors had no freedom to assign textbooks or deviate from the highly structured curriculum for each field. By the same token, students had no freedom and, in most cases, no meaningful rights whatsoever. Being state universities, all Iraqi universities followed one standard required curriculum for each discipline and there were no electives for the students to choose from. Otherwise, not many students would have elected to enroll in the National Education course that was imposed in the 1980s on the students of every department; the course mainly involved the study of Ba'ath Party pamphlets and the latest speeches of Saddam Hussein.

Perhaps the worst educational catastrophe to be suffered in Iraq was the U.N.-imposed sanctions following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and lasting until the collapse of Saddam's regime in 2003. The Sanctions affected Iraq's higher education both directly and indirectly. The ban imposed on equipment, information, and any collaboration with Iraqi universities isolated the Iraqi university and its cadre for over a decade. It is hard to imagine the shape of higher education in a country that struggled to obtain a license to import pencils. Indirect consequences of the sanctions included the deterioration of Iraq's economy, which deprived the universities of any meaningful funding. Also, the monthly pay of teachers did not exceed \$10, a condition that drove

most of the coveted Iraqi talent to migrate and look for work in countries such as Libya, Yemen, the United Arab Emirates and, for some lucky professors, Europe and the United States.

It was hoped that a reversal of this migration of Iraqi talent would happen after the collapse of the regime in 2003, but this has not happened, mainly because of the chaos of the new Iraq and the lack of security throughout the country until this day. Inside Iraq, hundreds of experts, including university professors, were targeted for assassination or kidnapping in the past six years. For that reason and because of other problems with the new Iraq, the migration of Iraqi brains continued at an increasing pace instead of being reversed.

The current state of Iraq's higher education was the main theme of the panel hosted by Rutgers University and sponsored by The American Academic Research Institute in Iraq (TAARII). The panel was chaired by Dr. Eric Davis, Professor of Political Science at Rutgers University and a leading expert on Iraq, and I was to act as the discussant. There were three scheduled presentations by scholars brought in from Iraq. Although Dr. Amal Shlash, Director of Bayt al-Hikma Research Center in Baghdad, was able to obtain a visa and did give her presentation, I ended up giving the two other presentations by Dr. Riyadh Aziz Hadi, Vice President of Baghdad University, and Dr. Amer Qader Sultan, Professor of Political Science at Kirkuk University. The fact that two of the speakers simply could not get their U.S. visas processed on time for the panel was a living proof for the audience of the ongoing hardships of Iraqi academics.

In spite of the cruelty of the cold evening, the hall at Alexander Library was completely full with an exceptionally engaging audience who posed questions on almost everything Iraqi. After presenting the opening remarks, Professor

Davis set the stage with an overview of Iraq's cultural and political environment as it has developed throughout the twentieth century. Drawing on his extensive research on Iraq, Professor Davis offered the audience insight on the symbolism and dynamics of Iraqi politics and the role of collective memory in shaping the perceptions of Iraqis from all social categories. With the help of PowerPoint slides, the audience had the opportunity to see how Iraqis distinctively displayed their national memory through art, literature, and political propaganda in every era of their modern history and how national symbols were used, or misused, in order to offer a certain story.

Following Professor Davis, Dr. Amal Shlash presented her first-hand observations of the current state of affairs in Iraq. Her presentation, "Academics and Human Development in Iraq," went beyond the university to encompass the current economic and financial situation in the country and offered the audience a sober picture of where Iraq is heading in the coming years. While acknowledging the burdensome challenges in Iraq, Dr. Shlash remains optimistic about the future of the country and somehow satisfied with the trajectory of improvement in the country in comparison with the early years of the political change.

The other two presentations were by Dr. Riyadh Aziz Hadi, who wrote on "Iraqi Academics and the Culture of Dialogue and Tolerance," and Dr. Amer Qader Sultan, whose paper focused on "The Role of Academic Institutions in Building an Iraqi Civil Society." Dr. Hadi's paper is a historical analysis of Iraq's academic progress from the Ottoman era to the present time, with a special focus on the post-Saddam era. He then provides an extensive set of measures to support the academics in Iraq in order to promote their positive role in society — measures that need to be undertaken at the Iraqi national level

as well as by the international community at large and that span from security measures to economic and technical forms of support.

While more theoretical than historical, the paper by Dr. Sultan is primarily devoted to offering an analysis of the challenges faced by Iraq's academic institutions, which impede the potential role of academics in building a vibrant civil society and promote a strong democratic culture in the country. He then provides another set of recommendations to help Iraq's academics overcome their plight and create the conditions for their fruitful engagement in society.

The three presentations have much in common. All of them identify the lack of independence as the central problem that faces the Iraqi universities. Whether through the meddling of governmental bureaucracies or the superimposition of certain political parties and local militias on the universities across Iraq, in varying degrees for each region, the freedoms given to Iraqi academics by the new laws (or by abolishing the authoritarian old ones) were undermined by the state's inability to guarantee them. Dr. Sultan highlights the imposition of the agenda of the party to which the Ministry of Higher Education is farmed out. "The agenda begins with the appointments — especially the appointment of administrators — to the design of the academic curricula. For example, a course on 'Democracy and Human Rights' was imposed and came to be regarded, by students and faculty alike, as the replacement of the National Education course that was imposed by the previous regime. However, this was not applied across the board. At the University of Mosul, for example, the imposed course was Islamic Education," which he sees as the University's way to avoid the wrath of al-Qa'ida and some extremist religious groups. Other problems seem to be more depressing. While the recent events show that "aca-

demics of all sects and ethnicities were the voice of moderation in the Iraqi political process, in a time Iraq was sinking into a bitter political and sectarian conflict," according to Dr. Hadi, "some people attribute the targeting of academics and their families for assassination, kidnapping, and forced migration to the moderation of the academics whose style does not sit well with the extremists of all sorts — over 300 academics were killed, of whom over 70 were from Baghdad University."

While all three panelists agreed on the urgency of providing security to Iraqi academics, as the most important requirement for the success of higher education in Iraq, they also agreed on the importance of improving the economic status of Iraqi academics whose pay is less than fifty percent of the international standards. This disparity is "one of the main reasons," as Dr. Shlash indicated, "for the continued migration of more marketable Iraqi academics." It is also one of the reasons that Iraqi academics abroad are discouraged from returning permanently to the country. Another reason is the cumbersome bureaucratic rules they face as they try to get a job in Iraq, including the application of many laws from Saddam's era that punish those who left Iraq without the blessing of his regime. For example, many academics complain that unless they were sent abroad by Saddam's regime, their experience in a foreign university does not count for the purposes of appointment and promotion. For example, a full professor from a top U.S. university would be hired at a rank less than an assistant professor at the University of Baghdad, perhaps being outranked by someone who wrote his dissertation in 1992 on "the political genius of Saddam Hussein."

Finally, one of the main proposals for helping the Iraqi universities and their academics, presented by all three panelists, focused on the need to increase the cooperation between the Iraqi uni-

versities and Iraqi academics with their counterparts in the West. Considering the tenuous security situation in Iraq, the only option at the present time is to grant Iraqi academics access to Western universities where they can get training and exchange experiences with their Western colleagues. Ironically, two of the three panelists could not be in the U.S. to propose this idea in person, because they simply could not get a visa.

#### LANGUAGE ANNOUNCEMENT

As readers may be aware, TAARII is committed to producing a bilingual newsletter in English and in 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.

#### BOOK DONATIONS

TAARII seeks donations for its permanent library. Currently located in the Amman office, this collection will be relocated when the Institute moves to Iraq. To date, TAARII has received a substantial collection of archaeological sources. TAARII welcomes book donations in this and other fields. In particular, TAARII seeks the donation of *The Encyclopedia of Islam* and the *Index Islamicus*. Please visit the TAARII website for the current catalog of the TAARII library ([www.taarii.org](http://www.taarii.org)). Contact us regarding new donations at [info@taarii.org](mailto:info@taarii.org).

## BETWEEN NAJAF AND JABAL ‘AMIL: A PORTRAIT OF THREE GENERATIONS OF SHI‘I INTELLECTUALS

MICHAELLE BROWERS, WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY

In his classic work, *Arabic Thought in the Modern Age*, Albert Hourani examines four generations of intellectuals engaged in attempts to revive political thought and to address challenges confronting contemporary Arab societies. The power of Hourani’s narrative centers on a tension between opposing strands of thought. The first generation he studies borrowed fairly unproblematically from the West. A second generation, more aware of the threats posed by Europe, undertook the task of reinterpreting Islam along modern lines. Modernist and Islamic thought move farther apart in Hourani’s third generation, as distinctly secular and Islamist trends emerged.

Students of Iraqi and Shi‘i political thought will notice that Hourani’s study remains short on both counts. What I wish to do here is offer a brief and preliminary (since fieldwork has only just begun<sup>1</sup>) sketch of three generations of Shi‘i intellectuals working in Najaf (Iraq) and Jabal ‘Amil (Lebanon), which demonstrate some “family resemblances” to Hourani’s second, third, and fourth generations: a first generation of leading clerics who took up reformist themes (in some respects for the first time) near the end of the Nahda period; the second generation which engaged modernist and secularist writings; and a third post-Nahda generation of political thinkers who came of age during a time of great political turmoil in Iraq.

So too, there are rough similarities to the changes and continuities one finds across generations. The thought and conduct of the first generation outlined here proved important in laying the foundation for the emergence of a new class of Shi‘i intellectuals and politi-

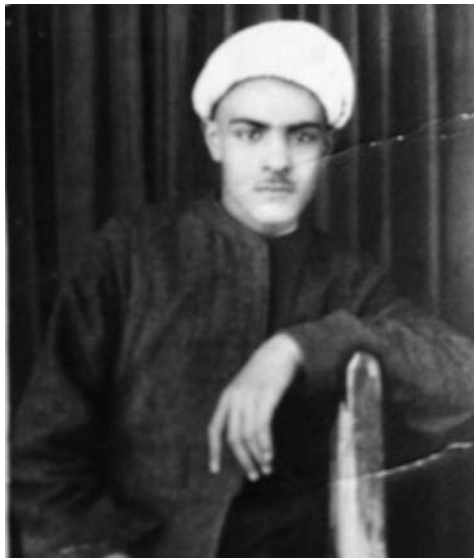


Figure 2.1. A Young, Beardless Sayyid Muhammad Mahdi Shams al-Din in Najaf, circa 1948 (Photo provided by his son, Sayyid Ibrahim Shams al-Din)

cal actors who, in a second generation offered distinctly modernist visions of literature, philosophy, and society, as well as a third generation that proved crucial in developing an ideological understanding of Islam as a comprehensive vision for political life. Many from the middle generation later came to embrace other ways of thinking, particularly communism. However, it is only with the final generation I study that a full effort was put toward creating modern Islamist movements and political parties that could compete with Arab nationalists, socialists, and communists.

While we should not be surprised to find such similar developments among Sunni and Shi‘i intellectuals in Arab contexts, it is somewhat surprising to find these ideas developing within the *hawza* of Najaf. It is also apparent that English language scholarship on modern Arab political thought gives less

attention to these parallels than those Shi‘i individuals who express them in their attempt to forge movements aimed at reform, modernization, and revolution.

### THE FIRST GENERATION AND THE CALL FOR REFORM

Two prominent figures in this first generation are Muhammad al-Husayn al-Kashif al-Ghita (1877–1954), the Najafi cleric and reformist *mujtahid* (jurist), and ‘Abd al-Husayn Sharaf al-Din Musawi (1872–1957), a Shi‘i scholar from Jabal ‘Amil, who completed his higher studies in Najaf between 1889 and 1903 before returning to Lebanon, settling in Tyre, and becoming the first leader of Lebanon’s Shi‘i. Both figures were important for legitimizing political action on national issues. In 1920, Sharaf al-Din gave a fatwa legitimizing jihad against the French and organizing with other ‘ulama to discuss the future of Jabal ‘Amil with King Faysal. Kashif al-Ghita and Sharaf al-Din al-Sadr both took part in the events of 1923–24 against the Iraqi monarchy and the British. Both individuals also sought to situate the Shi‘a within the framework of Islamic unity. Toward that end Kashif al-Ghita attended the Muslim Congress in Jerusalem in 1931, visited Cairo and other Arab capitals during his lifetime, and maintained an important correspondence with Mahmud Shaltut prior to the latter’s issuing of a fatwa declaring worship according to Twelver Shi‘i doctrine to be valid and the introduction of Shi‘i jurisprudence into al-Azhar’s curriculum. Sharaf al-Din visited Egypt and met with Shaykh Salim al-Bishri, then head of al-Azhar.

Thus, one finds within this first generation many themes further developed in subsequent generations: 1) the “renewal” of Islam within the context of the achievement of nationalist aims; 2) the necessity for Islamic unity and the desire Sunni–Shi‘i rapprochement (*taqrib* or *taqarub*); and 3) the construction of an engaged rather than simply rejectionist critique of competing ideologies (communism, socialism, and Arab nationalism).<sup>2</sup> While the later generations surpassed this first one in terms of political theorizing, the thought and actions of later prominent Shi‘i figures reveal the distinctive influence of their forbears, as well as their interaction with this and other politicized clerics, their students, and each other.

#### THE MIDDLE GENERATION AND THE MODERNIST PROJECT

The first generation raised many of the issues that continue to be important throughout the twentieth century — such as foreign intervention, the division and disunity of Muslims, and the marginalization of religious institutions, in general, and of the Shi‘a, in particular. Yet, the development of a modern and modernist political vocabulary is very much the project of a second generation of writers. As some leading clerics, such as Grand Ayatollahs Muhsin al-Hakim and ‘Abd al-Qasim al-Khoei were advising a quieter (and in the case of Khoei, one might argue, quietist) approach to reform, journals such as *al-Irfan* (published in Sidon) gave voice to the reformist ideas of individuals such as Muhsin Sharara (1901–46), Muhammad Rida al-Muzaffar (1904–?), and Husayn Muruwa (1910–87), among others. In the pages of *al-Irfan*, Sharara declared the

need for a Shi‘i Muhammad ‘Abduh. Like many others of this generation, Sharara was highly critical of what he saw as the sad state of intellectual and educational activity in Najaf and the reactionary fears of reform along modern and scientific lines on the part of its ‘ulama.<sup>3</sup> It is during this period that Muzaffar and others established Muntada al-Nashr in 1935, which published modern books, created modern syllabi, and established a “reformed” religious school. Muzaffar sought to reform education along the lines ‘Abduh planned for al-Azhar.

The generation that was coming of age in this period proved more radical in their critique than the first generation — and much more willing to call upon “new,” “modern,” or “Western” intellectual traditions in articulating the changes they viewed as imperative. The pages of *al-Irfan* carried poetry mocking backwardness and false piety; essays unselfconsciously discussing secularism, communism, and democracy; and translations of literature, philosophy, and political writings published in the United States and Europe. As a result, many of the second generation came under fire. Some found they had no future among the clergy.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, some

who studied at the *hawza* of Najaf went so far as to remove the turban (so to speak) and choose other paths. This is perhaps best epitomized by Muruwa, who eschewed his father’s dream of his becoming a religious scholar and joined the communist party. “Marx,” he proclaimed, “entered my life from Najaf.”<sup>5</sup> Muruwa’s journal *al-Hatif* became an important forum for airing these more radical ideas. Yet, it is only in the generation that follows that the project of articulating a revolutionary project within an Islamic framework is fully undertaken.

#### THE THIRD GENERATION: TOWARD A REVOLUTIONARY ISLAMISM

The third generation graduated from the reformist schools set up by Kashif al-Ghita and Muzaffar and includes: Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr (1963–80), perhaps the central philosopher of the renewal of Shi‘i Islamic political thought;<sup>6</sup> Musa al-Sadr (1928–78), the founder of Lebanon’s AMAL party; Muhammad Mahdi Shams al-Din (1935–2001), who headed Lebanon’s Higher Islamic Shi‘i Council after Musa al-Sadr’s disappearance; and Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah (1935–), currently Lebanon’s most prominent Shi‘i intellectual and founder of numerous charitable and educational institutions in Lebanon, Syria, and elsewhere.

All of these individuals were students in Najaf during the formation of the first revolutionary Shi‘i Islamist party, Hizb al-Da‘wa al-Islamiyya (around 1957 or 1958), for which Baqir al-Sadr is often cited as the central intellectual and political force. While Shams al-Din and Fadlallah remained in Najaf until the ages of 33 and 31, respectively, Musa al-Sadr’s period of study was much



Figure 2.2. Sayyid Musa al-Sadr and Sayyid ‘Abd al-Husayn Sharaf al-Din in 1955 (Photo provided by the Imam Sadr Foundation in Beirut)



briefers. Although English language scholarship on Sadr places him in Najaf for a period of four years, those who interacted and studied with him there maintain that it was a period of less than two years (between 1956 and 1958). Nonetheless, according to Shams al-Din, the “new vision” present in Najaf in that period crystallized at precisely the time of Sadr’s arrival. Fadlallah also notes the similarities between Musa al-Sadr and Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr’s thinking in regard to the cultural and political atmosphere of the time.<sup>7</sup> Both

Shams al-Din’s metaphor of shared vision and Fadlallah’s metaphor of, in a sense, breathing the same air, point to commonality among themselves and Musa Sadr and Baqir al-Sadr, which they associate with their generation and with Najaf.

The atmosphere Shams al-Din and Fadlallah describe is one I have encountered numerous times in interviews with individuals from this period: an atmosphere dominated by communism and Arab nationalism and in which Islamic institutions and ways of thinking were increasingly marginalized, such that some feared extinction. Fadlallah goes so far as to describe a kind of intellectual terrorism (*irhab*) toward anything Islamic.<sup>8</sup> It was against this trend that Shams al-Din began to insist that the very purpose of *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) is to apply Islamic theory to all spheres of human life and that Fadlallah began to preach that the jurist who removes himself from contemporary politics risks losing his function as a *marji‘* (authority) in other realms of life. In Iraq, Baqir al-Sadr sought to politicize religious identity in order to counter the secular and anti-religious sentiments prevalent in that country’s politics and society of the 1950s and 1960s. Around the same time, in Lebanon, Musa al-Sadr



Figure 2.3. From Right to Left: Sayyid Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, Sayyid Mahdi al-Sadr, Sayyid Mahmud Hashimi, Sayyid Muhammad ‘Ali Ha‘iri, Sayyid Mahmud al-Khatib, and Sayyid Ja‘far, Son of Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, Date Unknown (Photo provided by the Imam Sadr Foundation in Beirut)

(along with Shams al-Din and Fadlallah) began mobilizing Lebanon’s Shi‘i as a political community amidst that country’s discourse of “confessionalism” and “communalism.”

This third generation not only took up the challenges first of the communists and then of the Arab nationalists, but also translated the issues and rhetoric of these ideologies into Islamic categories. It is in this spirit that Baqir al-Sadr took up the “social issue” in his 1959 work, *Our Philosophy* (*Falsafatuna*), which was followed in 1961 by *Our Economy* (*Iqtisaduna*), which attempted to counter the communist appeal toward redressing the “social balance” and communist criticisms that Islam lacked solutions to contemporary problems. These works belong to a genre of Islamic modernist writing that confronts questions taken up in European philosophy in order to address them from the point of view of Islamic philosophy. One of the main claims in Baqir al-Sadr’s contribution to this genre is that neither communism nor capitalism (which he views as the two chief ideological rivals in the modern world) can offer real fulfillment to human beings, as he details what he takes to be the flaws and shortcom-

ings of each, in contrast to the truths and benefits of Islam.

#### A FOURTH GENERATION?

There is, of course, a subsequent generation that can be studied, what one might term the “Hizbullah generation” — that of Abbas al-Musawi (1952–92) and Hasan Nasrallah (1960–). In the view of many scholars the primary legacy of the third generation lies in this and other Shi‘i Islamist movements that currently animate politics in Iraq and Lebanon. While certainly, much of the credit

(or blame, as the case may be) for developing distinctly Shi‘i modes of engaging and competing in national political processes lies with this fourth generation, members of the third generation often seek to retain their distinctiveness. For example, they tend to characterize the subsequent generation as one of pragmatic political thinkers, rather than Islamic intellectuals as such. Explanations of generational differences may point to the fact that many from the Hizbullah generation had their period of study in Najaf cut short by the Ba‘thists expulsion of foreign students from Najaf in 1978 or a more general preference for direct action over intellectual work. Others point to the different environment in which each generation came of age. For example, Jihad al-Zayn, a writer for *al-Nahar* and descendent of Ahmad ‘Arif al-Zayn, described it, the “new Mullah” of the earlier generation emerged out of an ideologically and intellectually mixed milieu, the generation of Nasrallah was “born completely Islamist.”<sup>9</sup> Both members of the third generation and their relatives, who remain devoted to preserving their memories, tend to emphasize their role as intellectuals over their roles as political figures: as poet in the case of



Fadlallah, as philosopher in the case of Baqir al-Sadr, as scholar in the case of Shams al-Din. It is also common to hear priority given to an ecumenical strain among Shi‘i thinkers of the third generation as a basis of rapprochement or dialogue between Sunni and Shi‘a or between Muslims and Christians. One of the greatest challenges in fleshing out the brief sketch of the generations of political thinkers presented here lies in sorting through the discrepancies of aspirations and exigencies, written texts and memories, contemporary reception and historical legacies.

<sup>1</sup> The author is grateful to TAARII and the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC) for supporting this proj-

ect’s research in Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan. Feedback on the outline of generations offered here will be gratefully received at browerm@wfu.edu.

<sup>2</sup> For an elaboration of the latter themes in Kashif al-Ghita’s thought, see my paper presented at the 2008 Middle East Studies Association meeting in Washington, D.C., “Muhammad al-Husayn al-Kashif al-Ghita: Between Najaf and al-Azhar.”

<sup>3</sup> See for example, ‘Ali al-Zayn, “Buwadir al-Islah fi jami‘a al-najaf, aw nahda Kashif al-Ghita,” *al-‘Irfan* 29:2 (1939): 179–86. Despite his title, Zayn is more critical than laudatory of the current state of reform in Najaf. Similar articles were written around the same time by Muhsin Sharara in the same magazine and by Muruwa in *al-Hatif*.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Werner Ende’s essay, “From Revolt to Resignation: The Life of Shaykh Muhsin Sharara,” (1997) available

online at [www.freidok.uni-freiburg.de/volltexte/3368/pdf/Ende\\_From\\_revolt\\_to\\_resignation.pdf](http://www.freidok.uni-freiburg.de/volltexte/3368/pdf/Ende_From_revolt_to_resignation.pdf). Sabrina Mervin provides a rich account of this period of intellectual life in “The Clerics of Jabal ‘Amil and the Reform of Religious Teaching in Najaf Since the Beginning of the Twentieth Century,” in *The Twelver Shia in Modern Times*, edited by Brunner and Ende (Brill, 2001).

<sup>5</sup> “Min al-najaf dakhala hayati marx,” *al-Tariq* (1994): 172–83.

<sup>6</sup> See Chibli Mallat, *The Renewal of Islamic Law: Muhammad Baqer as-Sadr, Najaf and the Shi‘i International* (Cambridge University Press, 1993).

<sup>7</sup> Husayn Sharaf al-Din’s study of *Imam al-Sayyid Musa al-Sadr* (Markaz al-Imam Sadr, 1996) includes interviews with both Fadlallah and Shams al-Din.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>9</sup> Interview with author, January 30, 2009.

## FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The annual deadline for submission of applications to the *U.S. Fellows Program* is **November 15, 2009**, for projects beginning as early as March 2010. The annual deadline for the *Iraq Fellows Program* is **February 15, 2010**. Applications from U.S.-Iraqi collaborative teams are welcome on a **ROLLING** basis. Teams of individual U.S. and Iraqi scholars wishing to collaborate may request up to \$14,000. For additional information, please visit the TAARII website: [www.taarii.org](http://www.taarii.org). To submit a collaborative proposal, contact [info@taarii.org](mailto:info@taarii.org).

## “THE DEFENSE OF INHUMANITY: AIR CONTROL AND THE CULTURE OF BRITISH INTELLIGENCE-GATHERING IN IRAQ”

LECTURE GIVEN BY PRIYA SATIA AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

SUMMARY BY RUTH BERRY, MASTER’S STUDENT, UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Talked sponsored by TAARII, Center for Middle East Studies, The Oriental Institute, and the Nicholson Center of The University of Chicago

In a well-attended lecture at the University of Chicago’s Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Professor Priya Satia described how British intelligence officers’ perceptions of Iraq resulted in their use of the Royal Air Force (RAF) to subdue Bedouin uprisings during the mandate period. British intelligence officers and policy makers viewed Bedouin society as a kind of magical, biblical, and medieval utopia. This

image of “Arabia” led to the world’s first regime of aerial surveillance and bombardment in Iraq and helped defend Britain against critics accusing it of inhumanity.

Satia began her lecture with a brief discussion of the formation and early history of the Royal Air Force (RAF) in Iraq. Britain was given the mandate for Iraq after World War I. However, from the Iraqi perspective, “the mandate

was nothing more than a flimsy imperial disguise,” obscuring the broken promise of their post-war independence. Disappointed and frustrated, Iraqis rebelled in force against British imperial control throughout the 1920s. The British government, facing mounting unrest in many of its colonies and feeling financially and militarily stretched, decided to employ a new system of “air control.” According to

Satia, the goal of the newly created RAF was “to patrol Iraq and coordinate information gathered by agents on the ground in order to bombard subversive villages and tribes.” Although Britain had sporadically used aerial forces in the past, Iraq marked the first time in which air bombardment was systematically used, and it was then that “they first fully theorized the value of air power as an independent arm of the military.”

Satia asserted that British intelligence officers and policy makers conceived of Iraq as horizonless, featureless, and “very much the same everywhere,” and therefore “peculiarly suited” to policing by air power, an unbounded and all-seeing force.

Satia emphasized that, “the vindication of air control did not rest merely on a simple racist dehumanization of Arabs, [rather] it grew out of long circulating ideas about ‘Arabia’ as a place somehow exempt from the ‘this worldliness’ that constrained human activities in other parts of the world.” She described how British intelligence officers on the ground viewed Iraq as a mystical, magical place: a place where life was a simple battle between good and evil, unfettered by the constraints of modern Western society. These perceptions allowed the RAF to pose Iraq as a romantic backdrop for military engagement in which “the rules did not apply anyway.” Furthermore, intelligence gathering became more of an exercise in learning to “think like an Arab” than in the collection of actual data: “in the infinitely mysterious desert, faith if not facts or visual data, seemed a reasonable practical objective ... [Intelligence agents] embraced an anti-empiricist, metaphysical epistemology based on notions of a shared past and ‘racial affinity.’”

The use of air control was further justified by cultural beliefs such as the assertion that war was an inherent part of life in Bedouin society and that Arabs only respected strong shows of force.

Satia quotes one official as going so far as to say: “they have no objection to being killed.” Of the Bedouin, one Air Force commander stated, “war was a romantic excitement whose production of tragedies, bereavements, widows, and orphans was a normal way of life, natural and inevitable.” One British Air Minister suggested that the only problem was with British public perception, since the Bedouin expected such treatment: “Blood lust was the way of the place and the mantra was ‘when in Rome.’” The British believed that air power, with its ability to strike fast and hard, was respected rather than resented by Iraqis.

Satia points out that the true “inhumanity of this system stemmed from its inability to distinguish between combatants and non-combatants.” The use of aerial bombardment was indiscriminate and highly inaccurate; at times, entire villages were wiped out in a single raid and casualties of one hundred people were not at all uncommon. However, “accuracy itself was moot since air power was meant to be everywhere at once.” The true goal was terror; the effectiveness of air power “was tied to the Arab propensity for exaggeration; the theory was that where there was one plane, exaggerating Arabs would then spread news of dozens of planes.” Therefore, negative reports related to the use of air raids were easily dismissed given Britain’s belief in the inherently exaggerated nature of Arab news. Furthermore, RAF officers argued that they need not worry about the killing of women and children as Iraqis themselves were far more concerned about the death of men. According to Satia, these beliefs about the nature of Arab culture “rendered casualties entirely casual.” She at one point quoted a telegram sent from General Headquarters to Arnold Wilson: “If the Civil Commissioner is going on to Mosul will he be so kind as to drop a bomb on ... on the way,” a statement rendered humorous only by the absur-

dity of its casual barbarity.

In concluding her lecture, Satia drew a chilling parallel between the British use of airpower to subdue Iraq and the current U.S. occupation. She asserted that the earlier episode of British occupation can be used to help us understand our current situation “to the extent that [it produced] what we might call ‘the conditions of possibility’ for our present, including, in particular, a certain mode of modern statecraft that was designed to secure imperial ends in an anti-imperial world.” These conditions were informed by British understandings of the “Arab mind” and Satia highlighted the continuity between the past and the present by quoting an American officer in Iraq today as saying “you have to understand the Arab mind, the only thing they understand is force — force, pride, and saving face.” A member of the audience reinforced this idea of continuity by citing the Human Terrain System, which imbeds anthropologists and social scientists with combat troops in order to help them to better understand Iraqi culture. In the same vein, Satia then mentioned a newly declassified program called “Task Force Odin,” which has deployed hundreds of unmanned surveillance and attack aircraft in orbit over Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. This program was launched with the expectation “that constant ubiquitous drone surveillance coupled with air strikes triggered remotely from the United States will solve our tactical problems in Iraq and allow a draw down of troops.” Satia’s response to this program was to say that, “in a battle for hearts and minds there is no such thing as a ‘smart bomb,’ leaving aside altogether the ethical hazards of remote-control killing. Even if the drones enable some of the troops to come home, the unblinking eye in the sky will, I think, worsen the political problem of reconciling Iraqis to occupation and not least because of the living memory of the British experience.”

## AGENTS, BRITONS, IRAQ AND ARABIA

ORIT BASHKIN, UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Book Review: Priya Satia, *Spies in Arabia — The Great War and the Cultural Foundations of Britain's Covert Empire in the Middle East*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Priya Satia has written an outstanding work on British policies in the Middle East, detailing the histories of British spies in Arabia: their careers, self-perceptions, and public and covert conduct. The book covers the agents' activities before, during, and shortly after World War I. Almost thirty years after the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism*, Satia's careful deconstruction of the British colonial archive illustrates how cultural procedures could lead to devastating political outcomes. Although dealing primarily with British history, specifically the multifaceted relationship of the metropolis (including its politicians, spies, generals, journalists, and writers) to other parts of the Empire, the book is of immense importance to scholars of the Middle East in general, and of Iraq, in particular, because it situates British policies in the Middle East in a larger imperial context. Satia convincingly shows that policies in Iraq did not come into being after the destruction of the Ottoman Empire, but rather emerged from a complicated web of pre-war discourses.

Satia's use of sources is truly commendable. Her book encompasses colonial reports from the Foreign, India, Colonial, and War offices, memoirs, press accounts, as well as novels, films, and poems. Looking at these records as transparently representing reality, Satia is able to demonstrate how, within the larger category of the Orient, a specific conversation about Arabia — a mysterious, undecipherable, Bergsonian space, which serves as the site for savvy and well-informed agents — came into being. Her innovative reading strategies are especially illuminating in chapter two, which introduces the cultural universe of the Edwardian agents; a universe whose components include spy

novels, accounts of prose-fiction, and Biblical narratives. This background also explicates the Biblical and eschatological meanings ascribed to the fall of Mesopotamia during the war (as discussed in chapter five). British images of Arabia, and especially of its tribes, are highly significant to Middle Eastern scholars since Britain was instrumental in devising tribal policies in Iraq and the Gulf. Satia's book helps us understand the cultural setting that informed British decision-making in this domain.

Satia follows the spies' attempts before the war to validate the significance of their actions as knowledgeable agents "on the ground," and looks into their activities during the war. Consequently, the book enriches the well-known narrative of British betrayal of Arab national hopes (as manifested in the series of contradicting promises given in the Sykes-Picot agreement, the correspondence with Sherif Husayn, and the Balfour Declaration) by focusing on the daily interactions of agents in Arabia. These, ultimately, facilitated the normalization of intrigue in Middle Eastern foreign policies. The work not only covers the more familiar characters like A. T. Wilson, Henry Dobbs, Gertrude Bell, and especially T. E. Lawrence (whose actions and public image receive critical attention), but also studies less familiar officers and agents, and situates them within social networks in both England and the Middle East.

*Spies in Arabia* is also a book about democracy and its system of checks and balances. It clarifies how policies are conceptualized not only in democratic institutions but also in covert and secretive fashions across the Empire. Satia analyzes the ambivalent relationship of various bodies in the state, including the agents themselves, with the me-

dia, and scrutinizes the print-culture's shift from over-enthusiastic accounts of the agents' deeds before and during the war to the press' condemnation of Britain's irresponsible Middle Eastern policies after the war (chapter nine). Democracy, however, is also examined in the Middle East, where the creation of the veneer of democratic institutions under the mandate system, especially in Iraq, was only one aspect of British policies in the region. To understand the project of, and the public image associated with, "indirect control," Satia reads the history of the mandate period backwards, trying to place it in policies formed before and during the war. The gaps between the talk about democracy and the brutality of British power are encapsulated in chapter seven, which discusses the concept of "Air Control." Examining the Royal Air Force (RAF) in Iraq, the chapter inspects the ways in which Iraq's "uncivilized tribes" were subjected to the indiscriminate violence of technology.

Finally, the book could be seen as a thoughtful contemplation on the relationship between past and present. The book's themes include: a critique of an unsuspecting media during the war; an analysis of a foreign army tackling mass resistance in Iraq; a deconstruction of fabricated paranoid tales which affected foreign policy; a review of generals and agents whose self image as liberators relied on Biblical and Orientalist narratives; and an examination of the use of modern technology in order to deal with civilian "unrest." These themes seem more than familiar. The quotes of contemporary politicians Satia interlaces into her narratives, her evocation of U.S. policies in Iran in the conclusions, and the fact that the story she tells occurs in the same place where U.S. for-



eign policy today faces one of its greatest challenges link the past to the present. And yet, Satia is very careful in her analysis. She insists on the specificity of her case study, on the need to read it within the context of British imperial policies, and on the importance of carrying these specificities in mind when the historical fiascoes of the past are echoed in those of the present.

I would like to raise a few points as a reader who comes to this book from the field of Iraqi and Middle Eastern studies. With much talent and detail, Satia depicts the wild goose-chases inspired by British conspiracy theories, regarding Bolshevik, Arab, and Kemalist plots to overthrow British hegemony in the region (most lucidly analyzed in chapter six). Indeed, many of us who read British accounts are often amused by these imaginary intrigues, which saw the red danger looming from every corner in Arabia. On the other hand, scholars of Arab-Turkish relations during the Great War have established that despite the activities of Arab nationalists, the Arab Revolt, and the brutal persecution of Arab nationalists by Cemal Pasha, many Arabs sided with the Ottomans during the war and hoped for their victory. In Iraq, for example, Pan-Islamist Shi‘i

supported the Ottomans. Furthermore, after the war and during the 1920s, Kemalist Turkey was not simply a rival-state that sent its agents to Mosul. Kemalist Turkey was also the power that defeated Western intervention and a state engaged in politics of reform and secularization. These policies inspired many Iraqis. The secret society *al-‘Ahd*, Shi‘i clerics, and Arab nationalists who, as Bell once put it, “wanted the Turks to come back” had indeed advocated cooperation between Bolsheviks, Kemalists, and Arabs after the war. Similarly, the British looked at Iraq as a state important to Arabia, but their Iraqi policies were also influenced by events in Egypt and Syria. Egypt’s popular movement against Britain in 1919 encouraged many Iraqis, who referenced it in their writings. The combination of 1919 Egypt, the unstable Palestinian mandate, especially circa 1920–21, and the Syrian Revolt against the French in the mid-1920s, indicate that British fears about Pan-Arab and local resistance were not entirely unfounded. In brief, then, even paranoiacs can sometimes raise reasonable doubts.

Satia’s references to Arab nationalism could have been expanded based on secondary literature of the period, as Arab nationalists of the interwar period

came in many shapes and colors, and included Pan-Arab and local groups. In fact, some of her analyses of Britain’s covert policies appeared not only in the accounts quoted in the book, but also in Arab print culture, especially in the press. A comparison between British power in Iraq and in Jordan, a kingdom with a tribal population handled in manners similar to, but also very different from, Iraq, could have been helpful. Finally, I am not sure I entirely agree with the comparison between Gandhi and Lawrence. Although both are affiliated with a critique of Empire, Lawrence was a white man who materialized British colonial desires to pass as an Oriental. He was a product of the Empire who masterfully manipulated its public opinion. In the national narratives of the Iraqi left-leaning and nationalist opposition, he is represented as a spy and an agent of a foreign power, as a way of critiquing the compliance of the Hashemites with British power. These images differ greatly from the images affiliated with Gandhi in both the Indian and the British contexts.

In summation, this is a very important book for our understanding of Empire and foreign policy in Middle East, in the past and in the present.

## 2009 U.S. FELLOW PROJECTS

**SINAN ANTOON** will complete a documentary film about the Iraqi poet, Saadi Youssef. Based on extensive research carried out around the world, the documentary will contextualize Youssef’s life and work with interview and archival footage from the U.S., London, Cairo, Beirut, Damascus, and Baghdad. The documentary will show how Youssef’s experience and poetry reflect or respond to Iraq’s history in the twentieth century.

**JAMES ARMSTRONG**, along with colleague Hermann Gasche, will complete and publish a comprehensive ceramic typology for second-millennium Babylonia and its periphery. The typology is based upon well-dug, well-recorded stratigraphic sequences and will provide a resource for scholars who study the archaeology and history of ancient Mesopotamia.

With TAARII support, **ARBELLA BET-SHLIMON** will travel to the U.K. to conduct research for a dissertation that addresses the history of the oil industry in Kirkuk from its genesis through the coup that brought the Ba‘th Party to power. She will explore the impact of the industry upon local politics and society and will examine the interaction of economic change and identity politics.

ERIC DAVIS will undertake focus group research with two sets of Iraqi youths between the ages of 15 and 25: Kurds in the North and Arabs in the South. He aims to analyze the socialization, attitudes, and political and social identities of youth in Iraq toward sectarianism and democracy and will examine factors that cause some youth to turn toward radical politics or toward democratic values and processes. Davis plans for these case studies to provide the basis for a large, national youth survey to be conducted in the future.

ROCHELLE DAVIS, assisted by OMAR SHAKIR, will interview Iraqis about their perception of U.S. troops' knowledge and use of Iraqi culture in their interactions with local populations in Iraq. Davis has already analyzed cultural training programs and materials used by the U.S. military. By combining this analysis with her interview findings, she hopes to illuminate the complex ways in which Iraqi and American notions of Iraqi culture have interacted, and the significance of those interactions for Iraqis' perceptions of the ongoing presence of the U.S. military in their country.

In 1991, Shi'a in nine provinces of southern Iraq rebelled against the government of Saddam Hussein after the withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait. Abandoned by the international community, hundreds of thousands of uprising participants face reprisals by the regime. ABBAS KADHIM will conduct interviews with Iraqis who participated in the

uprisings. In addition to publishing an article on the participants' memories of events, he will also create an interview archive, which will become available to other scholars who study the period.

Where previous studies of development in Iraq have focused on money-metric factors, such as GDP, income, and wages, BASSAM YOUSIF, will complete a manuscript that evaluates Iraq's

development experience between 1950 and 1990 from a human development perspective. This new vantage will consider the country's historic social cleavages and its imbalanced, oil-based economy in addition to other economic outcomes. The resulting book will challenge long-standing assumptions about Iraq's twentieth century economic development.

## 2009 U.S. FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENTS

PROFESSOR SINAN ANTOON, NEW YORK UNIVERSITY  
*"In the Vocative Case: Saadi Youssef's Iraq," Phase II*

DR. JAMES ARMSTRONG, SEMITIC MUSEUM, HARVARD UNIVERSITY  
*"The Babylonian Ceramic Tradition: The Second Millennium B.C."*

MS. ARBELLA BET-SHLIMON, CENTER FOR MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES,  
HARVARD UNIVERSITY  
*"Kirkuk, 1918–1968: Oil and the Politics of Identity in an Iraqi City"*

PROFESSOR ERIC DAVIS, POLITICAL SCIENCE, RUTGERS UNIVERSITY  
*"Youth Attitudes Toward Identity, Sectarianism, and Democracy:  
Two Case Studies"*

PROFESSOR ROCHELLE DAVIS, CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY ARAB  
STUDIES, GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY, WITH OMAR SHAKIR  
*"The U.S. Military and Iraqi Culture: Iraqi Perspectives"*

PROFESSOR ABBAS KADHIM, DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND  
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, NAVAL POST GRADUATE ACADEMY  
*"Capturing the Narratives of the 1991 Uprising in Iraq"*

PROFESSOR BASSAM YOUSIF, DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS,  
INDIANA STATE UNIVERSITY  
*"Iraq at the Intersection of Development and Violence, 1950–1990"*

*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.*

For information on how to become a TAARII Member, please visit [www.taarii.org](http://www.taarii.org).

## TAARII LIBRARY GROWING

### MCGUIRE GIBSON, TAARII PRESIDENT

The TAARII Library has received several substantial gifts of books in the past two years. Joost Hiltermann was the first to send social science publications and journals that are already housed in the TAARII apartment in Amman, Jordan. This donation consists of eighty-four books and thirty articles devoted to the periods of the Iran-Iraq War, Sanctions, Saddam Hussein, the “Kurdish question,” the Iranian Revolution, and East–West relations. Most are in English, but there are a few in Arabic, Persian, and Kurdish.

Several months ago, Bert Golding, who had spent much of his life working in Saudi Arabia for Aramco, sent a message asking what he might do with the scholarly books from the library of his wife Marny. Born Margaret Letty Martin on June 18, 1922, Marny Golding, as she was known to all her friends, died on January 16, 1985. I first came to know Marny in Bahrain in 1970, when she and her colleague Grace Burkholder electrified an international conference on Asian archaeology with evidence of Mesopotamian Ubaid pottery (ca. 5,000 B.C.) found by them on sites in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia. She and Burkholder, long term residents in the Aramco compound in

Dhahran, had read Robert McC. Adams’ books on archaeological survey in Iraq and, although not trained archaeologists, they had followed his methodology to produce a break-through piece of research. Their discoveries altered our view of early cultural connections in the Middle East. They turned over their artifact collections and notes to the newly formed Department of Antiquities in the 1970s. Marny’s findings were essential to the dissertation research of Dr. Abdullah Masry, who subsequently became Saudi Arabia’s first Director of Antiquities. In the mid-1970s, Masry convened a small group of archaeologists in Riyadh to work out a nation-wide archaeological survey. The first steps in that project included a systematic survey of the Eastern Province, including the areas worked on by Marny. I was a member of that team, which was headed up by Adams. Our research complemented the pioneering research of Marny Golding and Grace Burkholder. The depth of Marny’s long-term commitment to scholarship is reflected in the 238 items that have now become part of the TAARII library. These include many fundamental archaeological reports, such as the monographs on the sites

of Ur and Ubaid, as well as volumes on the archaeology and ecology of Arabia and the Gulf. Of great importance are long runs of journals that include *Iraq*, *Sumer*, *Iran*, *Journal of Oman Studies*, *Pakistan Archaeology*, *Antiquity*, *American Journal of Archaeology*, *Archaeology*, and *Archaeometry*.

Recently, Professor Emeritus Gene Gragg of the Oriental Institute of

the University of Chicago, has donated more than 185 volumes, including many important monographs on Sumerian language, literature, and culture, as well as items in the wider cuneiform field. Anyone familiar with that field will understand the significance of this gift from the names of authors such as Bauer, Biggs, Borger, Deimel, Falkenstein, Gelb, Gordon, Lambert, Legrain, Poebel, Sjöberg, Schneider, Van Dijk, and Veenhof. Also included in the gift is the series *Materialen zum Sumerischen Lexikon*, which is essential for lexical studies. There is also the set of volumes on the cuneiform texts from Ur, which complement the archaeological reports from Ur in the Golding collection. In addition, there are archaeological publications, such as the Kish and Jemdet Nasr reports.

At about the same time, Professor Emeritus Robert D. Biggs of the Oriental Institute donated more than seventy volumes, consisting mainly of runs of several journals that do not duplicate items we already have.

The most recent gift to TAARII consists of fifty volumes from the combined libraries of Alexandra Witsell and Benjamin Studevent-Hickman, who were in Chicago but are now at Harvard. Given their different concentrations, she in archaeology and he in cuneiform languages, this group of books spans both fields. Of great importance are copies of books that students need when they begin to learn cuneiform, such as the Labat sign list and the older Borger sign list as well as Von Soden’s German language grammar of Akkadian and his dictionary of the Akkadian language. There is also Huehnergard’s Akkadian grammar in English. Falkenstein’s grammar of Sumerian is also here. Biggs’ study of the Abu Salabikh texts, Lambert’s *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*, and Roth’s *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor*



Figure 3.1. Marny Golding. Photo Courtesy Bert Golding



are some of the monographs. On the archaeological side are Frankfort's *Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient*, two books by Collon on cylinder seals, Moorey's *Ancient Mesopotamian Materials and Industries*, and the older volume of this kind on Egypt by Lucas and Harris. Of great importance for setting the cultural record in its environment are Wilkinson's recent monograph on archaeological landscapes and Guest's *Flora of Iraq*.

I have begun sending part of my own library to TAARII in Amman, for now items that are less central to my own work. Journals such as the *American Anthropologist*, the *American Journal of the Archaeology*, and the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* were dispatched last year, along with volumes on Islamic history (e.g., *The Cambridge History of Iran*), and the modern history of Iraq, especially

the last two wars. When I was in Amman last May to work with Iraqi archaeologists on publications, I left in the library Priya Satia's *Spies in Arabia*, which is being featured in the current newsletter. Monographs on geography, locational analysis, and urban studies will follow during the coming year.

We are finding that in a few cases there is some duplications of volumes, but usually the different donations complement one another. Where we have duplicates of volumes, TAARII will donate the extras to Iraqi universities or to the library of the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage.

In Amman, Lucine Taminian is buying Arabic language books on Iraq. Since 2003, there has been a flood of books on modern Iraq, including valuable memoirs by people who were in key positions in government or who were observers. We need to gather as

much of this material as possible while it is still available.

We hope that, in the not too distant future, the TAARII library will be transferred from Amman to Baghdad, where it will be open to all scholars.

With the increasing availability of many journals and some monographs on-line, it might be thought unnecessary to build an actual, physical collection. But real books still play a central role in scholarship. This is especially true in situations like that prevailing in Iraq, in which electricity is not yet reliable, on-line connections can be hit-or-miss, and the downloading of items is tedious and frustrating. Even in Amman, internet connections can be terminated without warning. Besides, there are still a lot of us who think that real comprehension comes more readily from reading the pages of a physical book than words on a screen.

#### NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS, COMMENTS, & SUGGESTIONS

To submit articles, images, or announcements in either *English or Arabic*, please email Katie Johnson at [katie@taarii.org](mailto:katie@taarii.org) for submission details.

The deadline for the fall issue of the TAARII Newsletter is **June 1, 2009**.

For all other inquiries, comments, and suggestions, please visit our website, [www.taarii.org](http://www.taarii.org).

#### THE HAMAD BIN KHALIFA SYMPOSIUM ON ISLAMIC ART



*And Diverse Are Their Hues:*  
COLOR IN ISLAMIC ART AND CULTURE

November 2-4, 2009 in Córdoba, Spain

The Hamad bin Khalifa Symposium on Islamic Art is a leading international symposium on Islamic art and culture chaired by Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom. It is presented by Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts, VCU Qatar and the Qatar Foundation. Symposia were held in Richmond, Virginia in 2004 and in Doha, Qatar, in 2007. The upcoming Symposium, *And Diverse Are Their Hues: Color in Islamic Art and Culture*, will be held in Córdoba, Spain, November 2-4, 2009.

#### REGISTER NOW

Please visit [www.islamicartdoha.org](http://www.islamicartdoha.org) to register for the Symposium. Registration is free and open to the public; because space is limited, early registration is suggested.

For information regarding travel & lodging, visit the Symposium website. Questions may be directed to the Symposium Coordinator, Marisa Angell Brown, at [mabrown@vcu.edu](mailto:mabrown@vcu.edu).

# TAARII

The American Academic Research Institute in Iraq  
1507 E. 53rd St., Suite 920 • Chicago, IL 60615  
Ph. (773) 844-9658 • Fax (773) 288-3174  
www.taarii.org



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