
THE BRITISH INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF IRAQ

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The next BISI Newsletter will be published in May 2011. Brief contributions are welcomed on recent research, publications, members' news and events. They should be sent to BISI by e-mail to arrive by 15 April 2011. The BISI Administrator Joan Porter MacIver edits the Newsletter.

Cover: An etching of a Sumerian cylinder seal impression by Tessa Rickards, which is the cover image of the recent BISI publication, *Your Praise is Sweet – A Memorial Volume for Jeremy Black from students, colleagues and friends* edited by Heather D. Baker, Eleanor Robson, and Gábor Zólyomi.

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Copies of BISI newsletters are available on the newsletter page of the BISI website www.bisi.ac.uk and most images are in colour on the downloadable PDF versions.

Members in receipt of the Journal IRAQ LXXII will know that this issue was published in honour of Professor J. David Hawkins FBA, Professor Emeritus at SOAS and a previous long-time co-editor of IRAQ. The volume was presented to him at a special gathering near Oxford on the date of his 70th birthday. The co-editors, Dr Dominique Collon and Professor Andrew George, had to meet a tight schedule to ensure its production by that date. Professor Hawkins was surprised not just by one publication but by two, as he was also presented with a Festschrift edited by Professor Itamar Singer, on *Luwian and Hittite Studies*.

We must also take this opportunity to thank Dr Collon for her many years of devotion as Co-editor to the BISI/BSAI Journal IRAQ, and her lengthy time as a member of Council and Chair of the BISI/BSAI Publications Committee. She is stepping down from BISI involvement with IRAQ 2010! We also look forward to working with Dr Michael Seymour as the Journal's co-editor with Professor George on future volumes.



Dr Dominique Collon and Professor Andrew George FBA, Co-editors of the Journal IRAQ presenting leather bound edition of IRAQ LXXII to Professor David Hawkins on the occasion of his 70th Birthday.

Congratulations also go to BISI Council member Professor Emilie Savage-Smith on being elected as a Fellow of the British Academy.

The Institute's Chairman was a signatory with thirteen civil society and heritage organisations to a letter organised by the UK National Commission for UNESCO to the Prime Minister, requesting that the Draft Cultural Property (Armed Conflicts) Bill should be presented during this parliament. It is considered that the Bill commands sufficient cross-party support as well as support from the heritage sector and MoD to ensure clear passage through parliament and "would make a significant contribution to the UK acknowledging its responsibilities to the

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international community". This is a very important bill for the UK parliament to pass at the earliest opportunity.

Since our last newsletter, we have settled the financial affairs of the 'old' charity with a closing year end date of 30 September 2010. Hence our next AGM will take place in March 2011 to approve the 2010 Report & Accounts and elect or re-elect council members. This will be in keeping with a change in our future lecture schedule. After next March's lecture with Professor Clive Holes, we will hold BISI lectures in June, November, and February (the AGM - 2012!) to correspond to our future year end of 30 June.

Dr Nadje Al-Ali's June 2010 lecture on 'Women and Gender in Iraq: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives' provided profound insight into the difficult situation for women in Iraq and certainly raised awareness of many critical issues. The announcement of Dr Al-Ali's appointment as Professor of Gender Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies had been made public the day before the BISI lecture, so the BISI Council regards this to be her very apt 'inaugural' lecture and congratulates her on this appointment. Our 9 December 2010 lecture will be given by Dr Augusta McMahon on 'A Grave Situation: Mass Graves and Early Urbanism at Tell Brak, Syria'. As members know the BISI/BSAI has supported the excavations at Tell Brak for many years and is pleased at the continuing success of this fieldwork.

Khyam Allami's performance and talk 'The Iraqi 'Ud School, its Influences', in aid of the BISI Appeal, took place at the Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre on 16 September with the support of Dr Rachel Harris, Chair of the SOAS Department of Music, and an anonymous donor. The audience was struck by Khyam's passion for the subject and his instrument - we could all have heard more music but were also very impressed by his knowledge of Iraqi music. The BISI Appeal Committee & Council were delighted that **Maureen and Tony Wheeler**, the sponsors of four 2010-2011 visiting Iraqi scholars, could be with us on this special evening and we were able to thank them publically for their generosity. We are also looking forward to the next BISI Appeal Talk with Dr Azzam Alwash, Director of Eden Again/Nature Iraq, on 'The Marshes of Southern Mesopotamia, Past, Present, and Future', which will take place at the British Academy on 24 February 2011, sponsored by our very generous former donor, **HE Sheikh Hamed Ahmed Al Hamed**.

<http://www.khyamallami.com>



*Khyam Allami performing for a BISI Appeal Event at SOAS above & Khyam performing with Ilham Al Madfai on 9 August 2010 at the BBC Proms to a packed and excited audience (next page).
Photos: J P MacIver*



The first of the 2010-2011 Iraqi scholars, Khawlah Mahleej Khaleel, arrived from Amman in late September. BISI scholars are now staying at the American Center of Oriental Research (www.acorjordan.org) while applying for and awaiting the approval of their UK visas. They have access to a wonderful library and are undertaking intensive English language tuition while they are at ACOR, funded by the BISI programme. The BISI Council wishes to thank Dr Barbara Porter, Director, and her colleagues at ACOR for providing such support to our visitors.

Hospitality from ACOR, Amman to the UK for BISI Visiting



Khawlah Maarij Khaleel , Lalya Mahmood Salih, and Qahtan Al Abeed at ACOR, Amman in September 2010 Photo: BA Porter



Khawlah Maarij Khaleel, Joan Porter MacIver, Qahtan Al Abeed, Dr Harriet Crawford, Chair of the BISI Visiting Scholars Committee, Dr Lamia Al Gailani-Werr and Lalya Mahmood Salih at Joan and David MacIver's home.

Qahtan Al Abeed and Lalya Mahmood Salih were also able to join us during their recent time in the UK working on the Basra Museum project. It was thanks to Dr Lamia al-Gailani Werr, that they were all able to come with Khawlah on an outing to the country to visit Joan's home in rural East Anglia – a far cry from Baghdad. A few days later, Khawlah took the train to Glasgow, where she was kindly met by Noorah Al-Gailani. We have heard that she is enjoying her

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placement at the Glasgow Museums very much. BISI would like to thank Dr Ellen McAdam, Acting Head of the Glasgow Museums, Celine Blair, Collections Manager, and Jane Raftery, Assistant Collections Manager (Documentation), and all their colleagues who have helped in making this unique opportunity possible. Khawlah is undertaking training in many aspects of museum collections management.

Our second 2010-2011 scholar Faeza Alrubaye is also currently in the UK after a rather lengthy wait in Amman for her visa (three weeks). She is a conservator at the Iraq Museum and has spent three months in Japan on a UNESCO sponsored conservation programme a few years ago. The first part of her UK time is being spent on researching and studying certain ivories from Nimrud in the collections of the Iraq Museum for a MA thesis. She has profited greatly from working with Dr Georgina Herrmann OBE FBA in the Study Rooms of the Department of the Middle East at the British Museum, thanks to the assistance of Dr John Curtis OBE FBA, Keeper, and his colleagues. She has also had access to the library of the Institute of Archaeology, thanks to the generosity of Mr Robert Kirby. BISI member, Mary Harris, spent the day taking Faeza around London to provide an orientation programme. At the time of the newsletter going out to members, Faeza will be taking up a four week placement with the Conservation Department of the British Museum thanks to the support of Kenneth Uprichard, Head of the Department, and Monika Harter and Clare Ward, as well as many other colleagues. We hope both of our scholars will be with us at the December lecture and reception – please come and meet them.

Our next scholar, Dr Mu'iyad Mohammad Suliaman, Head of the Department of Cuneiform Studies at the University of Mosul, will take up his research leave at the University of Oxford in February and will be collaborating with Dr Stephanie Dalley on Neo-Babylonian Cuneiform tablets. Professor Emilie Savage-Smith FBA has kindly helped us arrange a stay at St Cross College, Oxford, which will put him in the heart of Oxford near all the libraries. In addition to receiving Iraqi scholars in the UK, we have just funded a course at the museum in Sulaymaniyah, Kurdistan in Northern Iraq. Two courses were given; one on current Museum Practice by Noorah Al-Gailani of the Burrell Collection of the Glasgow Museums and the other on the Art and Architecture of Mesopotamia by Dr Dominique Collon. This is an aspect of our work we would like to develop as the security situation improves in other areas of Iraq.

In terms of the support we provide to UK academics, it is evident from the many reports included in this newsletter that the range of disciplines has increased. However, we are also ensuring a continuing commitment to fieldwork and Mesopotamian studies. There is clearly a demonstrative need to fund both ancient and modern research on Iraq. The breadth of the subjects covered in the applications for research and conference grants to the BISI shows that academics of all disciplines require research funding, particularly during this time of research cuts in academia. The reports (see table of contents p. 2) include those by John

MacGinnis on his 2010 season at Ziyaret Tepe; Jeffery and Jocelyn Orchard on the the Hajar Project in the Wadi Bahla, Oman; Martin Worthington on the April 2010 conference, *Decoding Gilgamesh*; and Bryan Gibson and Professor Nigel Ashton on the LSE International History Department, LSE IDEAS, and LSE Global Governance conference entitled *Reappraising the Iran-Iraq War Thirty Years Later*, which took place in September. Professor Nigel Ashton, one of the organisers of the conference, reported to the BISI that the conference also generated some significant publicity and that the conference thus played an important role in drawing wider attention to the anniversary of the outbreak of the war. (see p. 24). BISI Council member Dr Glen Rangwala was one of the conference speakers.

We continue to support outreach efforts through BISI Development Grants and the reports from the work covered in part by our funding include: Erica Hunter's 2010 Christianity in Iraq Seminar Day; *Contemporary Art Iraq*, in Manchester, co-curated by Sarah Perks from Cornerhouse, and Adalet Garmiany of ArtRole; Paul MacAlindin's report on the National Youth Orchestra of Iraq Summer School in Erbil and Adalet Garmiany's report on the Post-War Arts & Culture Festival, which took place in Sulaymaniyah last November.

In July through the generosity of the American Embassy's Cultural Affairs office and with the assistance of Diane Siebrandt and her colleagues, we sent off forty boxes of books to the Iraq Museum Library and to the Iraq National Library and Archives. These books were mostly from a legacy of the late Dr Jes Canby through the generosity of her family. We also sent off a collection of BISI publications to the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage to be distributed to SBAH offices throughout Iraq and to the INLA.

More recently Professor Amélie Kuhrt arranged the donation of books from her office. As she described "These books all come (with a few exceptions) from the library of Sidney Smith F.B.A., father of Harry Smith (former Edwards Professor of Egyptian Archaeology, UCL), who was Keeper in the British Museum, which he joined in 1914 (Department of Near Eastern and Egyptian Antiquities, as it was then), becoming Keeper in 1930. He retired from there in 1948, and was appointed to the Chair of Semitic Languages at SOAS, a position he held until 1960. During this time he numbered among his pupils Hayim Tadmor and H.W.F. Saggs. His expertise was very wide-ranging, including an important study of chronology (1940), the publication of the Statue of Idrimi (1949) and, of course, *Babylonian Historical Texts* (1924). On his death in 1979, much of his library, including a valuable collection of bound offprints, was donated to UCL (in the care of Amélie Kuhrt) by his son, Harry Smith." As the UCL library is unable to accommodate these books, Amélie Kuhrt (now retired) has donated the bulk of this collection to the British Institute for the Study of Iraq to eventually go to Iraq. Professor Kuhrt advised us that Harry Smith (who briefly worked in Nimrud in 1960) is delighted by and grateful to BISI for giving his father's books a new future home. He also told her in the letter that 'for a brief period of about two years in 1928-30 after Gertrude

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Bell's tragic death my father was head of the nascent Iraq Museum and Iraqi Antiquities Service on secondment from the British Museum.'

These books may await the fate of the Institute and its return to Iraq to become part of a resurrected library for the Institute in Baghdad. We feel this could be a very fitting new home for such a generous gift and valuable collection. Given the current tragic situation in Iraq with renewed bombings, we sadly can not expect to return any time in the near future but we do continue to plan for a return to Iraq and in due course we will be looking to build up our library once again.

*Joan Porter MacIver &
Roger Matthews*

PRESS RELEASE - BOOKS TO IRAQ

U.S. Embassy Facilitates Book Donation for the Iraq National Museum Library
On August 10th the Cultural Affairs Office was on hand at the Iraq National Museum Library to facilitate the delivery of almost one thousand books related to cultural heritage. The collection belonged to American archaeologist, Dr. Jes Canby, who excavated throughout the Middle East, and worked on artifacts from the ancient city of Ur, which is located in the Dhi Qar Province in southern Iraq.



Staff from the Iraq National Museum Library and U.S. Embassy Baghdad sort through hundreds of donated books sent by the BISI.

http://iraq.usembassy.gov/curr-20100812_iraq-national-museum.html

When she passed away in 2007, she donated her collection to the British Institute for the Study of Iraq (the Gertrude Bell Memorial) at the British Academy, who subsequently donated the collection to the Iraq National Museum Library. The museum library has minimal literature related to excavations and artifacts in Iraq, and the donation of the books will be of great assistance to university research students, and State Board of Antiquities and Heritage staff. The books will provide Iraqi scholars with useful information about artifacts and archaeological sites not readily accessible to them, and help them re-connect with international subject matter experts.

The U.S. Embassy provided funding to ship the books to Iraq as part of our continuing support for cultural heritage preservation, cultural exchanges, and other areas of civil cooperation."

**FIELDWORK, RESEARCH & ACADEMIC CONFERENCE
GRANT REPORTS**

ZIYARET TEPE 2010 FIELD SEASON

The 2010 field season at Ziyaret Tepe took place from early April to mid June, the first time we had operated a spring season. The primary objectives for the season were to complete excavation of the monumental gate on the southern city wall (Area Q) and to complete excavation of the administrative complex in the western sector of the lower town (Area G/R). Both objectives were achieved. The work was made possible by the support of the British Institute for the Study of Iraq and other generous donations.

Operation Q

Operations were resumed in Area Q, the site of the major gate on the southern city wall which had initially been located in the magnetometry and resistivity surveys. The previous seasons of excavation in 2007 and 2008 had first of all confirmed the presence of a chambered gate structure and then demonstrated that there had been multiple rebuildings of both the masonry of the gate and of the road leading into it and this year we were keen to finally establish the complete architectural sequence involved. In the event this was perfectly achieved. Excavations were taken down to foundation level, demonstrating in the process that there had been four major rebuildings of the gate, each marked by a considerable raising of the main street level. Furthermore, excavation of the section through the street was also resumed and taken down to natural: here, too, four major phases of construction could be observed, correlating with the sequence in the interior of the gate, thus demonstrating that the gate was in use for a long period of time and periodically refurbished.



Foundation Level and Phase I Gate

The foundation of the chamber construction consisted of a solid mud packing on average 40 cm thick. On top of this a layer of pebbles was then laid, followed by a second, thinner layer of mud, and then a foundation sub-floor packing 20 cm thick consisting of pebbles mixed with sand and mud. The width of the initial street was 5 m. The layout of the chamber in the foundation level was slightly trapezoidal being 2.75 m broad at the centre but 2.2 m broad at the eastern and western ends. Furthermore, the western chamber was nearly one meter shorter than the eastern one. Two iron arrow heads were found on the associated floor surfaces.

Phase II Gate

In the second phase major changes occurred. First of all, the layout of the gate was now properly rectangular, measuring 8 x 2.75 which means that while the trapezoidal aspect of Phase I had been corrected, the overall depth of the chambers was notably reduced. Furthermore, the position of the gate shifted about 0.3 m to north, with the Phase II southern wall covering the Phase I southern wall. One floor surface could be associated with Phase II, consisting of a bright mud plaster in both chambers.

Phase III Gate

In Phase III the gate again underwent major changes, especially concerning the layout of the chambers. The chambers were both broadened and lengthened and the whole area was raised by an average of 0.5 m in by the insertion of a platform consisting of three courses of sun-dried mudbricks with a pebble surface. A total of six distinct plastered floor surfaces were recognized. There with a fireplace in the northwestern corner and a bench built up against the chamber's northern wall and two baked bricks formed a simple threshold into the chamber. Near the entrance to the chamber were found two vessels in situ: one was a Palace Ware beaker, the other was a Mittani-style "Pig Pot" rhyton; sherds of a large storage jar and a pot stand were also found.

Phase IV Gate

In its final phase the gate's interior was again narrowed and the street level was also raised again. Only vestigial remains of floor surfaces were found from this level.

*Palace ware bowl &
Cylinder seal with
rolling*



Burials

Three burials were uncovered within the eastern gate chamber: Q-169 was very badly preserved: the few surviving fragments of the skeleton indicated that the head was at the south and the feet at the north and there were no associated grave goods.

Q-226 was a pot burial cut into the levelling fill below the mudbrick platform of Phase II and sealed by the Phase III southern wall. It contained the skeleton of a child placed in a large jar, lying crouched on his back with flexed legs. Three vessels were associated, a small round spouted juglet ZT 27552, possibly glazed, laying next to the head; a light blue palace ware dish lying up side down and covering the individual's right hand; and a small flask placed below the left knee.

Q-237 was a simple inhumation sealed by the Phase II eastern wall and cutting the Phase 1 southern wall. Interestingly, scattered over the skeleton were found the bones of sheep, cow and pig. The deceased was provided with a jar placed left of his head with a plate leaning against it. The arms of the skeleton were flexed with the hands placed in the region of the heart. The right hand was placed in a small phiale. Also associated with the burial, lying at hip height, was a dark black serpentine cylinder seal with bronze caps still intact. The rather linear carving of the seal which might belong to the group of the "cut style" seals shows a common Neo-Assyrian ritual scene with two worshippers in long dresses arranged antithetically around a very schematic tree of life with a winged disc above. Behind the worshippers is a stack of three symbols, a crescent moon above a star above a rhombus. At both ends below the bronze caps the seal is decorated with a ladder motif.

Operation R

Work was resumed in Operation R (the westward continuation of Operation G) where we had last previously worked in 2008. As readers of previous reports will be aware, the architecture exposed in Operation G/R is of a substantial nature comprising two principal elements. Building 1, on the east side of the area, is clearly a high status residence while Building 2 to the west of this appears to be an administrative complex. Work in the Area G/R commenced in 2001, and by 2003 the plan of Building 1 has been completely recovered and excavated down to floor level. Recovery of the complete plan of Building 2 has taken longer but by the end of the 2008 season we had completed recovery of the eastern and southern sides so that the principal area remaining was the northwestern part of the complex. Accordingly, completing the excavation of this remaining part was a major aim for the 2010 season.

Four new squares were opened up covering a total of 350 m². Very quickly we came down onto a corner of the pebbled pavement of courtyard 22. This is the third of the black and white checkerboard mosaics to have been excavated at Ziyaret Tepe and in some respects the finest. It is composed of a grid spanning 14 squares (north-south) by at least 25 squares (east-west) with a border at the side. The sides

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of the squares vary in length between 49 and 58 cm; the border varies in width between 15 and 20 cm. The layout of the squares is not geometrically perfect - the gridlines wander significantly from being perfectly parallel - but the actual composition of the squares is done with a degree of care. They are all divided by a St. Andrew's cross into four triangles with two opposing sides being black and the other two white; each square has a boss in the middle which is nearly always white, the exceptions being one black and one red. The pavement was cut by three pits.



Near the southwestern corner of the pavement was a drain capped by a pierced baked brick. A jumbled patch measuring approximately 130 x 60 cm where the pavement had evidently been dug up and the stones put back without any attempt to reproduce the original design evidently betrays an attempt to clear and/or repair the drain. East of this was a rectangular area measuring 95 x 240 cm composed of much larger stones (up to 40 x 56 cm) which was either cut into the pavement or built as part of the original design. Unlike such features revealed in earlier seasons in this case the feature carefully slots into the existing grid pattern (occupying what would have been an area of 2 x 5 of the checkerboard squares). This might suggest that it was not a grave but may rather have served some functional purpose in the use of the courtyard.



In the western part of the excavation we at long last discovered the main entrance into the complex. This consisted of a baked brick porch leading to a threshold composed of stone slabs. The door socket was in situ on the right hand side and not far away lay a displaced cover for the door socket of degraded green sandstone. North of the threshold was an in situ pithos (giant storage jar, ZT 34376), an extraordinary feature of which is that it was fashioned in one piece with its stand. It also had three handles round the rim and was decorated with stamped decoration comprising sequences of three different stamps: concentric rectangles, small circles and large circles; the latter may have originally been rosettes but if so are now too worn for this to be clear.

Among the smallfinds was a curious matchbox sized tablet with a hole deliberately bored through. The tablet bears just a few signs which may possibly read as a name (Ahu-iddin) followed by the numeral 1,000. The correct interpretation of this tablet is yet to be established. Another important find was the duck weight: this weighed almost exactly 30 kg and must consequently have represented an Assyrian talent. The weight would have been used for weighing wool, textiles and metals. It may be significant that this only this talent weight was discovered and none of the smaller scale weights, as this might suggest that the occupiers had time to gather their smaller possessions and take them with them while opting to leave behind the more massive objects. Other finds include a number of tokens and an ivory comb.



Duck weight (the duck's head is turned around and resting on its back)

Future Plans

With the completion of Area Q and Area R this year we are now ahead of our schedule. Accordingly in 2011 we will be able to commence exploring new areas of the site. After many years working in the western part of the lower town we intend to move our attention further to the east. As currently envisaged, our plans for 2011 are to open up a new area of excavation in a location where we suspect there to be middle-status housing, to continue the mapping of the lower town and to investigate the structures north of the gateway.

On behalf of all the team at Ziyaret Tepe I would like to once again express our deep appreciation to BISI for its support: it has made a genuine difference in helping us in our mission of learning as much as possible of this great site before it disappears forever.

John MacGinnis, Cambridge

THE HAJAR PROJECT: THE ANCIENT AFLĀJ RESEARCH PROGRAMME IN THE WADI BAHLA, OMAN

The 2010 season of The Hajar Project in the Wadi Bahla, Oman, took place from the 10th February to the 2nd April under the direction of Jeffery and Jocelyn Orchard and concentrated on the following programmes:

- Completing the excavation of BAS Tomb 2, the Umm an-Nar tomb on the Limweylaha Plain, Bisya Area Site, which was re-used by the Wadi Suq and 'Iron Age' people.
- Conserving the masonry structures on the Bisya Area Site.
- The collection and analysis of material samples as part of our investigations into the origin of ceramics excavated and collected on site, and the use of manganese as a colourant in cosmetics and painted decoration on pots.
- The ancient *aflāj* programme.

The Ancient Aflāj Programme

Once again, a most generous grant from the British Institute for the Study of Iraq allowed us to proceed with this important research, with the emphasis, this year, firmly on employing Ground Penetrating Radar to trace each of the major arteries - *Falaj A* (at Al Ghubrat Bahla) and *Falaj 1* at Bisya - upstream to its source. However, as part of our programme, it was also our intention (1) to continue to trace *Falaj 1* downstream from the point reached during the 2009 season; (2) to section Pit 2 which we had uncovered in 2009 beside *Falaj 1*; and (3) to attempt to ascertain whether *Falaj 2* (a tributary of *Falaj 1*) was tunnelling beneath the "building platform" located in 2009 or was diverting around it.

Our excellent team included Roy Krakowicz and Kathryn Smith, who were responsible for the manual tracing of the *aflāj* at Bisya and the excavation of their associated features, while the task of planning the channels for addition to the Expedition's site maps was ably undertaken by surveyor Kevin Arnold. Once again, The Hajar Project is indebted to Bartlett Clark (Archaeogeophysics) Consultancy, Oxford, for lending us geophysicist Peter Cottrell and for analysing the results of the GPR survey.

Ground Penetrating Radar Survey

In 2009 at the Al Ghubrat Bahla Site, we had traced *Falaj A* across the Wadi Dihni (a tributary of the Wadi Bahla) to its northern bank and had found that here the top of the *Falaj* was already buried some 1.0 m beneath the present ground surface. Our aim was to determine whether, like more recent *aflāj*, *Falaj A* was also trending towards a groundwater source situated north-east of Horat Kid (the Jabal located at the north-eastern edge of the Site on which part of its cemetery of *beehive* tombs is located). Accordingly, a series of survey plots - each c. 60 x 60 m - was laid out extending from the Wadi Dihni to Horat Kid and, within these, the Ground Penetrating Radar survey was conducted. To our surprise, our preliminary results indicate that *Falaj A* is not following the route that would take it around the

southern side of Horat Kid and then north-east, but instead is running due north along the base of the western flank of the Jabal. Horat Kid is crowned by a Ministry of Water reservoir and the Ministry has also fenced off the extensive area between the western base of the Jabal and the road that leads northwards up the Wadi Bahla to the town of Al-Hamra. We shall, therefore, require its permission in order to continue this intriguing survey.

In 2009, at the Bisya Area Site, we had traced *Falaj 1* upstream through the 3rd millennium BC housing area at the eastern base of Qarn Qarhat Lahwid, to the point where it disappeared into a tunnel some 0.60 m beneath the modern ground surface. From this starting point, a series of survey plots – each c. 60 x 60 m – were laid out on the low ground to east and north of QQL, and within these the Ground Penetrating Radar survey was conducted. Our preliminary results indicate that *Falaj 1* is trending in the direction of Jabal Juhelat (the northern demarcating monument of the Hajar Oasis Town) which is c. 1.60 km above QQL.

Tracing Falaj 1 Downstream

To determine the course of *Falaj 1*, which snaked across the landscape in an apparently haphazard fashion, continuous tracing was necessary. This involved the removal of a surface layer of mixed sand, silt and gravel to a depth of 50 cm in order to reveal not only the *Falaj*, but also the matrix of indurated silt into which it was cut. Further definition was then obtained by excavating a few centimetres of the *Falaj* fill to accentuate the edges of the cut. Matters were complicated by the presence of in-filled, man-made channels that cut the surface layer and occasionally truncated the *Falaj* beneath. Indeed, one such channel followed the line of the *Falaj* so closely, that in places the cut of its sides exactly matched those of the buried *Falaj*.

Gradually, as the surface layer was removed, a 97 m stretch of *Falaj 1* was uncovered and defined. Some 2 m south of the 2010 start point, the *Falaj* disappeared into a tunnel, eventually resurfacing some 7 m further south. It was then traced as an open-sky channel for some 8m before disappearing into a second tunnel for a distance of 4-5 m. After this, it remained an open-sky channel as it continued to be traced southwards for some 75 m. The surface area above the first tunnel displayed many gullies as well as considerable evidence of animal/plant disturbance and here, adjacent to the *Falaj*, some lumps of burnt clay were recovered together with an unpierced carnelian bead. While tracing the route of *Falaj 1*, corridors flanking it on both sides, each c. 10 m wide, were inspected for surface finds, and these yielded an extensive assemblage of flint waste and a few sherds of pottery.

We dug two sections at 12 m and 97 m respectively, in order to examine the profile of *Falaj 1*, and found that the channel in the upstream section was c. 0.7 m deep, while the downstream section – probably, originally of similar depth – had been re-cut once. These sections demonstrated the downward slope that would have allowed the groundwater to flow by means of gravity, when they revealed

that the original base of the downstream section was 38 cm deeper than the base of the upstream section, while the base of its re-cut was 11 cm deeper. The comparative shallowness of the channel at 12 m from the 2010 start point - 0.7 m compared with depths of c. 3.0 m further upstream - does not necessarily indicate that *Falaj 1* is approaching an agricultural area, as we are finding that within the 3rd millennium BC housing area *Falaj 1* can be even shallower. The way in which this works hydraulically will need to be investigated by the Project's hydrogeologist, Dr Gordon Stanger.

Pit 2

This Pit, was found to be generally concave in shape with vertical, slightly undercut sides. Its entire fill was natural and contained no artefacts or other evidence to indicate its function and there were no signs of any connection with *Falaj 1* situated only 0.2 m to its east.

Falaj 2 and the Platform Feature

In 2009, *Falaj 2* was traced upstream to the point where it encountered a platform feature and appeared to come to an end. In 2010, to ascertain whether *Falaj 2* was, in fact, tunnelling beneath the platform feature, extensive re-cleaning of the 2009 excavations was undertaken and this confirmed the course of the *Falaj* up to its last known point. The surface excavations of 2009 were then extended closer to the base of the platform feature and there encountered a narrow band of gravel-rich soil - apparently a ditch cut into the underlying indurated silt - which, on inspection was found to be describing a roughly circular path around the platform feature. In places, the visible surface path of the ditch was indistinct, therefore three partial sections were dug at points along its route. These showed that the band of gravel-rich soil was, indeed, the fill of a shallow ditch, the topmost of a series of four all following a similar path. Ongoing investigation disclosed that the ditches had been cut into by yet another pit (Pit 3) which partial excavation revealed to be over 1.5 m deep. However, like Pit 2, its fill was entirely natural and provided no evidence to indicate its purpose.

Despite excavating to a depth in excess of 0.5 m, no physical evidence was uncovered to indicate the route of *Falaj 2*. However, given its position on plan, there can be no doubt that the platform surrounded by a series of ditches is the buried circular feature first detected by geophysical prospecting in 2008, the plan of which shows what look like linear anomalies (*aflaj*?) crossing its southern area from west to east and apparently linking *Falaj 1* to *Falaj 2*. Furthermore, the discovery of a number of copper droplets (prills) in the topmost ditch, and of yet more copper fragments clustered around a house platform some 6.0 m to the south-west, implies not only that this interesting group of features was linked to the processing of copper, but also that the *aflāj* played a part in this activity.

Commentary

The *falaj* system is the phenomenon that not only shapes the oasis landscape, but also forms a part of it, and the type of settlement it creates is a discrete demarcated

unit organised around a cultivated territory in which the date-palm is the primary perennial crop. What our investigations reveal is that the internal oasis landscape fashioned by a *falaj* system is a complex one. While travelling from its source through the settlement to the areas under cultivation, it forms a seemingly haphazard network of main arteries, tributaries and bifurcation and it is the feature within the landscape that connects the widely separated demarcating monuments of the *Hajar Oasis Towns*. Two interesting facts are beginning to emerge. The first is that the ancient occupants of the Hajar region were brilliant water engineers, not only capable of bringing groundwater from distant sources to their communities, but also apparently capable of using it in ways that were hydraulically complex. The second is that the *aflāj* were employed in community activities (including copper working) that were not merely local industries but - as the presence of Hafit, Umm an-Nar and Wadi Suq trading visitors indicates - part of a regional enterprise that involved the exploitation of natural resources, trade and foreign contact.

At our Al Ghubrat Bahla site, we are now tracing *Falaj A* upstream beyond the confines of the *Hajar Oasis Town* and into the surrounding landscape. It will be interesting to discover how the *Falaj* affects and is affected by this wider landscape; most particularly in the matter concerning the tract of land (up to c. 160 m on either side of the main channel) which, according to custom and law, belongs to the *falaj*.

Although much important research is being undertaken regarding *aflāj* of the 'Iron Age' and Islamic periods, the Hajar Project is, as yet, the only archaeological expedition investigating the ancient *aflāj* of the late 4th / 3rd millennium BC and their continuity from that period up to the present day. That this area of research is fundamental to our understanding of the cultural and social history of agricultural settlement in the Hajar region - and, indeed, within Arabia - is not in doubt and our aim, therefore, is to establish a foundation that others may be able to build upon and expand.

Jeffery & Jocelyn Orchard,

DECODING GILGAMESH

The conference *Decoding Gilgamesh* was held in St John's College, Cambridge, on the 12th-14th April 2010. It sought to enrich the understanding of the *Epic of Gilgamesh* by providing a forum in which scholars from different disciplines could offer readings of, and responses to, the Epic, in the light of their own specialist knowledge, methodologies, and sensitivities. It included twelve papers, two open discussions, and a performance by the Lyre of Ur team. Attendees included students from various disciplines, academics (Assyriologist and non-Assyriologists), and interested laypeople.

Thanks to the great diversity of speakers, the conference was a culturally rich and intellectually stimulating even. The first paper was by Andrew George, Professor of Babylonian at SOAS, whose edition of 2003 is the foundation for all work on the Epic. After offering a historical survey of Assyriological work on

Gilgamesh, George drew some literary comparisons between *Gilgamesh* and *War and Peace*, commenting also that the understanding of a line in *Gilgamesh* could be assisted by considering a passage in *Genji Monogatari*.

Comparisons were also undertaken by other scholars. Richard North, Professor of English at UCL, explored similarities between Enkidu and Beowulf. Tamar Drukker, Lector in Hebrew at SOAS, compared the function of dreams in *Gilgamesh* and the Old Testament. Christian Zgoll, Coordinator of the SAPERE Project in Göttingen, compared Enkidu's humanisation by Shamhat with the encounter between Odysseus and Nausikaa in the *Odyssey*. Johannes Haubold, Reader in Classics at Durham, compared *Gilgamesh* and the Homeric poems in terms of their techniques of visualisation. Aaron Ralby, Independent Scholar, compared the life trajectory of the hero in *Gilgamesh* and the *Saga of the Volsungs*. Patrick Boyde, Emeritus Professor of Italian in Cambridge, raised the possibility that certain similarities between Arthur Ungnad's 1911 translation of the Epic and Rilke's *Tenth Elegy* are not entirely casual.

Not all the papers were comparative, however. Peter de Ville, poet and translator, presented his aesthetic reactions to the Epic and to the fact of reading a fragmentary composition. Martin Worthington, then Research Fellow in Cambridge (now in SOAS), suggested that the understanding of specific passages in the Epic could be refined by idiomatic examination of Babylonian literature as a whole. Nathan Hill, Lector in Tibetan at SOAS, surveyed occurrences of the phrase "black-heads" meaning "humans" throughout Asia. We Assyriologists were fascinated to discover that Mesopotamia might be the source of an idiom which occurs as far away as China and Tibet, and this is a salutary reminder of how far ideas - and, why not?, mythologems - could travel. John Tait gave an Egyptologist's perspective on the issue of standardisation, which is central to the Epic's history. Nino Samsonia presented Mikhail Tsereteli's pioneering translation of the Epic into Georgian. Jane Gilbert suggested that, analysing *Gilgamesh* from a perspective which she has been developing for Medieval French *Chanson de Geste*, some of the textual manifestations of melancholy (repetition, passages linking death to writing) could be interpreted as deriving from the self-image of the Epic's redactors.

Cumulatively, the conference mobilised literary-critical, anthropological, psychological, philological, historical, cultural, and other perspectives. Personally, I can only say that I came away with all sorts of things I had never thought of before. These ranged from minute observations such as the idea that when Humbaba says in Tablet V "Had I only hung you on a sapling" he chooses a sapling because Enkidu himself would have been young at the time (R. North) to broader issues. An example of the latter was the idea that the paucity of non-royal heroes in Egypt and Mesopotamian literatures may be explicable in terms of royal control over literary culture (panel discussion). I came away feeling more than ever that cross-literary comparison is a productive way to generate new angles from which to consider well-known passages, and new questions to ask about them.

Also, that Non-Assyriologists can contribute a great deal to the understanding and appreciation of *Gilgamesh*.

Martin Worthington

Martin Worthington has just published *Complete Babylonian* (Hodder Education, 2010) www.hoddereducation.co.uk ISBN: 978 0 340 98388 1 Price: £21.99

REAPPRAISING THE IRAN-IRAQ WAR THIRTY YEARS LATER

Thirty years ago, Iraqi forces thrust across the Iran-Iraq border to the east of Basra, leading to eight years of war that can best be described as “a bare-knuckle fight with no rules.” After its initial invasion, Iraq’s momentum collapsed and it failed to achieve its military objectives. Having been caught off guard, the Iranians quickly recuperated and in the summer of 1982 pushed Iraq back to the border. For the next four years the war remained in stalemate, with Iran launching annual spring offensives aimed at capturing the strategic Baghdad-Basra highway but to no avail. It was not until Iran’s successful invasion of the Fao peninsula in 1986 that the deadlock broke, but even then the war quickly settled back into a stalemate. It was not until in the spring of 1988 that the deadlock broke. Having been on the defensive for seven years, Iraq shocked Iran when it launched a series of well-rehearsed offensives against Iran’s positions all along the front, effectively destroying Iran’s ability to continue fighting the war. Even though Iran was defeated militarily, the catalyst for the end of the war was the downing of Iran Air 655 by an American naval vessel on July 3, 1988, killing 290 civilians. Defeated militarily and shocked by the American attack, on July 18 Ayatollah Khomeini drank his ‘poisoned chalice’ of defeat, dropped Iran’s more contentious demands, accepted the UN mediated ceasefire resolution, and sued for peace, though a ceasefire could not be put in place until August 20, 1988.

In the thirty years since the start of the war, historians’ and policy-makers’ understanding of it has undergone periodic changes. Part of this has to do with the willingness of former Iraqi and Iranian officials to talk about the war; another part has to do with the release of declassified documents. Today, thanks almost entirely to the release of documents captured during the American invasion of Iraq in 2003, we are witnessing another shift in perspective.

On September 23-24, policymakers, intelligence officers and scholars of the Iran-Iraq war met at the London School of Economics to debate, discuss, and reappraise the present state of knowledge on this brutal war that cost over 300,000 lives and permanently maimed thousands more. Over the course of the two-day conference presentations covered the military conduct of the war; the economic impact of the war; and the war’s impact on regional neighbours such as Turkey, Israel, the Gulf and the Soviet Union, among other interesting topics. Consequently, a great deal of new information about the war came to light.

Thanks to Kevin Woods and Williamson Murray, two researchers with the National Defense University at Fort Meade, we learned a great deal about the

internal machinations of Saddam Hussein's regime and his conduct during the war. Having spent years translating and analyzing thousands of captured Iraqi documents, Woods and Murray are two of the leading scholars on the Iraqi regime. Of interest, they revealed that Saddam Hussein had developed 'Nixon complex', where he recorded nearly every major policy debate and had transcripts of important conversations drawn up for his own reference. These transcripts and documents show that Iraqi generals were ordered to invade Iran only days before the actual invasion took place. Caught completely unaware, the generals had only limited resources and could only prosecute the war as far as their logistical tethers could allow. This created problems in Baghdad, because the regime wanted its forces to continue to advance, but its troops could not get enough supplies to the front to continue the assault. This completely debunks previous explanations for the start of the war that Iraq only intended to fight a limited war in order to physically retake the Shatt al-Arab river and establish a buffer zone to ensure Iraq's supremacy over the waterway.

In addition, Woods and Murray disclosed that throughout the latter stages of the war, the Iraqi regime legitimately feared Iran's chemical weapon capability. Iraq's use of chemical weapons in the war is well documented, but there has never been definitive proof that Iran used such weapons. Certainly able scholars, like Joost Hiltermann, have attempted to lay this question to rest, but always there remained the lingering suspicion that Iran might have used chemical weapons during the war as well. In light of this retrospective debate, it was quite remarkable to learn that Saddam himself firmly believed Iran had this capability. In fact, toward the end of the war, Saddam was so certain of his views that he ordered his generals to conduct live-agent drills, subjecting Iraqi troops to chemical bombardment, with the objective of increasing confidence among his forces so that they would be adequately prepared in the event of an Iranian chemical weapon attack.

The conference also revealed new information about the American and French policies toward the war. With respect to the American policy, a great deal of discussion focused on the so-called 'green light' allegedly given to Saddam by Zbigniew Brzezinski, President Carter's national security advisor, Senior American diplomats and a former CIA analyst dismissed this as a hoax. As one intelligence analyst put it: "Why would Saddam have cared if the United States wanted it to invade? That was not the way Saddam worked." Further, senior American officials, including Ambassador Richard Murphy, former Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs from 1983-89, questioned the logic of the claim. Indeed, Kevin Woods indicated that he had not seen anything in the Iraqi documents that suggests an American 'green light'.

The conference also highlighted France's significant role in the war: supplying Iraq with billions of dollars in advanced weaponry, including more than eighty Mirage jets and their incredibly effective Exocet missiles. France's public tilt toward Iraq was not just driven by its extensive commercial interests in Iraq, but by Iran's continued attacks against French interests in the Middle East, including the

kidnapping of French citizens, the bombing of the French barracks in Beirut and its embassy in Kuwait. As wave upon wave of Iranian sponsored attacks occurred against France, it retaliated by significantly increasing its support for Iraq.

Even though we are still learning a great deal more about the Iran-Iraq war thirty years later, there are still many unanswered questions. Certainly, Saddam Hussein's transcripts will continue to reveal a better understanding of the Iraqi perspective toward the war. Their release only underscores that there is a great deal more to learn, particularly about the Iranian side of the war. After all, the disclosure about Saddam's abrupt decision to invade Iran completely alters our previously held perceptions of the start of the war. Unfortunately, our knowledge of the Iranian perspective toward the war is quite limited and it is unlikely that similar disclosures from Iran will be forthcoming anytime soon.

Bryan R. Gibson

Bryan R. Gibson is author of *Covert Relationship: American Foreign Policy, Intelligence and the Iran-Iraq War, 1980-1988* (Praeger, 2010).

REAPPRAISING THE IRAN-IRAQ WAR THIRTY YEARS LATER

As required under the conditions for obtaining funds from BISI for the conference, *Reappraising the Iran-Iraq War Thirty Years Later* held at the LSE on 23-24 September 2010, I am writing to you to indicate how the funds were used and to thank you for your support in facilitating the event. Funds from the BISI were used to cover three categories of expenses for our conference: meals and refreshments, administrative costs, and accommodation for our speakers.

With the help of BISI the conference was a great success. BISI's support allowed us to bring in a range of speakers, including former Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern affairs Richard Murphy, intelligence analyst Judith Yaphe, Ambassador Mark Hambley, and the Middle East director of the International Crisis Group Joost Hiltermann, among others. We also were able to attract a number of promising younger scholars, who brought fresh perspectives drawn from new research to the study of the subject. Ground-breaking papers presented included those addressing the perspectives of France, the Gulf Cooperation Council, the US, the Soviet Union and Turkey towards the war. In addition, fascinating new material was presented on the inner machinations of Saddam Hussein's regime leading up to the outbreak of hostilities and his personal conduct during the war. The economic dimensions of the war were also elucidated, particularly in terms of the targeting of oil exports as a means of economic warfare. In terms of further dissemination of our work, we are currently engaged in discussions with Routledge and I.B. Tauris about the possibility of preparing an edited collection for publication based on the proceedings of the conference.

A further interesting aspect of the conference was the presence of representatives from the Iranian embassy, including a senior political officer who

had fought in the war. It was fascinating to see his interaction with Israeli and other Western scholars and American diplomats. Along the sidelines and during some sessions, the Iranian representative engaged in discussions with participants, including a brief exchange of views with the former American assistant secretary of state – a rarity in contemporary discourse.

The conference also generated some significant publicity. This included an Op-Ed I contributed to The Times (*‘Both Sides Lost, and 22 years on, the US has too: The roots of today’s conflicts between Iran, Iraq and the West lie in the war of 1980-88’*, 22 September 2010, p.24), an article written by Ian Black in The Guardian (*Iran and Iraq remember war that cost more than a million lives*, 23 September 2010) which refers to the conference, and commentary I offered on the BBC World Service’s international news bulletin on the evening of 22 September. The conference thus played an important role in drawing wider attention to the anniversary of the outbreak of the war.

All in all, the conference was a great success and we are very grateful to have received your support.

Professor Nigel Ashton, LSE

DEVELOPMENT GRANT REPORTS

CHRISTIANITY IN IRAQ SEMINAR DAY VII

The Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre at the *School of Oriental and African Studies* (SOAS) in London was the venue for the *Christianity in Iraq VII Seminar Day* held on Saturday 24th April 2009. The liturgies of the Iraqi churches were explored in both their historical and modern contexts. The day was held under the aegis of the *Centre for Eastern and Orthodox Christianity, Dept. for the Study of Religions*, SOAS where Dr. Erica C.D. Hunter is *Lecturer in Eastern Christianity*.

Sir Harold Walker on behalf of the *Jerusalem and Middle East Church Association* opened the morning session by outlining the society’s involvement with the various churches of the Middle East including Iraq. Mrs. Joan Porter MacIver, the Administrator of *The British Institute for the Study of Iraq* addressed its interests in Iraq, which span both the historic and modern, as well as drawing attention to the programme of bringing Iraqi scholars to England for training and the current fund-raising campaign. She also drew attention to the difficulties encountered –as well as the expenses involved- in obtaining visas for the Iraqi scholars.

Father Baby Varghese (SEERI, Kerala, India) opened the academic papers discussing *Images of Christ in East and West Syrian Liturgies*, exploring the major Christological differences between the Miaphysite and Diophysite Churches. Dr. Aho Shemunkasho (University of Salzburg, Austria) *Changes in West Syrian Liturgy* without liturgical reform addressed the practical problems which West Syrian

diaspora communities face in maintaining their liturgical forms. Moving to the East Syrian traditions, Mr. Steven Ring (Bristol) *The structure and history of the Hudra in the Church of the East: preliminary observations* outlined the complex transmission history of the Hudra and its relationship with the Beth Gazza, illustrating his paper with examples drawn from the Turfan collection of manuscripts. The final paper by Dr. Sebastian Brock (Oxford), *Early Witnessed to the liturgical tradition of the Church of the East* surveyed the manuscript and epigraphic evidence for the Hudra, the earliest examples going back to the Late Sassanid era. Dr. Erica C D Hunter chaired the morning's papers.

After lunch, the afternoon session, chaired by Dr. Jacob Thekeparambil, began with a performance of hymns by the 'Mar Behnam Choir' from the Syrian Catholic Mission in England. Then Dr. Suha Rassam showed a video of the activities of *Iraq Christians in Need*, a charity whose programmes include computer lessons and English instruction. Madame Christine Chaillot discussed the needs of Iraqi Christian refugees in France and the efforts made to help them, a situation aided by the direct support received from President Sarkozy. A second performance of the 'Mar Behnam Choir' preceded the fascinating presentation by Ms. Tala Jarjour (Cambridge) of her field-work recording the liturgical chant of the Suryani community in Aleppo. The day ended with a statement about situation of the Mandaeans by Dr. Layla Al-Roomi, who emphasized the urgent need for them to have a 'safe haven' if this ancient religion is to survive.

The interest generated by the Seminar Day, which was attended by sixty-five people, including many Iraqis, was most gratifying. Despite all the vicissitudes surrounding air-travel, all speakers were able to come – from as far away as India and the Middle East. Only Dr. George Kiraz (Gorgias Press) who was to travel from New Jersey, USA could not attend due to airline cancellation.

The grants by *The British Institute for the Study of Iraq* and *The Jerusalem and Middle East Church Association* have helped considerably to defray the considerable costs involved in organizing this day and made its success possible. The annual *Christianity in Iraq Seminar Day* is now well-established and the 2011 event, the eighth in the series, is already being planned for the 28th of May 2011 when the theme will be the connections between Iraqi Christianity and Turfan.

Erica C.D. Hunter, SOAS

CONTEMPORARY ARTS IRAQ

Exhibition 16th April – 20th June 2010

Contemporary Art Iraq, co-curated by Sarah Perks from Cornerhouse and Adalet Garmiany of ArtRole, was an original exhibition of contemporary art from 19 artists currently working in Iraq. Their work crossed a variety of media and had never been seen outside of the Middle East before. The exhibition explored and challenged expectations of Iraq today and showcased a new generation of exciting artists.

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Whilst acknowledging the aesthetics of conflict, these artists are not bound by it. This survey represented a predominantly young set of artists exploring their own personal situations with an international awareness and confidence that interrogated their recent history and current context.

The exhibition was divided across three initial ideas that were not rigid categories or themes, but more a means of approaching the complex range of issues that the artists were addressing. These were *Of Time And Tradition*, *The Changing City*, and *Protest*.

Accompanying the exhibition was a comprehensive engagement programme that included a one-day symposium exploring the themes of the exhibition in more detail.

The exhibition was a great success - *Contemporary Art Iraq* was Cornerhouse's highest attended exhibition since the British Art Show in 2006, with 19,082 visits. It also received more press coverage than any other exhibition at Cornerhouse in the last 25 years.

Engagement - Talk/Tales of Iraq: Artist Live Presentations, Cornerhouse, Friday 16 April



Cornerhouse's Sarah Perks, who co-curated the *Contemporary Art Iraq* exhibition, chaired this lively event, featuring a series of presentations by some of the most prominent artists from the UK and Iraq; including British sculptor Richard Wilson, installation and performance artist Anne Bean, official Ira war artist Xavier Pick and artist designer Shaho Abdul Rahman.

Richard Wilson, Adalet Garmiany and Anne Bean Photo: Paul Greenwood

Weekend Symposium

To coincide with the launch of *Contemporary Art Iraq* and the publication of the *MyWar* exhibition catalogue at FACT in Liverpool, Cornerhouse and FACT presented a two-day symposium tie-in.

Symposium/Future Now: Iraq and Contemporary Art, Cornerhouse, Sat 17 April

This one-day symposium explored the various thematic strands emerging from the exhibition. Divided into three panels delivered by a host of leading international researchers, artists, curators and writers, the symposium examined the concept of national identity in relation to new movements in art education and the overall future of contemporary art in the Middle East and Iraq.

Symposium Programme

- **Introduction**

Peter Jenkinson (Cultural Broker based in London and former National Director of the Arts Council's Creative Partnerships Programme)

- **National Identity and Art**

Beginning by examining concepts of nationalism and nationhood in the Middle East and Iraq more widely, this opening panel tackled the central question of national identity posited by the exhibition and considered how this related to an understanding of individual and collective national identity in Iraqi Kurdistan and how this is reflected in the diverse practice of contemporary Iraqi artists. Our speaker was Dr Rebwar Fatah (Contemporary Kurdish writer and journalist) - unfortunately Nat Muller (Independent curator and critic based in Rotterdam), who was also planning to attend was unable to come due to the volcanic eruption in Iceland affecting UK air space.

- **Building Blocks and Initiatives**

This panel looked at talent development, the current educational infrastructure for art in Iraq and international initiatives working in Iraq. Speakers included Anna Bowman (ArtRole Assistant Director and former Curator of Education at Yorkshire Sculpture Park), Aaron Cezar (Director, Delfina Foundation).

- **The International Art Market**

This panel explored the relationship between the contemporary art market and developing economies. A poor infrastructure in Iraq means only a few ex-pat artists are represented by galleries, but this could change in the future. Speakers included

Hadani Ditmars (Author, journalist, and photographer based in London), and Catherine David (Independent curator). Daniel Miller (Writer and researcher based in Tel Aviv), although planning to attend could not travel due to the volcanic ash cloud.

Also joining us via Skype for the symposium were artist and designer Shaho Abdul Rahman, and Falah Shakarchi, artist and lecturer at the College of Fine Art, Erbil.

Symposium/ Changing Perspectives on Contemporary Conflict, FACT, Liverpool, Sun 18 April

FACT hosted a symposium on the changing nature of war. Utilising an engaging and groundbreaking setup, speakers presented alternative perspectives on contemporary conflict.

Tour/Contemporary Art Iraq, Cornerhouse, Thu 29 April

Co-curator of *Contemporary Art Iraq*, ArtRole's Adalet R. Garmiany and Cornerhouse exhibitions co-ordinator Tomas Harold presented an introductory tour of the exhibition.

Artist-in-Residence/ Moments of Breathing with You, Cornerhouse, Wed 12 – Sat 15 May

Cornerhouse in collaboration with FutureEverything, were pleased to host artist-in-residence Hafsah Naib, who responded to the exhibition over a four-day period. Naib initiated and facilitated a range of creative encounters with visitors in order to produce an online moving book. Every hour of the exhibition, she initiated an encounter and documented it visually in collaboration with a gallery-goer through various video, drawing, photographic and written methods.

http://www.futureeverything.org/experienceeverything/experience_moments

Tour/Contemporary Art Iraq, Cornerhouse, Manchester, Sun 23 May

Co-curator Sarah Perks presented an introductory tour of the exhibition.

Communications

A striking visual identity was developed and created for *Contemporary Art Iraq*. The identity was carried across all promotion and exhibition interpretation materials, and in several spaces of the main building, including the main foyer and the wall directly opposite the Ground Floor Bar. Large-scale mesh banners were created for the first floor Café windows creating a high visual impact. Print produced for the exhibition included an A5 gallery guide, posters and supporting documents for the weekend programme of events. Print adverts appeared on the back page of FACT exhibition and events brochure for March-June, Spring issue of FLUX magazine, back page of ABulletin newspaper, and an international announcement featured in e-flux's sister bulletin, Art Agenda.

There was also a cross promotional partnership with Castlefield Gallery through targeted newsletter content and Imperial War Museum North through web presence for Contemporary Art Iraq.

Press

There was an impressive response with features in *The Independent*, *The Guardian's* Exhibition picks of the week and This week's art shows in pictures, Omer Kholeif's review in *Art Monthly* plus cover image, Daniel Miller's Breaking free article for Creativetourist, BBC World Service interview, Front Row interview and review by Andy McClusky, MEN article by Sarah Walters, The National Newspaper article by Ben East, Big Issue in the North select news piece, and Leila Nathoo's article for BBC Manchester Online.

There was also an online news item in Art Asia Pacific, A-N Magazine featured Hafsah Naib's residency, and the exhibition also featured in Kirstie Brewer's Last chance to see: Snapshots of the Iraqi art scene in *Contemporary Art Iraq* in Manchester for Culture24, Aesthetica Magazine Blog and Saatchi Online.

In international, travel or other new press, features included Claire Wilkinson's Manchester to Show Contemporary Art from Iraq article for HotelsHotelsHotels, India Times Online, Gulf Times, Socialist Worker Online and vodcast interview for BeKosmo.

Reviews

“Deliberately at utter odds with the images of Iraq we see daily on our TV news.” *The Guardian*

“There has never been a national showcase of contemporary art like that being shown in Manchester.” *BBC Manchester Online*

“*Contemporary Art Iraq* is anchored by something humanistic and emotive; it provides a powerful counter-narrative and demands a voice on the world stage.” *Culture24*

“The exhibition is one of the first chances anywhere outside the country itself to get inside the real Iraq [...] Zana Rasul Mohammed’s *Memories and War* is the kind of installation you might expect to see in any cutting-edge show.” *The National Newspaper, English United Arab Emirates*



Iraq is Flying, 2006-2009, Jamal Penjweny

Sarah Shelley

[For the full report with more photos please go to this event listing on the BISI website’s events’ page to view the fully illustrated report.]

NATIONAL YOUTH ORCHESTRA OF IRAQ - SUMMER SCHOOL IN ERBIL

The National Youth Orchestra of Iraq, supported this year by the BISI, completed its second epic summer school in Erbil on August 8th.

I say epic, because I’m still reeling from the organisational complexity of it all. This was one of the toughest things I’ve ever done as a conductor and as a human

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being. What we tried to do was bring 42 young Iraqis from Kurdistan, Baghdad, Kirkuk and Hallabjah together, many out of isolation, to create a symphony orchestra. You have to appreciate where these young people are coming from. How instruments found their way into their hands (though with the violinists who also play traditional music, there seems to be no shortage) is often a mystery. But what is even more baffling is how they ever attain a standard that I can allow into a symphony orchestra on the basis of little or no western classical teaching.

In spite of all the preparation this year, the orchestra is still an act of faith, driven not only by the western team, dispersed throughout the world, but also by the Iraqi participants, who inject their integrity and sincerity into the work, and are driven by the revelation that they can get out of their sitting rooms and play with other Iraqis in Iraq. Here's the basic plan. We all arrive, 13 tutors from Germany, UK and USA, one orchestral manager from the South African Youth Orchestras Association, 42 Iraqi players, and an Iraqi management team from the British Council, and a trilingual interpreter team in Erbil. The KRG gives us the Martyr Saad conference venue, the going rate for which is \$10,000 a day, for free for two weeks. This generosity already puts the orchestra on a higher facilitative level than many orchestras in developed countries. The first week covers intensive sectionals, where the players and tutors start working out deeply ingrained problems of technique and musicianship, many receiving their first ever instrumental lessons. Then the full orchestral rehearsals slowly take over and I try to get them listening to each other and watching the beat - oh yes - and understanding what it is I'm doing there waving my arms around at all. Through a process of persistence, gradual increasing awareness, interjections from the tutors to fix things as we go, and understanding of how the music fits together, the first ropey attempts quickly gel into something recognisable. This is where the hunger kicks in. The players' desire to grow, to learn and to absorb everything, to learn the intensity of orchestral teamwork, and the art of listening is staggering. Dobbs, our bass tutor from Boston, comes up to me and says of Chia, his student, "He's a monster! I show him something and he gets it first time, whereas anybody else would take 6 months." Behind that hunger is, of course, the reality that after 2 weeks, they return home, back to no teaching, back to solitary practice. The solace that many find when they pick up their instruments is what keeps many going. It's a great way of shutting out the world for a short while.

As Musical Director, my job is to programme the orchestra as well as conduct it. Our rule is that every concert has one Iraqi Arab piece and one Kurdish piece, along with the western repertoire. This year's Kurdish music was led by Tara Jaff, a living legend in the Kurdish world. London based, she accompanies her singing on a Celtic harp, given to her years ago by KRG Prime Minister Barham Salih. This year, we got our heads together to produce two string accompaniments to back her, written by me. This was a welcome opportunity to allow the strings to play something simple, where they could work on quality of tone and listening to a soloist. Although Tara's rhythms are sometimes quite challenging, they have no

problem latching on and giving her a glowing field of sound to support her pure voice with. Because Tara works with amplification, we spent an inordinate amount of time balancing and sound-checking in the hall to make sure she came through clearly.

The other Iraqi contribution is from Iraqi Composer, Lance Conway, whose background of British Indian Parents belies his experience growing up in Baghdad. "Heartbeat of Baghdad" is his portrait of his war-torn city, bitter-sweet and swinging from tragedy to joy. This was the work featured by Hugh Sykes in his Radio 4 and BBC World reports on us. Hugh was in tears. He couldn't believe that this orchestra could ever happen. For many of the participants, it also seems something unreal, unbelievable and yet, they are its reality. The heartbeat of the project is Zuhail Sultan, now doing A-Levels in Glasgow, but back in September 2008, a 17 year-old in Baghdad with a singular vision to create a national youth orchestra of Iraq. Wisely, she skipped over the various ministries and music schools in the capital, and went straight to Raw TV in London, an independent production company that is more likely to do reality TV on British foreigners thrown into Chinese jails than anything to do with classical music. From there, I found the project, and we both worked online through to the first summer school in Suleymanyiah, supported with enormous faith and finance from British Council Iraq. Auditions were by YouTube, a difficult thing to pull off in Iraq with poor internet and regular power cuts, but enough managed to upload their videos for me to make a meritocratic selection and build the first symphony orchestra.

Our two big adventures, other than the main concert itself, were the children's concert and the garden concert. This is exactly where the business of working in Iraq becomes at its most exciting. We were running a chamber music course and conducting lessons alongside the main orchestral course, and I decided with Sophia Welz, the orchestral manager, to find a place to play the chamber music in front of kids. Sophia sourced a location and a couple of schools who were willing to come along, and the next morning, we threw the concert together. One school was half an hour late, so I ordered my wonderfully intellectual percussion tutor, Adam, onto the stage to do clapping games with the school that had made it on time. This went down a treat, but was over too quickly, so I got up and started teaching them kids songs from Ghana. Again, they just learnt too fast, and we had to get a folk group from the orchestra up, violin, clarinet and duff (the Iraqi drum rather like a bohran from Ireland), to jam some music whilst the other kids arrived. When the actual concert got started, including a Mozart serenade, Telemann trumpet trio, a Haydn flute trio, solo viola work from a polish composer played by tutor Ilona Bondar, and Tara Jaff with the strings at the end, we'd spent 90 minutes delivering Iraq's first ever kids concert to an auditorium of clearly enthusiastic and naturally musical youngsters.

The other high profile risk, which I feel I can talk about now that the trauma has subsided, was the garden concert. Based in the gardens of a research institute just outside Erbil, the less said the better. Let's just say that the 47 degree heat and wind

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at 10 o'clock at night, the exploding lamps, the sound engineer who turned up for Tara then disappeared leaving all his equipment behind, were not conducive to good music making. But the show must go on. This was not a wise decision, but we all know how to grit our teeth and deliver on a promise, so we did. This was a stress test, and from that point of view, we came through it well.

The final concert, with Lance Conway's Heartbeat of Baghdad, Mendelssohn's violin concerto, Tara Jaff's songs and Beethoven 1, came off brilliantly. There is still a lot of work to do, and infrastructure to rebuild. Music is meant to be shared, and the heartbeat, which is humankind's most archetypal experience of rhythm, is not a solitary experience, but one we understand to bring us together through common ground, feeling and sound. The players proved this to themselves, and with any luck, took the feeling back to their villages and towns, to begin something local and from their own hearts.



Awder Mamood from Suleymaniyah and Tu'qa Saad from Baghdad on the first desk of cellos and Dobbs, the NYOI bass tutor from Boston, coaches Cia from Ranya and Samir from Baghdad.

Photos: K.W. Keppler

Next year, we face our next strategic step. The Beethovenfest in Bonn has invited us as their orchestra-in-residence, performing in Bonn on the 1st October. Back to the fundraising.

Paul MacAlindin

POST WAR ART & CULTURAL FESTIVAL - IRAQ, NOVEMBER 2009

Symposium: Reinvention: Iraqi Contemporary Art & Culture in a Post Conflict Zone

Colloquium and panel discussion with curators, artists, officials and academics from Iraq, Iran, UK and USA.

Adalet R. Garmiany opened the symposium, after which Richard Wilson R.A. spoke for 10 minutes about his visits to Iraqi Kurdistan and the meaning and process of installing 20:50 in a post war area.

Chair: Peter Jenkinson OBE, Cultural Broker,

Panelist:

- Dr. Cynthia P. Schneider, Professor in the Practice of Diplomacy, School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, Senior Non Resident Fellow, Brookings Institution, Former Ambassador to the Netherlands,
- Dr Lamia al-Gailani WerR, Iraqi Archaeologist living in London, specialising in Ancient Iraq, worked in the Iraq Museum in the 1960s as assistant curator.
- Amirali Ghasemi is the director of Parkingallery, Tehran, (www.parkingallery.com)
- Didem Özbek is an artist and designer, and lives in Istanbul. She is the co-founder of PiST/// Interdisciplinary Project Space, a non-for-profit, independent artist-run space in Istanbul.
- Dr. Maki Omran, Professor at Babylon University - Iraq
- This Symposium was organised by ArtRole UK in association with Kahk Press & Media Centre, Iraqi Kurdistan.

It was part of the 3-Day international contemporary Art and Culture Festival in Iraq the first of its kind after the war. The programme was a collaborative initiative between UK, USA and Iraqi Kurdistan which aims to promote greater exchange of expertise by creating a unique platform and opportunity for dialogue between Iraqi and international artists, curators, officials and academics.

Adalet Garmiany

[Dr Lamia Al-Gailani Werr 's report on her trip to Iraq, including the Festival, appears in BISI Newsletter No. 25.]



**IMPERICAL COLLEGE IRAQI SOCIETY:
IRAQI SOCIETY CULTURAL EXHIBITION
2 DECEMBER 2009**

This was the second year in a row that Imperial College Iraqi Society held its Iraqi Cultural Exhibition. Last years exhibition (Nov '08) was the first of its kind, and there was a lot of hype to live up to and prove to the community that the society's event would stand to be bigger and better, year after year.

Societies representing Iraqi life and culture from all across the UK were invited to take part in this years "expo"

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event, held in the Sir Alexander Fleming building in Imperial's South Kensington campus. This was a fitting location for such an event, which was aiming at promoting inter-society links and networking whilst bringing the Iraqi community together to celebrate our beloved country. From those that are unable to return to Iraq, to those that have recently arrived on the UK but miss that nostalgic feel about their homeland, to those that have never even set foot in their native country, this exhibition was a great opportunity to really experience life in Iraq from all aspects.

By giving each society its own stall, the visitors to the event would truly be surrounded by all that symbolises Iraq, both the beautiful, and sadly, the ugly truth of life after the recent war. Just looking around the exhibition room, the Iraqi Orphans stand catches the eyes of those passing by, with its heart wrenching pictures of the plight of those orphan children, so desperately in need. Moreover, there are further charitable causes with their respective stalls, all trying to increase the awareness of what they do and how donations really do make a difference to those suffering back home. Two newly formed societies are the Iraqi relief organisation and the Al Hasan Foundation. Nevertheless, the beauty of a country so rich with art, culture, and heritage and steeped in its own history is something that cannot be overlooked. One corner provides pictures from the past and present, of the Hanging Gardens of Babylon to the quintessentially important historical monuments, both old as well as new, to the world renowned Iraqi artists and their unique works of art.

A break in the middle of the evening allows the crowd to move into the adjacent lecture theatre to hear the incredible sounds of Ehsan Emam performing a special 30 minute recitation of the Oud – a special type of Iraqi instrument, most similar to the classic English guitar. And of course, no event could be completed without some proper Iraqi food, with lamb and chicken kebabs, kubba and samosas to name but a few of the range of delicacies on offer. Of course, no Iraqi menu could be complete without a cup of tea, a staple in the Iraqi diet!

With an attendance of over 100 people, this was truly a successful event, and we hope all that attended found it both positive and fruitful, and took away a piece of Iraq in their hearts. We would especially like to thank BISI for their very generous grant of £350 which really went a long way to help make this event even better. We hope to see you all at the next ICE which should be coming your way very soon!

Zahra Kadoom

[The next ICE cultural exhibiton takes place 10 December 2010 at 6 p.m. - see the events list p 35.]

BOOK DONATIONS

Civilizations of Ancient Iraq, by Benjamin R. Foster & Karen Polinger Foster , Princeton Press 2010 ISBN: 978-0-691-13722-3 (Donated by Sir Harold Walker, BISI member & Past President of the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies)

BISI GRANTS: RESEARCH, ACADEMIC CONFERENCES, VISITING IRAQI SCHOLARS & DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

The Institute promotes, supports, and undertakes research and public education relating to Iraq and neighbouring countries. Its coverage includes anthropology, archaeology, geography, history, languages, and related disciplines within the arts, humanities, and social sciences from the earliest times until the present. It has over 700 subscribers to its journal *IRAQ* and members may also subscribe to the *International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies*. Membership with its benefits is open to all with special student rates. For more information about the Institute and its grants see: <http://www.bisi.ac.uk>

BISI RESEARCH AND CONFERENCE GRANTS

The Institute invites funding applications for grants in aid of research and for the organisation of academic conferences. Applications are welcomed to support research or conferences on Iraq and neighbouring countries not covered by other BASIS-sponsored institutions (<http://www.britac.ac.uk/institutes/orgs.cfm>), in any field of the humanities or social sciences, concerned with any time period from prehistory to the present day. Awards will normally fall within a limit of £4000, though more substantial awards may be made.

In addition, the Institute welcomes funding applications (January deadline) for pilot projects preliminary to larger research projects, especially on the theme of *Exile and Return*. Funding of up to £8000 is available, for one pilot project a year. The Institute will also offer assistance to the award-holder in drafting a full research proposal to submit jointly to other funding bodies.

Applicants must be residents of the UK or, exceptionally, other individuals whose academic research closely coincides with that of the BISI. Two academic references are required.

All applications and references must be received by **31 January 2011**.

(From January 2011 there will only be one annual round of research and conference grant applications. The Institute reserves the right to consider applications outside the deadline on an exceptional basis.)

BISI VISITING IRAQI FELLOWS & SCHOLARS GRANTS

BISI offers two to four grants each year to be held in the UK by visiting scholars from Iraq in the fields of archaeology, ancient languages, museum and heritage studies, and other disciplines within the humanities and social sciences. The academic focus must relate to the study of Iraq and priority is given to scholars at an early stage of their careers. Applications are due by **30 April 2011**.

BISI DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

Grants are available to support development events and projects, such as lectures, study days, and popular publications that relate to Iraq and neighbouring countries and to the areas of interest covered by BISI. A Development Grant application should normally be for an amount up to £500 but more substantial grants may be made. Applicants need to submit an application form and two references to the BISI Administrator. Applicants must be residents of the UK and preference is given to activities taking place in the UK, or in Iraq or a neighbouring country (please check for eligibility prior to applying).

The deadline for the next application is **15 April 2011**.

Please check the BISI website for any revisions to grant deadlines & requirements. All grant requirements, conditions, and application forms, as well as membership forms, are available from: BISI Administrator, 10 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AH, United Kingdom and the BISI website: <http://www.bisi.ac.uk>
Email: bisi@britac.ac.uk, Tel. + 44 (0) 20 7969 5274, Fax. + 44 (0) 20 7969 5401

BOOK NEWS

Beyond the Ubaid: Transformation and integration in the late prehistoric societies of the middle east Edited by Robert A. Carter and Graham Philip

SAOC 63 - Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization 63

Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2010

Pp. ix + 396; 147 figures, 11 tables

ISBN-13: 978-1-885923-66-0 Price \$42.95

Originally coined to signify a style of pottery in southern Iraq, and by extension an associated people and a chronological period, the term "Ubaid" is now often used loosely to denote a vast Near Eastern interaction zone, characterized by similarities in material culture, particularly ceramic styles, which existed during the sixth and fifth millennia b.c. This zone extended over 2,000 km from the shores of the Mediterranean to the Straits of Hormuz, including parts of Anatolia and perhaps even the Caucasus.

The volume contains twenty-three papers that explore what the "Ubaid" is, how it is identified, and how the Ubaid in one location compares to another in a distant location. The papers are the result of *The Ubaid Expansion? Cultural Meaning, Identity and the Lead-up to Urbanism*, an International Workshop held at Grey College, University of Durham, 20-22 April 2006.

(The conference was sponsored in part by a BSAI Research Grant.)

The in print book may be purchased from Oxbow Books www.oxbowbooks.com
All BISI publications, except the Journal, are available at OXBOW Books and members receive a 20% discount on BISI publications.

BISI 2010-2011 LECTURES & OTHER FUTURE EVENTS

Saturday, 20 November 2010 - *The Ancient near East: Power and Propaganda* at the Department of Continuing Education, University of Oxford in association with BISI. <http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/courses/>

Thursday, 9 December 2010 at 6 pm - BISI Lecture by Dr Augusta McMahon of the University of Cambridge on *A Grave Situation: Mass Graves and Early Urbanism at Tell Brak, Syria* .

Venue: J.Z. Young Lecture Theatre, Anatomy Building, UCL, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT - members of the public are welcome to attend.

Friday, 10 December 2010 at 6 pm. - Imperial College Iraqi Society annual *Iraqi Cultural Exhibition* <http://union.ic.ac.uk/osc/iraqi/>

6-8 January 2011 BANEA 2011 - The British Association for Near Eastern Archaeology Conference <http://www.banea.org/>

Main Themes : Artistry, Artisanship and Divisions of Labour in the ANE

Venue: The School of World Art Studies at the University of East Anglia, Norwich

Thursday, 24 February 2011 6 p.m. (tbc) - BISI Appeal Talk by Dr Azzam Awash, Director of Eden Again/Nature Iraq, on *The marshes of southern Mesopotamia, Past, Present, and Future* (Sponsored by HE Sheikh Hamed Ahmed Al Hamed)

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

Tickets will be required and a form is available on the BISI website.

Thursday, 17 March 2011 - BISI AGM & Lecture by Professor Clive Holes FBA - *Iraqi voices from the margins: 'Abbud al-Karkhi, 'Aziz 'Ali and 'Abbas Jijan*

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

Saturday 19 March 2011 - BISI & Department of Adult and Continuing Education (DACE) Day School, University of Glasgow Day School - *Mesopotamia: highlights of ancient Iraq*, organised by Dr Frances Reynolds, University of Oxford.

Thursday, 9 June 2011 BISI Bonham Carter Lecture

Thursday, 11 November 2011 BISI Lecture - details to be announced.

For updates and further details, please check the BISI website
<http://www.bisi.ac.uk>

Members of the Public are welcome to attend BISI Lectures.

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS & BISI OFFICERS**

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- Invitations to three BISI lectures and receptions in London (without fees)
- Invitations to BISI special events and joint study days as available (fees may apply)
- BISI Annual Report and Accounts
- Full voting rights at the BISI AGM in person or by postal ballot

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I R A Q

VOLUME LXXII • 2010

In Honour of
THE SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY
of
PROFESSOR DAVID HAWKINS

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