

EDITORIAL

As announced in last year's Editorial, the 2005 issue of *Iraq* is in two parts, for the first time since 1984, at no extra cost to members. Part 1 appeared in the Spring; it was the second volume of the Proceedings of the Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale and was therefore bound in red. The present volume, Part 2, is slimmer, but with it we return to our normal green binding and our customary mix of archaeological and Assyriological papers, an excavation report, this editorial and, alas, obituaries marking the deaths of Dr Roger Moorey and Professor Harry Saggs, and highlighting the debt we owe both of them.

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A sentence in last year's editorial read, "Alas, the situation in Iraq has worsened and there is little prospect of re-establishing the School's presence there and resuming operations at the moment". Last year it was at least possible for members of the School's Council to visit Iraq, but this year it has not been, and plans to send scholars to the Iraq Museum have had to be abandoned. Due to worsening security and the chronic lack of electricity the Museum is closed. However, in December 2004, at the invitation of the Iraqi Minister of Culture, Dr John Curtis, a member of the BSAI Council, was flown to Babylon to inspect recent damage to the archaeological site. His report drew much media coverage. As a result of his visit, the British Government, through its Department of Culture, Media and Sport, provided funding for three Iraqi archaeologists from Babylon, Dr Maryam al-Adee, Mr Raad al-Amari and Mr Haider Ariby, to come to England. They were based at the British Museum, which coordinated their visit, and the School hosted their trip to Cambridge. We have recently heard that Dr Donny George has been appointed President of the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage of Iraq. We offer him our congratulations, but regret that his new duties have led him to cancel a planned visit to England.

Members of the School have generously donated books for Iraq. Thanks to the help of the British Council's former director in Baghdad, Mr Adrian Chadwick, and to our secretary, Mrs Joan Porter MacIver, who sorted, listed and packed them, twenty-one boxes of books were sent to the Baghdad and Mosul museums and other institutions. The School is most grateful to all those concerned. Please continue to liaise with our secretary if you wish to donate your own publications or other relevant books and journals. Through Dr Lamia al-Gailani Werr, a co-opted member of its Development Committee, the School was also able to act as a facilitator for a generous donation made by the British Academy for refurbishing the Iraq Museum Library and setting up a bookbinding workshop.

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The School has continued its outreach programme. On 2 December 2004 ICOMOS UK hosted a Christmas lecture and gathering in association with the School, with a talk by Dr Lamia al-Gailani Werr, who had just returned from Baghdad, on "Iraq's Cultural Heritage". On 22 January Dr Stephanie Dalley arranged a second Day School in co-operation with the Department of Continuing Education in Oxford, this time on the Assyrians. In April Dr Erica Hunter organised her second Conference on Christianity in Iraq. Both events were very successful, aroused a great amount of interest and served to demonstrate the huge contribution Iraq has made to the history of the world. Our Chairman, Dr Harriet Crawford, gave a lecture at the British Academy on 12 May on the occasion of the launch of a book entitled *Looting of the Iraq Museum, Baghdad — The Lost Legacy of Ancient Mesopotamia* (edited by M. Polk and A. M. H. Schuster), to which she and several other members of the School had contributed chapters. Grants were given in support of a conference in June at the Warburg Institute in London, entitled "Iconography without texts", and for a conference in Durham on the Ubaid period scheduled for Spring 2006.

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Last year we reported the sad death of Mrs Rosalind Hicks, whose generous funding enabled the School to set up the Christie-Mallowan Scholarship (see *BSAI Newsletter* 15, May 2005, pp. 5–6 for an obituary). However, the need for further funds to help our colleagues in Iraq has led the

School to launch an appeal for £500,000 to fund Scholarships and Fellowships for students from Iraq to study in Britain and for visits of students and scholars. Eventually we hope that it will be possible for the School to re-establish itself in Iraq and resume fieldwork and excavation.

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Fieldwork has continued at Tell Brak under the direction of Dr Joan Oates with Helen McDonald as Field Director. However, in May Helen took up a post at the Oriental Institute in Chicago. We offer her our warmest congratulations and wish her well, but will miss her and her many contributions to the Brak project. She first served the School as Secretary-Librarian in Baghdad until it was forced to close in the aftermath of the First Gulf War. Subsequently, as our first Senior Research Fellow, she worked tirelessly on the Brak publications. Dr Augusta McMahon's report on the last season of fieldwork at Chagar Bazar is included in the present volume.

With fieldwork still impossible in Iraq, the School has given a grant Dr John MacGinnis towards his excavations in the Neo-Assyrian levels at Ziyaret Tepe in south-eastern Turkey. Dr Farouk al-Rawi received a grant for the Umma Project (see *BSAI Newsletter* 15, May 2005, pp. 11–15). This is a study of the tablets from Umma in the collections of the British Museum, and was originally intended to complement archaeological work undertaken by the Iraq Department of Antiquities. However, it has now developed into a series of collaborative projects with databases in Spain (Professor Manuel Molina) and Los Angeles (Professor Robert Englund), with many scholars participating. The first volume has just appeared in the series *Nisaba*. A further grant was awarded to Dr Georgina Herrmann for her work in the British Museum on ivories from the North-West Palace of Ashurnasirpal II at Nimrud in preparation for another volume in the *Nimrud Ivories* series. Other grants were made to Dr Stein for work on Nuzi tablets, and to Mr Pickup for a study of Arpachiyah ceramics.

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On the publication front, the Proceedings of the 49e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, which took place in London in July 2003 with the School as one of its sponsors, appeared as a two-volume set in time for the 51e Rencontre in Chicago in July. Publication was aided by a substantial subvention from the MFI Foundation. Members had already received both volumes as *Iraq* 66 and *Iraq* 67 Part 1. A generous grant from the Charlotte Bonham Carter Trust, in memory of Professor David Oates, has enabled the School to produce a facsimile reprint of his seminal *Studies in the Ancient History of Northern Iraq*, first published in 1968 and very rapidly sold out. Our thanks go to Joan Porter MacIver for seeing the volume through the press. The publication of the first volume of Professor Alastair Northedge's monumental work, *The Historical Topography of Samarra* (Samarra Studies I), is imminent. In due course it will be followed by his *Archaeological Atlas of Samarra* (Samarra Studies II). Both volumes have been generously subsidised by the Fondation Max van Berchem. Dr Joan Oates and Dr Stewart Campbell and Professor Nicholas Postgate were given grants to help them complete work on the publication of, respectively, Tell Brak, Umm Dabaghiyah and Abu Salabikh.

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The Spring lecture on 10 March was by Dr John MacGinnis on his interesting School-sponsored excavations at Ziyaret Tepe in south-eastern Turkey: "Probing the frontiers — Excavations at a provincial capital of the Assyrian empire". This year the twenty-third Bonham Carter "lecture" was given on 9 June in honour of Jeremy Black, who died in March 2004. It was, indeed, a lecture with a difference as it was a lively performance by ZIPANG of "Lugalbanda and the Anzu Bird", narrated by Fran Hazelton and accompanied by Kurdish Iraqi harpist and singer Tara Jaff playing a working model of the Royal Harp of Ur.

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The School's seventy-first Annual General Meeting on 16 December 2004 marked the retirement of one of the Council's longest-serving members, Mr Christopher Walker, who wished to leave

the field open to a younger generation of scholars. His wish was granted when another cuneiformist, Dr Jon Taylor, was elected. Also elected was Dr Eleanor Coghill, who had been co-opted onto the Council after the death of Jeremy Black. The engrossing lecture that followed was given by Sir Terence Clark and entitled "The noble art of the chase under the Abbasid Caliphs". The 2005 AGM will be held at the British Museum on 15 December and will be followed by a lecture by Dr Erica Hunter entitled "Hira as a centre of Christianity during the Sassanid-Islamic periods".