

EDITORIAL

This volume is the first of two in which we are proud to present the papers on the topic of Nineveh, given in July 2003 at the 49e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, which took place in London with the School as one of the sponsors. Further details will be found in the Foreword below.

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It is with much sorrow that we learnt of the deaths of our President, Professor David Oates, on 22 March 2004, and of a former Director of the School and a member of our Council, Dr Jeremy Black, on 28 April 2004. We extend our condolences to their families. They will be sorely missed. Their obituaries appear below.

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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. Members of the School continue, however, to do what they can to support our Iraqi colleagues, and to bring the situation in Iraq to the attention of the public and the government in every possible way, through interviews with the media, gallery-talks, lectures, study days, conferences, etc.

On 19 May, our Chairman Dr Harriet Crawford, Dr John Curtis and Professor Nicholas Postgate gave presentations to the All Party Parliamentary Archaeology Group at the House of Lords at the invitation of its Hon. Secretary, Lord Redesdale. Dr Dominique Collon took a group from the UK Trade and Investment's Iraq Unit round the Mesopotamian galleries in the British Museum on 3 September and, also in September, Dr Eleanor Robson gave a presentation to the MENA Oil & Gas Conference. On 2 December a joint lecture has been arranged with ICOMOS-UK, to be given by Dr Lamia Al-Gailani Werr on "Iraq's cultural heritage — Challenges and opportunities".

Dr Lamia Al-Gailani Werr, an Honorary member of the School and a co-opted member of the School's Development Committee, spent a year in Baghdad, from June 2003 till June 2004, on assignment by the Iraqi Reconstruction and Development Council to the State Board of Antiquities. Her duties included working in the Iraq Museum and editing the next issue of the journal *Sumer*. Members of the School helped to bring three Iraqi conservators to London for top-up training after the long years when they worked with insufficient equipment and materials, no access to publications, no contact with their colleagues abroad and no knowledge of developments in conservation. Mrs Buthayna Hussain, head of conservation, and Ms Tagried Kheder, both from Baghdad, and Ms Sukina Welly from Mosul, arrived on 28 January and spent two months in the Department of Conservation at the British Museum. At an international seminar held on 19–20 February conservators from several countries agreed to go to Iraq to continue the training. Unfortunately the rapidly worsening situation led to the postponement of this initiative. However, in May 2004 Ms Noorah Al-Gailani, the curator of Islamic material at the National Museums of Scotland in Glasgow, returned to Iraq, and spent two weeks in the Iraq Museum training forty members of the Museum's staff in museum administration and display. This was funded by the School and was tremendously successful (see the report in the School's *Newsletter* 13).

Thanks to generous funding by Mrs Rosalind Hicks, "Christie Mallowan Scholarships" have been established to help in the further training of Iraqi colleagues. The School is administering these scholarships, and Khalid Mutlaq, the Iraq Museum's photographer, and Senan Mahmoud, an Iraq Museum designer are currently in England for top-up training in their respective fields. It is also hoped that an Islamic scholar will be able to go to Baghdad to run a training course on Islamic material culture for museum staff. Sadly, Mrs Hicks died on 30 October.

The School continues to collect books for the Iraq Museum Library and for university libraries in Baghdad and Mosul.

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The School is preparing a major appeal to provide scholarships for students from Iraq to study archaeology or related subjects in the UK, fellowships enabling scholars to travel to and from Iraq, and for the purchase of books, materials and equipment for museums and universities in Iraq. It will also enable the publication of previous School projects.

Eventually the School hopes to be able to set up a new Iraqi/British Institute in Baghdad as a joint centre of scholarship, and to resume its programme of fieldwork.

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Because of the political situation, fieldwork has had to be curtailed, but the season at Tell Brak took place as planned, with Helen McDonald as Field Director.

The Council approved the following grants: for Dr Farouk Al-Rawi to continue work on the Umma tablets in the British Museum, for Dr Diana Stein to travel to the Harvard Semitic Museum to work on material from Nuzi and for Dr John MacGinnis to travel to the excavations at Ziyaret Tepe. The School also continues to support Professor Georgina Herrmann's Nimrud Ivories project.

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This year Georgina Herrmann produced a book entitled *The Published Ivories from Fort Shalmaneser, Nimrud*, consisting of a check-list with thumb-nail illustrations of the ivories, and an accompanying CD. The proceedings of the Manchester conference, edited by J. N. Postgate, *Artefacts of Complexity: Tracking the Uruk in the Near East* (IAR 5, 2002), had sold out, but has been reprinted. Joan and David Oates' *Nimrud — An Assyrian Imperial City Revealed* (2001) has also been reprinted.

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On 17 January 2004 the School, in association with the Oxford University Department for Continuing Education, ran a very successful Day School on the Sumerians in Oxford, organised by Dr Jeremy Black. A follow-on Day School on the Neo-Assyrians, to take place on 22 January 2005, is being organised by Dr Stephanie Dalley under the same sponsorship. The School also supported a conference on "Christianity in Iraq" on 15 May, organised by Dr Erica Hunter. The School and the British Academy organised a joint conference entitled "Steady States" which took place at the Academy on 13–14 September. On 28 October, the School held a talk by Jim Crow, School of Historical Studies, University of Newcastle, on the Gertrude Bell Photographic Archive on the occasion of the launch by Barzan Publishing (in association with Stacey International) of a revised and updated edition of H. V. F. Winstone's acclaimed biography of Gertrude Bell (*Gertrude Bell — "The Lady" of Iraq*), in whose memory the School was founded.

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At the School's seventieth Annual General Meeting, on 11 December 2003, Dr Harriet Crawford, Professor Alan Millard, Dr Augusta McMahon and Dr Dominique Collon were all re-elected to Council. The AGM was followed by a lecture by Dr John Curtis entitled "Balawat: the study of an Assyrian city". After the Council Meeting on 24 March 2004, Dr Heather Baker gave a lecture on "Urban landscapes and domestic space: the Neo-Babylonian house in its setting". During the reception after the lecture, we toasted our Vice-President, Mrs Rachel Maxwell-Hyslop, who celebrated her ninetieth birthday on 27 March. On 10 June the School held a Summer Forum where members of the School could address questions to the School's officers. The Forum was followed by the Bonham-Carter Lecture by Dr Emilie Savage-Smith on "Our scientific debt to Iraq". The School's seventy-first AGM will take place on 16 December and will be followed by a lecture on "The noble art of the chase under the Abbasid caliphs" by Sir Terence Clark, a member of the Council.