REMOTE SENSING OF CULTURAL HERITAGE IN IRAQ: A CASE STUDY OF ISIN

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Historical Introduction

The alluvial plain of southern Mesopotamia, modern day Iraq, was home to some of the earliest cities in the ancient world. Begun in the mid-nineteenth century, archaeological excavations have provided the bases for our understanding of Mesopotamian civilization (figure 1.1). Surface reconnaissance was also conducted as early as 1900, but it was Robert McCormick Adams' more systematic surveys, begun in the 1950s and continuing over thirty years, that found about 4,000 sites in the alluvial plain.[1] While the excavations yielded Mesopotamia's material culture in the form of architecture, art, pottery, other objects, and written records, including cuneiform tablets, it was the surveys that put the sites into a context of natural environment and settlement patterns.

Many archaeological sites in Mesopotamia are prominent, high artificial mounds (tells) in the otherwise relatively flat landscape. Tells are, therefore, recognizable from great distances. Sometimes ancient canals are also visible as raised features, but usually the traces of past irrigation networks that crisscross the plain are not easily seen from the ground, nor are relict levees of the old river courses.

While archaeological work in Mesopotamia has continued for more than a century and a half, there have been long periods of interruption: World War I, World War II, the first Gulf War, and the Sanctions regime of the 1990s. From 1921 until 1991, archaeological sites

Figure 1.1. Archaeological Sites in Mesopotamia

were protected under Iraqi antiquities laws,[2] especially the key one drafted in 1936. Since 1991, and especially since the 2003 American invasion and occupation of Iraq, most of these laws have seen little real enforcement as a result of a general lack of security and stability, especially in the alluvial plain. As a consequence, many archaeological sites in southern Iraq have been and are still being looted or they are being damaged by military, agricultural, and industrial development. Despite a ban on the sale and exportation of Iraqi antiquities, declared by the U.S. and other countries in 2003, reports of damage to sites have trickled out of Iraq and into the mainstream media. The attempts at documenting site damage since 2003 have been confined primarily to short trips to the region[3] to check on well-known sites. It is important to note that the sites visited are confined to a specific number of tells in quite diverse areas.[4] Since 2003, except for some work by the Antiquities Department with the Italian Caribinieri in Thi Qar Province, formal assessment of the state of damage to sites has not been possible. Given the current lack of stability and security in the region, an extensive assessment of
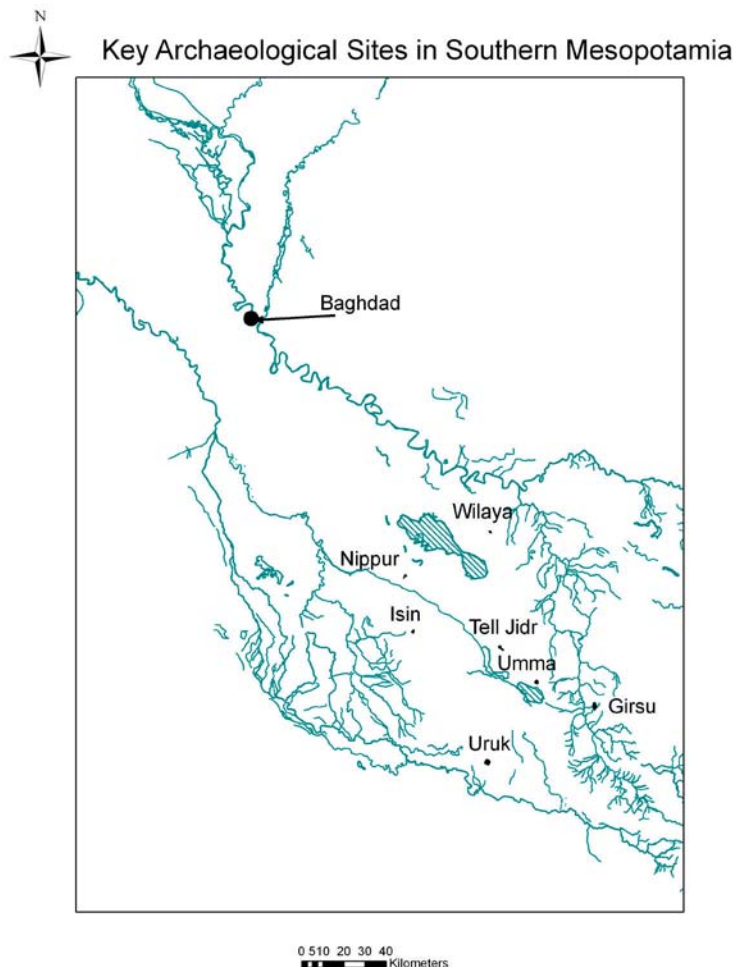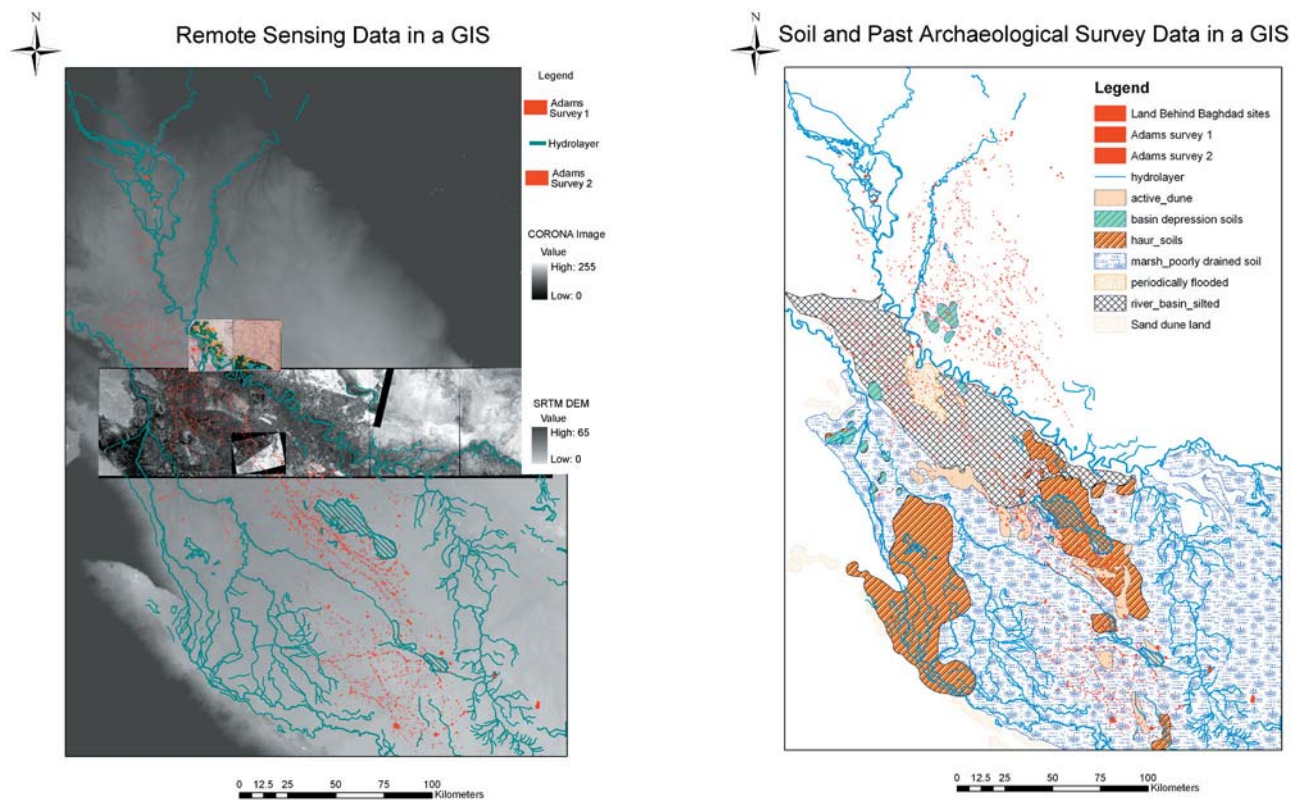
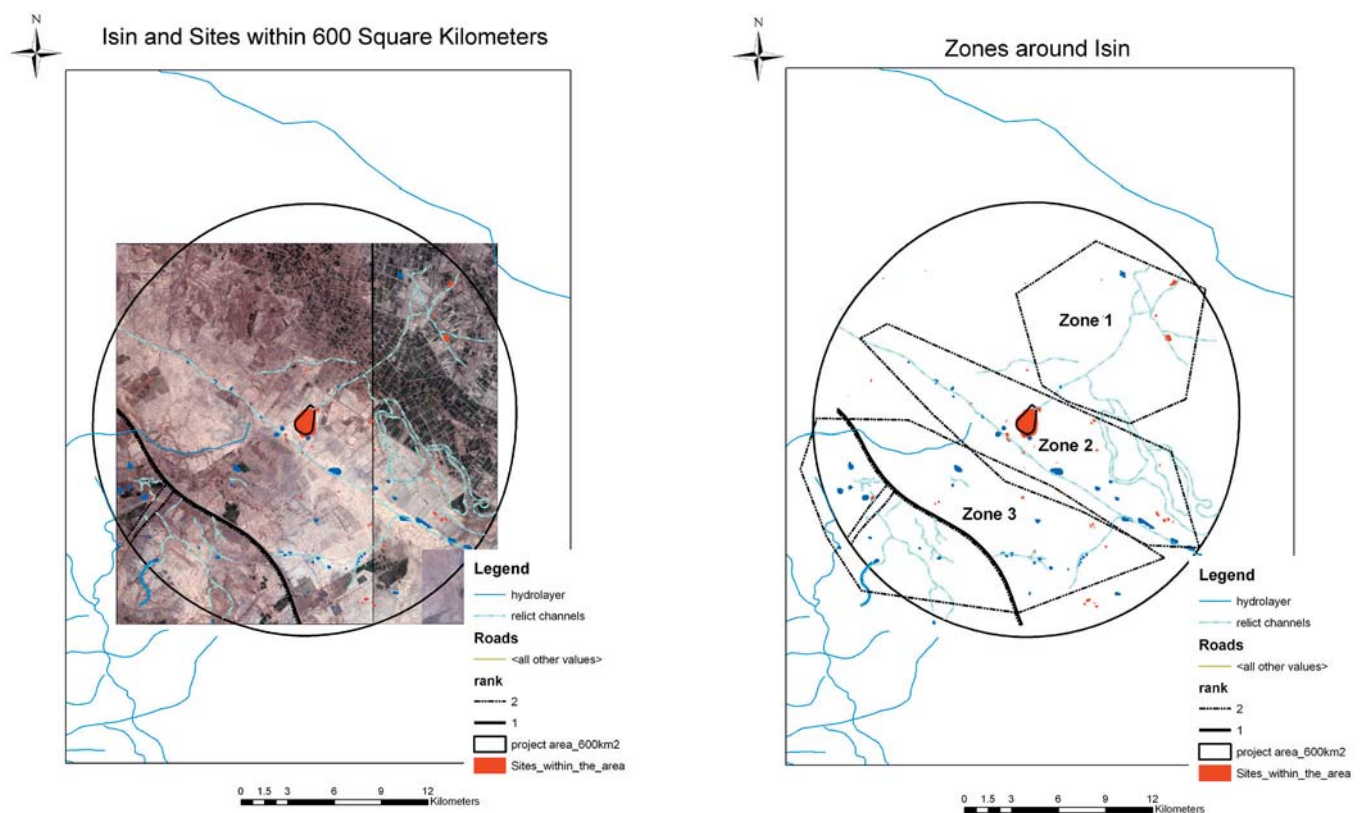Figure 1.2. Remote Sensing and Soil Data in a GPS

Figure 1.3. Adams' Surveyed Sites in Blue and Newly Detected Sites in Red. Isin in Red at Center

Figure 1.4. Zones around Isin

sites will not be feasible in the near future.

But the advent of publicly available high resolution satellite imagery has changed how archaeologists can monitor sites. Google Earth and other images provide an indication of the situation on the ground. Figures 1.5 and 1.6 show the widespread pitting common to a number of large sites in different areas of southern Mesopotamia. These images, besides documenting the damage, are also valuable for historical research because they show traces of relict channel levees and previously unrecorded sites, from which past watercourses and settlements can be reconstructed and dated by correlation with known archaeological sites.

The web-available version of Google Earth uses high resolution Quickbird imagery provided by the private company Digital Globe. This imagery is occasionally updated, but most images are from the period around 2003–2004. While these images are useful in their freely available form, they cover only small sections of the alluvium. In order to look at wide expanses of the alluvium, it is necessary to purchase new imagery. For example, Dr. Elizabeth Stone[5] has been purchasing and analyzing Quickbird imagery to look at looting patterns on a large scale across the Mesopotamian alluvium.

It is necessary to include other imagery sources such as Corona satellite imagery from the 1960s, SPOT imagery from the 1990s, and SRTM (Shuttle Radar Topography Mission) Digital Terrain data released in 2004. With my TAARII grant, I was able to purchase the most recent high-resolution satellite imagery, for an area of 600 square kilometers, which makes it
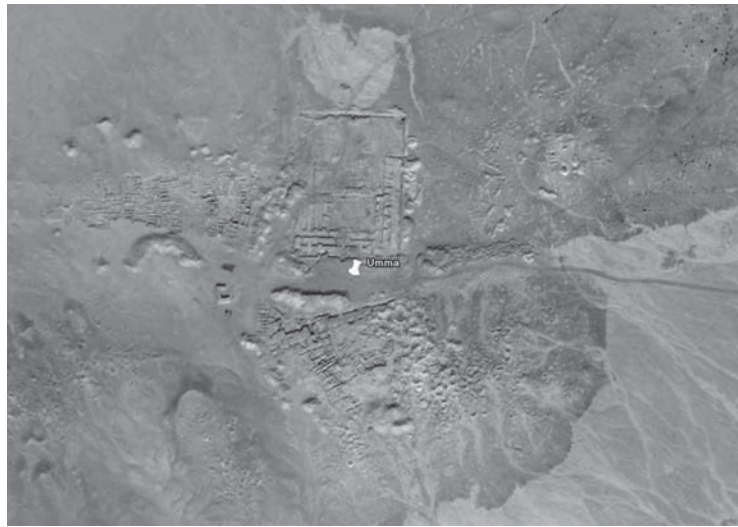

Figure 1.5. Looting Evidence at Umma

possible to create a micro model of looting patterns in the western portion of the alluvial plain. The model includes key factors that result in site looting, allowing a classification of tells that are at most risk in the future, and an elaboration of the mapped ancient settlements and channels in the area. By combining the Google Earth imagery with newly acquired Quickbird, Corona, and SPOT imagery, it will be possible to project the model to other areas of the alluvial plain and contribute to ongoing efforts of reporting on site damage.

Case Study Area

The study area for testing these remote sensing methods in micro-mapping landscape and site destruction is confined to a 600 square kilometer or 13 kilometer radius around the archaeological site of Isin (modern Ishan Bahriyat), south of Nippur. Isin is located at the juncture of two environmental zones: 1) the basin of major branches of the Euphrates River; and 2) the central desert. The archaeological and textual records reveal that Isin rose to prominence as a political entity in two periods of the second millenium B.C.

At the dissolution of the Ur III empire (ca. 2000 B.C.), the city of Isin dominated what was left of the Ur III core and exercised control over the key cities of southern Mesopotamia for about seventy years. At around 1100 B.C., the city gave rise to a dynasty that ruled Babylonia for about a century.

We have little current information on the status of archaeological sites in this area. Most recent reports have focused and continue to focus on areas to the east, north, and south (fig. 1.7).[6] The 600 square kilometer area around Isin includes fifty-six smaller sites that were located by ground survey;[7] these sites have been dated in a range from the Early Uruk period (4000 B.C.) to recent settlement (1960s). But this area was not the focus of much detailed, formal survey. Much of it is now, and has been, an area of intensive cultivation preventing any intensive field walking for the detecting of relict channels and archaeological sites. It is, however, a crucial area for understanding the sequence of westward shifts of Euphrates water throughout Mesopotamian history. The interactions between the site of Isin itself and its rural hinterland at the time of its role as an important political and economic center can be elu-
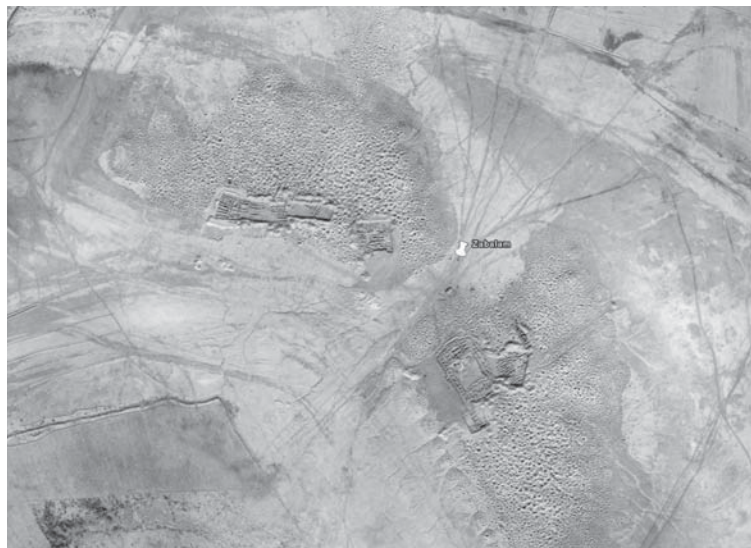

Figure 1.6. Looting Evidence at Zabalam

cidated, in part, by analysis of satellite images. Mapping the channel systems as well as detecting previously unobserved sites within a small radius around the center should contribute crucial information on the organization of Isin as an urban center.

Goals of the Project

This project was intended, first, to document the destruction of archaeological sites in one area of southern Iraq. Incorporating diverse data sources into a Geographical Information Systems (GIS) framework, I am able to assess the destruction of known and undocumented archaeological sites throughout a 600 square kilometer area centered on the ancient site of Isin. Second, the use of high resolution and recently acquired satellite imagery, when compared with 1960s Corona satellite photography as well as SPOT satellite imagery from the 1990s, should enable me to demonstrate the evolution of destruction on single sites and for the area. Third, I should be able to delineate areas that are more prone to site destruction and correlate this with their proximity to modern settlements. Fourth, I should be capable of correlating patterns of destruction of archaeological sites with their occupation history, giving a measure of the targeting of certain periods for looting. Fifth, this project would produce a record of archaeological sites in this largely unexplored area of the southern alluvium for future archaeological research projects. Lastly, I would begin to trace the remains of relict channels that could be fixed in time by the occurrence on them of already-dated archaeological sites.

Description of Methods

This project builds upon work undertaken as part of my doctoral dissertation.[8] My research focused on the creation of a landscape model to better understand the physical/natural and cultural transformations that marked the rise of early cities in Mesopotamia, the development of irrigation agriculture, and the dynamic settlement pattern of southern Mesopotamia through time.

Past archaeological survey and mapping have provided a valuable set of baseline data for southern Mesopotamian settlement patterns. Combining that data set with new information derived from the analysis of remote sensing images in GIS allows the identification of new sites.

In the course of the project I have detected numerous archaeological sites that were previously unknown. Tells of southern Mesopotamia reflect a distinct tonal signature on satellite photography and imagery. In general, their elevation above the flat agricultural fields which surround them results in a dark shadow appearing on the image to the north of the tells. Further, the composition of the tells (primarily mud brick) results in their appearing as dark spots against the lighter agricultural fields surrounding them. Once a feature is detected on one satellite data set, other satellite data sets can be checked in GIS to determine the visibility of the possible archaeological site in multiple data sets.

Layering of time series data sets in GIS allows for the comparison of site destruction over time. Looting is generally determined by the presence of distinctive round looter holes, as opposed to rectangular archaeological excavation trenches. Other types of destruction involve the encroachment on the tell by agricultural fields and human settlements, the creation of roads that bisect sites, or the development of channels through them.

This project has incorporated newly-purchased Quickbird imagery from missions in the winters of 2002, 2003, and 2006. I also used Corona images dated to February 1967. SPOT images avail-
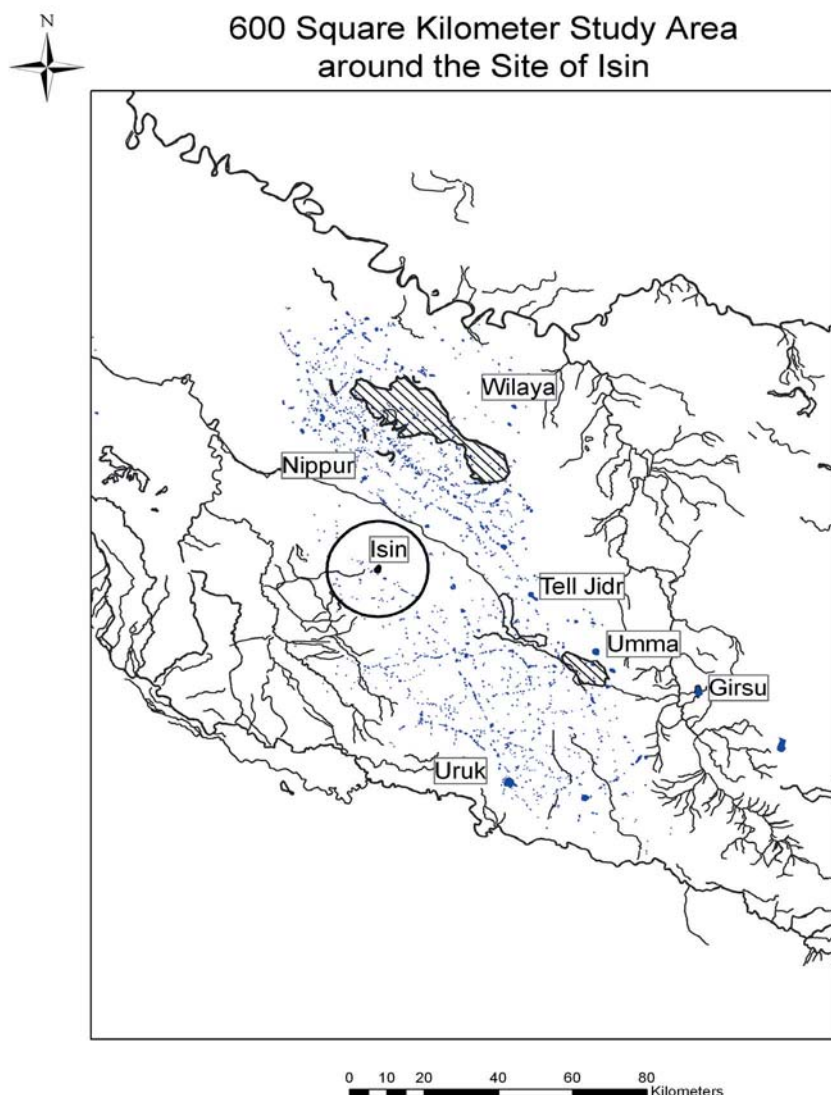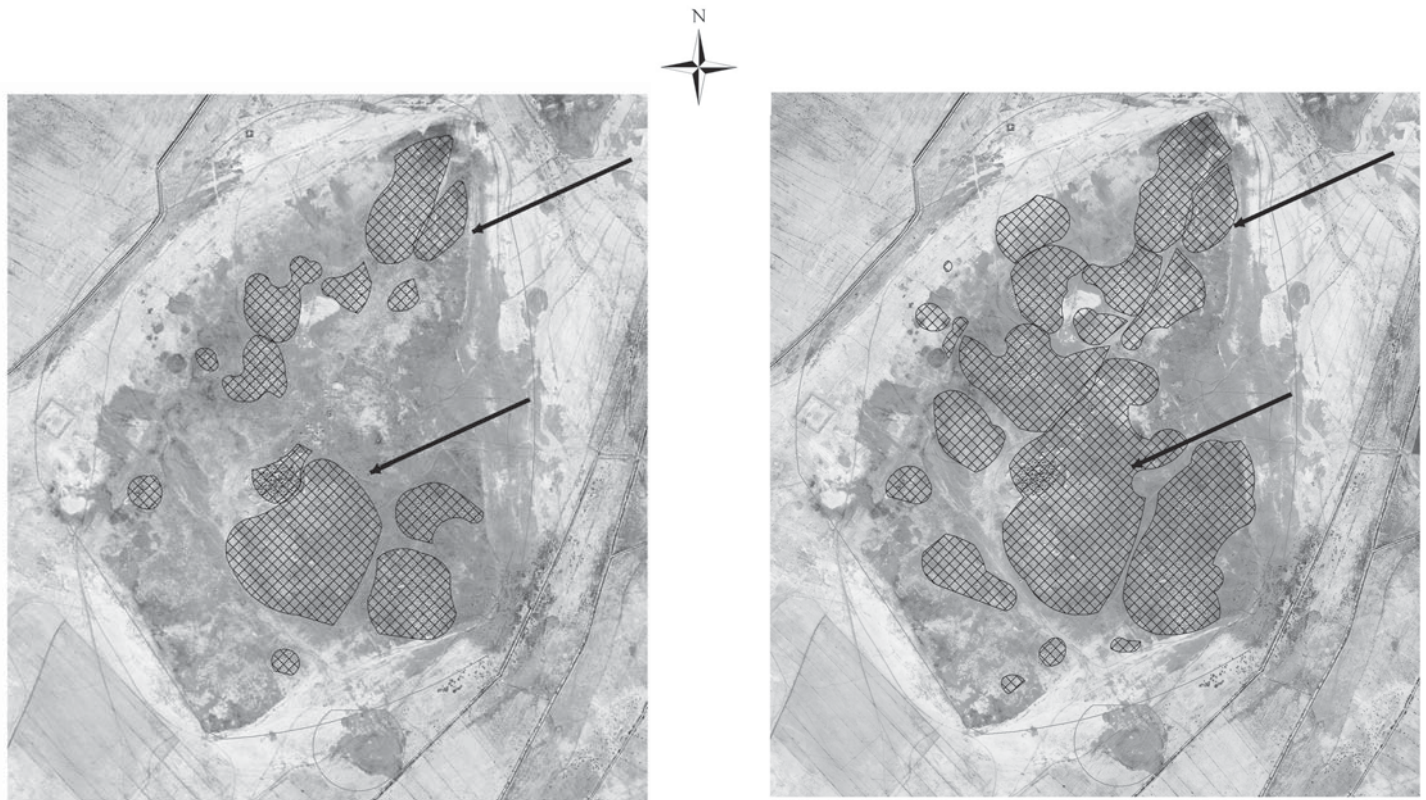

Figure 1.7. The Project Area

Figure 1.8. The Arrows Point to Looting Holes (delineated by cross-hatching) at Isin in 2003 (*left*) and 2006 (*right*)

able for the area were not from the same season, but they range in date from 1993–1995.

Analysis

Using the GIS model created in my dissertation and incorporating the newly acquired images, I have begun to analyze destruction patterns, and I hypothesize preservation strategies through predictive modeling. The basic GIS data for the area include past survey and soil information, which has already been incorporated within the data set for the entire southern alluvium (fig. 1.2). Building on this GIS work, the first step is to locate previously undocumented sites and channels in the study area.

While the ground surveys of Adams located fifty-six archaeological sites in this area, the imagery shows an additional sixty possible archaeological sites. These new sites are detected based on the following criteria: 1) tonal signature on satellite imagery; and 2) confirmation of feature presence on all three data sets. While many of these sites are not

located on visible, surveyed, and dated relict channels, the few that are located on historical channels may be given the date range of Old Babylonian through Kassite (fig. 1.3).

Once the sites of Adams and the new sites are both located and verified, the next step is to map the pattern of destruction. On the site of Isin itself, it is possible to plot the movement of looting across the tell over three years. The site measures 193 hecatres of mounded area on the images. The 1960s and 1990s imagery does not show any visible looting damage. But in 2003, distinctive round looting holes appear covering 37 hectares of the site (fig. 1.8). By 2006, looter holes expanded to cover 69 of the 193 hectares, more than doubling the area of damage within this three year span. Additionally, the looting has spread from the highest points on the mound laterally down the slopes of the mound, particularly in the northwestern portion of the site, probably indicating the presence of substantial material of periods preferred by the dealers.

Many of the newly detected archaeological sites have evidence for some level of looting and, in some cases it is only the presence of circular looting holes that confirms site recognition. Of the total 111 sites in the study area, fifty-three sites had no visible disturbance in the form of looter holes on any of the images. Forty-five sites had minor looting in 2002–2003 and widespread looting by 2006. Thirteen sites detected by Adams were not visible on Corona, SPOT, or Quickbird images. This may be due to a number of circumstances: 1) the site detected by Adams was a sherd scatter with no visible topography that would appear on satellite imagery; 2) the site has been completely plowed through since the 1960s imagery; and 3) the site is too small to be detected by even the most sensitive satellite imagery.

Within the 600 square kilometer area around Isin, there are three clearly defined zones that contain distinct clusters of archaeological sites and relict channel beds (fig. 1.4). The first zone is the heavily cultivated area in the northwest

portion of the study area. This zone contained six sprawling modern settlements within the agricultural fields. Most of the archaeological sites in this cultivated zone had little or no visible looter holes. One exception was a large tell with prominent high points at the northeastern and southwestern ends, which had widespread looting. This tell was located over one kilometer from the nearest modern settlement and was not in the vicinity of a major road or canal. While the site is not located directly on a dated ancient channel, it is situated in the vicinity of channels mapped by Adams and dated to the Old Babylonian period. Also in this zone are the relict meanders of a large watercourse, partially mapped by Adams. These meanders indicate the presence of a large channel entering the area from the northeast or central portion of the plain. The integration of the Quickbird and Corona imagery will allow for further elaboration of this former channel.

As an illustration of the method using multiple images, I can state that traces of the meander and levee of this former channel are visible on the Corona images as well as the Quickbird imagery. On the Corona images, this meander and levee appear only as a trace of dark moisture within an expanse of dunes and cannot be clearly mapped. On the Quickbird imagery, however, the levee and meanders can be mapped (fig. 1.9). This levee has nine archaeological sites along it, only one of which was detected by ground survey (Site 1365) and is dated to the Kassite period.[9] The levee measures 900 meters in width on the Quickbird imagery, but its height is not clear. By incorporating the SRTM imagery, it is possible to get a height range for this feature. Thus, while the levee is too small to appear as clearly on the SRTM as it does in Quickbird, a subtle elevation difference of 2–3 meters can be detected. The width of this channel suggests longevity

of use in conducting a substantial flow and is comparable to the Hilla branch levee, which measures 1.5 kilometers in this area. Further mapping of this feature should yield information on movements of the Euphrates River and its branches, and shed light on the relationship between the river movements and the rise and fall of Isin as a political power.

The second landscape zone within the Isin case study area contains the large levee on which Isin sits (fig. 1.10). There are thirty other archaeological sites located along this levee. Seven sites that Adams detected are not visible on any of the satellite images. Nine sites showed minor looting, nine sites had no looting, and six sites had widespread looting on the Quickbird imagery. Of the nine sites showing minor looting, two newly detected sites north of Isin that showed minor looting in 2002 and 2003 can be moved into the category of widespread looting by 2006. The sites that experienced widespread looting (over 50% of

the visible site looted) in 2002–2003 seem to be looted to the same degree in 2006. The dated sites in this group all date to the Early Islamic and later periods. It seems that the increase in looting visible on Isin itself is mirrored at the sites located along its levee and is not confined to sites of early historic periods.

The third landscape zone of the study area is southwest of the site (fig. 1.11). This zone stands out in that, out of the thirty-three detected sites, thirteen are classified as having widespread looting. The sites in this group that have been dated by Adams include Uruk, Old Babylonian, Kassite, Sasanian, Early Islamic, and recent settlements. Eighteen sites had no visible looting, one had minor looting, and one site of Adams' was not visible. In this area, the sites cluster in a linear fashion along a few relict channels, some of which were noted by Adams and dated to the Kassite period, and some of which are newly detected relict channel beds. While there seem to be few villages or towns in this area, a super highway runs through it. Most of the sites exhibiting widespread looting are located within a few kilometers of this highway.

This preliminary analysis has illustrated a number of key concerns for site preservation in the 600 square kilometers around Isin. Using comparative remote sensing data sets, it has been possible to double the number of archaeological sites in this small area, suggesting a density of settlement in this area that was not detected by the past archaeological ground survey. Relict channels, particularly in the northeastern portion of this area, may reflect movements of the Euphrates River, and further mapping will enable the description of the relationship between these channels and the city and hinterlands of Isin. Not surprisingly, site looting was widespread, and it increased between 2002 and 2006. Sites of all periods
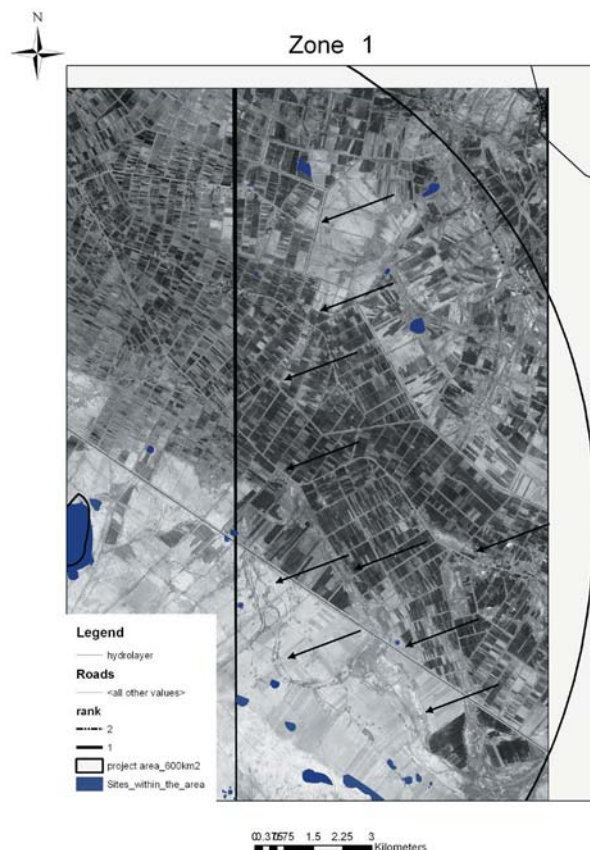

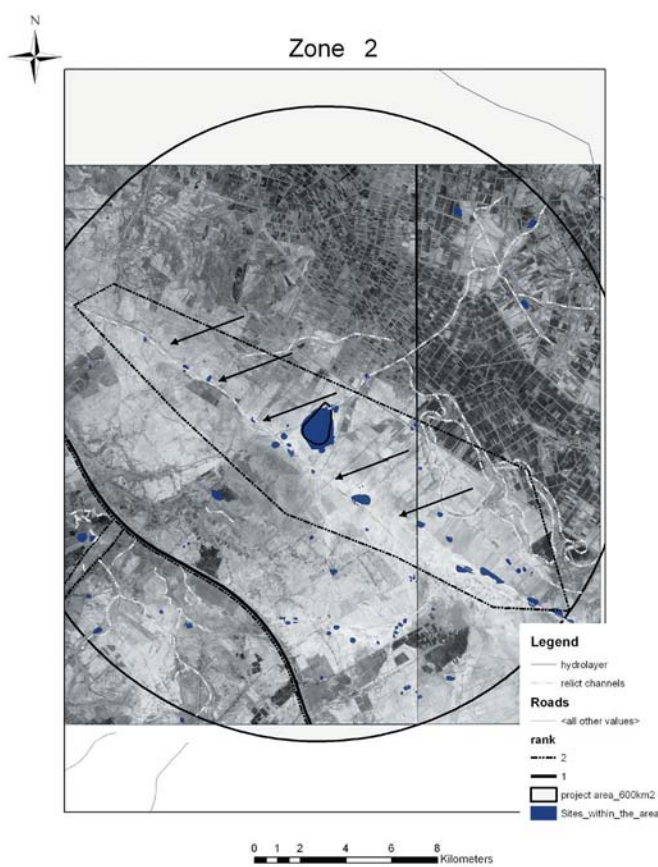Figure 1.9. Zone 1, Northeast of Isin, Showing Relict Channels and Sites

Figure 1.10. Zone 2, Including the Site of Isin. The Arrows Show Relict Channels in the South and Archaeological Sites in the North
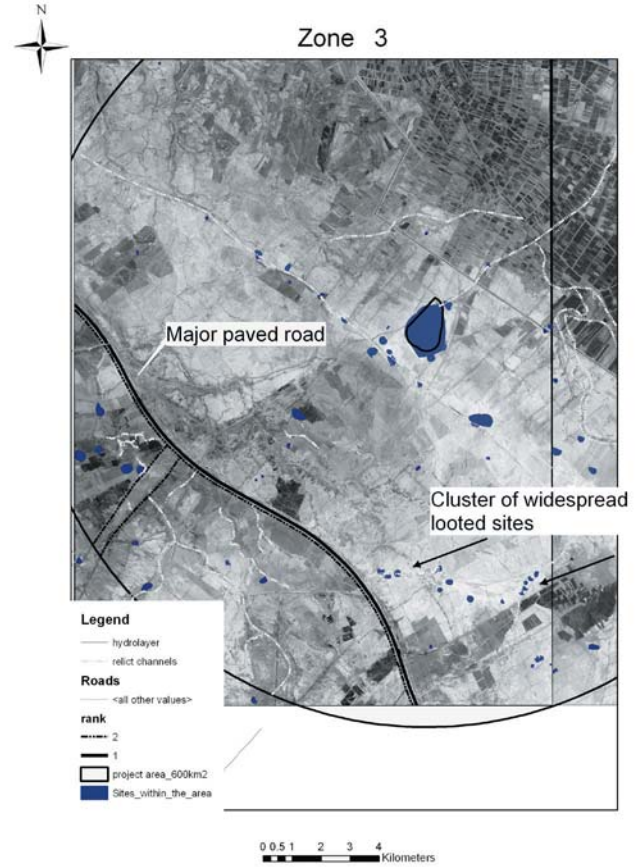

Figure 1.11. Zone 3, with Looted Sites and Major Paved Road

are being looted and their proximity to modern villages is varied. Looting seems concentrated on sites in the southwest of this area and among sites located within 2 kilometers of a major paved road, but with no visible villages. Sites never visited by archaeological survey are subject to the same rates of looting as those known from archaeological survey.

With this basic information incorporated into GIS, it is now possible to begin to address particular processes of site destruction. The remote sensing and image analysis as well as the incorporation of past survey data have allowed for the deriving of spatial data that can be used to plot density of site destruction in the Isin area as a model for macro-levels of site destruction elsewhere in the alluvium.

Future GIS Work

By layering all the data sets and derived data into GIS, I expect to classify the percentage of sites within this 600 square kilometer radius that have been damaged. Furthermore, I will determine what percentage of each specific site has been lost over time, through looting or modern cultivation, taking into account natural rates of site erosion and sedimentation calculated by various scholars[10] for different areas of the alluvium. This percentage map will provide the basis for GIS predictive modeling.

Once this percentage-based map is created, I will add a Digital Terrain model of the area that gives specific elevation information, which will form the basis, along with digitized roads and village locations, of a distance analysis. This sort of spatial analysis will illustrate average distances between villages and sites and allow for the quantification of the impact of site location and village as it relates to looting.

Once these variables are mapped, it will be possible to run a number of different predictive models to determine the likelihood of looting in other areas of the alluvial plain. For example, using the variables of distance to roads and villages as well as the percentage of sites looted, a predictive model using a simple logistic regression should enable the prediction of the probability of a site being subject to looting or cultivation damage. After comparing the predictive model with the actual visible looting information, this predictive model could be applied to other areas of the alluvial plain. This would enable the prediction of probability of site looting in other areas based on the criteria of distance to road, town, and period of main site occupation.

Results and Significance of Project

This project will contribute to the historical study of the landscape around the urban center of Isin, creating a model of past and present landscape features that

may be applied to other parts of the alluvium. By mapping sites and traces of relict watercourses in the area, we are able to explore the poorly understood settlement in the southwestern portion of the plain.

More immediately, this project has the potential to address current and ongoing concerns in site destruction and preservation in Iraq. While the type of predictive model that I envision is inherently biased towards chosen variables, it will provide a first order level of information from which to develop site preservation strategies in the future. The predictive model could help conservation specialists determine how to divide and map areas for a general assessment of damage and to plan for protection of archaeological sites. The recording of information about the status of these archaeological sites provides a record that, if the looting

and destruction continue on the scale we see today, may not be nearly as visible when Iraqi and foreign archaeologists are finally able to return to fieldwork in Mesopotamia at some future date.

[1] Adams, R. McCormick, *Heartland of Cities: Surveys of Ancient Settlement and Land Use on the Central Floodplain of the Euphrates,* (University of Chicago Press, 1981).

[2] Republic of Iraq Ministry of Information, *Antiquities Law No. 59 and Amendments No. 120 of 1974 and No. 164 of 1975* (Directorate General of Antiquities).

[3] McGuire Gibson, "Fate of Iraqi Archaeology," *Science* 299 (2003): 1848–49; idem "From Preventative Measures to the Fact Finding Mission," *Museum International* 219/220 (2003): 108–118 (Report on UNESCO trip to Iraq May 2003); "Ancient Iraqi Sites Show Theft, Destruction," *National Geographic*, June 11, 2003; "Archaeologists Fight to Save Iraq Sites," *The Guardian*, June 20, 2005. These are just a few of the articles documenting short site targeted trips to the region.

[4] John Russell, "U.S. Base Damages Ancient Babylonian Temple," *NPR Report*, June 24, 2004.

[5] Personal Communication. Article forthcoming in *Antiquity* March 2008.

[6] Elizabeth Stone, USAID Reports, January 2004–October 2004, http://www.sunysb.edu/usaidhead/04_03.htm

[7] Adams, *Heartland of Cities,* pp. 253–95.

[8] Carrie Hritz, Landscape and Settlement in Southern Mesopotamia: A Geo-archaeological Analysis (The Oriental Institute, University of Chicago, 2005).

[9] Adams, *Heartland of Cities,* p. 282.

[10] Clemens Reichel, "Changes in the Plain Level of Babylonia and the Diyala from 6,000 Onwards," (Unpublished RAI Paper, 1997); Elizabeth Stone, *Anatomy of a Mesopotamian City,* (Eisenbrauns, 2004).

ANNOUNCEMENT

As readers may by aware, TAARII is committed to producing and printing a bilingual newsletter in English and in Arabic. Our September 2007 issue, sadly, was printed primarily in English (with Arabic to appear on the website). We regret that this April 2008 issue is printed in English only. We hope to seek funds for its Arabic translation for posting on our website and are actively seeking support for the ongoing cost of translation, so that we can continue printing a bilingual edition. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we raise the necessary funds.

NEWSLETTER
SUBMISSIONS, COMMENTS, & SUGGESTIONS

To submit articles, images, or announcements in either *English or Arabic*, please email Katie Johnson at info@taarii.org for submission details. The deadline for the fall issue of the TAARII Newsletter is **June 1, 2008**.

For all other inquiries, comments, and suggestions, please visit our website, www.taarii.org.

THE BABYLONIAN CERAMIC TRADITION:
THE SECOND MILLENNIUM B.C.: A PROGRESS REPORT

JAMES A. ARMSTRONG, Semitic Museum, Harvard University

The American Academic Research Institute in Iraq granted me a fellowship for 2006 in support of my participation in an international effort to produce a comprehensive ceramic typology for second-millennium B.C. Babylonia. This typology, which will be published as *The Babylonian Ceramic Tradition: The Second Millennium B.C.,* includes material from all parts of Babylonia and its periphery and, most important, is anchored by well-dug, well-recorded stratigraphic sequences. Hermann Gasche of the University of Ghent and I have been working together for more than a decade on this project. Our hope is to provide scholars with a useful resource for the study of the archaeology and history of ancient Mesopotamia.

The usefulness of earlier pottery typologies has been limited because of the weakness of the stratigraphy and chronology underlying the available material and because of an overall failure to take advantage of the information provided by potsherds. As a result, the use of ceramics for close dating purposes in historical Babylonia has remained difficult, if not impossible.

With advances in excavation and recording techniques during the 1970s and 1980s the situation started to improve, and by 1990 a critical mass of well-excavated material had become available. Recognizing this, Hermann Gasche, Field Director of the Belgian excavations at Tell ed-Der, and McGuire Gibson, Director of the Nippur Expedition of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, began organizing a cooperative project among like-minded European and North American excavators. Their intention was to produce a comprehensive typology of Babylonian pottery that was based on well-excavated and well-dated stratigraphic sequences. With the agreement and support of expeditions from five countries Gasche and I, who at that time was working on the pottery from Nippur, took on the task of developing a ceramic typology for second-millennium Babylonia.

To insure that the typology is as comprehensive as possible, we have been working with data provided by excavations in all parts of Babylonia, as well as most of its periphery: the Belgians at Tell ed-Der; the University of Chicago at Nippur, Umm al-Hafriyat, and Tell ed-Deylam; the University of Munich at Isin; the French at Larsa, Khirbet ed-Diniyeh, Mari, Failaka, and Susa; the University of Turin at Tell Yelkhi; and New York University and the Metropolitan Museum of Art at Tell al-Hiba (see fig. 2.1). We have examined the drawings, descriptions, and archaeological contexts of well over a thousand whole vessels and tens of thousands of potsherds. All original artifacts, of course, remain in Iraq.

This cooperative undertaking goes by the name "The International Working Group on Mesopotamian Pottery." Formally, it is a sub-project of a larger Belgian research project called "The Land of Sumer and Akkad: Reconstruction of its Environment and History," which is supported by grants from the Belgian government. We receive technical and production support from the University of Ghent, where the pottery drawings have been scanned and where the plates will be produced in final form, taking advantage of recent advances in digital technology.

Our overriding concern has been to produce a volume that is easy to consult with a minimum of orientation. We have therefore paid a great deal of attention to the organization and visual presentation of our results, so that the book conveys information quickly and is convenient to use.

For each vessel-group in the typology, we provide description and analysis in English, plates of representative examples illustrated with drawings and photographs, and citations of previously published examples or comparanda. The plates are the heart of the book. Each occupies two facing pages and has been carefully arranged to communicate both the spatial and temporal distribution of each shape. Dates are indicated by vertical scales and representative examples are grouped horizontally by region. Small maps on the plates show the geographic distributions. Photos of vessels, including photos of cut profiles illustrating
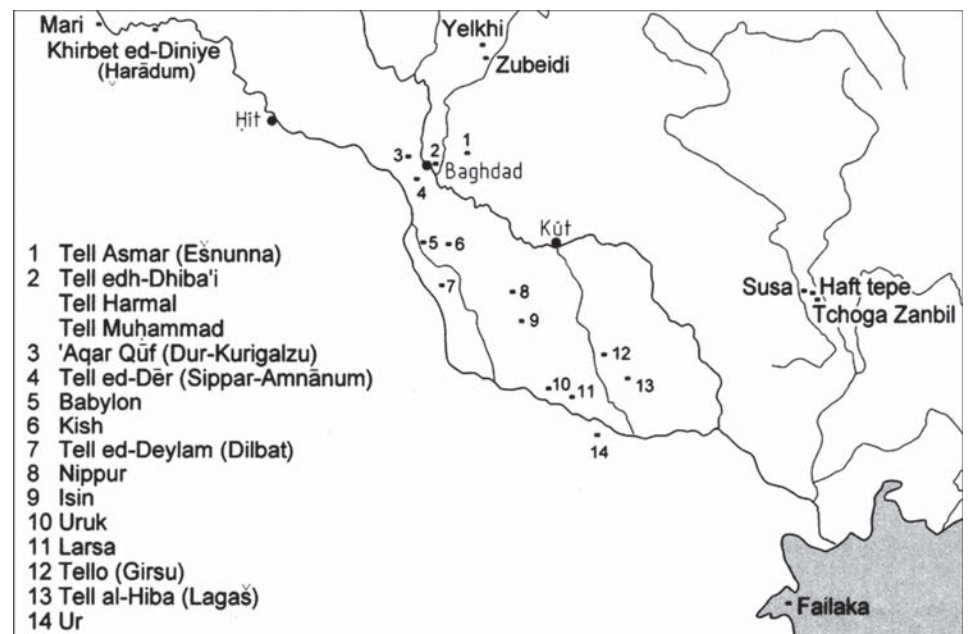

Figure 2.1. Map Showing Sites in Babylonia and Peripheral Areas (adapted from Gasche et al. 1998: fig. 2)

manufacturing techniques, are integrated with the drawings. Our goal is to convey the essential information about a given vessel-group, both what it looks like and where and when it is attested, in a straightforward, efficient manner.

An important part of our understanding of the Babylonian pottery tradition has to do with identifying and describing the manufacturing techniques used by the Babylonian potters. As members of the International Working Group on Mesopotamian Pottery, Abraham van As, a specialist in pottery technology at the University of Leiden, and ceramist Loe Jacobs have analyzed the techniques used to produce the major vessel-groups in our typology. Van As and Jacobs will present the results of their study in this volume, including their efforts to reproduce the ancient techniques experimentally.

The book concludes with essays describing how and why the principal shapes in the typology evolved over the course of the millennium and discussing the ways the geographical and temporal distributions of various shapes inform our understanding of Babylonian history.

Our efforts have already produced significant results. Spurred on by early findings, Gasche and I, together with Steven W. Cole and Vahe G. Gurzadyan, published *Dating the Fall of Babylon: A Reappraisal of Second-Millennium Chronology* (Gasche et al. 1998). In that study we argued that the pottery does not support the dates usually given for Babylonia in the early second millennium, the so-called Middle Chronology, and that those dates should be reduced by something on the order of a century.

Earlier discussions of second-millennium chronology have largely focused on king-lists, ancient astronomical observations, and statistics. Co-authors Cole and Gurzadyan, therefore, looked afresh at the cuneiform and astronomical evidence respectively, with the result that together we proposed lowering the conventional Middle Chronology dates for the Old Babylonian Period and earlier periods by ninety-six years, placing the fall of Babylon to the Hittites in the year 1499 B.C. *Dating the Fall of Babylon* was a truly collaborative and interdisciplinary effort. Nevertheless, the starting point for reexamining second-millennium chronology was the ceramic evidence from recent excavations, evidence that could not be harmonized with the conventional dates.

Our proposal has been controversial and has not been universally accepted. On the other hand, archaeologist Julian Reade has arrived at the same date as ours for the fall of Babylon (1499 B.C.) by independent means (Reade 2001), and Gregory Possehl has used Reade's chronology in his recent survey of the Indus civilization because it fits best with the Harappan evidence of the late third millennium (Possehl 2002: 29, 53). It is particularly encouraging to us that our chronology has support among excavators working in the Levant (Gates 2000), especially those dealing with sites that must simultaneously be linked with the absolute chronologies of Egypt and Mesopotamia (Ben-Tor 2004).

Our pottery investigations have also strongly confirmed the conclusion already reached on the basis of the geographic distribution of dated cuneiform tablets that there was a major rupture in southern Babylonia in the middle of the Old Babylonian Period, during the reign of Samsuiluna of Babylon, the son of Hammurabi (Stone 1977; Gasche 1989). In two episodes, dated to around 1643–1641 and 1623 B.C. (according to the chronology of Gasche et al. 1998, which will be followed in this article), the old cities of the South were all abandoned. No sixteenth or early fifteenth century pottery has been identified at any site to the south and east of Tell ed-Deylam (Dilbat). Therefore, both the tablets and the ceramics indicate that southern Babylonia, at least as far north as Nippur, was de-urbanized. Across this entire region the production of pottery on an industrial scale ceased. As a result, a distinctive southern Babylonian pottery tradition came to an end, and the continuing development of Babylonian ceramics involved only those shapes that belonged to the parallel ceramic tradition of northern Babylonia. Southern cities began to be resettled only in the latter part of the fifteenth century, after the Kassites had begun to rule in Babylon.

Our findings have had not only chronological implications. As has already been alluded to above, we also have identified significant differences between the pottery of the northern and southern alluvial plains during the first half of the second millennium.

For example, even though the seventeenth century goblets (large drinking vessels) from northern and southern Babylonia share similar morphological characteristics, their shapes are sufficiently different that they cannot easily be mistaken for one another. In both regions they are characterized by a bottom-heavy appearance and have no shoulder to speak of. However, examples from the South (fig. 2.2:22–25) have less well-defined necks than their northern counterparts. The rims tend just to curve out from upper bodies that are more or less vertical or only slightly sinuous. In the North, on the other hand, the goblets tend to have a neck that is set off from the body by a constriction, which is usually emphasized with an added horizontal incision (fig. 2.2:11–14).

Recognizing these regional differences has greatly contributed to our understanding of the Babylonian ceramic record. For example, researchers have been hard pressed to explain where the distinctive ceramic shapes of the Kassite Period (from the early fifteenth to the mid-twelfth century) came from. Based on what was generally understood about Babylonian pottery as late as the 1980s, they did not seem to be related to the known vessels from the Old Babylonian Period. There was even some speculation that the Kassite shapes must have come into Babylonia from outside, with the Kassites themselves.

The principal difficulty was that until the 1980s major assemblages of Old Babylonian pottery were known only from southern cities, and, as was mentioned above, those cities were all abandoned before the end of the seventeenth century.

On the basis of more recent excavations in northern Babylonia, at sites like Tell ed-Der (Gasche 1989) and Tell ed-Deylam (Armstrong 2001), we have been able to show conclusively that the late second millennium shapes were the result of internal developments within Babylonia. The vessels of the Kassite Period represent the continuation and evolution of the ceramic tradition of *northern* Babylonia in the sixteenth century.

In the late fifteenth century, when the Kassite rulers began to reestablish the
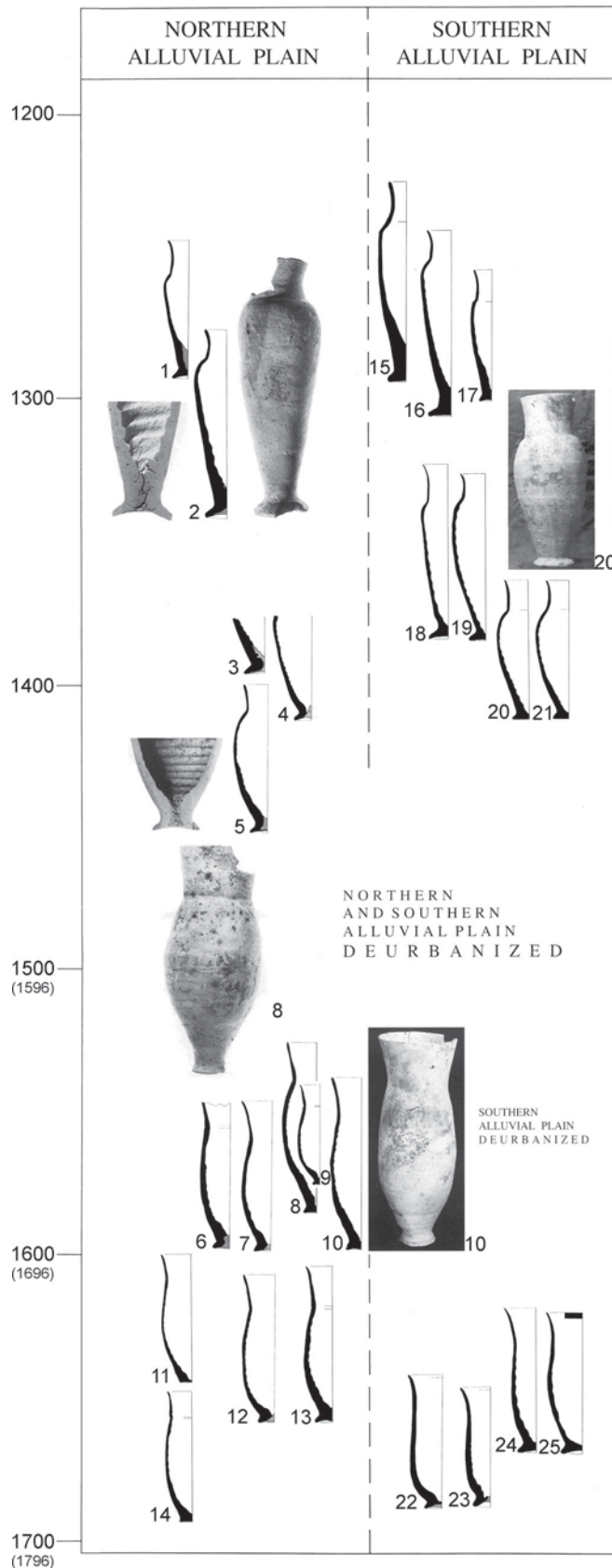
Figure 2.2. Babylonian Goblets of the Second Millennium B.C. (adapted from Gasche et al. 1998: pl. 1). Scale 1:12. Proveniences have not been listed for reasons of space

cities of southern Babylonia, the shapes that began to be produced in those cities were derived from the northern tradition of the early second millennium. Over the course of the remaining Kassite centuries, the Babylonian ceramic assemblage developed in an essentially uniform fashion across the entire alluvium, without the distinctive regional variations that had characterized earlier periods.

This shape evolution can readily be seen in the development of the goblets that I have already mentioned. In northern Babylonia, the goblets of the seventeenth century tended to have a relatively low center of gravity, as has been noted above (fig. 2.2:11–14). During the sixteenth century the center of gravity of these vessels moved higher and the widest part of the body tended to be around the mid point (fig. 2.2:6–10).

As yet we have no clear pottery evidence from northern Babylonia for the early years of the fifteenth century. The Kassites were apparently in the process of taking control of Babylon and Babylonia, and it seems to have been a time of major urban disruption, possibly even de-urbanization. In any case, occupation levels that can be confidently dated to the early fifteenth century have not yet been excavated in the alluvial plain, north or south. However, early fifteenth century contexts at Susa in southwestern Iran (fig. 2.1) have yielded Babylonian goblets (Gasche et al. 1998: 42–43, pl. 1:33) that we can use to help fill the gap we are faced with in the Babylonian record.

The morphologically earliest goblet we have from Babylonia proper that can be called "Kassite" comes from the northern site of Tell ed-Der; on the basis of its shape we have assigned it to the latter half of the fifteenth century (fig. 2.2:5). It serves as a kind of "missing link" between the Old Babylonian goblets of the sixteenth century and the later Kassite examples of the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries (fig. 2.2:1–4, 15–21). The profile of the goblet in figure 2.2:5 is remarkably similar to the profiles of the sixteenth century goblets, except that, like the later Kassite shapes, its widest diameter is clearly above the mid point of the body. During the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries, the Kassite goblets developed slimmer profiles with a high center of gravity, along with broad, well-

defined shoulders and narrow, solid bases or feet.

In terms of its shape, the typical goblet of the thirteenth century has little in common with its seventeenth century forebear. Nevertheless, we have been able to connect these two very different-looking vessels with a sequence of gradually evolving intermediate forms that spans the intervening centuries.

The fellowship that TAARII awarded me has permitted co-author Hermann Gasche and me to make major progress toward finishing our study, and we expect that it will be ready for the printer in about a year's time. *The Babylonian Ceramic Tradition: The Second Millennium B.C.* will be published by the University of Ghent and the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago in the series *Mesopotamian History and Environment, Memoirs.*

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UPDATE: U.S.-IRAQI COLLABORATIVE ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT

Three years ago, TAARII received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) under a program to rescue Iraq's cultural heritage. Our project is meant to help Iraqi colleagues to reconstruct and publish reports of theirs that were damaged or lost in the looting of the Iraq National Museum. During the summer of 2007, Mark Altaweel worked with three Iraqi colleagues for several weeks on the notes from a number of sites. The three Iraqi scholars were brought out of Iraq for the purpose. These sites included Tell al-Wilaya, Tell Muhammed, Tell al-Imsihli, Tell Muqtadiya, and Tell Asmar (ancient Eshnunna). These sites were excavated prior to the 2003 war. As a bonus, they worked on a preliminary report on an excavation that one of the Iraqi colleagues is currently excavating at Tell Qasra. McGuire Gibson spent ten days in the TAARII headquarters in Amman, concentrating on the Tell Asmar report.

The work at Tell al-Wilaya, located west of Kut in southern Iraq, is significant as a third millenium B.C. city that has been excavated by Iraqi archaeologists in a number of campaigns since the 1950s. Much of the work in the 1990s has not been published. A great part of the site has been heavily damaged due to recent looting. Publication of the Tell al-Wilaya material will provide significant new knowledge that would otherwise be lost. Tell Muhammad, within the southeastern part of Baghdad, was extensively excavated by the Iraqis in the 1990s, and it has yielded cuneiform documents and objects that help elucidate what happened in Babylonia after the fall of Babylon to the Hittites in 1500 (using the shorter chronology). The Iraqi excavations that were done in the late 1990s at Tell Asmar will supplement the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute excavations conducted there in the 1930s. Tell Asmar, ancient Eshnunna, was the capital of an important kingdom just prior to the time of Hammurabi, but even before that time, it was a major center for the Diyala region. The recent excavations have revealed unique domestic architectural features. Tell Qasra is located in the Kurdish region near Erbil. Relatively few sites have been excavated and published in the Kurdish region, and results from this site will add significantly to our knowledge of the prehistoric development of the area and the interrelations of northern and southern Mesopotamia.

Thus far, there have appeared several publications based on work covered by this grant, and more are in press or in preparation. First was an article in the academic journal *Iraq*, covering sites near Mosul. Recently, the journal *Akkadica* carried a report on the excavations at Tell Abu Shijar, a small but significant exposure of a Kassite palace within the area of Aqar Quf, the ancient capital named Dur-Kurigalzu. Finally, Altaweel has completed his book, *The Imperial Landscape of Ashur: Settlement and Land Use in the Assyrian Heartland*, which is based on work done under an earlier TAARII grant as well as information derived from collaboration with an Iraqi colleague in the NEH-funded recovery of archaeological materials from Iraq. In May 2008, Gibson and Altaweel will join Iraqi colleagues once more in Amman to finish at least three more articles.

REFLECTIONS ON RELIGION AND POLITICS IN POST-BAʿTHIST IRAQ

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Much analysis of Iraqi politics since 2003 has focused on the relationship between religion and politics. Iraq has been viewed as yet another example of an Islamic resurgence in the Middle East that is characterized by violence towards non-Muslims, intolerance, and support for religiously based authoritarian rule. The dominance of Iraqi politics by the Mahdi Army (*Jaysh al-Mahdi*), the Supreme Iraqi Islamic Council (SIIC) and its Badr militia, the Association of Muslim Scholars, and radical groups linked to al-Qaʿida is viewed as proof that Iraq is succumbing to "Islamic fundamentalism." In this analysis, however, the concept "religion" remains largely unproblematized and under theorized. If Iraqi politics is in fact dominated by "religion," then clearly we need to understand what criteria are being used when this concept is applied. What exactly do we mean when applying the term "religion" to Iraqi politics?

It is possible to define the concept of religion is several different ways. The most obvious manner is to think of religion as a system of beliefs based in *piety and devotion*. To be able to claim membership in a religion, the believer must adhere to a set of principles that define his or her particular creed. Raising this issue immediately draws our attention to several considerations. First, piety does not necessarily predispose the believer to engage in politics. There is no requirement that the believer become a political actor as a criterion for membership in a religion. None of the "five pillars of Islam," for example, imply that the believer needs to think or behave in a political manner to be a true Muslim. While a particular religion may require the believer to defend that religion in the event of an external threat, politics *per se* is not a condition of membership in any faith. In short, to raise the issue of religion in a formal textual manner tells us little about its relationship to politics.

Second, we may think of the *politicization* of religion. There are many instances in which religious thinkers and leaders have joined faith with political action. However, in this instance we need to distinguish between those who link politics and religion in an ecumenical manner, and those who construct this relationship in hostile terms, meaning in opposition to other religions and social groups. If we think of religious leaders such as St. Francis of Assisi, Shaykh Muhammad ʿAbduh, Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Imam Musa al-Sadr, and Yeshayahu Leibowitz, we realize that many religious leaders who have engaged in efforts at political change have emphasized an inclusive and ecumenical message and generally supported non-violence. From these examples, we find that, when religion intersects with politics, the outcome need not necessarily entail hostility to members of other faiths.

A second understanding of politicized religion brings us much closer to the understanding of the term employed by analysts of post-2003 Iraqi politics. Here religion becomes a weapon in the struggle among a wide variety of Iraqi political groups for power and domination. Applying the concept of religion in this context is highly problematic because religion is subordinated to politics. First, I would argue that, in what we might term "xenophobic" constructions of politicized religion, political goals actually assume primacy over religious doctrine. In other words, political goals are formulated first and then religious ideas and symbols are mobilized to enhance achieving these goals.

A good example of this process is the formation of the Ku Klux Klan in the American south following the Civil War. As is well known, the burning cross became the Klan's defining symbol. The Klan asserted that suppressing the efforts of former slaves to assert their political rights was God's will. According to the Klan, God wanted the United States to remain under white (male) control. Politics, not religion, defined the Klan's behavior. Put differently, the Klan mobilized distorted understandings of Christianity to promote its political agenda. Its use of Christianity had little in common with understandings of core doctrine among the vast majority of orthodox Christians.

Politicization of religion in a xenophobic manner not only entails a deviation from orthodox interpretations of religion, but is usually characterized by a lack of knowledge on the part of those who formulate radical and intolerant agendas. In research I conducted on the Muslim Brotherhood and its offshoots in Egypt during the period between the 1950s and early 1970s, I was struck by the superficial knowledge of Islam among radical Islamists who were accused of engaging in violence. When questioned by a judge during their trials, invariably Islamists asserted that their action was required by Islam. When asked by the judge to provide textual justification for their actions, defendants were unable to do so.[1]

Likewise, many scholars point to the superficial knowledge of Islam among radical Islamists in Iraq. For example, cleric and Mahdi Army leader Muqtada al-Sadr, is looked down upon by many clerics due to his lack of knowledge of Islamic doctrine. Indeed, al-Sadr, who spent much time playing video games, was disparagingly referred to as "Sayyid Atari" in his youth because he demonstrated little interest in the intricacies of Shiʿi theology. This lack of knowledge stood in sharp contrast to the erudition of his highly respected father, Ayatallah Muhammad Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr, whom the Baʿthist regime assassinated in 1999. The late leader of al-Qaʿida in Iraq, Abu Musʿab al-Zarqawi (Ahmad Fadil al-Nazal al-Khalayla), another exponent of a xenophobic and intolerant interpretation of Islam, had little education, came from a criminal background, and knew little Islamic doctrine.

A third conceptualization of religion is that of *communal solidarity* in the face of external threats. Here it is illustrative to turn to Iraq's Shiʿa after

2003 to explain this understanding of religion. Having been excluded from political power literally since the killing of the fourth Caliph, ʿAli ibn Abi Talib, in 661 A.D., whose death inspired the Sunni-Shiʿi split in Islam, Iraq's Shiʿa population confronted a very difficult and unstable political situation after the collapse of Saddam Husayn's Baʿthist regime in April 2003. How were they to assert themselves politically? How were they to prevent the return of a regime that had excluded them from politics, deprecated their culture and persecuted them? Would they be able to rely on the United States to prevent a reversion to Baʿthist rule?

One of the consequences of Baʿthist rule between 1968 and 2003 was the complete destruction of virtually all secular organizations of civil society in Iraq. While many Iraqi Shiʿa had joined secular political parties prior to Baʿthist rule, such as the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP), the National Democratic Party, the Independence Party and others, no functioning secular movements remained when Saddam Husayn's regime fell. In this context, it was natural that Shiʿis would rally around the Shiʿi clergy in the form of the Hawza, the loose association of religious academies in and around the shrine city of al-Najaf in south-central Iraq.

Further, the tendency for Shiʿa to rally around the Hawza and its leader, Grand Ayatallah ʿAli al-Sistani, reflected a continuation of a trend that began during the 1990s. Iraqi society experienced severe political, social, and economic degradation in the wake of the 1991 Gulf War, the subsequent failed uprising (*Intifada*) of February–March 1991, and twelve years of United Nations sanctions. The resulting collapse of the economy and national education system, a monthly food rationing system that failed to provide adequate nutrition to Iraqi families, and extensive corruption and violent and immoral behavior within Saddam Husayn's inner circle, especially by his two sons, ʿUday and Qusay, forced Iraqis to turn inwards to religion as a means of shielding themselves from harshness and unpredictability of daily life. Religious institutions provided one of the few constants in their lives and hence assumed greater significance dur-

ing the period between 1991 and 2003.

If we consider yet another trend, we find that religious activism in both the Shiʿi and Sunni Arab communities increased during the 1950s and after. Alarmed by the manner in which the ICP attracted Shiʿi youth, and the perceived leftist leanings of the post-1958 Revolution regime of General ʿAbd al-Karim Qasim (1958–63), a group of religiously minded Shiʿi clerics and lay people formed the *Hizb al-Daʿwa* (Islamic Call Party) sometime during the late 1950s or early 1960s to counter the increased strength of leftists and secular forces.[2] The formation of the Daʿwa Party was accompanied by a "war of position" between the left and religious forces.[3] The publication of works, such as Ayatallah Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr's *Falsafituna* (*Our Philosophy*) and *Iqtisaduna* (*Our Economics*), were intended to demonstrate that Shiʿism could provide better answers to the people's spiritual and economic needs than could Marxism.[4]

Although Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr and his sister, Bint al-Huda, were executed by the Baʿth Party in April 1980, the Iranian Revolution inspired many Shiʿi clerics to take up the banner of Ayatallah Ruhallah al-Khumayni and support his emphasis on the concept of the state of the Supreme Jurisprudent (*wilayat al-faqih*). One of the strongest advocates of this concept was Ayatallah Muhammad Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr, the nephew of Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, whose activism led the Baʿthist regime to first attempt to co-opt him, and then led to his assassination when he refused to cooperate with the regime.[5] Muhammad Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr's efforts reflected a split within the Shiʿi clergy, between those who supported the so-called "quietist" tradition, such as that followed by ʿAli al-Sistani's predecessor, Grand Ayatallah Abu al-Qasim al-Khuʾi (1899–1992), who scrupulously tried to keep the Shiʿi Marjaʿiyat from participating in politics, and those clerics who argued for immediate and organized action against the Baʿthist regime. The activism of the latter, I would argue, also gave greater credibility and legitimacy to religious institutions among Iraq's Shiʿa during the 1990s that held over into the politics

of the post-2003 era.

As a final comment, it should be noted that the Hawza, unlike secular organizations, was able to sustain itself under Baʿthist rule for a number of reasons. First, it enjoyed independent income flows in the form of religious donations (*al-khums*) from devout Shiʿa inside Iraq, and from Shiʿi pilgrims who visited the shrine cities of al-Najaf and Karbalaʾ from neighboring Iran and abroad. Despite the continued threat that the Hawza presented as a possible alternative to Baʿthist rule, especially following the example set by the Iranian Revolution of 1978–79, Saddam Husayn was loathe to suppress it during the 1980s for fear that, during the Iran-Iraq War (1980–88), the morale of Iraqi troops, the majority of whom were Shiʿis, would be adversely affected. During the 1990s, Saddam attempted to project a personal religiosity, for example, through substantial donations to refurbishing mosques in al-Najaf, Karbalaʾ, and elsewhere, as a means of offsetting the social and economic decay that worked to undermine support for his regime. Under these circumstances, an attempt to suppress the Hawza would have been counterproductive.

This analysis suggests that the outpouring of support for the Hawza and Shiʿi political movements such as the Mahdi Army, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (which recently changed its name to the Supreme Iraqi Islamic Council), and the *Hizb al-Fadila* (Virtue Party), whose stronghold is located in the southern port city of Basra, reflected the respect many Shiʿa felt for the efforts by clerics to oppose the Baʿth during the 1990s and the fact that these movements were the only forces that could protect the Shiʿi community once Saddam Husayn's regime fell in 2003.

However, by mid-2007 we began to see many Shiʿa reacting against movements that defined themselves as Shiʿi, especially the Mahdi Army and SIIC. First, the Mahdi Army has increasingly splintered over time resulting in Muqtada al-Sadr's loss of control over many units. Second, many Mahdi Army units have increasingly engaged in criminal activity. Since they are located in predominantly Shiʿi areas, they have

turned on their own co-confessionalists. Increasingly, Shi'is are asking how it is that an organization purportedly established to protect their interests now seizes their property and extorts money from them. Third, the SIIC has lost much support in its efforts to use the 2005 Iraqi constitution to establish a semi-autonomous Shi'i state in Iraq's nine southern provinces that would give it control over the region's huge oil wealth. The struggle in the Basra region between the SIIC, on the one hand, and the Mahdi Army and the Fadila Party, on the other, has led to great disenchantment among much of Iraq's Shi'a who increasingly support a government based on secular principles and the separation of politics and religion.[6] Thus we see the balance of forces shifting back towards secular politics in much of Iraq's Shi'i community, especially among the more educated and middle classes.

Finally, we need to realize that, in Iraq, religion has become for many organizations a *subterfuge for engaging in criminal activity*. Already in 2006, the late Shaykh 'Usama al-Jad'an, head of the al-Karabila tribe from the Qa'im area in northwestern al-Anbar Province, and organizer of one of the first tribal alliances to oppose al-Qa'ida in Iraq, pointed to this phenomenon in a news conference. He announced that his forces had captured many so-called radical Islamists who were justifying their resistance to the United States occupation in the name of Islam, but who were actually engaged in wide scale theft, for example, of cargo trucks on highways in al-Anbar Province.[7] After the United States and Iraqi forces expelled al-Qa'ida forces from the city of Ba'quba in Diyala Province, during the spring and summer of 2007, local residents spoke of how they had not only been subject to a harsh and repressive political and personal regime (for example, smoking was not allowed and women could not leave their houses unless they were veiled), but also how city notables had been abducted and ransomed back to their families and houses seized, all in the name of Islam. Both these examples indicate the extent to which crime has become an integral part of radical Islamist political praxis in Iraq, both among Shi'i and Sunni movements.[8]

These developments in Iraq suggest comparisons with sociopolitical movements elsewhere. For example, the Hizballah Party in Lebanon has raised significant funds through criminal activity.[9] In Italy, the *Mafia* and other criminal organizations in southern Italy, such as the Campania-based *Camorra*, and the Calabria-based *'Ndranghetea*, originally began as social service organizations given an absent central state. During the late nineteenth century, following a lengthy period of foreign rule under the Hapsburgs and Bourbons (1504–1860) during which there were few if any social services for the local populace, the Mafia, which modeled itself on Catholic confraternities and the military-religious Order of Malta, began as an organization that used criminal activities to help the poor. However, over time the Mafia was transformed into a purely criminal organization, all the while continuing to profess its commitment to religious traditions associated with the the Roman Catholic church.[10]

This essay suggests that greater attention needs to be given to the conceptualization of the term "religion" when discussing the relationship between religion and politics in post-Ba'thist Iraq. As I argued, the concept of religion assumes different meaning in a wide variety of social and political contexts. Religion may be understood as piety and devotion, as politicized religion (in both ecumenical and xenophobic/intolerant forms), as expressing communal solidarity, and as a subterfuge for crime. What this analysis also suggests is the need to question the often rigid dichotomy that is made between "religion" and "secular." It is indeed possible for a political actor to be highly religious, yet still act in a manner in which religion and politics are behaviorally separated.[11] The foregoing analysis likewise suggests the importance of situating any study of religion and politics in a historical context. The danger of divorcing the study of this relationship from a temporal context can lead to a static analysis that prevents us from understanding its ability to undergo change over time.

[1] See my "Ideology, Social Class and Islamic Radicalism in Modern Egypt," in *From Na-tionalism to Revolutionary Islam*, edited by Said A. Arjomand (MacMillan Press, 1984), pp. 134–57; see also http://fas-polisci.rutgers.edu/davis.

[2] For an excellent discussion of the formation of the Da'wa Party, see Faleh A. Jabar, *The Shi'ite Movement in Iraq*, (Saqi Books, 2003), pp. 75–109.

[3] For an elaboration of this term, see Antonio Gramsci, *Selections From the Prison Notebooks*, (International Publishers, 1971), pp. 238–39; see also my *Memories of State: Politics, History, and Collective Identity in Modern Iraq*, (University of California Press, 2005), p. 277.

[4] Muhammad Baqir Sadr, *Falsafatuna*, (Dar al-Fikr, 1970); idem, *Iqtisaduna*, (Dar al-Ta'aruf, 1982).

[5] For a discussion of Muhammad Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr's religious activism, see 'Adil Ra'uf, *Muhammad Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr Marja'iyat al-Midan*: *Mashru'uhu li-l-Taghyir wa Waqa'ia al-Ightiyal* [*Muhammad Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr's Public Authority: His Program for Change and the Details of his Assassination*], (al-Markaz al-'Iraqi lil-I'lam wa-al-Dirasat, 1999).

[6] This theme pervaded virtually all interviews that I conducted with Iraqis in northern Iraq and Jordan during research there in October and November of 2007.

[7] "Sunni Clans Take the Initiative of Launching a Campaign to Expel Zarqawi's Followers and Foreigners and Intruders," *al-Hayat*, January 26, 2006.

[8] "Violent Struggles in Eastern Ba'quba Lead to the Death and Arrest of 80 al-Qa'ida Fighters," *al-Sabah*, July 23, 2007; "The Continuation of Operations to Clear Diyala (Province) — Its Inhabitants who Are Refugees Are Afraid to Return," *al-Mada'*, July 8, 2007.

[9] For a discussion of these activities, see "Hezbollah in the U.S.: Fundraising or Worse?," http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5579252.

[10] For a discussion of the Mafia and other criminal organizations in southern Italy, see Robert D. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, (Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 136, 146–47; Filippo Sabetti, *Village Politics and the Mafia in Sicily*, (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002).

[11] This was exactly the argument that was made to me by the cleric, Imam al-Shaykh Husayn al-Mu'ayyid, the author of fifteen works on Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), and leader of the newly formed political party, The Iraqi National Movement (*al-Tayyar al-Watani al-'Iraqi*), which calls for a complete separation of religion and politics. Interview, Amman, Jordan, November 6, 2007.

DR. SAAD ESKANDER VISITS NORTH AMERICA
NOVEMBER, 2007

JEFF SPURR, Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University

In April 2007, Amy Newhall, Executive-Director of the Middle East Studies Association (MESA), asked this writer if I would organize a special session on Iraqi libraries and archives for its November meetings in Montréal. I agreed, and the first person I asked to participate was Dr. Eskander, the remarkable Director-General of the Iraq National Library and Archive. He accepted, and Dr. Newhall then invited TAARII to co-sponsor his visit.

Dr. Eskander's Cambridge/Boston schedule involved numerous meals, meetings, and tours of Widener and other Harvard libraries, discussions with the University Archivist, with staff of the Weissman Preservation Center, and with Harvard University Library systems people. He gave talks at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, at Simmons Graduate School of Library and Information Science (GSLIS), and, most notably, at the Boston Public Library (BPL). The latter two were particularly well attended, the talk at the BPL eliciting forty minutes of questions, answered by Dr. Eskander in his characteristically lucid, penetrating, and (when required) patient manner. He was also given an extended tour of the Boston Athenaeum by its Associate Director, John Lannon, including a detailed discussion of the comprehensive renovation recently undertaken by that august institution.

Dr. Eskander was interviewed twice while in Boston; once by David Mehegan of the *Boston Globe*, which may be accessed at: http://www.boston.com/news/education/higher/articles/2007/11/08/in_baghdad_building_order_out_of_chaos/. He was also interviewed by Tom A. Peter of the *Christian Science Monitor*, available at: http://www.csmonitor.com/slideshows/2008/iraq_library/. This article in its online form includes a very useful slide show coordinated with commentary by Dr. Eskander, save in the case of the three unidentified final images, which show the terrifying cloud thrown up by the infamous car bombing of the book

sellers market at Al-Mutanabi Street as seen from the window of Dr. Eskander's office at the INLA, and an image he took when visiting the carnage directly afterwards.

Dr. Eskander addressed three principal themes during his three talks in the Boston area, which also characterized subsequent ones, with different emphases depending upon the audience. These were: 1) the history and status of national archives in Iraq; 2) the revival of the INLA after the devastation of April 2003 and neglect under Saddam Hussein; and 3) the challenges of sustaining a viable institution given the extreme security situation in Baghdad generally, and of the INLA itself.

Regarding the first theme, Dr. Eskander made it clear that the concept of a national archive was slow to develop under the British Mandate, under the Monarchy, and then in the Republic. In the latter case, he maintained that it would be more accurate to describe them as "state" archives, serving the practical and ideological purposes of a totalitarian regime, rather than "national" archives, created in service of the nation. Only in the latter case would you have an institution most of whose holdings would be available to its citizens with few restrictions, and where more comprehensive retention of archival documents would be considered a virtue.

Dr. Eskander proceeded to address the central issue of who was responsible for archival materials, citing standing Iraqi law and The Hague and Geneva Conventions concerning the responsibilities of occupying powers — in the present instance principally the United States and the United Kingdom. He described a lamentable situation where, in the chaos following the invasion, various parties grabbed archival documents in a free-for-all, the immediate victims of which were the Iraqi nation and the prospects for an effective National Archive. Political parties took materials in order to gain leverage against their opponents, and others

took records to sell illicitly to desperate family members anxious to discover the fates of their loved ones.

More important, the Iraq Memory Foundation (IMF), led by Kanan Makiya and Hassan Mneimneh, consolidated millions of documents under their control, especially those from the Ba'th Party headquarters in Baghdad with the support of officials in the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA). The IMF then prevailed upon the U.S. Army to fly those documents out of Baghdad to West Virginia; this provided Dr. Eskander with another cause for complaint, compounding the problem posed by the fact that the major agent to appropriate documents was the U.S. Army itself in 2003. The initial motives for this were to discover evidence of "weapons of mass destruction," of Iraqi government links to al-Qaeda (both of which did not exist, as it turned out), and to gain evidence against members of the Saddam Hussein government. Dr. Eskander contended that these excuses no longer carried any weight, and that the tens of millions of Iraqi archival documents in U.S. hands — whether held in the U.S. or in Iraq — should be returned to the Iraqi nation via its National Archive. He considered that the IMF, as a private entity, had no right to hold Iraqi documents. He made it clear that the National Archive had redoubled its efforts to both microfilm and scan the documents in its hands, and wished to make sure that they were handled responsibly so as not to injure innocent Iraqis, while making them available in a controlled but transparent manner so that all Iraqis could ultimately come to understand what had happened and what been done to them under the Ba'th regime.

In the case of the second theme, Dr. Eskander would reiterate the oft although not always accurately told tale of the looting and double arson to which the INLA was subjected just after the U.S. Army arrived in Baghdad. New information included the fact that Saddam

had issued an edict shortly before going underground that ordered the destruction of archival materials related to the Republican regime. This helps account for the targeting of this institution for burning. Major archives from the Interior Ministry dating from the first decade of the Ba'th regime (ending 1978) had been transferred to the INLA short weeks before the invasion and were resting in boxes in the basement, unopened and unmolested.

Dr. Eskander also emphasized that the ninety-five staff members held over from the ancien régime had been so ill-remunerated that corruption had been rampant prior to the beginning of his tenure. Neither book nor document could be accessed by a patron without a bribe. So his initial tasks, when he assumed responsibility for this devastated and moribund institution in November 2003, included an increase in salaries, the forbidding of bribery and other corrupt behavior, and the search for new blood to help reinvigorate the staff. He has managed to increase his staff to over 400 people despite the trials of life in Baghdad. This is an extraordinary achievement for which no comparable examples exist among other Iraqi cultural and educational institutions. By recourse to sundry inventive strategies, Dr. Eskander has also managed to renovate and refurnish an institution once declared beyond restoration.

The third principal theme of Dr. Eskander's talks was security. He pointed out that the INLA happened to be situated in arguably the most dangerous spot in Baghdad, with one neighborhood that was the local stronghold of al-Qaeda in Iraq on one side, and territory governed by the Mahdi Army (irregular militia supporting Muqtada al-Sadr) on the other. Due to this situation, the INLA came under gun and shell fire on a regular basis, requiring frequent repairs to the building, and the virtually constant replacement of window glass. To make matters worse, a small U.S. Army and helicopter base was nearby. In one talk, Dr. Eskander mentioned that an American journalist had visited him in his office, and, seeing his well-functioning institution, dismissed Dr. Eskander's description of the dire security situation just as the bomb that devastated Al-Mutanabi Street exploded.

In a couple of talks, Dr. Eskander also described some of the very sad fates that had befallen members of his staff, and vividly conveyed the effect each such loss had on their colleagues. He mentioned the method he had devised to insure that his staff kept coming to work, namely by bussing them all from their homes and back, which he had told me before cost 40% of his budget to accomplish.

By these and many other actions, including his fearless willingness to go to the press and to defy corrupt and politically-motivated individuals at the ministerial level, Dr. Eskander has become essentially the sole prominent public voice in Iraq for progressive, non-sectarian values, and institutional transparency, by which means he has provided a model for all Iraqis if they were willing to pay heed.

By coincidence, Stanley Cohen and members of the Board of the Scone Foundation of New York had decided to present Dr. Eskander its "Archivist of the Year" award. This and related events became the organizing principle for Dr. Eskander's New York visit. The award ceremony took place at Columbia University, with Dr. James Neal, Director of the Columbia University Libraries, playing co-host with Mr. Cohen. Dr. Eskander and the group were also invited to lunch at the New York Public Library by Paul LeClerc and David Ferriero, President and Director respectively, who, like many others encountered by Dr. Eskander, promised their support to his institution. He gave a particularly effective hour-long talk at the Metropolitan Museum to a large audience comprising staff members and trustees.

While in New York, Dr. Eskander appeared on Charlie Rose. That interview is available at: http://www.charlierose.com/shows/2007/11/12/2/a-conversation-with-saad-eskander. Furthermore, although it was not aired until January 8th and 9th 2008, Dr. Eskander was also interviewed in New York by Fergal Keane for his BBC radio show, *Taking a Stand*, accessible at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/takingastand/pip/0u2j8.

On the 14th of November, 2007, Dr. Eskander and I took the twelve-hour train ride from Pennsylvania Station to Montréal. A significant portion of the time was dedicated to a first draft of a comprehensive needs assessment for his institution, which revealed how much

must be done for his plans to be fully realized.

MESA in Montréal was preceded by the Middle East Librarians Association (MELA) meetings. At a meeting of the of the MELA Committee on Iraqi Libraries, David Hirsch of UCLA, a committee member who has trained Iraqi librarians in both Amman and the United Arab Emirates in a program developed by Harvard in conjunction with Simmons GSLIS, spoke about the experience of training Iraqis. Dr. Eskander commented on the impact of the training on his staff and institution.

The central event at MESA was the plenary meeting, given that MESA had decided to bestow its recently-established annual Academic Freedom Award on Dr. Eskander. He walked up a long aisle to a thunderous standing ovation. This was wonderful, but I couldn't help but think about how easy it is to stand up and applaud, and how little it amounts to when what this world — and his institution — needs is action.

For Dr. Eskander, the final formal event of the MESA meetings was the panel this writer had organized: "Iraqi Libraries and Archives in a Time of Invasion, Chaos, and Civil Conflict: Status and Prospects," where he spoke on the topic "The Reconstruction and the Modernization of the INLA: Political Hurdles and Security Challenges." Despite taking place at five o'clock P.M. and being in competition with the usual host of other sessions, it was quite well attended and well received, judging from the number of questions. The other speakers were Nabil al-Tikriti, who talked about the events of April 2003, and particularly their effects upon archival collections, and Shayee Khanaka, who addressed the situation of universities and their libraries in Iraqi Kurdistan. I discussed the (few) successes, and (many) failures concerning outside assistance to Iraqi libraries and archives.

For those interested in learning more about Dr. Eskander and the INLA, Dr. Eskander's remarkable diary, which ran from November 2006 to July 2007, may be visited on the British Library website at: http://www.bl.uk.iraqdiary.html. It provides a vivid account of life in Baghdad at a terrible time, not to mention the challenges of running an institution under such circumstances.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

STEPHANIE PLATZ

In this issue, we are pleased to announce our 2008 U.S. Fellows. This group of finalists represents our fourth cohort of Fellows working on Iraq in a number of disciplines across the social sciences and humanities. Since 2004, TAARII has supported the research of 35 U.S. Fellows.

We are also pleased to present original work by several TAARII Fellows from 2006 and 2007: Carrie Hritz, "Remote Sensing of Cultural Heritage in Iraq: A Case Study of Isin;" James Armstrong, "The Babylonian Ceramic Tradition: The Second Millennium B.C.: A Progress Report;" Eric Davis, "Reflections on Religion and Politics in Post-Bathist Iraq." Contributions by Rasha Salti, Dina Khoury, and Jeff Spurr describe other TAARII sponsored events that took place in the autumn of 2007. These include the panel "Energizing Film Culture and Production: Emerging Initiatives for Film Schools in the Arab World" at the CinemaEast Film Festival at New York University; "Writing the Oral History of Modern Iraq" at the annual Middle East Studies Association (MESA) meeting; and "Iraqi Libraries and Archives in a Time of Invasion, Chaos, and Civil Conflict: Status and Prospects," also at the MESA meeting.

In October 2007, TAARII partnered with the Hollings Center to hold a conference in Istanbul, entitled "Unity and Diversity in Iraq: The Nation's Past and Future," which addressed relations between Iraqi sub-groups and Iraq's neighbors. Twenty-six participants came from Jordan, France, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Syria, the United Kingdom, Norway, Iraq, and the United States to deliver papers or moderate discussion. Six panels were held over three days and throughout them all, competing trends toward unity and sectarianism were critically examined in the context of Iraq's political, economic, and cultural history, as well as in the present.

Panels included "Iraqi Nationalism — Reflections on Nation, State, and Society," "Iraq, Turkey, and Iran," "Iraq and Its Arab Neighbors," "Occupying Powers, Old and New — On Involvement, Democratization, Mistakes and Exit Strategies," and "Identities within Iraqi Society and their Relationship to the Region — Civil War vs. Integration." In a final round table session, themes that spanned the panels were discussed. Among these, consensus emerged that

Iraq's hypothetical partition would be unprecedented and anathema to its long-term political and social trajectories.

The meeting convened scholars of Iraq from different disciplinary backgrounds, countries of origin, and generations, many of whom were aware of one another's work, but had never met before. A summary report on the meeting will be available on the TAARII website in the late spring or early summer of 2008.

In December, TAARII co-organized a meeting on "The Politics of Expertise" with the Social Science Research Council and the New America Foundation (NAF) in Washington, D.C. Professor Juan Cole of the University of Michigan and Professor McGuire Gibson, TAARII President, spoke at a public event at the NAF. This event was followed by a discussion of the relationship between academic expertise and foreign policy debates.

January 2008 was a busy month for TAARII as well. Dr. Reidar Visser of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs visited the University of Chicago, the University of Michigan, and George Washington University, with TAARII support, to deliver a lecture entitled, "Partition Iraq? Imperial Iraq Strategies from Suleiman the Magnificent to Joseph Biden." The talk examined the long history of foreign rule in Iraq, from the 1500s to the present. Dr. Visser argued that the partitionist policies currently propagated especially by Democrat politicians in the U.S. represent a break from the past. Neither the Ottomans, nor the British contemplated the sectarian division of Iraq and thus, Dr. Visser noted, serious questions about the durability

Figure 3.1. At Kapalı Çarşı, Istanbul. From Left to Right: TAARII President McGuire Gibson, Ambassador Hasan Abu Nimah, Stephanie Platz, Waiel Hindo, Abdulkhaleq Abdullah, and Hakan Özoğlu, in front

of partition models should be asked.

Also in January, TAARII brought Dr. Donny George Youkhanna, former Director of the National Museum in Iraq and of Iraq's State Board of Antiquities, to participate in a panel in conjunction with the show, *Consuming War*, at the Hyde Park Art Center in Chicago. The show included a piece by artist Michael Rakowitz that addresses the life and work of Donny George. Donny George, Michael Rakowitz, and TAARII President McGuire Gibson participated in a joint conversation about Iraq's National Museum and the significance of its fragile existence in a zone of war. Also in conjunction with *Consuming War*, TAARII contributed to an event entitled "Enemy Kitchen" at the Experimental Station in Hyde Park, in which Michael Rakowitz led participants in the preparation of

Figure 3.2. After the Bosphorus Cruise, Istanbul. From Left to Right: Katie Johnson, Megan Clark, Stephanie Platz, and Waiel Hindo

a family recipe of Baghdadi cuisine. The recipe appears in full, along with photographs taken at the event, at the end of this newsletter.

Throughout the summer of 2008, TAARII researchers will continue work on two NEH-supported projects:

"Recovering Iraq's Heritage" and The Iraqi Oral History Project. Recent work on the former is summarized in the Archaeological Update in this newsletter.

TAARII plans another conference, to be held at Williams College, in October 2008. In recognition of the fifty-year anniversary of revolution in Iraq, the meeting will address its significance through the subsequent decades.

Despite the substantial momentum represented by the density of events and projects undertaken in the last six months and summarized here, TAARII continues to seek the advice of its members and newsletter audience on how best we can foster the growth of the Iraq Studies community and serve its needs. I welcome your response to each issue of the newsletter, along with your ideas for future programs at stephanie@taarii.org.

FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Applications from U.S.-Iraqi collaborative teams are welcomed on a ROLLING basis. Teams of individual U.S. and Iraqi scholars wishing to collaborate may request up to $14,000. For additional information, please visit the TAARII website: www.taarii.org. To submit a collaborative proposal, contact info@taarii.org.

• INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERS •

American Schools of Oriental Research
University of Arizona
Boston University
University of California, Berkeley
University of California, Los Angeles
University of California, Santa Barbara
University of Chicago
Columbia University
Duke University
Georgetown University
Harvard University
Hofstra University

Kimbell Art Museum
University of Maryland
New York University
University of Notre Dame
University of Pennsylvania Museum
Rutgers University
State University of New York, Buffalo
State University of New York, Stony Brook
University of Texas, Austin
University of Utah
Williams College
Yale University

RESIDENT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Iraq Fellows Program

In 2007, TAARII received only sixteen applications from Iraqis for research fellowships. Compared to 2006, when we had over fifty applications, the number is small. It is not coincidental that 2007 — especially the first half of it — was the most violent year since the occupation, in which security deteriorated to a frightening degree. This had a negative impact on the academic scene; the lives of students and scholars were under continuous threat, some universities closed down, and even on peaceful days, the absence of power prevented scholars from electronically filing their applications. Due to such considerations, TAARII accepted applications throughout 2007 on a rolling basis.

A look at the distributions of applications by disciplinary and institutional affiliation shows that:

• TAARII has had success in reaching Baghdadi scholars (twelve of the applicants teach at universities in Baghdad), and to lesser extent, in reaching scholars in the south (of the three applications from the south, one is from Basra, one is from Wasit, and the third one is from Kufa). Additionally, there is one application from the University of Jordan. Unfortunately, TAARII has not reached the universities in the eastern and northern parts of Iraq. However, since September new inquiries about the fellowship programs from scholars at various universities, including Tikrit University and Babel University, have been received. I believe application numbers will increase as we improve our use of the internet for recruitment of our scholarly support programs.

• Two disciplines dominate: ancient history (five applicants) and ancient languages and linguistics (five applicants). We have a very small number of applicants in the social sciences: education (two applications), sociology (two applicants), environmental studies (one applicant), public health (one applicant), and agriculture (one applicant). TAARII still needs to encourage younger scholars and social scientists.

• In 2008, twenty-seven applications were received from Iraqi applicants. Look for further information on this application pool in the fall issue of the newsletter.

Office

In 2007, TAARII moved its office to larger quarters in the same building. The new office is sunny and pleasant with nice balconies. There are two bedrooms, an office, a library, and a meeting room. We have enough space to accommodate six scholars to work individually or together on the premises.

Book Donation

TAARII received a book donation of fifty books and articles on Iraq from Dr. Joost Hiltermann, the Middle East Project Director for the International Crisis Group. We are grateful for this significant contribution to our growing library, which will benefit the work of future Iraqi fellows.

BOOK DONATIONS

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

Thanks to those individuals and institutions who have donated books to Iraqi institutions of research and higher learning through TAARII. We sadly announce that due to changes in the United States Postal Service M-bags program, we will no longer be able to cover the cost of transporting donated books to Iraq.

THE INDEPENDENT FILM AND TELEVISION COLLEGE IN BAGHDAD

Rasha Salti

In November 2007, ArteEast organized the Second CinemaEast Film Festival in New York featuring films and panels on Middle Eastern cinema. With co-sponsorship from The American Academic Research Institute in Iraq (TAARII), the Kevorkian Center at New York University (NYU), and the Ford Foundation, a panel on film schools in the Arab world was held at the Tisch School of the Arts of NYU. The panel, "Energizing Film Culture and Production: Emerging Initiatives for Film Schools in the Arab World," featured Maysoon Pachachi (Independent Film and Television College [IFTC], Baghdad), Omar Amiralay (Arab Institute of Film [AIF], Amman), and Vincent Melilli (Ecole Supérieure des Arts Visuels [ESAV], Marrakesh). Sheril Antonio, Associate Dean of the Tisch School, chaired the session. As part of the program, Maysoon Pachachi screened selections from the IFTC's students' short films.

Much has been written of the spread of digital video technology in filmmaking worldwide. Throughout the Arab world, beginning in the mid-1990s, the impact has been glaring; the exclusive monopoly over film production has been reversed considerably. Generations of aspiring filmmakers have emerged making very low-budget independent films, and establishing alternative associations and venues for production, distribution and consumption of work. In the beginning, aspiring filmmakers hailed from across fields of specializations in the media and communications industries, but soon amateurs enrolled in independently run training workshops, acquired basic skills, and began to make short films. These increasingly popular workshops had a democratizing effect, as they were almost free of charge and reached out to students from across social classes. They were set up in response to existing film schools' sluggish or conservative reaction to the rapid changes in the landscape of production.

Until the fall of Saddam's regime, the curriculum of art education in Iraq included courses on film, but they were strictly theoretical. Students were not trained to acquire practical skills. In 2004, Kasim Abid, an Iraqi cinematographer, director, editor, and producer, and Maysoon Pachachi, an Iraqi director, editor, and producer, teamed up to establish the Independent Film and Television College (IFTC) in Baghdad. Both had been living in the United Kingdom, but after making their first visit to their home country, they were motivated by the urge to partake in the reconstruction of Iraq. They quickly realized there was an emerging generation aspiring to make films, tell their stories, and craft their own representation. At the panel presentation, Maysoon Pachachi quoted from the College's mission statement: "Film and television can be powerful tools in the reconstruction of a shattered society and contribute to the re-defining and renewal of a national culture. They provide a way for a society to look at itself, to question its history, and to consider its future. And they also provide a way for one section of society to talk to another."

Born and raised in Iraq, Pachachi continued her education in the U.S. and Britain. She earned a degree in filmmaking from the London Film School and made a career for herself as a film editor based in London. She has directed eight documentary films, including the prize-winning *Iranian Journey*, *Bitter Water* about a Palestinian camp in Beirut and *Return to the Land of Wonders* about her return to Iraq in 2004. She is also a skilled educator; she has taught film directing and editing at the Jerusalem Film Institute and Birzeit University in Ramallah.

The IFTC offers tuition-free intensive short courses in film technique, theory, and production. It also provides production facilities and information about funding and further training. Until now, Kasim Abid and Maysoon Pachachi are responsible for most of the teaching. So far, three IFTC graduates have had work commissioned by al-Jazeera International. Students' work has been screened at international film festivals, including the U.N. Association Film Festival (U.K.), Augsburg Film Festival (Germany), Women's Film Festival (South Korea), Iraqi Film Festival (The Netherlands), International Festival of Human Rights (Switzerland), Oxdox Documentary International Film Festival (U.K.), and the Arab Film Festival in San Francisco. The College is funded by private philanthropists, grants from foundations in Europe, and donors. Their facilities are humble; they have two cameras and two editing suites.

The student body has been surprisingly diverse and interesting, students hail from the mosaic of cultural, ethnic, and religious affiliations of Iraq and half are made up of women. Admission requirements are fairly lax, but Pachachi and Abid demand of their students that they be very committed to the program, in part because everyday living conditions being so difficult, students would have to be very motivated to stick through the length of the program. Pachachi attested to being surprised at their students' enthusiasm and drive, and their ability to endure strenuous and trying situations.

By the end of 2005, it became increasingly difficult to shoot film in the street. Students were at risk as they moved about the city. Projects had to be readjusted and scripts rewritten to fit the constraints of the security situation. The violence that overwhelms the lives of Iraqis did not spare students of the IFTC, explained Pachachi. Two of their students had to cope with their relatives getting kidnapped, others lost kin in mortar shelling and explosions. One of their students, Emad, was attacked by armed men and miraculously survived. He is still debilitated from his injuries, but he is healing slowly. The student body and faculty raised funds to help cover his medical expenses. His film

is a documentary on the Shahbandar Cafe, a legendary cafe for artists and intellectuals that was destroyed by a bomb. Intended as an ode to this unique place in the city, Emad's film will be edited with help from Pachachi and Abid. With the curfews, closures, and checkpoints it became increasingly difficult for students to reach the school building, and by the end of the year 2006, the faculty decided to relocate the school temporarily to Damascus. By the spring of 2007, the students were able to complete the documentaries they were working on. For now, the school will operate from Damascus; although safe, the solution has not been easy, as it is difficult for Iraqis to obtain visas. For the upcoming cycle of classes, Pachachi and Abid have reached out to displaced Iraqi refugees settled in Syria, with help from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Obtaining permits to shoot outdoors in Damascus has, unfortunately, proved very difficult as well.

Pachachi and Abid are quite eager to repatriate the school to Baghdad. In between teaching sessions, Pachachi and Abid labor at fundraising to cover the cost of running the school, buying more equipment, and providing more resources for the production of films. Nevertheless, the student films are quite powerful. They narrate everyday life in Baghdad and represent a rare subjective chronicle of a population emerging from thirty years of dictatorship, coping with occupation, violence, and civil conflict.

For more information, please visit the website: http://www.iftvc.org.

"WRITING THE ORAL HISTORY OF MODERN IRAQ"
REPORT ON A MIDDLE EAST STUDIES ASSOCIATION WORKSHOP
SPONSORED BY TAARII, MONTRÉAL, NOVEMBER 2007

DINA R. KHOURY, George Washington University

Perhaps at no other time has it been more crucial to capture the voices of Iraqis who have shaped and been witness to the history of their country. The destruction and dispersal of a large portion of Iraq's archival and historical record, the violence and pauperization visited on the country that has led to the displacement of its population, and the contested nature of its historical memory has created challenges and opportunities for scholars intent on recording various facets of Iraq's history.

With these challenges in mind, the participants in the workshop who had undertaken major projects based on extensive oral interviews highlighted some of their findings. They hailed from different disciplines and their research covered different topics. The workshop was well attended and there was a long and sometimes contentious discussion following the short presentations by the panelists.

Professor Nadje el-Ali, an anthropologist at the School of Oriental and African Studies, "reflect(ed) on the challenges of using oral histories as a research method in the context of my recent publication *Iraqi Women: Untold Stories from 1948 to the Present*" (Zed Books, 2007). She spoke of her experience interviewing Iraqi women in Jordan, the U.K., and the U.S. over the course of two years. She stressed that the memories of these women were often colored by present politics and worldview, and often tinged with nostalgia. She also discussed her "positionality" vis-à-vis her informants as an Iraqi activist with a mixed heritage.

Professor Dina Rizk Khoury, a historian at George Washington University, works on war and remembrance among Iraqi soldiers and intellectuals who participated in the Iran-Iraq and first Gulf Wars. She addressed the challenges faced by a historian using ethnographic methods to access the memories of violence of a traumatized population. In particular, she focused on the extent to which her informants' memories reproduced or challenged the official version of the war story and the extent to which their memories of violence are intertwined with their current displacement and traumatization.

Professor Nada Shabout, an art historian at the University of North Texas, spoke about her attempts at constructing a historical narrative of modern and contemporary Iraqi art. She writes, "for the past two years I have been working on constructing a context (a frame) within which objects (works of art) are to be located, as well as constructing a virtual archive of lost works of the Iraqi Museum of Modern Art. To this end I have been probing memories of as many Iraqi artists as possible, starting with the older generation still alive." She addressed some of the challenges she encountered in sorting out individuals' memories which are often "directed to the community" and the consequences of the demand for Iraqi art in the market.

Dr. Lucine Taminian, an anthropologist in Amman, spoke about TAARII's "Oral History Project," for which she has recently interviewed Iraqi exiles and refugees. She was particularly interested in interviewing lower class Iraqi refugees. She also tried to draw on as representative a sample of the Iraqi communities as possible. One of the challenges she faced was convincing her informants to talk to her about their lives when their immediate needs were much more important.

2006–2007 U.S. FELLOWS: PROJECTS SUPPORTED

Professor Sinan Antoon
The Gallatin School, New York University
"In the Vocative Case: Saadi Youssef's Iraq"

In late June, Antoon traveled to England with his colleague Bassam Haddad to interview and film the Iraqi poet Saadi Youssef. They returned with thirty hours of rich footage and interviews covering Youssef's early life in Iraq and in exile since 1979, his involvement with the Iraqi Communist Party, and his pioneering contributions to Arabic poetry and culture. In addition to filming Youssef in his surroundings and around London, they managed to interview a number of poets, critics, and friends of Youssef. In 2008, they will film Youssef reading poetry in Cairo or Beirut and conduct more interviews with critics and fellow poets in the Arab world to contextualize and illustrate his significance in the Arab world's cultural centers. Since it is impossible to film in Iraq, the project still requires archival footage, as well as Youssef's various appearances in the past on Moroccan, Syrian, and Egyptian satellite stations.

Mr. Haytham Bahoora
Department of Comparative Literature, Columbia University
"Toward a Singular Modernity: Literary and Architectural Modernism in Iraq, 1950–1965"

Bahoora has completed several chapters of his dissertation, now entitled "Modernism before Modernity: Literature and Urban Form in Iraq, 1950–1963," and he has conducted a substantial amount of historical research. He explores the relationship of development policies of the Iraq Development Board to the deployment of high modernism in architecture. He emphasizes the politics of rural to urban migration of peasants from southern Iraq in the context of policies of state that sought to modernize the nation. He considers the ways that the development programs initiated by the state in this period, including its housing policies, education reform, and police recruitment reflect an anxiety (both social and political) about the new urban poor of Baghdad, an increasingly visible segment of the urban population. The remaining chapters are devoted to a study of the literary developments of the period, including the rise of modernist poetry and innovations in prose.

Professor Magnus T. Bernhardsson
Department of History, Williams College
"Before the Storm: Americans in 1950's Iraq"

During the fall of 2006, Bernhardsson conducted oral histories about the 1950s with a number of Iraqis in Egypt and Jordan. In the spring of 2007, he interviewed Iraqis based in the United States. In addition to the oral histories, he has also been collecting materials from a wide range of sources, both published and unpublished. He conducted research in governmental archives at the National Archives in College Park, Maryland, utilizing State Department records.

Unfortunately, many of the relevant documents were still classified (it seems that many of them had been classified in August 1990). He also spent a week at the Eisenhower Library in Abilene, Kansas, looking into Eisenhower's engagement with Iraq.

Professor Eric Davis
Department of Political Science, Rutgers University
"The Formation of Political Identities in Ethnically Divided Societies: Implications for a Democratic Transition in Iraq"

In his project, Davis examined how an ethnically divided society emerging from authoritarian rule can transition to democracy. First, he analyzed the practices of Islam in Iraq after 1991. Next, he examined a number of major clerics and tribal leaders in terms of their social, educational, and political background. The role of Islam and the views of politically important clerics and tribal leaders were examined for their impact on Iraqi politics. This project relied on survey data drawn from a representative sample of Iraqi youth to determine their views on key political issues, democracy, political violence, and Islam.

Ms. Melissa Eppihimer
History of Art and Architecture, Harvard University
"The Visual Legacy of Akkadian Kingship"

In her dissertation, Eppihimer considerd how ancient Near Eastern rulers responded to the monuments of

the Akkadian kings of the late third millennium B.C. Previous textual studies have shown that the Akkadian kings Sargon and Naram-Sin became models of kingship, both good and bad. Her dissertation asked whether there was a visual component to the ancient regard for these paradigmatic kings. Her research exposed the ways in which the legacy of the Akkadians has framed modern approaches to ancient Near Eastern art history. This study joins an earlier one focusing on a group of rock reliefs in the Zagros Mountains related to the Akkadian stele of Naram-Sin. Rather than presenting the rock reliefs as derivative copies of the stele, her research showed that some of the reliefs express an entirely different conception of kingship.

Dr. Carrie Hritz
Department of Anthropology,
Washington University, St. Louis
"Remote Sensing of Cultural Heritage in Iraq"

This project addressed a number of topics in Mesopotamian archaeology using a combination of previous archaeological survey information, Corona satellite photographs, and high resolution Quickbird imagery. First, she documented the destruction of archaeological sites in southern Iraq. Second, she produced a record of archaeological sites in this largely unexplored area of the southern alluvium for future archaeological research projects. Lastly, once site locations were verified and the extent and patterns of looting traced, she mapped the remains of relict channels in the immediate environs of the site of Isin. These relict channels may shed light on movements of the Euphrates River in this western area over time. The relationship between sites, channels, and the main river branches can shed light on the somewhat obscure countryside of the

powerful Isin based city-state of the second millennium B.C.

Professor Dina Khoury
History and International Affairs,
George Washington University
"Postponed Lives: War and Memory in Iraq"

During a ten week stay in Amman, Jordan, Khoury conducted interviews with Iraqi veterans of the Iran-Iraq and first Gulf Wars. She established contacts with two generations of intellectuals who congregated in a coffeehouse and reproduced the coffeehouse culture of intellectuals that was once prevalent in Baghdad. The 1980s generation of intellectuals fought on the front and were instrumental in creating the "literature and theater of war," which was known as "The Literature of Qadisiyyat Saddam." The second group of intellectuals she interviewed was younger and had its formative experience in the 1990s. While there was some overlap between the two groups, the 1990s generation was clearly marked by a different set of circumstances, not the least of which was the destructiveness of the American war on cities and the ensuing sanctions regime (regarded by many as a continuation of war) as well as the weakening of state controls. The second set of interviews was with soldiers who were mostly drawn from infantry divisions. Their stories of war and displacement were often colored by their experiences of exile in the present.

Dr. Mina Marefat
Design Research, Johns Hopkins University, and Catholic University
"Architecture, Cultural Politics, and Universalizing Modernism in 1950s Baghdad"

In her project, Marefat builds on her previous research to complete

the oral history of those involved in an ambitious project to rebuild Baghdad as a modern city in the 1950s. In addition to primary research on the European and American architects who participated in the new vision of Baghdad, Marefat has interviewed key Iraqi participants whose ideas and networks were instrumental in shaping the project's direction. She has documented the contributions and recollections of five less famous but irreplaceable figures: Rifat Chadirji, Mohammad Makkiya, Ellen Jawdat, Nizar Jawdat, and Negam Ameri. Their historical memory will reveal the full dimensions of a cultural exchange between a Middle Eastern nation captivated by progress and determined to forge a "modern" identity and a Western architectural practice.

Ms. Sara Pursley
Department of History, City University of New York, Graduate Center
"The Conflict over the Iraqi Personal Status Law of 1959: A Social History"

Pursley traveled to London to conduct oral interviews with surviving members of the women's league of the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) and the League for the Defense of Women's Rights, which was instrumental in the drafting and promulgation of the Iraqi Personal Status Law of 1959. She also conducted archival research on the controversy over the law using Iraqi newspapers and other print materials from the time period. She plans to publish an article on the history of women's involvement in the ICP from the 1940s to 1963.

Professor Nada M. Shabout
Art History, University of North Texas
"Between Local and Global: Continuity in Iraqi Art since 1990"

Shabout spent two months in London and Paris collecting data for her project. In Paris, she conducted research at the library of the Institut du Monde Arabe and interviewed a number of Iraqi artists residing in Paris. In London, she conducted extensive interviews with the artist Dia al-Azzawi and thoroughly examined the works and contents of his library. He has a vast collection of newspaper clips, Iraqi journals, and out-of-print Iraqi books on Iraqi art. Data collected have enabled her to develop a number of important questions and issues to pursue further.

Professor Keith Watenpaugh
Modern Islamic Studies, University of California, Davis
"Reassessing the 'Assyrian Tragedy' (1933): International Humanitarianism, Citizenship, and Communal and Sectarian Challenges in Interwar Iraq"

The League of Nations and its archives has proven to be a remarkable source for understanding the history of Iraq in the interwar period, especially when that history intersects questions about human rights, international law, and humanitarian intervention. Watenpaugh conducted a thorough survey of archival materials related to Iraq's Assyrian Question both in Geneva and later in London at the Public Records Office. He found the League's archives particularly useful. Beyond records of debates in the League's general assembly, where the newly-independent Iraqi state sought to defend its treatment of the Assyrians, the League sent to the

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2008 U.S. FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENTS

PROFESSOR MICHAELLE BROWERS
Department of Political Science, Wake Forest University
"Arab-Shi`i Political Thought since 1959: Political Activism and the Quest for Freedom"

DR. JEAN EVANS
Department of Ancient and Near Eastern Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
"Sculpture, Glyptic, and Other Small Finds from the Inanna Temple at Nippur"

MS. HELENA KALER
Department of History, George Washington University
"Sectarianism, Education, and the Creation of the Shi`i Citizen-Subject in Lebanon and Iraq, 1920–1945"

PROFESSOR DINA KHOURY
History and International Affairs, George Washington University
"War and Remembrance in Iraq"

DR. MINA MAREFAT
Design Research, John Hopkins University, and Catholic University
"Baghdad University: Education by Design"

MR. TATE PAULETTE
Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, University of Chicago
"Magazines, Models, and Artificial Societies: The Archaeology of Grain Storage in Third-Millenium Mesopotamia"

MR. ROBERT RIGGS
Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Pennsylvania
"Interpreting God's Law: How Ayatollah Sistani and Ayatollah Fadlallah Mediate Authority in Heterogenous Arab Societies"

MS. ALEXANDRA WITSELL
Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, University of Chicago
"Archaeological Perspectives on Temple and Neighborhood in Third Millenium B.C. Khafajah, Iraq"

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region observers who wrote lengthy and detailed reports in an attempt to understand and explain what had happened. The resulting actions (and inaction) provides a window on how complex the first years of Iraqi independence were. They also tell us something about how events in the Middle East were crucial to larger, international discussion and debates about minority rights, population transfer, and the refugee issue.

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Artist Michael Rakowitz uses food as an element to facilitate dialogue and collaboration.

"ENEMY KITCHEN"

from a performance piece by artist Michael Rakowitz, which took place at the Experimental Station in Chicago on Sunday, January 13, 2008, in connection with his participation in the exhibition, "Comsuming War," at the Hyde Park Art Center.

KUBBA BAMIA

Rakowitz prepares a meal based on his Iraqi mother's home recipes.

Kubba, also known as *kibbeh*, is a dish found throughout the Middle East and North Africa. Commonly composed of spiced meat with pine nuts and onions, stuffed inside a bulghur wheat shell, it is usually fried and served with sesame paste.

Kubba Bamia is a traditional Iraqi dish in which the kubba is made of spiced meat but stuffed inside a rice flour dough, which gives it the soft, chewy texture of a dumpling. Finally it is cooked in a stew of tomato stock with plenty of fresh okra, called *bamia* in Arabic.

> 1 1/2 pounds lean lamb or beef, ground
> 2 cups natural rice flour
> 1 box (10 ounces) frozen whole baby okra, or 1 pound fresh okra
> 2 8-ounce cans crushed tomatoes
> 1 small onion, chopped fine
> salt
> 1 tablespoon oil
> 3/4 cup lemon juice
> 1/2 teaspoon ground turmeric
> 1/2 cup minced parsley leaves
> 1/8 teaspoon pepper
> 4 tablespoons sugar
> 3 1/2 cups hot water

First, prepare the meat mixture. Mix 1 pound of meat with parsley, a teaspoon of pepper, and 1/4 teaspoon of turmeric (go easy on the turmeric, which can leave the meat tasting bitter). Add 1 1/2 tablespoons of lemon juice and some salt. Mix all ingredients together.

Next, mix 2 cups of natural rice flour with the remaining meat to create the dough that forms the outer shell of the dumpling. Water should be added gradually to keep the dough smooth. Keep a saucer of water nearby to keep your palms wet. Break off small pieces of the dough and roll them into spheres smaller than a golf ball.

To make the dumplings, pinch each piece of dough with wet fingers and make a hollow. Fill the resulting depression with a 1/2 teaspoon of the meat filling. Then close the ends together, pinching firmly to ensure a good seal. With your wet palms roll the kubba and shape into a round ball. Repeat until all the dough and meat mixture have been used up.

In a large, deep pot, sauté the onion in olive oil, adding a 1/2 teaspoon of pepper and 1/4 teaspoon of turmeric.

Next add the crushed tomatoes. Fill the two empty tomato cans with water and add to the pot (this gets all of the remaining tomato out of the can in the process). Bring to a boil and let cook for 15 minutes. Reduce heat, simmer for about 7 minutes, and then add the okra (fresh or frozen) along with a teaspoon of salt and the remaining lemon juice. Introduce the kubba into the simmering mixture by dropping them in carefully, two at a time. Distribute evenly around the pot. Allow the dish to cook for 15 minutes, then add the sugar and simmer for 10 more minutes. Serve with plain rice.

Makes 6 servings.

TAARII

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