EDITORIAL

This issue of *Iraq* has appeared very late, the consequence of the editors having too many other university commitments on their plates. We hope to manage this better for future issues.

There will be several changes in the next few years to the way the journal *Iraq* is published and disseminated. As mentioned in the editorial to *Iraq* 84 (2022), we have been involved in protracted negotiations with Cambridge University Press and discussions with the rest of the Editorial Board regarding future Open Access publication. Some members of the board are opposed to a 'hybrid' Open Access arrangement, according to which those authors and institutions who can afford to pay high Author Processing Charges are published Open Access and freely available to everyone, while others who cannot afford the fees remain behind a paywall. In addition to being an ethical necessity, Gold Open Access is increasingly a requirement of many funding agencies.

We have now agreed to follow a hybrid Open Access arrangement for a limited period, until such time as we can enter into a Gold Open Access mode of publishing, in which all articles in the journal will be freely available on the internet irrespective of whether their authors or their institutions can pay for the costs. This may be possible due to the prospect of an extension of fee-waiver programmes on the part of the press. If/When we transition to Gold Open Access in a couple of years, this will mean that the paper print run of the journal will effectively finish, although we hope the journal will be also available in a print-on-demand format. BISI will hopefully be conducting a survey of the journal's subscribers to find out how many people would wish to keep a paper subscription to the journal.

The current issue has an online appendix with supplemental materials related to three of the articles (Diffey et al., Ait Said-Ghanem and Cavigneaux) hosted on the Oracc website: https://build-oracc.museum.upenn.edu/iraq/index.html. This was facilitated by the work of Eleanor Robson and Steve Tinney, to whom we are profoundly grateful.

The articles covered in this issue cover a range of archaeological and textual matters. Two articles (Cavigneaux, Baragli and Gabbay) contain editions of fragments of tablets kept in British museums (Birmingham, London BM) which were published in cuneiform copy by A.R. George and J. Taniguchi in *Cuneiform Texts from the Folios of W.G. Lambert Parts One and Two* (Eisenbrauns 2019 and 2021). A preliminary version of the article by Olof Pedersén in this issue, concerning the find-spot of the Tower of Babylon Stele, has already contributed to the return of this artefact from a private collection to the Republic of Iraq. The text of the Babylon Stele was also originally published by Andrew George. A historical case of a legal dispute concerning the accession of an object by the British Museum is elucidated by Nadia Ait Said-Ghanem's article, which adds a further building block to our understanding of the role played by Iraqi antiquities dealers in contributing to the construction of European tablet collections. We are pleased to publish the results of legacy excavations at Tell Brak (Diffey *et al.* on 3rd millennium agricultural strategies) and at Tell Asmar in the Diyala (al-Luhaibi, on research carried out in Iraq shortly before the 2003 US-UK invasion, which was not published at the time due to the ensuing collapse of state institutions in the country). Articles also include materials from recent archaeological excavations at Amyan in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (Couturaud on terracotta nails). Our authors use a range of methods from landscape observations and photogrammetry (Brown and Rashid on the Rabana-Merquly site complex) to detailed comparisons of material culture (Amelirad *et al.* on the looted Kani Charmou cemetery materials and Assyrian-Mannaean connections). Recent surveys in western Iran have produced inscribed artefacts/bricks that are published here (Zeynivand and Sharifi).

We include obituaries of three towering scholars, Dr Joan Oates (BISI and Cambridge), Prof Amelie Kuhrt (UCL), and Prof James Kinnier-Wilson (Cambridge), who will be sadly missed even

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as their legacies continue to inspire. Obituaries of colleagues we have recently lost, Jonathan Tubb and David Hawkins, will be included in the next issue. As usual, we thank Saadi al-Tamimi for the Arabic translations of the abstracts; we hope to organise abstract translations in Kurdish soon. We owe an enormous debt to our reviewers, who so generously give their time and energy to support the work of the journal.

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