

ANGLO-IRAQI STUDIES CENTRE (AISC) OCTOBER 2016 NEWSLETTER



October 2016

What's Inside:

- Outreach activities
- From our library
- Anglo-Iraqi images
- Anglo-Iraqi poems
- Further information

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

An evening of poetry

* Nadeem Al-Abdalla, Manager of the Anglo-Iraqi Studies Centre, attended a cultural event held at Salam House on 5 October 2016, hosted by the Humanitarian Dialogue Foundation (HDF) in London.

This event featured an evening of poetry by the Iraqi poet, Ms Reem Kais Al-Kubba. Reem, along with a few other Iraqi poets, represents the trend of modernity of the last 25 years.



Ms Reem Kais Al-Kubba presents an evening of poetry at Salam House, 5 October 2016



The audience at Salam House listen to Reem's poetry recital, 5 October 2016

Iraqi stand, Turkish Embassy

* As part of the Anglo-Iraqi Studies Centre's community involvement with Iraqi issues, Nadeem and Ihsan from the AISC team joined the peaceful stand made by the Iraqi community, outside the Turkish embassy on 14 October 2016.

The Iraqi community's peaceful stand is in solidarity with the Iraqi people's liberation from Daesh, and the civil and military efforts made by Iraqis and their allies to liberate the city of Mosul and the Nineveh province from Daesh terrorism. As part of this, the Iraqi community ask the Turkish government to reconsider their decision to deploy troops in northern Iraq and to withdraw their troops from Iraqi territory.

The Turkish army's presence in northern Iraq is against the will of most Iraqis, and it happened without the request or consent of the Iraqi government, parliament or the people of Iraq. Turkey and Iraq have had a good relationship for decades, and this should not be affected by the current regional situation. The voice of rationality needs to prevail at this difficult time.



The Iraqi community in the UK stand in support of the Mosul liberation operation from Daesh, demanding the withdrawal of Turkish troops from Iraq as this has happened without the Iraqi parliament and government's consent



Future of America Debate

* Nadeem attended an academic and cultural event on "The Future of America", organised by CNN TV channel and London's Evening Standard newspaper.

This event was held on 27 October 2016 at The Royal Geographic Society, South Kensington, London. Hosted by CNN news anchor Hala Gorani, the event discussed America's future ahead of November's presidential election between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton.

The panel included Sir Christopher Meyer, a former British Ambassador to the USA, New Yorker journalist Lauren Collins, the British MP for Spelthorne, Kwasi Kwarteng, Green Party parliamentary candidate Larry Sanders, whose brother Bernie Sanders stood against Mrs Clinton for the Democratic Party nomination, former newspaper publisher Lord Black of Crossharbour and Josh Berger, Chairman of the British Film Institute and UK head of Warner Bros.

This debate focused on the hopes and fears of the American people and the choice that Trump and Clinton, two very different candidates, presented to them, and its impact on the world and America's international relations. The questions of the audience reflected the concerns of the international community; issues raised included Europe, Brexit, Middle East, Iraq and Syria. At the end of the debate, most of the panel predicted a victory for Hillary Clinton and when it was put to the audience, 90% raised their hands to indicate they predicted a Clinton victory!

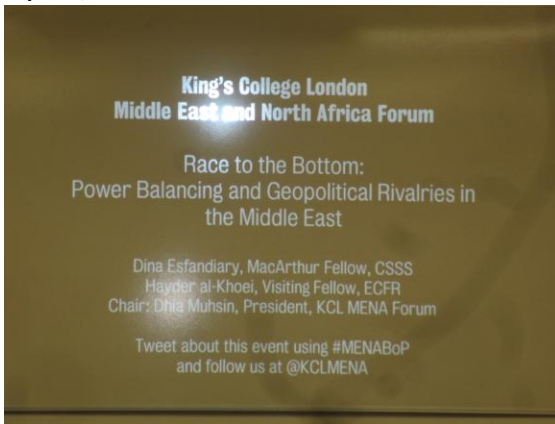


Nadeem at the "Future of America" debate, held in London on 27 October 2016

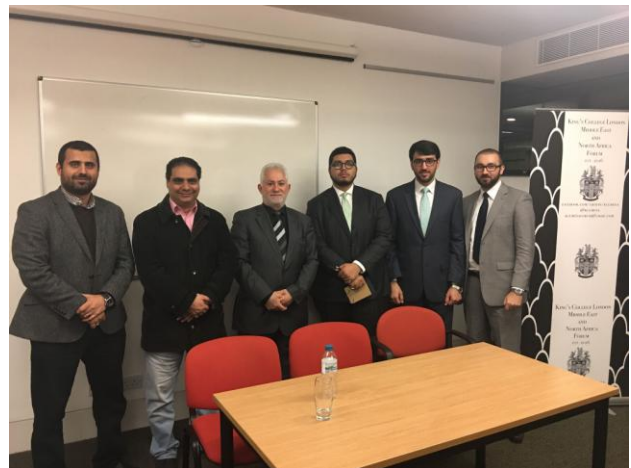
Middle East & North Africa Forum: Kings College London

* The Anglo-Iraqi Studies Centre are proud that one of our volunteer researchers, Dhiaa Muhsin who is currently a politics undergraduate student at Kings College London (KCL), has recently established a forum within KCL under the name "Middle East & North Africa Forum".

Ihsan and Nadeem from the AISC team were happy to attend the forum's first event, held at Kings College London (KCL) on 31 October 2016. This event was facilitated by Dhiaa, and its title was "Race to the Bottom: Power Balancing & Geopolitical Rivalries in the Middle East". The main speakers were university lecturer Dina Esfandiary and Hayder Al-Khoei, Middle East researcher, who spoke mainly about the current issues relating to Iraq, Syria, Iran and the Gulf.



The AISC team share Dhiaa Muhsin's first event of the MENA forum, Kings College London. Other photographs show Dhiaa with the speakers, Dina Esfandiary and Hayder Al-Khoei, talking about current challenges facing the Middle East



FROM OUR LIBRARY THIS MONTH

"Where Adam and Eve Lived" ***Published 1914 by Frederick & Margaret Simpich***

The above article was published in the December 1914 National Geographic magazine, and it was written by the American journalist, travel writer and diplomat Frederick Simpich (1878-1950) and his wife Margaret (nee Edwards) (1884-1981).

Simpich and his wife visited Baghdad in 1914, and described the city and country as "where Adam and Eve lived", hence the title of their article. After the First World War, Simpich spent some time working in America's diplomatic service and later became the editor of the National Geographic Magazine until his death in 1950.

Whilst Simpich describes in depth the character of Baghdad and its historical links with Western powers, and Western hopes for the region, Margaret spent time with the wives of a Baghdadi "pasha" and she describes her experience of visiting them in this article.



Gondala on the canals watering Baghdad's date gardens, Baghdad, 1914

Goofah boats bring passengers from steamer ship to shore, Baghdad, 1914



A busy Baghdad bazaar, 1914



The banks of the River Tigris at Baghdad, 1914. Pictured are keleks (round boats) and goofahs, which look similar to canoes and gondolas. These photos were taken by Frederick Simpich.



ANGLO-IRAQI IMAGES

"Pushing Back History's Horizon" (photos by Albert T Clay)

The above was the title of an article published by Professor Albert Tobias Clay (1866-1925) in the National Geographic's February 1916 magazine.

In this article, Clay talked about the excavations taking place of ancient Mesopotamian cities, including Ur, Nineveh, Babylon and Sumer, among others. Clay was an American academic who was Professor of Assyriology and Babylonian Literature at Yale University; he also founded Yale University's Babylonian Collection.

During his time visiting the excavation sites of these ancient cities, Clay took photographs of his own to accompany his National Geographic article. Whilst the majority of photos accompanying the articles were taken by Underwood & Underwood during their visit to these excavation sites in 1913, Clay's photos show the vastness of the city-states under excavation by Western archaeologists.

The work of Underwood & Underwood, an American photographic firm which traded between the 1880s and 1940s, has been covered in a previous newsletter. As such, we decided to showcase Clay's photographs of the Iraqi excavations at Nippur in this edition of our monthly newsletter.



Temple excavations at Nippur, 1916



Remains of a 4,000-year-old library in Nippur, 1916

ANGLO-IRAQI POEMS

"Samara Mounds" (by E J Thompson, 1919)

This was a poem published in "*Mesopotamian Verses*", a collection of poems by Edward John Thompson (1886-1946) written during his time serving with the British Army in their Mesopotamia Campaign. He served as a British Army Chaplain in Mesopotamia from 1916-1918.

Thompson was also the author of other poetry works, including "*The Knight Mystic*" (published 1907) and "*Collected Poems*" (published 1930). He also wrote a novel, "*These Men, Thy Friends*" (published 1927) which was a fictional account of events in Mesopotamia during 1916-1918 which was loosely based on his own experiences. However, Thompson also produced a factual account of these experiences in his book "*The Leicestershires Beyond Baghdad*", which was also published in 1919. It was his collection of poems, "*Mesopotamian Verses*" published the same year which cemented his reputation as a poet.

As we continue to remember 100 years since the battle for Mesopotamia, which resulted in Iraq becoming an independent state in 1920, Thompson's poems remind us that the British Army suffered the second highest number of casualties in their Mesopotamia front after the European front. They remind us of the involvement of Western powers, including that of the UK, in Iraq in the last two centuries.

Samara Mounds

Till sun and moon shall fall
And heaven its stars throw down,
As in autumn the oak-woods tall
Scatter their tarnished crown,

They shall lie here, who gave
More than men gave before;
Youth, like a running wave;
Strength, and the praise they bore;

Beauty, whose worshipped names,
Leaving their land of birth,
Follow, like mounting flames,
The sun's way over the earth.

And the desert hills shall hold
Their sacred bones in trust;
Ruins, and empires old,
Are dust to guard their dust.

And for us, because they died,
The things that they lost remain;
Friendship; and fireside;
Glamour of wood and lane;
Hawthorn; and hyacinth bells;
Deep meadows' billowy peace;
The high groves; heathery fells;
August, and fields' increase;

Morning; and solemn eves;
Sunset and night are ours;
The scurry of wings in the leaves;
Grass, and the glimmering flowers.



FURTHER INFORMATION

To find out more about the AISC project, our activities and services, please visit our website at:

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