

<b>Institution:</b> The University of Manchester		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 29 (Classics)		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Cultural protection in post-conflict Iraq		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2013–2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Stuart Campbell	Professor of Near Eastern Archaeology	1995-present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> August 2013–2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N</b>		
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>Cultural heritage infrastructure and archaeological training in Iraq were devastated during the Iran-Iraq War (1980s) and under the sanctions regime (1990s). Thousands of antiquities were looted from museums and archaeological sites in the aftermath of the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and during extensive civil unrest in 2008-2009. Campbell has carried out practice-based research in southern Iraq since 2013, placing the archaeologist as both activist and social practitioner in post-conflict zones. This research has: (1) supported professional training, capacity building and the creation of the first geophysics unit within Iraq's State Board for Antiquities and Heritage; (2) contributed to cultural protection planning; (3) enhanced community awareness of, and engagement with, archaeological heritage at local and national level in Iraq; and (4) contributed to cultural heritage advocacy in Iraq and at international level, including influencing the development of the UK government's Cultural Protection Fund.</p>		
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>The research began in 2013 in the continuing aftermath of the 2003 invasion of Iraq and the extensive subsequent civil unrest during 2008-2009. As well as direct damage to heritage sites, archaeological infrastructure had been severely disrupted, with loss of skills and particularly training capacity. The University of Manchester (UoM) was the first British HEI to restart fieldwork in southern Iraq, preceded only by one American and one Italian team. The decision to recommence work in southern Mesopotamia, one of the global hot spots for archaeological research prior to 1990, was taken explicitly to provide an in-country focal point through which to re-engage with Iraqi archaeologists and cultural heritage professionals, as well as the Iraqi and international public. While the research itself had to have academic excellence, the primary aim was to establish archaeological practice as a medium through which wider impact could be achieved.</p> <p>The research took place in two phases:</p> <p><b>1. The Ur Region Archaeology Project (2013-2017; co-directed by Campbell)</b></p> <p>The project excavated the site of Tell Khaiber, Dhi Qar province, southern Iraq [1–3]. One of the first excavated insights into the poorly known Sealand Dynasty of the mid-2nd millennium BCE, work focused on a large scale, fortified, institutional building that provided centralised administration in a rural area. The project represented a return of international field archaeology to long-neglected Babylonia, in collaboration with Iraq's State Board for Antiquities and Heritage (henceforth SBAH). While this research reconnected with areas of academic interest that had been suspended since the 1980s, it particularly focused on re-engaging with Iraqi archaeologists and local communities, and embedded training into research practice.</p> <p><b>2. The ancient site of Charax Spasinou, Basra province, southern Iraq (2016-2020; co-directed by Campbell)</b></p> <p>This was the first international fieldwork in Basra province since 1990. Founded by Alexander the Great, the city was the principal Mesopotamian port on the Persian Gulf, linking the Gulf, India and China with a trading network that ran through Palmyra to the Mediterranean and the Classical World between the 3rd century BC and 4th century AD [4]. This project was one of the six initial projects funded by the new UK government Cultural Protection Fund (CPF). Work at the site</p>		

focused on surface documentation together with limited excavation to produce a site management plan and document processes of site destruction. Key findings through extensive geophysics survey included areas of large-scale grid-plan urban layout and industrial areas. Training and provision of equipment were embedded in the project, which aimed at providing SBAH with enhanced capacity at the project's conclusion.

### 3. References to the research

#### Outputs

1. **Campbell, S.**, Moon, J., Killick, R., Calderbank, D., Robson, E., Shepperson, M., Slater, F. (2017) Tell Khaiber: an administrative centre of the Sealand period. *Iraq* 79: 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.1017/irq.2017.1>  
(*Iraq* is the journal of the British Institute for the Study of Iraq and is one of the oldest and most prestigious journals that are specific to the archaeology and ancient history of the region, and importantly one of the few that is widely available within Iraq.)
2. **Campbell, S.**, Killick, R., Moon, J., Calderbank, D., Robson, E. (2018) Summary report on excavations at Tell Khaiber, an administrative centre of the Sealand period, 2013-2017. *Sumer* 65: 15–46.  
(*Sumer* is the primary archaeology journal in Iraq, published by the State Board for Antiquities and Heritage, and easily the most widely circulated academic publication within the country. While there are challenges in publishing within Iraq, it is also an important commitment to archaeology in Iraq and for the dissemination of the research within the country.)
3. **Campbell, S.**, Calderbank, D., Killick, R. and Moon, J. (2017) A Kassite Settlement in Southern Babylonia - investigation at Tell Khaiber 2, *Sumer* 63: 93–.
4. **Campbell, S.**, Hauser, S., Killick, R., Moon, J. Shepperson, M. and Doležalková, V. (2018) Charax Spasinou: New Investigations at the capital of Mesene. *Zeitschrift für Orientarchäologie* 11 (2018): 212–239.  
(*Zeitschrift für Orientarchäologie* is the journal of the Orient Department of the German Archaeological Institute that publishes research of transregional significance.)

#### Grants

The Ur Region Archaeology Project: Funded by the British Institute for the Study of Iraq, the Augustus Foundation, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (through the British Embassy, Baghdad) and private sponsors. Total GBP448,143.

Charax Spasinou: Funded by i) The British Council Cultural Protection Fund, CPL-015-16 'Ground survey, documentation and protection of archaeological sites in Basrah Province, Iraq', 2017-2020, GBP329,780 awarded to UoM, PI Campbell; ii) the Foreign and Commonwealth Office through BPB Project FY2016/17: 'Countering Daesh Narrative Through Promoting Iraqi Heritage and Fostering National Identity', GBP30,000; iii) the Augustus Foundation, GBP15,000; and iv) the British Institute for the Study of Iraq, GBP5,000. It also received funding of EUR120,000 from the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft through the University of Konstanz.

### 4. Details of the impact

By 2013, cultural heritage in southern Iraq had sustained direct damage through extensive looting and unregulated construction and agriculture. At the same time archaeological infrastructure had become increasingly damaged and unable to respond to these threats. Skilled professionals and academics had left the country since the Iran-Iraq War in the 1980s, taking with them the expertise to train new staff. It was with these challenges that the research aimed to engage when it began in 2013. This context was amplified by the direct attacks by Daesh on cultural heritage in Iraq from March 2015, events that happened when the team was probably the only foreign archaeological team present in non-Kurdish Iraq. While the sites under direct attack were in northern Iraq, this event was felt profoundly both within Iraq and by the wider international community. This context not only gave additional urgency to the research, but also provided greater potential to influence public narrative and policy both in Iraq and abroad.

The research at the sites of Tell Khaiber [1-3] and Charax Spasinou [4] not only addressed cultural heritage preservation at the sites themselves but was the enabling factor through which other

outcomes, related to cultural heritage and the re-engagement of the international and Iraqi communities, were achieved. The team's official partner in Iraq was SBAH. Researchers operated under their permit and project aims were carefully coordinated with SBAH colleagues.

The impact of the research has come through several inter-connected routes:

### 1. Professional training and capacity building through collaboration

Researchers provided long-term professional training to 13 individuals employed by SBAH and selected by them as future leaders, across successive seasons in 24 training blocks between 2013 and 2019. Working in 2-3 month placements allowed in-depth engagement, and working with individuals across different seasons allowed the team to extend this to longer-term mentoring [A, B]. Feedback was very positive: "*it is amazing to have these skills*" [A]; the project was viewed as "*a major contribution to the capabilities of SBAH in Basra province*" [C]. This impact assisted in the recent rapid promotion of two trainees to the directorship of the Basra Museum and directorship of SBAH (Basra province) [D]. Funding for Charax Spasinou provided GBP35,000 of geophysics and surveying equipment to SBAH in Basra at the end of the project in January 2020. This provided the foundation for the creation of the first geophysics unit within SBAH, together with four experienced members of staff [C]. This technology provides an important new tool for evaluating threats to cultural assets and enabled a more effective management of economic development through rapid assessment of the presence of preserved architecture without excavation.

Training provided at Tell Khaiber to workmen from Nasariyah helped to reskill local labour and led to year-round employment as foremen working on archaeological excavations across southern Iraq [B]. The team also regularly visited Dhi Qar University between 2014 and 2017 to give presentations, address students and advise in the formation of a new archaeology faculty [B, E]; the first students of this programme graduated in 2018 and have entered employment with SBAH. Subsequently, UoM was a partner in the Nahrein Network (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/nahrein/>), part of the Global Challenges Research Fund, supporting ancient history research for education and sustainable development in Iraq.

Based on his research-led expertise, Campbell served as a member of the core group that founded the *International Association for Archaeological Research in Western & Central Asia*, a new professional organisation which supports the training and development of heritage professionals, and was elected to its executive board in June 2020 [F]. There are currently 457 members from 47 countries. This will become a further channel for integrating Iraqi archaeologists within the international profession, providing a platform through which to disseminate good practice in heritage protection and advocacy, and create the ARWA Online Academy to provide open access course material to support teaching [F].

### 2. Cultural heritage protection

Cultural heritage preservation was enhanced by the research team's production of a site protection plan for Charax Spasinou in January 2020, with implementation agreed by SBAH and with local communities as stakeholders [A, C]. The plan influences and benefits the process of generating planning decisions on land use through SBAH, provincial administration and the local council. Through prolonged fieldwork, the research has created new dialogues between archaeologists and the local community. These dialogues have changed community perceptions, including the view on long-term tourist potential [G] and protecting the landscape from systematic soil removal. The identification and recognition of the significance of material remains from the Iran-Iraq War as important cultural heritage is a further outcome [C, D].

Working with significant numbers of the police, initially as part of the team's security, led to considerable progress in promoting protection of sites from looting. The impact of this can be seen in the decline of looting not just at Charax Spasinou, but also other major sites in the north east of Basra province, such as Forat, the successor city to Charax Spasinou [A, C]. A survey of policemen who worked with the team at Charax Spasinou in 2018 showed an average increase of more than 5 points (on a 10-point scale) in understanding of cultural heritage issues [A].

### 3. Heritage and community engagement

The research produced new approaches to archaeological heritage, leading to greatly increased recognition of this heritage within Iraq at both local and national level. It involved a variety of forms of community outreach, including regular site tours at Tell Khaiber for local teachers (in particular with a group from al-Batta who visited annually from 2013), visits to schools, and formal and informal discussion with local community leaders. In Nasariyah [B, E], these were coordinated through the local Writer's Union. This engagement supported and facilitated better awareness of cultural heritage in the community, assisting site protection and provincial investment. It set a pattern for additional archaeological research, with the number of international teams working in Dhi Qar province, for example, rising from 2 in 2013 to 8 in 2019, which extends the impact of this research [B]. In the longer term, strengthening cultural heritage in education promotes generational change.

Charax Spasinou is one of the few sites in Basra province with potential iconic status, which maps onto the context for renewed focus on local and international tourism in the future. The site is now on the itinerary of Hinterland Tours, for example, directly attracted by the new awareness of the importance of the site through the research [G]. The first visits by tour groups took place in 2018. Charax Spasinou is also highlighted in the new displays in the Basra Museum, enhancing cultural heritage interpretation, and being seen by large number of school visitors [C, D] as well as contributing to future tourist provision.

### 4. Cultural heritage advocacy

Researchers have challenged the entrenched negative images of Iraq internationally, through large numbers of media appearances to global audiences. In the UK they included BBC Radio 4 and BBC Newsround [H]. This has helped to create a new narrative around Iraqi cultural heritage and the opportunities to engage positively with it [B, H]. As a reaction to the targeting of cultural heritage by Daesh in 2015, SBAH invited UoM researchers to create a pop-up exhibition on the Tell Khaiber excavations in the Iraq Museum in 2015, opened in a televised address by the Minister of Culture [B]. At the same time researchers participated in numerous university-led events and public meetings/protests in southern Iraq, including Qadissiyah and Nasiriyah, directly challenging the attacks on culture heritage and providing an almost unique focus for local expression of otherwise remote international condemnation [B, E]. This research-based public engagement led to Campbell's appointment as the founding vice-president of *Rashid International* in 2015 to promote the safeguarding of Iraqi heritage.

Researchers provided regular briefings to provincial officials and worked closely with senior police officials in both Dhi Qar and Basra provinces, significantly enhancing prioritisation of the protection of cultural heritage. This led, for example, to the ending of looting at the important site of Forat in Basra province [C] and control over the extensive stripping of topsoil south of Charax Spasinou [A].

Briefings to the British Embassy, particularly in 2015 and 2016 in the aftermath of the destruction of sites by Daesh, led to direct sponsorship of the Ur Region Archaeology Project from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office through the British Embassy in Baghdad. Funding was provided under the programme 'Countering Daesh Narrative Through Promoting Iraqi Heritage and Fostering National Identity' in 2016. [text removed for publication] The Charax Spasinou research has continued to influence CPF development [J]. In a testimonial, the CPF Senior Programme Manager notes that the Charax Spasinou project "*has been pivotal to the development of the [CPF] programme*" [J]. The research and data from the successfully completed project are "*continuing to be of use in the fund's current programme evaluation*" which will in turn contribute to the development of "*a larger, more strategically focussed version of the Cultural Protection Fund as well as wider heritage initiatives at the British Council. It also informs the cultural protection work of our UK government partner, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.*" [J]

### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- A. 'Ground survey, documentation and protection of archaeological sites in Basrah Province, Iraq' (CPL-015-16). A Final Report. Evaluation report to the Cultural Protection Fund, including draft site protection plan (2020).
- B. Testimonial from Minister of Culture, Iraq (2018-2020) (5 January 2021). Corroborates impact on cultural heritage protection in Iraq, including through training, development of skills and the rebuilding of international links.
- C. Testimonial from Director of Antiquities for Basra Province, State Board for Antiquities and Heritage, Iraq (2008-present) and Director of Basra Museum (2008-2019) (16 December 2020). Corroborates impacts on professional training and capacity building, cultural heritage protection and the work of Basrah Museum.
- D. Testimonial from Director of Basrah Museum (2019-2020) (November 2020). Corroborates impacts on professional training and capacity building, cultural heritage protection and the work of Basrah Museum.
- E. Testimonial from freelance writer and activist in cultural heritage, Writer's Union of Nasiriyah, Dhi Qar province (14 December 2020). Corroborates community engagement and cultural heritage advocacy.
- F. Foundation documentation for the International Association for Archaeological Research in Western & Central Asia: [www.arwa-international.org](http://www.arwa-international.org)
- G. Testimonial from Managing Director, Hinterland Tours, corroborating the inclusion of Charax Spasinou on the company's tour route (provided 2020).
- H. Report on media engagement and coverage of the research (2014-2015).
- I. [text removed for publication]
- J. Testimonial from Senior Programme Manager, Cultural Protection Fund, British Council (14 December 2020). Corroborates the impact of the research on the development of the Cultural Protection Fund.