The impact on libraries and archives in Iraq of war and looting in 2003 - a preliminary assessment of the damage and subsequent reconstruction efforts

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Abstract

The early reports that appeared during and immediately after the 2003 war and subsequent civil disorder in Iraq provoked public and professional concern about the impact on libraries and archives services. However, many of the early reports were later proved to be unreliable, and subsequent reports correcting that information have been less well publicised. Moreover the mass media have focused on a few well known institutions, and paid little attention to the post-war reconstruction efforts. This paper aims to provide a more rounded and reliable picture, based on a critical reading of a wide range of official and unofficial media, and summarises the scattered information in the public domain about the overall situation up to the end of 2004. A brief note of the main reconstruction programmes is followed by an outline of some of the contextual issues relating to the rehabilitation of Iraq's library and information services. An extended review of what has been reported about the impact on individual elements of the professional panorama in Iraq covers not only the National Library and Archives, but also the university libraries and significant special libraries, as well as noting the limited information available about college, school, and public libraries. The state of the main archival collections is outlined, and an appendix lists the minor collection and their reported condition. It concludes with an examination of the human resource issues. Finally, the paper discusses the problems that have arisen through the lack of quality information about events during the conflict and continuing civil disorder in Iraq, and some issues relating to current and future reconstruction efforts. The paper points to the need not only to repair damaged buildings, replace looted equipment and make good the deficiencies in collections, but also to mobilise and modernise the indigenous professional workforce to implement the reconstruction.

Introduction

"The first casualty when war comes is the truth."
- Senator Hiram Johnson, in a speech to the US Senate on February 3, 1917

Widespread looting of libraries and archives services in Iraq took place after the brief war that led to the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime in April 2003, in a cultural disaster that has been resembled to the sacking of Baghdad by the Mongol hordes in 1258 A.D. by, amongst others, the Venezuelan scholar Fernando Báez, one of the members of the first mission sent to Iraq after the war by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and author of '*Historia universal de la destrucción de los libros*' (Báez, 2004; Marquez, 2005). Because this damage followed budgetary restrictions that had steadily worsened during the 1980s and the embargo imposed by the United Nations that, since 1991, had further reduced acquisitions and minimised awareness of changes in professional practice, Iraqi libraries were "doubly wrecked" (Arnoult, 2003a).

Speaking in mid-April 2003, after the war, the Director-General of UNESCO, Koïchiro Matsuura, warned that the devastation and looting of libraries and archives in the country may have irreversible consequences.
> "Libraries, archives and manuscripts must be preserved as essential parts of the rich heritage of Iraq. Libraries are the essence of knowledge societies. Nearly twenty centuries of written history of mankind are in danger; everything must be done to protect them from looting and destruction… Measures must be taken to protect governmental records that are held by archives, since they are vital for the functioning of public administration after the war, for example, to protect the legal, financial and contractual rights of Iraqi citizens." (Matsuura, quoted by Felfoldi, 2003)

The present circumstances of libraries, information and archives services in Iraq remain to be clarified. Ignorance of the situation in Iraq is widespread, as relatively few foreign professionals have visited the country in the last 50 years, and those working in the field in Iraq became even more isolated from the international professional community during the last 20 years. This has had significant consequences. For example, following the fall of the Saddam regime, the UK government's immediate priority was the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the rehabilitation of Iraq's essential infrastructure, including its education system. As part of this process, the British Council surveyed UK Universities to assess their interest in assisting Iraq, but ignorance of what was needed (and of any relevant expertise their staff might have) may have inhibited their responses.

Public awareness has focused on the reports of damage to archaeological sites, and major cultural institutions, particularly the National Museum and the National Library and Archives. The damage to other libraries and archives throughout the country has attracted little if any attention in the mass media. Awareness and understanding of the situation is bedevilled by the impressions created by what can now be seen to have often been inaccurate or exaggerated early reports in the mass media of the damage to those institutions in Baghdad that resulted from the short war in March and April 2003 and the civil disorder that immediately followed it. In this respect, it was no different from any other crisis. Following a study that had examined the media's treatment of another disaster, Campbell explained that

> "... news, particularly 'disasters', is generally framed pessimistically and coverage is intense, thereby reinforcing the negative images which surround issues." (Campbell, 1999)

Partisan reports by those supportive of the Coalition and emotive commentaries by those attributing blame to the occupation forces have both obscured the facts. Other, occasional reports by academics and others who had not verified, or qualified, the statements that they were repeating have also shaped the public and professional response, and yet – as one observer commented, with hindsight:

> "Acting precipitously based on early news can be a political liability, a step in the wrong direction that will have to be retraced, and a catalyst for disharmony with other parties who are critical to the resolution." (Hitchcock, 2003)

Any mistaken impressions that were initially created have not been countered, largely because the mass media's subsequent focus has been on the continuing security problems and, to a lesser extent, on the looting of archaeological sites, rather than on the slow but not insignificant efforts to begin to rebuild Iraq's infrastructure.

Better-informed reports have appeared regularly, but not necessarily all enjoyed a wide circulation. Whilst a variety of information media have carried more accurate and sometimes substantial accounts of the situation in Iraq, only those people with a particular interest in the Arab world or the history of the Islamic civilisation are likely to have developed anything approaching a comprehensive understanding of events. Even for them, the picture was obscured by the range and scatter of sources and the often fragmentary, and evolutionary, nature of the reports they provide.

Research aims and methodology

This paper aims to provide a balanced review of the situation in Iraq based on the information available in the public domain. The intention is to analyse the evidence to better inform decision making about the reconstruction effort required, but not to engage in a debate about the detailed requirements of specific institutions.

To maintain a sharp focus and produce useful findings, specific objectives were set to guide the direction of the research effort (Creswell, 2003). These were:
- To identify the main sources of information in the public domain relating to libraries and archives services in Iraq concerning events during the war in 2003 and the post-war civil disorder, and reconstruction efforts up to the end of 2004;
- To collate as much as possible of the available information and critically analyse it to provide an assessment of the overall impact on the country's libraries and archives services;
- To identify, so far as is possible from the documentary evidence, the principal issues still to be addressed in the reconstruction process in Iraq;
- To draw out any lessons from the experience of events in Iraq that might usefully guide the library and information science community in preparing for and managing any future disaster, whether man-made or natural.

The paper does seek to identify general lessons that may be applicable if other similar situations occur. However, it does not attempt a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of the present state of librarianship and information sciences in Iraq. That would depend on a reading of this paper together with others, still in preparation, that review the evidence about developments in Iraq up to and since 1979 when Saddam Hussein became President.

Sources of evidence

Stoddart (1999) has pointed out that
> "Crises are by nature urgent events, and it is this urgency which frequently causes an *ad hoc* response… [but] Decision makers need synthesized data that have been validated and corroborated."

Babbie (2004) argues that the more sources point to the same set of facts, the more credibility can be attached to the accuracy of the findings, providing the form of triangulation expected in any case study. This paper, therefore, seeks to consolidate what was known (or at least what had appeared in the public domain) about the situation on the ground up to the end of 2004.

Amongst the first reports to appear in the press after American forces entered Baghdad were several that reported first the sacking of the Iraqi (National) Museum by looters, and then similar acts of vandalism at Iraq's National Library and Archives (al-Maktabah al-Wataniyah) and the nearby manuscript library of the Ministry of Awqaf (Riedlmayer, 2003b). This and other reports from the mass media have been used regularly as sources of evidence for this study, but the author has been careful to recognise that:
> "In some news organisations, then, the basic factual information is dressed up with drama to make it more acceptable at higher levels in the editorial chain. Certain facts are given more emphasis than others … to give the story greater impact." (Campbell, 1999)

A number of substantial reports were subsequently produced by individuals or groups who managed to make visits to Iraq concerned to establish a more sober assessment of the situation than was available from the reports in the mass media. Edouard Méténier, a French social historian who had spent 6 months researching in Iraqi libraries and archives, mostly in Baghdad from November 2002 until early April 2003, provided the first substantial account, generally distinguishing between what he had actually seen and what he had been told by local contacts. He had little or no news about libraries outside the capital (Méténier, 2003).

One summary of these early reports appropriately concluded that
> "The overall picture is still far from clear - particularly for libraries and archives outside Baghdad, but there are encouraging reports that many institutions took steps to evacuate at least parts of their collection to safer storage elsewhere" (Shaw, 2003)

Well before the outbreak of the conflict, UNESCO had taken a number of steps to ensure that the different parties likely to be involved in the conflict were aware of the terms of the 1954 Hague Convention and its two additional protocols relating

to the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict (UNESCO. Spokesperson of the Director-General, 2003b). These seek to ensure that governments protect cultural property of great importance such as rare collections of books and original manuscripts, but neither of the Coalition's leading partners were signatories. After the war began, the Director General of UNESCO called an emergency meeting to discuss the best ways of responding to the situation. After reports of the damage to the National Library appeared, he called for libraries and archives to be given the same protection as other parts of Iraq's rich cultural heritage (UNESCO Office of the Spokeswoman, 2003b). Some 30 leading experts met at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on 17th April 2003 and recommended *inter alia*:

- that all museums, libraries, archives, monuments and sites in Iraq be guarded and secured immediately by the forces in place
- that an immediate prohibition be placed on the export of all antiques, antiquities, works of art, books and archives from Iraq
- that there be an immediate fact-finding mission under UNESCO coordination to assess the extent of damage and loss to cultural property in Iraq
- that there be the facilitation of international efforts in assisting cultural institutions in Iraq (UNESCO Spokesperson, 2003a).

The reports in the mass media had outraged public and professional opinion, and alarmed scholars and others interested in the history, literature, culture and religion of the Arab world. The relevant professional associations were not slow to express their support for UNESCO's stance. The American Library Association, for example, issued a statement on 23rd April offering such assistance as it could, but also repeating the widely held misconception that the Iraqi National Library and Archives had been totally destroyed (Dowling, 2003), whilst in Britain CILIP, the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, followed with a similar statement a few days later. In the both countries, however, the failure of the professional associations to simultaneously condemn the military action initiated by the governments was questioned by those who were more fundamentally opposed to the war and to the occupation of Iraq (Rosenzweig, 2003; Pateman, 2003).

Strong support for the statement made by UNESCO's experts' meeting regarding the events in Iraq, particularly as regards libraries and archives, was given by the Intergovernmental Council for UNESCO's Information for All Programme, who met in Paris at this time (Plathe, 2003a) - presumably without its Iraqi member. The Intergovernmental Council requested UNESCO to pay particular attention to libraries and archives, and to cooperate with the competent Non-Governmental Organisations to safeguard, preserve, reconstruct and develop libraries and archives in Iraq and to develop an information and knowledge based society (Plathe, 2003a).

By the end of April, the first reports had began to appear in the mass media indicating that significant collections had been transferred to safe keeping, and that some looted items were being returned,.

From 15 to 20 May 2003, an expert mission arranged by UNESCO visited Baghdad to elaborate a first report on the state of Iraqi cultural heritage. The aims of the mission were:

- To carry out a first assessment of the conditions of Iraqi cultural heritage, evaluating the most urgent needs of the Iraqi museum, monuments, sites and cultural institutions in Baghdad;
  - To start drafting an overall strategy for the protection and conservation of the Iraqi cultural heritage, including immediate measures and short and long-term actions. (UNESCO, 2003a)

The organisation of the mission was not without controversy. The Library and Information Science professional community reacted with astonishment to reports that the Coalition Provisional Administration in Iraq had refused a visa to Jean-Marie Arnoult, Inspecteur-Generale at the Bibliotheque National de France, apparently on the grounds of his French nationality and because France had opposed the war on Iraq (Buckley Owen, 2003). Arnoult had recent experience of the pre-war state of the National Library (Arnoult, 1999), and had been the sole librarian proposed as a member of the UNESCO mission. Some of the professional criticism was muted, for pragmatic reasons:

> "Nobody wants to criticise the U.S. ban on Arnoult openly because everybody wants to maintain a good working relationship with the occupation forces in Iraq… What is important now is to have a mission of experts travelling regularly to Iraq to assess the damage done by the war" (Godoy, 2003)

Amongst other activities, the members of the first UNESCO mission visited the National Archives, the "Manuscripts Centre", and the "Baghdad Library" (Boughida, 2003). The use, in a UNESCO Press Release after the mission's return, of such ambiguous titles for the institutions visited added to the continuing uncertainty about the fate of Iraqi institutions. In addition to the official report (UNESCO, 2003a), several participants in the mission subsequently recorded personal recollections and impressions (Báez, 2003a; Gibson, 2004; Russell, 2003).

MELCOM, the European Association of Middle East Librarians, assembled in Beirut at its 25th annual conference at the end of May 2003. Usama Al-Naqshabandi, then the Director of the Dar al-Makhtutat (House of Manuscripts), regretfully informed them that he would not attend the conference. He apparently so feared the lawlessness of Baghdad's streets that he was afraid to leave his house (Quilty, 2003a). MELCOM's members gave Iraq special attention, supported a declaration deploring the state of affairs in that country, and proposed to send a highly qualified professional from among its members into Iraq to assess the situation (Koopman, 2003). Despite its best intentions, MELCOM was not able to follow up immediately by arranging for one of its senior members to visit Iraq. The delegate, MELCOM's former President Jan Just Witkam, was subsequently unable to make the proposed visit (Johnson, 2004).

However, Nabil Al-Tikriti, then a research student at the University of Chicago (now Assistant Professor in the Department of History and American Studies at the University of Mary Washington in Virginia) who has family ties to Iraq and had done research and NGO work there in the past, did manage to visit Baghdad from 25-31 May, interviewed a number of officials working with manuscript (MSS) collections, libraries, and academic research facilities, and circulated a major report a few days later (Al Tikriti, 2003). Some of his reports on major institutions in Baghdad are noted in later sections of this paper, and Appendix A includes notes from his report on the probable circumstances of some of the smaller and provincial manuscript (MS) collections. He acknowledged that

> "As I did not physically see a single MS in the course of these interviews, I cannot personally vouch for the physical state of the preserved MSS... As many of the interviews were conducted in some haste, certain details (especially chronological details) provided below may be open to clarification in the future... While it did not affect the research presented here, it was made quite clear to me by one US official that permission would not have been granted for my visit, had it been sought." (Al Tikriti, 2003)

A month later, Keith Watenpaugh (Assistant Professor of Eastern Mediterranean and Islamic History at Le Moyne College in Syracuse, New York) led a small team of historians of the contemporary Middle East to Iraq from 22 to 30 June 2003, with support from the Middle East Library Association as well as some money from foundations and institutions, including Le Moyne College and the University of Toronto. Watenpaugh's team made an early, preliminary report at the end of June (Watenpaugh, 2003b). The team's final report (Watenpaugh *et al.*, 2003) subsequently reached a wider audience in an unauthorised translation into Arabic (Watenpaugh, 2004b).

Between Watenpaugh's initial statement, and the publication of the team's final report in mid July, from which evidence is extracted in the later parts of this paper, a second UNESCO expert mission, organised in close cooperation with the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) and again led by Mounir Bouchenaki, undertook another one-week visit to Iraq from June 27 to July 6 2003. This time, the team included Jean-Marie Arnoult, the French specialist in archives and libraries who had been excluded from the previous mission. His terms of reference required him, *inter alia*, to:
> "carry out an assessment of the Iraqi Museum in Baghdad and other cultural institutions in Baghdad in order to identify the urgent need in terms of rehabilitation of the mentioned-sites and accordingly, drafting project proposals in his/her field of expertise" (Arnoult, 2003a).

Iraqi authorities were represented throughout the mission by Wishyar Muhammad, the CPA Adviser for libraries and archives to the Iraqi Ministry of Culture, an Iraqi Kurd who had taken postgraduate degrees in librarianship in Britain, and who had at one time been a member of teaching staff of the Department of Librarianship in Al Mustansiriyah University.[1] Their programme had to be adapted each day to the security conditions. To make a coherent assessment of libraries and archives in Iraq, it was decided that mainly libraries and institutions placed under the authority of the Ministries of Education, of Culture, and of Religious Affairs should be visited. Those actually visited by Arnoult included the first libraries outside Baghdad on which reliable reports became available:
- Baghdad: National Library; National Archives ; House of Manuscripts; Awqaf Library; Al Mustansiriyah University Library
- Basrah: Central Public Library; Central University Library; Islamic Library

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[1] Mr. Muhammad provided invaluable assistance to various early visitors and projects concerned with the rehabilitation of Iraq's library and archives services, but left Iraq at the end of his contract, after the CPA handed power over to the interim Iraqi government at the end of June 2004, and apparently after efforts to persuade the U.S. Department of State to support an extension to his contract to assist the Director General of the National Library and Archives (Jones, 2004c). Subsequent efforts failed to persuade him to return (Spurr, 2005)

- Mosul: Public Central Library; Central University Library; Library of the Museum (Arnoult, 2003a).

There was nothing about libraries and archives in the main mission report (UNESCO, 2003b) that was not to be found in Arnoult's individual report to UNESCO, which is summarised at relevant points later in this paper. Arnoult subsequently presented his report at a UNESCO Meeting of Experts on Iraqi Cultural Heritage hosted by the Japanese government at the beginning of August (Plathe, 2003b), and then at the IFLA Conference in Berlin later that month (Arnoult, 2003b), where a resolution urging action by governments to help restore the library and information infrastructure in Iraq was passed by the delegates at the closing session. The Tokyo meeting more specifically recommended that it was necessary:

> "To ensure the sustainability of cultural institutions in Iraq, by carrying out a thorough needs assessment on the basis of a comprehensive questionnaire, including archives and libraries in the country." (UNESCO, 2003c)

At the same time as the second UNESCO mission was in the country, a team of experts led by John Hamre, President and CEO of the independent Center for Strategic and International Studies, also visited 11 cities in Iraq at the request of the American authorities to provide an assessment of the general requirements for post-conflict reconstruction (Hamre *et al.*, 2003).

In addition to drawing on these official and unofficial visitors' reports, this study is based on a close reading of a wide range of official statements on the web sites of relevant international and governmental agencies (including the CPA, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the British Council, UNESCO, and the World Health Organisation (WHO); unofficial 'blogs' (web logs) created by foreigners based in Iraq during and after the war, and latterly by Iraqis themselves; and the archives of a number of email discussion lists concerned with Iraq and the Middle East, whose contents have often identified further reports in the mass media. These have all been searched using terms such as library, archive, and book (and their plurals). A particularly valuable source has been the 'Iraqcrisis' discussion list, hosted by the University of Chicago Oriental Institute.[2] These various sources have been supplemented by notes made by the author based on semi-structured conversations, focused on verifying and complementing what had been published, that were undertaken during a number of meetings with participant-observers in the events and situation - senior members of the Iraqi academic and library and information professions, during their visits to the U.K. in early 2004 and at a workshop in Amman in June 2004.

By bringing the available evidence together, this paper not only presents a generally more comprehensive picture than partial and isolated reports have permitted to date, but also established a basis for coherently evaluating pieces of information that previously appeared contradictory. The paper is largely dependent on reports in European languages, mainly English, and does not claim to be complete. Some news reports, identified long after their original publication, are now in fee-based archives. Although two email services

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[2] 'Iraqcrisis' discussion list archive [online]:
https://listhost.uchicago.edu/mailman/listinfo/iraqcrisis [Accessed 30 December 2004]

summarising Iraqi newspapers have been followed, they are also necessarily selective in their coverage in English. Moreover, some agencies' reports are selective, which is perhaps unsurprising. Given the scale of activity and the number of projects that have been or are being undertaken, reports on the rehabilitation of libraries and archives services may have been suppressed, in the interest of brevity, in reports of activity at their host institutions. A further deficiency in the available information sources is that some commercial organisations, such as BearingPoint (formed in 2002 by merging many of the national offices of KPMG Consulting and Anderson Business Consulting), and Non-Governmental Organisations, such as ACDI/VOCA, do not report on their web sites on their substantial involvement in the reconstruction process in Iraq. It should also be noted that several of the USAID HEAD projects' web sites have not been updated, perhaps because of budgetary or personnel changes after the first contract year.

The principal problem encountered in undertaking the research was the shortage of substantive, reliable information, and particularly the scattered distribution of such information as was available. Given the continuing disruption to normal communication services and the ongoing security problems that restricted the potential for on-site survey work, a secondary problem was to identify and assess the actual extent and nature of damage to Iraq's libraries and archives resulting from the war and the subsequent looting, so far as this was possible and practicable from the documentary evidence available.

The outcome of the research is an inductive study that first notes the beginnings of the reconstruction effort to give the context for the details provided later in the paper. To provide a perspective on some of the challenges being encountered in that process, it also briefly discusses the state of two key drivers for reconstruction - the economy and government, and of two foundation stones in the development of literacy and libraries - education and publishing. The paper then collates and analyses the available evidence about the damage to libraries of different kinds and the principal archival collections, and about the reconstruction that has been commenced or completed. It also discusses the controversy that still surrounds the looting that took place. The paper reports on the current state of professional education, and the indigenous professional resources available to carry through the reconstruction. Finally, it examines the conditions required for reconstruction to be carried out effectively. This paper, then, is a study in recent history that accords with Shera's (1952) view that the study of library history allows librarians not only to understand the present but also to fulfil their social responsibility more effectively.

The beginnings of rehabilitation efforts

The principal rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts have been led by the partners in the Coalition that overthrew the Saddam regime. The plans and activities of other national and international governmental and non-governmental agencies are also reported here in so far as they have been mentioned in the sources examined for this study. Many of these agencies seem to have operated largely independent of each other, and their activities are accordingly reported here separately.

Activities supported by United States government agencies

As early as the end of May 2003, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Higher Education and Development program - HEAD - called for partnerships between American and Iraqi colleges and universities to modernise Iraq's institutions of higher education as well as stimulate economic growth and agricultural sustainability (USAID, 2003a). The first recipients of grants eventually made by the HEAD program were:

- a consortium led by the State University of New York at Stony Brook which was to partner with Baghdad University, Al Mustansiriyah University, Basrah University, and Mosul University in updating teaching and research in archaeology and environmental health.
- the University of Hawaii College of Agriculture and Human Resources which would partner with the University of Mosul and University of Dohuk to strengthen related academic, research, and extension programs.
- DePaul University College of Law and the International Institute of Higher Studies in Criminal Sciences (Italy) which would work with the Universities of Baghdad, Basrah, and Suleimanyah on legal education reform (USAID, 2004h).

Subsequently, two more projects were awarded funds (USAID Press Office, 2003):

- the 'Al Sharaka' ("partnership" in Arabic) Program for Higher Education in Iraq, a project to be undertaken by the Oklahoma Higher Education Partnership (with an association with the University of Pittsburgh implied by a link included on the web site), led by the University of Oklahoma's College of Continuing Education, which was intended to provide technical expertise to Iraq's universities and technical colleges for up to 3 years, working principally with the University of Basrah, Salahaddin University in Arbil City, and Al-Anbar University in Ramadi (USAID, 2003a; Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, 2004).
- the Mississippi Consortium for International Development, led by Jackson State University, which was expected to take three to five years to address public health and sanitation issues in collaboration with the University of Mosul's Department of Public Health, College of Medicine and the Department of Sanitation Engineering, College of Engineering, and the College of Nursing (Jackson State University,2004).

The scale and duration of this support was not made clear, but the first year funding for the 5 projects totalled more than $21 million (USAID Press Office, 2003) and, if funded for all the planned three years, the consortium of Oklahoma universities alone would receive more than $14.6 million (University of Oklahoma, 2004). A critical component of all these projects, aimed at restoring Iraq's capacity to conduct higher education in these fields, is bringing libraries - including both their holdings and their management - up to current standards. Some of the projects began work quickly. A team from Stony Brook University made a visit to Baghdad, 17-22 December, 2003, to initiate the on-site part of their project, and the team included Christian Filstrup, Director of Libraries (Filstrup, 2004). At about the same time, a team from DePaul University visited Baghdad, and shortly afterwards one of the University's law library specialists took up temporary residence in Iraq, and began a 'blog' (Morris, 2004). However, it was not until March 2004 that work plans for the Jackson State/MCID, University of Oklahoma, and DePaul University partnerships were finalised and approved (USAID, 2004c).

In addition, in mid-July 2003, the U.S. Department of State (2003) proposed a programme of activity to preserve Iraq's cultural heritage. The announcement indicated that

- "The Library of Congress will spearhead the work to be done with libraries by helping to reconstitute pre-war Iraqi collections; assist Iraqi librarians as they expand and modernize their library system; and provide training opportunities for Iraqi librarians.
- The Institute of Museum and Library Services will support American librarians and museum professionals in partnership with their Iraqi counterparts to create and share digital content and develop educational resources.
- The National Endowment for the Arts will partner with other federal agencies, American institutions and their Iraqi counterparts to work toward the restoration of Iraq's artistic legacy including providing leadership and funding for the documentation, preservation and exhibition of works of art. The Coalition Provisional Authority is working with Iraqi experts to protect and restore libraries, museums, and important cultural sites. As specific needs are identified, they are communicated to donor countries and organizations."

Funds were also provided by the U.S. National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to support projects to help rebuild Iraq's cultural heritage. The first awards under the agency's special initiative, "Recovering Iraq's Past," were announced in April 2004. The 6 grants, totalling $559,000, support projects intended to preserve and document Iraq's cultural resources and to develop education and training opportunities for Iraq's librarians, archivists, and preservation specialists. These included an online catalogue of the National Museum's cuneiform tablets, a cultural heritage inventory, and the creation of a tutorial in Arabic on the preservation of printed and non-book media that would be made available on the Internet and as a CD-ROM for distribution in Iraq (NEH, 2004).

The NEH grants also included $100,000 for a two-year joint program by the Simmons College Graduate School of Library and Information Science and the Harvard University library system to provide training for Iraqi librarians and archivists to modernise their library systems. In collaboration with Harvard's librarians, the Simmons faculty are also expected to oversee a series of special projects that the Iraqis identify as most needed to rebuild their contemporary and historic collections (Millikan, 2004). Members of the team and some of their advisory panel held their first meeting with a group of Iraqis in June 2004. The meeting took place in Amman, Jordan, partly because of the ongoing security problems in Baghdad, but principally because the terms of the NEH grant prohibited travel in Iraq.

In October 2003, it was announced that the Fulbright Program was being re-opened to applicants from Iraq (Armitage, 2003; USAID, 2003g). The first Fulbright Scholars, from Salahaddin University, went to the U.S.A. early the following year (CPA North, 2004).

Activities supported by British government agencies

The British government's Department of Trade and Industry's Education and Training Exports group (ETEG), together with Foreign and Commonwealth Office

officials and the British Council, initially aimed to put together a longer-term education and training strategy, with an emphasis on public diplomacy and the rebuilding of bilateral links between Britain and Iraq (Publishers Association, 2003a). No formal inter-departmental agreement on this exists (Foster, 2005).

In August 2003, the British Council appointed a books and information specialist as Acting Director for Iraq. He visited Iraq early in the month, although remaining based in London (Waite, 2003b). Following 3 visits made by the British Council team, it was decided that the Council's activities would focus on, *inter alia*, the development of English language learning centres, online information services, and a number of 'Chevening' scholarships. By December the Council had made a substantive appointment as Director, and was in the process of setting up its new office in Baghdad, run initially by locally recruited members of staff (Waite, 2003c). The Council had already arranged shipments of donated books and journals to Iraqi Universities (Jobbings, 2003), with more expected to arrive in Iraq in mid-January (BBC, 2004). By February 2004, the Council's local Director was based in Amman, but it was to be several more months before he relocated from Amman to Baghdad. In March 2004, the re-opening of the Council's offices in Baghdad was seemingly little known (Fattah, 2004b).

A group of Iraqi University Presidents and Vice-Presidents participated in a meeting in London, 28 - 30 January 2004, organised by the Iraq Higher Education Organising Committee (a group of Iraqi academics working in the UK) in collaboration with the University of Westminster and supported by the British Council (Iraq Higher, 2004). The focus of the meeting was the reconstruction of Higher Education in Iraq (Al Hussaini, 2004), and discussions were informed by numerous first hand accounts (Al Jabrey, Al Joborae, Al Musawi, Habeeb, Hussain, 2004) of the recent damage from war and looting, as well as the consequences of long-term deterioration in state funding for the universities.

In March 2004, to coincide with the 2004 London Book Fair, UK Trade and Investment paid the expenses for a group of eight senior Iraqi librarians and publishers to visit London, accompanied by Wishyar Mohammed, and the British Council organised the recruitment of the group. The Publishers Association organised the group's programme of professional visits (Publishers Association: International Division, 2004). The visitors' programme focused on book supply for higher education, journals and databases for libraries, and some discussion of copyright issues, but some of the visitors were also able to provide the author with an initial, first hand summary of the state of librarianship in general and professional education in particular, details from which are incorporated in later sections of this paper (Qassim *et al.*, 2004).

Events in Iraq seem to have at least one particularly beneficial effect in Britain. The British government had signed the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the event of armed conflict, but had chosen to not ratify the Convention or its first protocol. The public outrage at events in Iraq may have been behind a Ministerial announcement on 14 May 2004 that Britain would at last ratify the Convention. That process, however, seems likely to take 2 to 4 years to complete, because new legislation is required to incorporate or clarify features of the protocol in British law (Cole, 2005).

Some months after the conflict, the inter-governmental agencies began to announce support for the reconstruction of Iraq's libraries.

UNESCO, through its active participation in the Oil-for-Food programme, was already present in Iraq before the war began. The Director General had also set up an internal task force to coordinate its post-conflict activities in relation to Iraq's education system and cultural heritage (UNESCO Office of the Spokeswoman, 2003a). In September 2003, the UNESCO Executive Board approved the establishment of the International Coordination Committee for the Safeguarding of the Cultural Heritage in Iraq, and some of the necessary project funds had been secured by the following March, although the committee itself did not hold its first plenary session until May 2004. One of the seven objectives then set by the committee was to assist the Iraqi Minister of Culture to devise a cooperation mechanism and network of international partners and stakeholders aiming at the rehabilitation of the National Library and Archives, as well as other libraries and archives in the country (Eskander, 2004). The only concrete action by UNESCO appears to have been a small project to revive the National bibliography, creating records for the period 1992 to 2003 (Abid, 2004).

The UNAMI (United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq) web portal for the organisation's agencies does not indicate any projects of the Ministry of Culture for which priority funding is being sought, and the brief descriptions of the priority projects of the other Ministries make no reference to libraries and archives.

The World Health Organisation had continued to be active in Iraq throughout the embargo period. In August 2003, Dr. Najeeb Al Shorbaji, Regional Officer for Health Information in the WHO's Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office (WHO/EMRO), visited many of the country's medical libraries to make an up-to-date assessment of their needs as the basis for a rehabilitation plan, some of which is outlined later in this paper (Al Shorbaji, 2004b).

Other initiatives

Individual governments have also offered assistance. The Kuwaiti government sent US $3 million worth of textbooks to Iraqi technical institutes (Agresto, 2004). Other offers of assistance have come from professional bodies and private foundations. For example, the American Library Association has received a $20,000 grant from the Working Assets Grantmaking Fund of the Tides Foundation to provide children's books for the public libraries (ALA, 2004). The Gates Foundation has indicated that it may be willing to consider funding IT provision in public libraries (Johnson, 2004).

Public sympathy for the situation in Iraq has been tapped for assistance in the form of book donations. For example, Scottish publishers, the University of Edinburgh, and the *Glasgow Herald* newspaper joined forces in a drive to donate English-language books to Iraq's libraries, to help make good not only the ravages of the post-war looting but also the deficiencies from a decade of isolation and sanctions (Riedlmayer, 2003d). Several publishers generously agreed to donate their backlists, and the British Council agreed to collect and

consolidate materials which were published since 1990 or remained standard texts in their field. The first consignments, intended for 7 universities, arrived in January 2004 (BBC, 2004).

Shortly before it handed over to the interim Iraqi government, the CPA presented 34 boxes of academic books and journals, donated by several U.S. universities, to the Iraqi Natural History Museum (Coalition Provisional Authority, 2004c).

However, some of the assistance offered, although well intentioned, may potentially have imposed unnecessary burdens of the Iraqi professional community, in terms of their ability to absorb them into organised library collections. OCLC has, however, offered to provide catalogue data free of charge for donated material. Perhaps to take advantage of this, or possibly as a result of support from one of the USAID HEAD projects, the University of Mosul libraries were the first Iraqi libraries to became a member of the OCLC cataloguing consortium in June (OCLC, 2004), and has since been joined by the Ministry of Oil, and the Law School at Suleimanyah University. It is also expected that OCLC will provide training on use of the *WorldCat* online cataloguing system for staff of the archaeology libraries from Mosul and Baghdad Universities (SUNY Stonybrook, 2004e).

A more significant potential problem was noted by Arnoult (2003a) in the recommendations appended to the report on his visit:
> "The international community, sensitive to the hardships of Iraqi libraries, is likely to make gifts of books; it will be advisable to see that they correspond to the actual needs expressed by the Iraqi authorities."

Another librarian, with previous experience of responding to disasters in Islamic countries, explained:
> "The question is how to insure that appropriate materials are gathered and then delivered to the right recipients. There are a host of pitfalls in "book drives" and their history includes a great number of examples of how not to go about them. Yesterday's potboilers, self-help books, outdated reference works, fine titles in terrible condition, and stray copies of magazines are all a blight on the process and to be avoided at all costs. Donations should, ideally, be focused in character, organized by subject and within subject, and accompanied by comprehensive lists, automated and print, to best assist the recipients. They should include high quality literature, scholarly works, up-to-date reference works and long runs of important periodicals, preferably coming up to the present or near present. Where possible, they should have a designated recipient... Iraqi faculty and students need books right now--and not simply books to fill the libraries but text books to pass to students, particularly in the hard and applied sciences." (Spurr, 2004a)

In many respects, Iraqi universities were aware of the deficiencies of their libraries. One British newspaper, in association with a report on the state of Baghdad University, published on its website a very specific lists of the scientific equipment and journals required by the University's College of Science (How you can help, 2004).

Nonetheless, another book drive, was started by one of the faculty involved with Jacksonville State University's USAID HEAD project, to collect textbooks for

Baghdad University, apparently without making clear any criteria for the subject or type of materials that were needed (Kughn, 2004).

Similarly, the organisers of the 'Al Sharaka' project included in their HEAD grant a request for funds from USAID to ship books raised by a public appeal, principally apparently for Babylon University (although the project does have a wider remit) whose library had been totally emptied by the looters - and whose academic specialties are described on the 'Al Sharaka' web site as including Law, Dentistry and Sciences - but the appeal called for

> "copies of journals and monographs, personal offprints, electronic sources, etc… anything on history, archaeology and religion in the region in any Middle Eastern or Western language." (Walker, 2004)

The organisers of the 'Al Sharaka' book drive, 'Books Beyond Borders', did not apparently respond to enquiries about whether they would like to take advantage of the assistance offered by OCLC, or to questions about whether they had set any criteria for the material that they would ship to Iraq (Spurr, 2004c), although the web site now indicates that they require books published in 1995 or later. However, it seems that they had identified more than 700 potential textbook donors, and a commitment of $4,500 for geology and petroleum engineering texts (USAID, 2004h). By June 2004, over 9,000 books had been assembled (USAID, 2004g), although it was not clear whether they had been shipped and distributed. However, by early 2005 some 8,500 books were reported to have arrived and been distributed to 5 Iraqi universities (USAID, 2005b).

The 'Books Beyond Borders' initiative was claimed to be helping to improve Iraq's university libraries. The programme was soliciting donations from all over the world, and was said to be working with donors to collect the books, review them for appropriateness for a university library, and sort them by discipline. Books in numerous disciplines at both undergraduate and graduate level, donated by university students in the United States, Canada, India, England and France, as well as American bookstores and publishing companies, are reported to have been collected (USAID, 2004i). Some 50-60% of the books collected have had to be rejected as unsuitable, but the project has resulted in the establishment of an independent NGO with an office in Baghdad able to act as a counterpart for future donations form other organisations (Spurr, 2005).

At least one of the book drives was explicit about its requirements, but was clearly politically motivated, and - regrettably - appears to have had support, official or unofficial, within the CPA. The web site of one pressure group in the U.S.A. invited:

> "think tanks and public policy institutes within the freedom network to donate books and other publications on market ideas to school libraries in Iraq. Since we're in the business of promoting ideas, what better way to spread the principles and virtues of free-market capitalism! Omar Altalib, a friend of Atlas, is organizing the project. Below is his contact information: Omar H. Altalib, Education Specialist, Advisory Office to the Ministry of Education, Baghdad…" (Atlas, 2004)

An interesting note points to an unidentified library sciences NGO working with USAID in the U.S. that has received 2,000 post-1990 scholarly books (USAID, 2004l).

Whilst books may assist staff to update their knowledge and teaching, a more immediate need for teaching materials was met by the supply of new textbooks for students, such as those presented to the University of Tikrit to replace books that were out of date, in poor physical condition, and not available in sufficient quantities (USAID, 2004a). In December 2004, a consignment of aid organized by UNESCO and the Qatar International Fund for Higher Education in Iraq included US$1 million in textbooks for students and reference books for university libraries. The books were to be distributed between the libraries of about a dozen universities and technical institutes in the capital and other important regional centres, including Basrah and Mosul (Williams, 2004).

Collecting the books that were really needed was one problem. Shipping and distributing them was another. Altogether, the British Council eventually provided support in shipping 55 tonnes of books and journals donated by more than 30 organisations and individuals, and distributed them to 10 universities (University of Baghdad, Baghdad University of Technology, Al Nahrain University, Al Mustansiriyah University, Baghdad Business School, University of Basrah, University of Mosul, Suleimanyah University, Mansour University, Al-Anbar University), before withdrawing its support for these activities on 31st March 2004 (British Council, 2004). The distribution was reportedly uneven (Fattah, 2004b). The existence of these donations was also seemingly not widely known in Iraq (Johnson, 2004), where communication even within the same University does not appear to be particularly effective. Lack of information about them also led to rumour and criticism, which may or may not have been justified, to the effect that

> "The latest informal news [in late February] is that nine tons of books from this donation are languishing in a warehouse in Baghdad and that no one has yet figured out a way to distribute them." (Spurr, 2004b)

Other individuals used ingenious arrangements to arrange for consignments of books to be delivered, but these broke down as the security situation deteriorated (Malikoff, 2005].

A number of publishers have also been persuaded to provide free access on a trial basis to their electronic journals and databases, and the British Council has facilitated access to these by establishing resource centres in the Universities of Baghdad, Basrah, Dohuk, Salahaddin and Suleimanyah.

General developments affecting the provision of library and archives

Reconstruction efforts need to be seen against the background of other relevant circumstances.

Economic development

Iraq's human capital and oil reserves mean that its economy should recover well in the medium term. Indeed, early American reconstruction plans were predicated on the assumption that they would be increasingly paid for by Iraq's own oil exports (Watenpaugh, 2003a). However, the oil industry is not yet operating at full capacity, and is thus unable to maximise its contribution to the revival of the national economy.

Electricity supply is being restored, but in early 2004 the generating capacity was still only about 60% of what was required, and still represented a problem for universities other than the University of Baghdad (Johnson, 2004). By August, generating capacity exceeded pre-war levels, but reports of power cuts resulting from sabotage continued throughout the year.

The war and the fall of the Saddam regime have transformed telecommunications, which had previously suffered from underinvestment and state monitoring. By the end of October 2003, all active telephone subscribers in Iraq had a connection to the international networks (USAID, 2003d). Three Middle Eastern firms - Asia Cell, Orascom Telecom and Atheer Telecom Iraq - won bids in October 2003 to develop the country's communications infrastructure respectively in the north, centre and south. The country should very soon have a fast and reliable telecommunications structure (Reporters, 2004). By the end of December 2003, a large portion of Baghdad's telephone network had been repaired (USAID, 2004b). Work has also been completed to restore telephone lines between Baghdad and the northern cities.

Iraq was not connected to the Internet until 1998 (Mosaic Group, 1998), and by 2003 there were only about 500 known users on the country's sole network, Uruklink, then controlled by the Ministry of Culture. After the war, access to the web grew at an exponential rate in Baghdad, where Internet Service Providers are charging about 500 Iraqi Dinars per hour for connect time (about U.S.¢30 per hour) which was quite expensive in relation to current incomes (Iraq Higher, 2004). Cybercafés began to appear in the capital's middle-class districts almost immediately after the war (Watenpaugh *et al.*, 2003). Cybercafés have since sprouted near the universities as well (Watenpaugh, 2004c). The cybercafés charge less than US $1 per hour. Private home connections have also become available, in Baghdad at least, costing $28 for 50 hours online (Reporters, 2004).

During the embargo and throughout 2004, food was rationed, and improving food supply was an understandably high priority for the authorities. However, problems in food supply were exacerbated by theft. Trucks carrying foodstuffs from Basrah's seaport to Ministry warehouses were being attacked and looted by bandits, threatening to reduce rations (Institute for War & Peace Reporting, 2004i), with an inevitable impact on the focus and energy that individuals could apply to the rehabilitation of services.

Before it was disbanded, the CPA also found time to promulgate a new "Trademarks and Descriptions Law" as well as the "Patent, Industrial Design, Undisclosed Information, Integrated Circuits and Plant Variety Law" to protect the intellectual property of companies doing business in Iraq (USAID, 2004d).

Government capacity

The CPA installed a Governing Council of Iraqis to replace the Saddam regime's Ministers, and the Higher Commissions attached to the various Ministries as policy advisors probably ceased to function after the regime collapsed. The CPA and the Council quickly lost much of the support and goodwill they enjoyed after the overthrow of the old regime.

> "The Iraqi public administration contains many able and qualified people. However, under Saddam a command and control system operated… Modern governance concepts of accountability, transparency and responsiveness are therefore unfamiliar…" (Department for International Development, 2004: 4)

A perceived inability to manage the basic needs of everyday life in the capital - public safety, electricity, water, telephone, and gasoline – was the main cause of that loss (Watenpaugh *et al.,* 2003). A typical example of bureaucratic paralysis, albeit in unusual circumstances, was the fact that some of the United Nations 'oil-for-food' money already transferred to Iraq was held in suspense for at least a year after the end of the war, despite the urgent need for funds for reconstruction (Iraq Higher, 2004).

A year after the war ended, the CPA and other sources had allegedly met only about 20% of what was needed to complete the reconstruction of the higher education system (Iraq Higher, 2004). At the end of June 2004, the CPA was formally disbanded and power transferred to an interim Iraqi government, pending elections planned for early 2005, after the end of the period with which this review is concerned.

British government assistance was focused on strengthening the Iraqi government, as well as on the relief of poverty. There was a local perception that USAID schemes were ignoring Basrah, because it was in the CPA South, i.e. British, zone (Iraq Higher, 2004).

Some American assistance seems to have been focused on developing a strategy for a government-wide information technology (IT) system to improve the provision of essential services through the use of computer systems to improve information management. The IT assessment and implementation strategy was developed by BearingPoint (USAID, 2004f). As part of this strategy, several government departments were assisted to introduce new management information systems. For example, a new database system has been implemented at the State Board for Lands, which was responsible to the Ministry of Agriculture for tracking agricultural land ownership in Iraq, many of whose files had been damaged or destroyed during the 2003 conflict (USAID, 2004n), complicating the situation arising from the loss of some of the historic records in the awqaf manuscripts (q.v.).

Libraries and records management receive no specific mention in the British government's Department for International Development (DfID) country assistance plan. Moreover, the Iraqi Higher Commission on Libraries had been dissolved some years earlier after failing to influence "more senior" government departments (Johnson, 2004). There was also a perception amongst library and publishing professionals that the CPA has relatively little contact with local people (Publishers Association: International Division, 2004). There certainly appear to be noticeable gaps in co-ordinating library development in Iraq. People who were trying to help are reportedly not talking to each other (Johnson, 2004). Whilst acknowledging that libraries and archives may not be the only services requiring attention in the reconstruction of Iraq, Arnoult (2003a) nonetheless argued that:

> "it is absolutely necessary to deal with them as soon as possible and not to under-estimate their importance in the setting back to work of cultural, patrimonial and academic Iraqi institutions. Before the war those institutions

were divided between the ministries of culture, education and religious affairs, and they need a deep reorganisation that must not be overlooked because of the mere rebuilding and reopening of premises."

Education

Two thirds of Iraqi citizens are under the age of 24, and the implications of these demographics for the existing educational system are overwhelming.

The Director-General of UNESCO expressed the hope that his Organisation, in close coordination with the other agencies of the United Nations system, would be ready and able to ensure the continuity of the Iraqi education system while improving its quality, in particular through curriculum revision and the provision of suitable educational materials. UNESCO's efforts seem, however, to have been largely focused on the needs of primary and secondary education, where library provision had previously been largely non-existent.

Since the end of the war, references to former President Saddam Hussein and the Ba'ath party have been deleted from school textbooks. UNICEF coordinated the Iraqi-led revision of textbooks (ReliefWeb, 2003), and a technical team from Denmark assessed bids from Iraqi Printing Houses to print them (USAID, 2003b). UNESCO, in cooperation with and with support from USAID, assisted with the production of 5 million science and mathematics textbooks, to make them available to primary and secondary Iraqi students for the school year starting September 2003. These included textbooks not only in Arabic, but also in Kurdish, Syriac, and Turkmani (Publishers Association, 2003c)

Nevertheless, it was left to the CPA (or at least one of its partner NGOs) to recognise that Iraq was a multilingual community, and to protect that heritage by supporting the printing costs for three editions of *Sawra*, a magazine for children written in the Assyrian language (USAID, 2004f).

Higher education was expected to receive less attention (Butler, 2003), but efforts were made to ensure that the University Presidents were familiar with developments in both Britain and the U.S.A. (Iraq higher, 2004; USAID, 2004m). Speaking in London less than a year after the war ended, Professor Musa Jawad Al-Musawi, President of Baghdad University, claimed, with some justification, that Iraq used to have one of the best Higher Education systems in the Arab world, comprising - in addition to the Universities and Colleges - the Iraqi Commission for Computers and Informatics, and 35 Research Centres (Iraq Higher, 2004).

Iraqi government policy had sought to establish a university in each governorate, to provide higher education for a growing youth population. 14 new universities were created during the last 20 years. Two of them, in Thi-Qar and Kirkuk, were established as recently as 2002, whilst the most recent, in Wassit, was established in February 2003 (UNESCO, Division of Educational Policies and Strategies, 2005). According to senior Iraqi visitors to London, there are now 18 state universities, 10 or 11 'private' University Colleges (students pay tuition fees, but the Colleges are state supervised and operate on a not-for-profit basis), and up to 300 colleges, with a total of half a million students enrolled (Publishers Association, International Division, 2004). Different information on a CPA web

site reflects one of the problems in developing reconstruction programmes for Iraq. That site suggests that the Higher Education system comprises 20 public universities, 36 two-year public technical institutes, and 10 technical colleges, the Commission for Computing and Informatics, the Commission of Medical Specialisation, and the Academy of Sciences (CPA Ministry of Higher Education, 2004). The CPA's Newsletter also records work to set up 3 'American' private universities in northern Iraq (CPA Higher Education Team, 2004).

Until the handover to the interim government, the CPA's "advisor" to the Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education, was the *de facto* head of Iraq's university system with the ultimate power to veto appointments and set budgets. For the universities, the first 12 months after the war were not an easy time.
> "A recurring complaint was an inability to make contact with the CPA officials in charge of the universities." (Watenpaugh *et al.,* 2003)

Andrew Erdmann, the first appointee as CPA advisor, was a former member of the U.S. State Department's Policy Planning staff (Del Castillo, 2003). He had no training in university management or practical experience in the leadership and administration of large public institutions of higher learning. In addition, he appears to neither have had formal preparation in Middle Eastern History and Politics, nor speak Arabic (Watenpaugh, 2004c). Nonetheless, in the face of severe practical difficulties, he worked to keep universities open for exams and professors paid. He also oversaw the controversial policy of removing members of the Ba'ath Party. As a result, 1,400 professors were dismissed (Munthe, 2003), although most were reinstated in 2004 through an appeals process (Asquith, 2004).

Watenpaugh was equally critical of Erdmann's successor, John Agresto, whose credentials in higher education management were somewhat stronger as he had been President of a College in the U.S.A. (Del Castillo, 2003; Quilty, 2003c), because he was equally unfamiliar with the Arab world, and was allegedly committed to the U.S. government's political agenda, which Watenpaugh (2003a; 2004a) characterised as 'neo-colonialism'. Another, later, commentator held a different view. She reported that Agresto arrived with the intention of making universities modern, decentralized, internationally oriented establishments, free from religious influences. However, he had to contend with the Minister of Higher Education appointed by the Governing Council, Ziad Abdel Razzaq Aswad, a petroleum-engineering professor and member of a radical Sunni Islamist group, who was said to be a force in the opposite direction. He allegedly wanted more centralization of power in the Ministry; expected professors to ask the government for permission to travel, as they had under Saddam's regime; and wanted the Ministry again to control the hiring and firing of Deans (Asquith, 2004).

Generally, Iraqi academics have a very clear sense of what they need, namely internet communication, staff exchange programs, and support to conduct research abroad (Watenpaugh *et al.,* 2003). The Ministry of Higher Education went some way towards meeting these expectations when it announced in June 2004 that academics would no longer need visas to travel abroad (Institute for War and Peace Reporting, 2004f). However, another of the first acts of the Ministry, after power was handed over by the CPA in June 2004, was to direct the universities that all external contacts must be first cleared through the

Ministry (Johnson, 2004), presumably so that the Ministry's judgement on national priorities could be pursued.

A survey conducted as part of a USAID higher education partnership revealed that library restoration was the second most critical need of university faculty and students after Internet connectivity (USAID, 2004i).

The average student-teacher ratio in university education was 13 students per teacher, but there were wide variations between subjects and institutions. Generally, the universities favoured by the Saddam regime, such as Al Nahrein University and the University of Tikrit, had better staffing levels. In those Universities where there were Schools of Librarianship, the overall ratio varied between 8 (Basrah), 10 (Mosul) and 22 (Al Mustansiriyah) (UNESCO, Division of Educational Policies and Strategies, 2005), but data for the relevant departments has not yet been published.

Also high on the agenda of both the Iraqi authorities and the international agencies is the training of faculty members to catch up with developments in their fields in the last 10-15 years. Formal qualifications are also deficient:

> "In Iraq the minimum educational qualification for a teaching post in higher education is a master's degree. However one third of the teaching staff lack a masters degree; 28% of the staff has doctorates, 39% masters and 33% bachelors degrees." (Reddy, 2005)

Moreover, university faculty members

> "wanted help to introduce new teaching methodology and to become more substantively up to date. As in most of the Middle East, both secondary- and university-level education in Iraq tends to rely heavily on an instructor-centered lecture method. Narrow, state-determined syllabi are closely followed, and students learn to reproduce what they hear or read nearly verbatim in the state examinations." (Gray, 2004)

450 Iraqi professors from science faculties at the various Iraqi universities were expected to benefit from a $100,000 grant from the Richard Lounsbery Foundation[3] through the Institute of International Education with further, in-kind contributions from the University of Suleimanyah where the seminars were to be held during the 2004 summer vacation. The Lounsbery Foundation has promised to involve other foundations in funding another programme in summer 2005. The University of Suleimanyah was chosen as the site for the seminars, because the area was the "safest and most secure" in Iraq. So far, Suleimanyah city had largely been spared from any terrorist attack, and compared to other universities in Iraq, the infrastructure remained intact (Merriman, 2004).

The CPA estimated the cost of repairing the damage to the universities at $500 million (Reeves, 2004). Officials at the Qatar Foundation, a private, non-profit organisation which has donated $15 million in aid for higher education in Iraq, have estimated that the total cost of bringing them up to international standards will be $2 billion. This was likely to be an underestimate according to UNESCO, which is co-managing the foundation's grant, and which had undertaken a

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[3] Richard Lounsbery Foundation [online]: http://rlounsbery.org/default.asp [Accessed 30 December, 2004].

comprehensive assessment of Iraqi higher education in cooperation with the Japanese government (Merriman, 2004).

In the short to medium term, the Iraqi government's budget will be stretched to meet all the potential demands on it. It has been estimated that 84% of the infrastructure in Iraqi higher education institutions has been either looted or severely damaged (Reddy, 2005). The state-funded universities clearly need to develop alternative sources of income to assist with redevelopment, and are beginning to provide services at a charge. Tuition remains free for Iraqis, but fees have been introduced for other Arab students (Iraq Higher, 2004). There is likely to be a move towards charging students for the textbooks that have traditionally been loaned to them each year to support their studies (Publishers Association, International Division, 2004). To meet rising costs, particularly salaries, annual fees at the private colleges have increased by 50% to 100%, and now range from $170 to $690, depending on the subject, but conditions are still far from good and the availability of learning resources is limited (Kadhum, 2004).

Whilst noting that the universities were beginning to implement a semblance of their normal routine in June 2003, despite the difficult physical conditions, Watenpaugh was particularly concerned about disturbing trends observable on the campuses.

> "While the resourcefulness of Iraqi faculty and students is readily in evidence, they were struggling with the corrosive impact of the US-imposed process of de-Ba'athification, a rising Islamism and partisan fragmentation. Campuses are becoming overtly politicized in ways that may lead to the suppression of open exchange and freedom of thought. Increasingly frequent incidents of harassment of non-veiled coeds and teachers, student-on-student violence and assassinations of education administrators are equally matters for concern." (Watenpaugh, 2004c)

The continuing security problems present a significant challenge to the restoration of normal academic life in Iraq. Watenpaugh *et al.,* (2003) had earlier repeated

> "local media reports that the school [Al Mustansiriyah University] has been the site of student-on-student violence and the assassination of a dean."

These reports were confirmed by later interviews with students at Baghdad's Technical Institute as well as the University, where the tradition of "haram al-jamaa", or campus sanctuary under which weapons are banned within universities, seemed to have broken down (Al Razek, 2004). Sectarianism appears to have been part of the problem. Many Kurdish students were reported to be transferring from 'Arab' universities to universities inside Iraqi Kurdistan following a series of threats (Kareem, 2004). However, Arabic speaking students were also finding themselves at a disadvantage at the universities in the Kurdish regions (Ali, 2004).

Security has clearly been a continual problem for the education system. In December 2004, the Ministry of Higher Education sent instructions to universities across the country to cancel mid-term exams for colleges in dangerous locations to provide security for the students. Students from the vulnerable colleges would take one larger exam at the end of the university year in June 2005, rather than having two exams during the year (ReliefWeb, 2004).

The educated cadres are a significant part of the country's human capital, but many were deposed under Saddam because they did not comply with his doctrines. Some were imprisoned and others left Iraq. But after the fall of the regime, few of them returned to Iraq despite the fact they are badly needed. At the end of February 2004, the then Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Ziyad Abdul Razzaq Aswad, was reported in one local newspaper to have called on Presidents of Arab Universities to terminate the employment of 4,000 Iraqi university teachers working for them. The Minister said Iraqi universities provide all necessary requirements to encourage Iraqi teachers to return home (Institute for War & Peace Reporting, 2004b). This did not convince some Arab lecturers who relocated to Universities in Iraqi Kurdistan because of the greater security there (Tahir, 2005).

However, salaries have seriously declined in real terms, although they are beginning to improve. Even after the increase initiated by the CPA in mid 2004, which produced some protests about its structure (Worker Communist Party, 2004), a full Professor's monthly salary, formerly equivalent to U.S. $1,400, equated to U.S. $500 (compared with a national average monthly income of $127) because salaries had not kept pace with the declining exchange rate (Qassim *et al.*, 2004). Faculty and library staff had been able to supplement their salaries before the war by taking on a second or third job, but the security situation now makes it almost impossible for staff to continue in the secondary employment that had been a necessary supplement to their incomes. This is now often impractical because they feel safer if they go home before dusk (Qassim *et al.*, 2004). By the end of 2004, however, salaries were reported to have again reached $1,500 per month (Reddy, 2005).

At the same time that the Minister of Higher Education was reported to be calling for the return of Iraqi academics, another newspaper was reporting that, according to Baghdad University's President Musa Jawad al-Musawi, the Ministry of Interior and Iraqi universities were planning to form a guard service to protect teachers. He said teachers had received threats from students, and there had also been attempts (some successful) to assassinate a number of university teachers for unknown reasons (Institute for War & Peace Reporting, 2004b). Throughout the country, more than 130 academic staff were rumoured to have been murdered in the year following the end of the war (Johnson, 2004).

Despite the evident nature of the problems, or perhaps to encourage a solution, the interim government was urged by the National Organisation for Civil Society and Iraqis' Rights to study the reasons behind the failure of Iraqi academics to return home to work and to take quick action to get them back. In April 2004, it presented the Governing Council with draft proposals for reversing the 'brain drain' and attracting people back to Iraq (Institute for War & Peace Reporting, 2004d). This theme was later taken up by comments in the media (Institute for War & Peace Reporting, 2004h).

However, in November 2004, a source in the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research told an Iraqi newspaper reporter that 14 university teachers had been killed during the previous year, while the fate of 75 teachers was still unknown. Perhaps more significantly, it was also claimed that, in addition, more than 1600 university teachers had left Iraq due to threats and kidnappings

(Institute for War & Peace Reporting, 2004i). In December 2004, a statement by the Minister confirmed that the number known to be dead had risen to 37 (Institute for War & Peace Reporting, 2004j).

Publishing

The commercial opportunities evident in the reconstruction process were quickly recognised (New Fields Exhibitions, 2003). The Education and Training Exports Group (ETEG) of the British government's Department for Trade and Industry quickly, almost with unseemly haste, but because there was a serious shortage of recent data, commissioned a report on the education and training system in Iraq focused on the potential opportunities in the rebuilding process for British education providers, including publishers. The report was scheduled for completion in April 2003 (Armstrong, 2003), but has not yet been made public. In July, Malcolm Griffiths, a freelance consultant contracted by the British Council to carry out an assessment of English Language Teaching needs in Iraq addressed a specially convened meeting of the Publisher's Association. In August, the ETEG pressed for a senior UK education strategist to be seconded to the CPA in Baghdad, and for facilitation funds to be made available immediately to enable meetings between Iraqi education contacts and their British counterparts, either in the UK or in a third country such as Kuwait (Waite, 2003a). However, it was reported in *The Guardian* on 4 December 2003 that there had been no response by the CPA to Griffiths' report since its submission in August.

British publishers were not slow to notice that the United States' government was principally channelling its funding for educational reconstruction in Iraq through USAID, and particularly that, apparently without competition, it had awarded an initial 12 month contract to Creative Associates International for a short-term immediate assistance programme of aid to schools. The initial contract did not include the production of text books, but further contracts relating to book supply were expected (Publishers Association, 2003b). A subsequent internal investigation in Washington revealed that USAID had invited five contractors to bid, but only Creative Associates International had done so. It is not clear how this affected the award of future contracts.

University libraries in Iraq focused on postgraduate studies and research materials for staff. Faculty chose what books to buy. Traditionally the universities dealt direct with publishers for books and the colleges worked through bookshops (Publishers Association, International Division, 2004). However, the system had deteriorated under the ousted regime (Iraq Higher, 2004), as a result of
> "... being cut off from all substantive international contact for much of the last two decades. In real terms, this meant a suspension of subscriptions to academic journals, library acquisition, and travel abroad for faculty members and students." (Watenpaugh, *et al.*, 2003)

The Universities normally loaned textbooks to all undergraduate students at the start of each year (Qassim, *et al.*, 2004). The University Presidents who visited London in January 2004 acknowledged that the textbooks they were using were probably out of date, and sought advice on recommended textbooks for the main subject areas. There was also a need for low cost reproduction of these up-to-

date textbooks (to replace, in some cases, illegal multiple photocopying) (Iraq Higher, 2004). All Universities use the same textbooks for their courses, and the Ministry of Higher Education used to allot the production of particular titles to specific presses. Mosul University Press, one of the four university presses that printed the textbooks, was a substantial publishing operation, which included editors, marketing specialists, printers and binders amongst its total of 400 staff. Although it had been hard to achieve high production standards, there had been no particular shortage of paper (Bostock, 2004) even though, as a result of sanctions on the importation of all types of paper, the printing of government stationery had been reduced to 60% of the actual need of offices and establishments (Google, 2003). The presses at Baghdad and Basrah Universities were badly damaged in the war, but there was an expectation that Basrah's would be repaired and working again in 2004 (Bostock, 2004).

During the Saddam period, foreign books had continued to be supplied to the north via the 'Oil for Food' programme. For the rest of the country, some books were imported from Jordan and surrounding Arab countries, but these were more expensive than books locally printed. Books were also imported from India and Iran, in both cheap and pirated editions (Publishers Association: International Division, 2004). For students who wished to buy additional books, the problems resulting from the UN sanctions had been similar:

> "Because curriculums were American or British, the books also originated from these countries. Major publishing houses refused to sell books to Iraqi universities because their governments considered it illegal (apparently, you can make WMD using a calculus book…). We had to wait until someone brought a copy of the necessary book in, by chance, and make dozens of photocopies of it, which would be sold in little 'makatib' or bookshops all over Baghdad." ('Riverbend', 2003)

The only way in which academics and librarians in Iraq can see the range of books now available appears to be at specially arranged book fairs. Online catalogues are not useful because of limited access to the internet. There have been two book fairs in Mosul since the war ended and two in the Kurdish area. The Mosul fair supplied general books as well as university texts (Publishers Association: International Division, 2004).

The organisation of a UK-led book fair was one of the recommendations of the Iraqi group who visited the London Book Fair. The Chairman of the Publishers Association's International Board subsequently asked that the Association set up an Iraq group, to plan for a high-level visit to Iraqi schools and universities at the first possible opportunity. The group drew up a blueprint for a possible book fair for Baghdad. The plans had gone to a number of contacts in and around Baghdad, but could progress only if a substantial sum was set aside by the Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education to guarantee book purchases by each university (Publishers Association, 2004). This seemed unlikely and, given the additional concerns about the security situation, new plans were made to support British publishers' participation in a book fair in Amman in Jordan in April 2005 (Publishers Association, 2005).

The Iraqi visitors to the London Book Fair in March 2004 are reported to have claimed that there are now no bookshops, and that, in Baghdad, readers are dependent on market stalls for books. Iraq's Minister of Culture was also reported as claiming that bookshops do not exist in Baghdad, and that

> "Downtown Baghdad has one option for book lovers: a weekly bazaar, open every Friday." (Mite, 2004a)

Nonetheless, an American academic with years of experience in Iraq (throughout the period of the Saddam regime and as a member of the UNESCO team which visited Baghdad in May 2003) reported that the book market was flooded with a wide variety of titles, and Iraqis were buying them up (Gibson, 2004). Nowhere has there been such unanimous support for the overthrow of the regime than among book buyers and sellers as, after more than a decade, readers were able to buy books that had previously been banned as unacceptable because of their content (Fisk, 2004), and booksellers were able to sell them without fear of being jailed or tortured (Blomfield, 2004). Describing his previously illegal publishing activities, one bookseller in Baghdad remarked to a newspaper reporter

> "It was a long process to publish books like these in Iraq. First you had to get hold of a banned edition, then photocopy it, cut it, bind it and finally design the cover. That is the bit I enjoyed most. I am rather pleased with how they turned out." (Beeston, 2003)

The isolation of the country tended to conceal the extent to which some regular publishing activity had continued. Reports had suggested that the results of the UN sanctions upon Iraq had caused a severe reduction in the number of books printed from 1,150 titles annually to just 40 titles a year, and the printing and distribution of daily journals, weekly magazines, periodicals and books and magazines for children had suffered a 90% reduction (Google, 2003). Despite these reports, the quantity of material published during the last 15 years that is now emerging has surprised those American libraries that have managed to re-establish purchasing mechanisms since the end of the war. However, the experience of American libraries attempting to build their collections is that, as elsewhere in the region, publishing was mainly based on short print runs, and titles are out of print by the time information about them is received, although libraries may acquire titles if they are reprinted (Johnson, 2004).

Iraq's news media has also gone through a huge transformation, from a propaganda machine whose function was to idolise Saddam Hussein and his family, to the freest media in the world, where anyone with money could start to publish a newspaper. Freedom to publish was reflected in the appearance on the streets by June 2003 of 55+ (Al Tikriti, 2003), 75+ (Watenpaugh *et al.*, 2003) or as many as 90 (MacKinnon, 2003) new newspapers and journals, many of them associated with, and probably supported financially by, emergent or traditional political groups. Speaking at the Frankfurt Book Fair in October that year, Taher Khalaf Jabur Al-Bakaa, then President of Al Mustansiriyah University, later Minister of Higher Education in the interim government (but not re-appointed after the elections in February 2005), claimed that there were then more than 170 newspapers and magazines being published (Eddy, 2003). Even before the collapse of the Saddam regime, an international non-governmental organisation had been working to draft a new law on media freedom and an underpinning training programme for journalists (Alkifaey, 2003).

The Minister of Culture claims to be working for the creation of new publishing houses, which were all nationalised under the former regime, and to be trying to provide encouragement for people looking to start publishing houses:

> "Now one of our main aims in this field is to encourage the private sector to start again with establishing publishing houses. Slowly, slowly, slowly. They

are afraid that the situation is not okay. They have no money, the security is not okay. Everything is not stable and so on. But we are trying to attract them and support them." (Mufeed Mohammed Jawad al-Jaza'iri , quoted by Mite, 2004a)

The progress was too slow for some. A new edition of the *Iraqi Journal of Agricultural Sciences* was sponsored by USAID and published by an agricultural college at a university in northern Iraq to enhance research and faculty development at the Iraqi universities (USAID, 2004o). An organization in south-central Iraq received a grant to publish 3 issues of a journal which provided up-to-date public health information (USAID, 2004p). The Iowa State University Iraq Initiative Group has brought together an international partnership to revive, online, the journal to revive *Marina Mesopotamica*, the journal of Basrah University's Marine Science Centre (Iowa State University, 2004).

The chaotic state of media production and distribution presents an additional challenge for the National Library, that of establishing an ongoing and comprehensive collection of contemporary Iraqi publications. Aspects of legal deposit arrangements, which required 5 copies to be deposited at the National Library for distribution to other libraries, seem to have broken down before the war. The Library of Congress team found several copies of the same titles on the shelves in the National Library. It seemed clear to them that (at least in the previous couple of years) instead of distributing the books as they should have, the librarians had instead just stored them in the stacks (Deeb, *et al.*, 2003).

However, the French Embassy has indicated its intention to forward the newspapers they have collected to the Institut Français du Proche Orient in Amman, Jordan (Watenpaugh *et al.*, 2003), thus ensuring that there should be at least one substantial collection for future study.

Appearing almost as an afterthought at the end of Arnoult's recommendations, he noted the need to review

"last but not least the whole system of libraries and archives: the legal deposit of documents produced in Iraq and the law on archives." (Arnoult, 2003a)

Copyright currently has little meaning in Iraq, as circumstances rendered the law (Iraq, 1971) promulgated by the Ba'ath regime unsustainable and subsequently unenforceable. Although Iraq was a signatory to the Berne Convention in the 1970s, sanctions meant that Iraqis had little choice but to make pirate copies of whatever foreign books they could get hold of ('Riverbend', 2004). The international publishers are anxious for the new Iraqi government, when in power, to re-affirm a commitment to international copyright conventions (Iraq Higher, 2004). Early reports suggested that work of drafting new copyright legislation for Iraq may have involved the Chief Executive for the Recording Industry Association of America (Orlowski, 2003). A new copyright law that allegedly meets internationally-recognized standards of protection for intellectual property was promulgated by the CPA a few weeks before it was disbanded. The law was one of several commercial laws "developed by Iraqis and the CPA with support from USAID partner BearingPoint" (USAID, 2004e).

The impact on libraries

Much of the interest in Iraq's libraries has focused on the major institutions, particularly those in Baghdad, and this is reflected in the scale of the following review. The fate of many lesser institutions has been noted only in brief reports, or can be inferred from indirect comments, and the details may be regarded as unconfirmed unless confirmed by other evidence. Almost inevitably, the current situation of many small libraries has attracted no outside attention, and remains to be uncovered.

<u>The National Library</u>

The fate of the National Library has attracted much attention, with numerous variations in reports identifying when the looting took place; the origins and scale of the fire damage to the building and the collections; what portion of the collection had been removed for safekeeping, and its location; and the future replacement of the building. The appointment of a new Director General also provoked a minor controversy.

The National Library was, initially, reported to have been set on fire around April 12, after the U.S. and British forces took control of the city. Typical of the early press reports was one in the New York Times, which reported, on 14th April 2003, that there were

> "fires still burning in government ministries, and the National Library and its centuries of archives added to the roll call of institutions ransacked and burned..." (Burns, 2003)

The early reports about the damage to the Library were believed to be sufficiently accurate that the news was unfortunately spread throughout the global library community on April 14 by the then Secretary General of the International Federation of Library Associations who, quoting newspaper reports, suggested that:

> "virtually nothing was left of the library and its tens of thousands of old manuscripts and books, and of archives like Iraqi newspapers tracing the country's turbulent history from the era of Ottoman rule through to Mr. Hussein. Reading rooms and the stacks where the collections were stored were reduced to smoking vistas of blackened rubble." (Shimmon, 2003)

Describing the situation at the National Library, Méténier repeated the claim that the library had been totally looted and vandalised, whilst American troops were in the area, but acknowledged that he did not know if part of the collection had been evacuated before the war.

> "D'après les informations dont je dispose, cette bibliothèque a été entièrement pillée et brûlée le 14 avril 2003. Je ne sais pas cependant si une partie des collections n'avait pas été mise à l'abri avant la guerre. Une information sûre que je tiens de Bagdad signale que les troupes américaines occupaient le quartier - al-Midân / Bâb al-Mu'azzam (sans doute étaient-elles positionnées sur le lieu de l'ancien ministère de la défense, située juste en face de l'entrée principale de la bibliothèque, de l'autre côté de la rue) - et avaient décrété la veille au soir le couvre-feu pour la nuit. Le lendemain matin, lorsque celui-ci a pris fin, les habitants du quartier sont sortis de leurs maisons pour trouver la bibliothèque en feu..." (Méténier, 2003)

However, on 21 April, a Japanese newspaper reported that only the entrance hall and the reading room were burned, and that many of the precious documents and books of the Iraqi National Library in Baghdad and its adjacent National Archives were found in safe keeping in other places:

> "The books of the library were also saved by the post-war effort of religious leaders… According to a person concerned with … the books and [manuscripts of] Qurans which were left in the stacks rooms of the library and in danger of being looted, the managing staff of the library and the religious leaders made consultations and decided to keep them in a mosque which had less danger of being sacked. Since April 17, fifty volunteers per day have been bringing the books from the library in the city center to the Imam al-Haqq Mosque in the Saddam City in the city's northeastern part. Among the collection of more than one million books, about the half of it, some hundreds of thousands of books were already brought there.
>
> Munem Al-Musawi, a professor at the Al-Hawza, the center of Shii learning in Najaf, is leading this activity and said, 'The damage of the library today only matches that of 13th century when the Mongols invaded Baghdad and burned all the books. The books we are keeping will be returned to the library when the safety of the library is secured.' " (Asahi Shimbun, translated by Jun Akiba, 2003)

It appears that the transfer to the mosque may have begun on 10 April, a day or two after American troops began to fight their way into Baghdad. This was indicated in a later report, which also suggested that the efforts to safeguard the collections may have been prompted by fears that Kuwaitis might seek to take them in revenge for the looting of Kuwait's libraries in 1990/91 (Healy, 2003). (Al Tikriti [2003] had also reported a number of instances where local opinion blamed Kuwaitis for looting libraries' collections, and books from the Kuwaiti National Museum were subsequently found in the Iraqi Museum [Kuwait News Agency, 2004]) No one has attempted to attribute any other motive to the people who took the books for safekeeping, but it may be simply be that one of Saddam Hussein's political ploys had succeeded. To unite the diverse ethnic and religious groups in the country, the Ba'ath regime had placed much emphasis on the national heritage embodied in the history and culture of ancient Mesopotamia (Seymour, 2004).

A week after the Japanese report appeared, American newspaper reporters were also permitted to see a storage room in a mosque in Baghdad.

> "Inside were treasures of Iraq's National Library that had survived the fire and looting that followed the arrival of American troops. From the dingy floor to the ceiling, the room was crammed with six truckloads of manuscripts, records and books. Centuries-old Islamic texts were piled next to a vinyl disc of Junior Walker and the All-Stars and hundreds of hand-written Hebrew prayer books…" (Trofimov *and* Fassihi, 2003)

The same report suggested that the arsonists may have used white phosphorus at the National Library,

> "a fast-burning substance favoured by military forces disposing of paper documents." (Battles, 2003)

About one third of the library's collections was being stored at the mosque, in far from ideal conditions, together with some of the Library's computers and

photocopiers, whilst the rest was stored elsewhere or still at the Library, where volunteer guards had been placed after the end of the war (Healy, 2003).

Despite the appearance of these reports, Mounir Bouchenaki, Assistant Director General for Culture at UNESCO who had led the first UNESCO mission, created fresh confusion about the state of the Library's collections when he reportedly repeated, in a UNESCO press conference in late May, the erroneous claim that all 2 million volumes belonging to the National Library had been reduced to piles of ashes. He also appears to have contradicted the fact recorded in the Mission's own report that much of the National Library's collection had been moved to safe storage (James, 2003).

Watenpaugh's team was able to form a somewhat clearer picture of events from conversations with library employees and representatives of the volunteer guards then in place. According to them, the library fell victim to two separate arson attacks. During the first attack, while the American troops were on the outskirts of Baghdad, looters took most of the photocopiers, computers, scanners and office equipment. A small fire broke-out in the building at that time, perhaps to cover the tracks of the looters. After that, the then Director Mr. Kamil Jawad Ashur claimed, the Library's employees moved books, newspapers, periodicals and Ottoman archival materials from the closed stacks to a safe place, which he declined to disclose while claiming that the CPA knew of the location. He estimated that 50% of the library's collection was burned, but was unwilling to share with the team how he reached this figure, and there appeared to be no records whatsoever of what was stored in various remote locations. However, Watenpaugh and his colleagues were not convinced that he was an entirely reliable witness (Watenpaugh *et al.,* 2003). Similar accounts had been given to the first UNESCO mission when they visited the library. Apparently, no fire-fighters had attended the fire, so the basement stores remained dry (Russell, 2003).

Perhaps half the building had been burned in the second fire. After the first fire, representatives of the Haqq Mosque in the renamed Sadr City, had entered the library and welded shut a steel fire door on the ground floor, sealing off an entire wing. Kamal Jawad Ashur estimated that 30% of the collection, "mostly books," was inside. Meanwhile young men transported a large portion of the books that could not be secured at the library to their mosque, using commandeered trucks. Watenpaugh's team could not estimate the quantity that they saw in store, in hot but dry conditions, but formed the strong impression that it was intended to return the material to the Library in due course (Watenpaugh *et al.*, 2003).

Arnoult made two visits to the National Library, and confirmed that the building had, in fact, been burned and looted twice. The ground floor with the main reading room had been sacked, and fires had been started in several places. The binding unit no longer existed. All the inventories were said to have been destroyed by fire or by vandalism, and a substantial portion of the catalogue cards were scattered on the floor. He also noted that
> "the fire was well organised: books were gathered in some places and burnt with combustive agent so that they entirely burnt together with metallic shelves; it means that temperatures were high enough to destroy books and the structure of the building itself." (Arnoult, 2003a)

He was told that, between the first fire (repeatedly confirmed by others as having taken place on 10th April) and the second fire (variously reported by others as having taken place on 12th or 14th April), employees of the Library and volunteers moved perhaps a quarter of the collections to a Shiite mosque in Tawra in the former Saddam City, and he was able to visit the mosque and see the material stored there in poor but secure conditions. A further 200,000 volumes, most of them said to be precious, had allegedly also been removed and stored in Baghdad in a building of the Board of Tourism, but he was not allowed to see this location. More than half the collection remained in the National Library, in stores situated on the ground floor and on the second floor of the building. Because the door of the ground floor store had been sealed, he was only able to confirm its contents by peering through a window. He was not able to obtain accurate data on the size of the collection, or estimate what had been lost (Arnoult, 2003a).

In October, Dr. Taher Khalaf Jabur Al-Bakaa, a historian who was then President of Al Mustansiriyah University (and later appointed Minister of Higher Education in the Iraqi Interim Government which came into power at the end of June 2004) is reported to have said in an interview whilst attending the Frankfurt Book Fair that losses amounted to 17,000 books (Eddy, 2003).

A Library of Congress team made an official visit to Iraq's National Library and to the House of Manuscripts from 25th October to 4th November to assess the damage, and was the first outside group to go into the stacks containing the book and newspaper collections of the National Library. The entrance door to the stacks had indeed been welded shut, and was opened on 28th October for the first time since the fires in April so that the Library of Congress team members could visit and see for themselves what had happened to the collections. During the team's visit, some of the books and documents that had been stored in Sadr City were already being brought back (Fischer, 2003).

The Library of Congress team met with Kamal Jawad Ashur, Dr. Faiza Adeeb Abdul-Wahid Al Bayati (his presumed successor as Director General of the National Library), Professor Nazar Qassim (who used to be Technical Adviser to the National Library in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and not Director General as reported in some documents), and various members of staff. They claimed to have found the majority of the collections intact (Deeb, *et al.*, 2003). However, Kamal Jawad Ashur reportedly claimed in November, in an interview with a journalist, that 50% of the Library's books and documents had been stolen, and 50% burnt (Gordon, 2003).

Dr. Faiza Adeeb, Librarian of the Central Library at the University of Baghdad, whose PhD was in Library and Information Science at Al Mustansiriyah University, was described by the Library of Congress Team as "inspiring as a woman with a vision for her country and for a great library for the future of Iraq." She had been approved as National Librarian designate by the CPA. However, she was rejected by the Minister of Culture in the Iraqi Governing Council, 2003/4, Mr. Mufeed Mohammed Jawad al-Jaza'iri, who was re-appointed to that role in the Iraqi Interim Government that came into power at the end of June 2004 (but not re-appointed after the elections in February 2005). Mr. al-Jaza'iri obtained a Master's Degree in Journalism in Prague, and had worked as an editor and broadcaster for the Arabic section of Czechoslovak Radio

throughout the 1960s and 1970s, before joining the Kurdish resistance movement (Coalition Provisional Authority, 2004b). He is said to have wanted to make an appointment that had no connections with the Ba'ath Party (Eskander, 2004).

Dr. Saad Bashir Eskander, a distinguished Kurdish historian with a Doctorate from the London School of Economics, was appointed Director General of the Iraqi National Library and Archives in December 2003 (Johnson, 2004). In addition, Dr. Khayal Mohammed Mahdi Al Jawahiri, a Czech-educated librarian (BA: Al Mustansiriyah; PhDr, CSc: Univerzita Karlovy, Prague) was appointed as Technical Expert responsible for staff training and for the revision of the catalogue at the National Library. She attended a meeting concerned with modernising education and training for Iraqi librarians and archivists in Amman, Jordan, in June, 2004, where she also confirmed that the buildings of the National Library and Archives had indeed suffered some damage, that some parts of the collections had been removed for safekeeping, and that other material was in parts of the building that were not damaged. The newspaper collection and some microfilm had survived. The books that had been taken into storage had been returned. However, the Library's collection of audio-visual material was largely destroyed. The National Library still had no electricity or water at that time (Al Jawahiri, 2004), but air conditioning equipment was installed in June (Mite, 2004b).

Speaking to a journalist in July 2004, shortly after the National Library re-opened, Dr. Eskander reported to have claimed that
> "We lost about 60 percent of our state records and documents - they were either burned or damaged by water. [The lost documents belonged] to all the ministries, all departments of the state from the late 19th century up to Saddam's period. As concerns books, I think we lost some 25 percent of them, mostly rare books, the most valuable books" (Eskander, reported by Mite, 2004b)

Although authoritative statements are now beginning to appear about the state of the Library's collections, there still appears to be some confusion, possibly because of the loss of some of its records, although Dr. Eskander has expressed the hope that some copies of lost microfilms may be found elsewhere. The replacement of the damaged building has also been the subject of changing reports. At that time of the first UNESCO mission's visit, the suggestion was to relocate the library to the Al-Bakr university nearby (Russell, 2003). Arnoult later reported that a civil engineer employed by the CPA had concluded that the building could not be restored. The CPA was therefore proposing to relocate the National Library (including the National Archives) in existing buildings in Baghdad (Arnoult, 2003a). The Library of Congress team were, however, advised by two Iraqi government architects/engineers that the damaged library was architecturally sound and could be repaired (Deeb, *et al.*, 2003).

In June 2004, it became apparent that plans to use the former Senior Officers' Club building at al-Balat al-Malki as a temporary storage location while a new Library is built had been abandoned, because that building had been allocated by the CPA's Office of Property for the Ministry of Justice to use for a new law court (Al Jawahiri, 2004). In a statement circulated the following month, Zainab Bahrani (then Senior Consultant, Iraq Ministry of Culture) and Dr. Eskander confirmed this report and also acknowledged that the archive of Ottoman

documents were still in freezers in the Officer's Club building. They also refuted a rumour that the Ottoman Qishla building had been assigned as a new Library. This rumour was seemingly based on an official request to the CPA by the Ministry of Culture for demolition and construction to be stopped at the 'Old Ottoman Complex in the Bab al Muadham area' because the necessary authorisation of the State Board of Antiquities had not been granted for work on a site of historical or archaeological interest. An adjacent site was considered possibly suitable for a new Library, but in July 2004 there were no firm plans:

> "In sum, the library has no building at this point other than the old shell of a burnt building that is left from the plunder of April 2003. This building is in a terrible state, and looks on the verge of collapse. All the same, a great deal of work and effort by the staff has gone into the cleaning and reorganization of this institution, and despite the destruction and looting of a large part of the library and almost no reconstruction budget to speak of, the collections are already accessible to readers."   (Bahrani and Eskander, 2004)

Speaking in October 2004, Dr. Eskander reviewed the assistance that had been promised but not delivered:

> • "Japan promised last year to help with the setup of an electronic database and the purchase of equipment for the National Library
> • The French government expressed its willingness to help the National Library through the Ministry of Culture.
> • As I mentioned earlier, the U.S. government, the Department of State, promised to sponsor the reconstruction of NLA. I feel that the Department of State will not fulfil its promise. Neither LC nor [the Department of State] want to establish direct contact with NLA. The Library of Congress team seems to have forgotten its promises of aid.
> • The British Library showed its willingness to train some Iraqi librarians, but the British Consul [sic] was not interested in funding the project." (Eskander, 2004)

Other forms of assistance were, however, more immediately available. An Italian funded project has provided the library with 25 computers, various scanners, printers, a photocopy machine and other instruments, an Internet connection, and plans to provide training in book preservation. The agency has also paid to hire 15 new librarians (Un Ponte Per, 2004). The only other country which seems to have fulfilled its promises is the Czech Republic which has already arranged for four archivists to be trained in Prague (Eskander, 2004). There have been unexplained delays in issuing visas for Iraqis to receive archival training in the U.S.A. (LaFranchi, 2004). American help to date seems to have been limited to supplying 6 vacuum cleaners (Eskander, 2004).

With support from the United Nations Development Group's Programme for the protection of Iraqi cultural heritage, UNESCO finally committed itself in March 2004 to a 3-year programme to assess the collections at the National Library and Archives in anticipation of their organization in new premises, the establishment of a computerized database, the training of local staff in charge of the inventory, and the provision of equipment. In addition, UNESCO will support the preparation of an architecture brief by the Iraqi Ministry of Culture for the relocation of the collections, and the provision of a network between libraries of cultural institutions, inside and outside of Baghdad (UNESCO Division of Cultural Heritage, 2004). Contacts between UNESCO and the National Library to progress the project were established in August 2004 (Eskander, 2004).

Libraries in Further and Higher Education

The picture of the current situation of Iraq's university libraries as seen by external observers is no less confused, partly the result of a lack of familiarity - amongst news reporters working for the western mass media in Iraq as much as amongst the international Librarianship and Information Sciences professional community - with the origin of Baghdad University as independent Colleges (i.e. Faculties), and of many Iraqi provincial universities as dependent Colleges of earlier foundations. These Colleges built up their own libraries, which were in some cases substantial, and have retained a degree of autonomy. Even today, in most cases, there is no University library *system* coordinated by or under a single overall management, as is usually the case in North America and most European countries. Reports of damage to a particular university library may in fact have referred only to one of the College libraries. The Universities comprise some 201 Colleges and 28 research centres (UNESCO, Division of Educational Policies and Strategies, 2005), and there may be as many libraries serving them.

In a report published in mid-May, and apparently without making clear whether or when he had been in Iraq, or whether he had travelled outside Baghdad, Walter Sommerfeld, Professor of Oriental Philology in Marburg University in Germany, claimed that

"the 15 [*sic*] universities of Iraq have been totally looted and burned. Only the University of Baghdad in Djadaria remained untouched. There, Americans had made their headquarters. Of the infrastructure of the Mustansanja University, along with that of Bologna the oldest in the world, nothing has been left - even fixed installations were dismantled - including the electrical wall-sockets, and the campus burned down. On the campus of the Arts Faculty of the University of Baghdad in Wazinja almost everything has been destroyed, also its Department of Archaeology, which as extension of the Iraqi Museum delineates the sources of the more than 5,000 year-old period of high culture. The fires have caused several buildings to collapse. Of the Library of the Germanistic Section, which contained over 15,000 volumes, only solidified slagheaps of ash remain." (Sommerfeld, 2003)

Later reports cast serious doubt over the accuracy of his claims. Some have indeed been proved to be inaccurate or exaggerated. However, it does seem certain that some of the libraries of several Iraqi Universities suffered to various degrees as a result of the war and the looting that followed. A later evaluation suggested that:

"Iraqi higher education was in a shambles after the war. An estimated 80 percent of the country's 22 universities and 43 vocational colleges had been damaged, some beyond repair." (Asquith, 2004)

Data collected by UNESCO and the CPA suggests that perhaps half the total stock of Iraq's university libraries has been lost through war damage or looting (UNESCO, Division of Educational Policies and Strategies, 2005).

University of Baghdad

The University of Baghdad is the largest in Iraq, with more than 3,600 academic staff, c.70,000 undergraduates and c.7,500 postgraduate students in 24 Colleges, 5 postgraduate institutes and 5 research centres. There are 6 different campuses spread all over Baghdad. The main campus is the one located in

Jadriya, in the centre of Baghdad. The Colleges of Engineering, Science, Political Science, Physical Education, and Women's Education are all located on the Jadriya campus, as is the University President's office.

Méténier (2003) provided the first report that the "Central Library of Baghdad University" had been destroyed. Both of the University's Central Library buildings were subsequently reported to have been burnt in the hours after Saddam Hussein's government collapsed (Shaw, 2003). Nonetheless, Al Tikriti (2003) reported that, according to Dr. Naji of Bayt al-Hikma, *the* Central Library was neither looted nor burned.

The initial UNESCO mission reported that the University's southern campus was undamaged, but one member of the team visited the northern campus and reported damage to the College of Arts and the Medical College (UNESCO, 2003a). Other visitors also reported that

> "…the Bab al-Muazzam campus' Wazirriyya central library, which contained the Fine Arts, Humanities and Literature collections, has been looted and burned. Several departmental libraries, which often housed copies of doctoral dissertations, have been destroyed. Following a quick survey of the Department of Music in Baghdad University's Faculty of Fine Arts, it was determined that at least 1,000 music records (vinyl disks), 5,000 tapes, dozens of record players, 30 pianos and hundreds of books were stolen from the Musical Arts Department, including Opera, Baroque and Iraqi recordings." (Watenpaugh *et al.,* 2003)

Later, the University's President confirmed that the infrastructure of Baghdad University's northern Bab al-Muazzam Campus in Waziriyah, had been nearly totally destroyed, that 20 buildings across the University's campuses were no longer fit for teaching, and that 15 others had suffered different degrees of damage in the war and the looting that followed it (Al Musawi, 2004).

Further confirmation came from the Stony Brook University team, who learned that the College of Arts, the largest graduate humanities library in the country, had been stripped of computers and furniture, and its entire collection of 175,000 volumes and manuscripts destroyed by fire (Filstrup, 2004).   However, a distinguished local archivist claimed – in an unconfirmed report written more than a year after the war (Al-Naqshbandi, 2004) - that only 1% of the books were stolen from the Waziriya campus library, suggesting that even then there was still some confusion as to which campus had suffered damage. He also claimed that the University authorities were far from diligent in seeking to repair the damage, and alleged that:

> "An American librarian visited the library, along with her interpreter, and offered to help repair and renovate the library but since the staff of the library did not have a mandate to come to a decision on their own (laysu ashab al-qarar), they passed along the information to the main library on al-Jadiriya campus which then contacted the President of the University, which refused the American librarian's offer, saying they already had a set amount specified in reserve (al-mablagh marsud) to repair the library!"

Dr. Walid al-Hashimi told Al Tikriti (2003) that the Library of "Baghdad Medical College" was looted. This appears to refer to the University of Baghdad's College of Medicine, whose library was on the Bab al-Muazzam campus. The College of Medicine's chief librarian, Maryam Abd al-Karim Nazo, later told the Stony Brook

team that the library was badly looted in April, losing the most important part of its book collections (about 8,000 volumes), along with all of its computers and its computerised catalogue. The library was one of five Baghdad medical libraries that had used WINISIS - the UNESCO-sponsored library management software - to catalogue their books (Filstrup, 2004). The looting was later also was confirmed by the College Library's Technical Adviser (Jabbar, 2004).

Baghdad University's southern campus at Jadriyah, where the main building of the Central Library is located, suffered maybe 10% damage (Iraq Higher, 2004), and the Library was reported to be largely unscathed (Johnson, 2004). This confirms Watenpaugh *et al.*'s (2003) earlier report that:
> "The campus central library at al-Jadriyya is mostly intact, with losses at the utmost of 10% of the total collection. Yet, like all libraries in Iraq, it is woefully out of date, with the collection of new books and periodicals ceasing almost entirely after 1990."

Some of the campuses' facilities have been rehabilitated (Iraq Higher, 2004). The Cultural Emergency Response, a joint initiative of the Prince Claus Fund of the Netherlands and the International Committee of the Blue Shield, allocated 25,000 Euro to help refurbish the Reading Room of the Central Library, buying tables, chairs and computer equipment (Felfoldi, 2004a).

The College of Law had some areas burned out, but, as at the National Library, the Dean sealed the library's doors and bricked them over, so the collection and the catalogue are intact. The College is one of the 3 university law departments that are being redeveloped with American assistance. The programme, led by DePaul University, will re-equip the libraries with computers, web-based research resources, and implement a training program for the library staff (USAID, 2004h). Despite these efforts, an American-educated Iraqi lawyer, visiting the Baghdad library sometime during the summer of 2004 reported that:
> "there are no books in the libraries from which students may study their country's legal system. There are very few new books, despite greatly publicised donations from Western institutions - there is not anywhere near enough to go around." (Al-Ali, 2004)

Infotrieve has offered to donate copies of their Ariel Electronic Document Delivery software for the three law school libraries and to offer additional copies to other Iraqi libraries at a discounted rate (DePaul, 2004d). Once it has been installed and the staff have been trained to use it, it will make collaborative collection development and inter-lending between the three libraries practical (Morris, 2004). As Ariel's use is also being encouraged by WHO-EMRO, this will perhaps serve as a resource-sharing model for other libraries in Iraq to help overcome deficiencies in their collections. The DePaul team had some preliminary discussions with staff of the National Library about local and national collaboration to share expertise and provide mutual support (DePaul, 2004e).

When the University's Islamic Studies building was burning, and looters threatened its museum's collection of 20,000 ancient and priceless volumes, students moved the books to mosques and then to safe houses (Schofield, 2003).

Contrary to Professor Sommerfeld's claim (*q.v.*) that it had been destroyed, the Archaeology Department's collection suffered only smoke damage, although the

entire card catalogue was lost and the collection had had to be relocated to other rooms in the building. However, the collection, like most others, contained few books and journals published after 1980. (Filstrup, 2004). By June 2004, the archaeology library at Baghdad University had been refurbished, and a decision taken to defer similar action at Mosul pending the department's planned relocation in the Autumn (SUNY Stonybrook, 2004b). Stonybrook University's on-site coordinator left Baghdad in August 2004, after the library had been equipped with PCs and a satellite link to the Internet (SUNY Stonybrook, 2004d), and having already reported that the Baghdad University library staff was not well prepared for receiving the support being made available (Pournelle, 2004).

The University of Baghdad's College of Languages, where there was a shortage of current material for teaching German, was a beneficiary of military assistance, noted in a U.S. Army press release (which makes no reference to Professor Sommerfeld's earlier claim that its library had been destroyed). Combat Engineers from the Task Force coordinated the collection of more than 500 books and 300 pamphlets, donated by students and faculty at Justus-Liebig-University in Giessen, Germany, where they were normally stationed, and arranged for their shipment to Iraq via the U.S. military postal system (Webmaster, 2004).
The Universidad Complutense de Madrid provided similar assistance for the Department of Spanish (Auchterlonie, 2003), which had been destroyed by fire in the post-war looting (Vargas Llosa, 2003).

Some of the DePaul University team arrived in Baghdad in December 2003 to initiate USAID HEAD renovation projects at the three university law libraries, and observed that the Baghdad University Law Library lacked modern materials of virtually any kind, and Internet and computer access were almost nonexistent (DePaul, 2003). DePaul University's library specialist, Kimberli Morris, arrived in Iraq at the end of February 2004, and confirmed that a pre-requisite for re-establishing the library in Baghdad would be renovations to the library space: the shelving was falling apart; the floor was broken; there were holes in the walls where air conditioners had been stolen, severe problems with white ant infestations, and insufficient electrical capacity (DePaul, 2004b).

The rehabilitation of an unidentified library at the University was completed in August 2004, after being indicated as a priority by members to the USAID Community Action Program in Baghdad. The project, completed at a cost of US $107,000, included repairs to the main library, supplies of new shelving materials, new furniture for the common areas, computers, printers, a data projector, air coolers, and water coolers (USAID, 2004o).

An American company has a contract to provide a cable network for the University of Baghdad and Baghdad city. Free PCs are being provided for the University as part of the contract (Iraq Higher, 2004).

Al Mustansiriyah University, Baghdad

Some early reports may have confused the residual Twelfth Century buildings of the Al Mustansiriyah Madrasa (School/College) in the historic centre of Baghdad with Al Mustansiriyah University, founded in the 1960s, whose principal campus is in Waziriyah, a suburb to the north of the city centre (Riedlmayer, 2003c).

During the war, reports suggest that an American missile landed near Al Mustansiriyah University in early April, causing some blast damage, mainly to windows (Haidar, 2003). Early reports on the subsequent civil disorder claimed that a College of Arts in the north of the city was looted, but did not make it clear whether this was at Al Mustansiriyah University or Baghdad University (UNESCO, 2003a; Rodenbeck, 2003).

Much of the information circulated to the outside world was obtained at third hand. The initial UNESCO mission was informed that the Archaeology Department at Al Mustansiriyah University was looted and set afire, but the faculty saved the library. Watenpaugh's team also reported that the library facilities at Al-Mustansiriyah had been destroyed, as had the offices housing the university's central records administration (Watenpaugh *et al.*, 2003). Dr. Walid al-Hashimi, a professor in Al Mustansiriyah University Medical School, told Nabil Al Tikriti (2003) that the University's Main Library was looted, but the University Medical School Library was not.

Although Arnoult was not able to visit the University, he was informed by Wishyar Muhammad that the Central Library had been damaged, not by fire but by looting. Equipment and furniture had been stolen (including doors and windows, air conditioning systems, etc.). A part of the collection was stolen, but some was returned later. Some 168 manuscripts were said by the Director of the Centre for Manuscripts to have been looted (Arnoult, 2003a). It was later confirmed, by staff of the University's Department of Library and Information Science, that the Main Library had lost all its equipment and most of its books, although some books had subsequently been returned (Johnson, 2004).

Some 15 months after the end of the war, Taquey al-Mosuwy, Vice-President of Al-Mustansiriyah University, estimated that 85 percent of the damage done by post-war looting on the campus had been repaired, all by Iraqis themselves (Asquith, 2004).

University of Mosul

Mosul University, in the north of Iraq, is the second largest University in Iraq, with c.20,000 students, including c.650 postgraduates, served by a main library and 24 branches. All told, the main and branch libraries had 140,000 volumes and 3,500 journal titles, but no current paid subscriptions to foreign journals (Filstrup, 2004).

Early reports suggesting that the University Central Library had been looted and burned (Shaw, 2003) were in part confirmed by Arnoult who saw that the Library had been vandalised, and furniture, equipment and books had been looted, but the building was not burned. The University as a whole had suffered catastrophic looting (in only 6 hours), but was functioning again within 2 months (Ismail, 2004).

This was confirmed by Arnoult, who reported that the Library building was rapidly secured and made accessible to the students. Significant efforts had been made by employees to clean the Library. The rehabilitation of the Library also proved to be an example of co-operation between scholars and the Coalition forces. With help and funds from U.S. forces, tables, chairs and other furniture

were acquired; and broken glass and forced doors were also repaired. Professors on their own initiative contacted foreign colleagues to send books to replace items lost from the collection. A strong and energetic reaction by religious authorities in the city (appeals in the mosques condemning theft and requiring restitution of stolen books) had apparently produced good results. An initial assessment made by employees indicated that only 30 % of the books had been lost (Arnoult, 2003a).

Later, the Stony Brook team (who do not appear to have visited Mosul) met with the Director of the University Library (or perhaps the College of Arts Library), Mahmud Jirjis. They were told that, while the library had been looted of all its computers and printers, its collections were intact (Filstrup, 2004). More recently, it was further confirmed that relatively little had been lost from the Library's collection as a result of the looting, perhaps because there was little of any current value (Ismail, 2004). Like other Iraqi university libraries, it had purchased almost nothing since 1990, adding mostly gifts of journals (Filstrup, 2004). The Stony Brook project has since acquired both new and old books to reconstitute the Archaeology library, and had these ready for shipping by the end of July (SUNY Stonybrook, 2004c), while the DePaul University project has since purchased several hundred volumes chosen from Arab publishers' lists by the law libraries at Mosul, Baghdad, and Basra (DePaul, 2005)

The head of the College of Medicine library, Mr. Mahmud Ayyub, explained to the Stony Brook team that the library had 14,000 books and received 150 journals, including some foreign journals, but all the journals came as gifts. Stony Brook University will arrange for the library to be wired for computers and Internet access and use part of its grant to purchase 10 computers for the library, arrange for Medline training (probably presented by the Baghdad University Medical Librarian who had been trained by WHO), purchase a selection of environmental health books published in the last five years, and subscribe to a core set of environmental health journals (Filstrup, 2004). The first small consignments of books had been delivered by the end of 2004 (USAID, 2005a). The MCID project has also provided books for the medical books to the University of Mosul's Colleges of Nursing and Dentistry, and Central Library; and to Dohuk Technical Institute's Nursing Department (Jackson State, 2004).

The USAID HEAD grant awarded to the University of Hawai'i-Manoa's College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources to work with the University of Mosul's College of Agriculture and Forestry and the University of Dohuk's College of Agriculture, is intended to strengthen the academic programs, and rehabilitate the research infrastructure. Part of the grant will be used to rebuild university libraries looted or destroyed during the war (Creamer, 2004). According to the project's director:
> "This task includes a strong emphasis on library and information retrieval enhancement by University of Hawaii assistance, installing electronic libraries such as TEEAL (The Essential Electronic Agricultural Library, ala NAL), and providing books or journal subscriptions to meet state-of-the-art requirements for teaching and research. We have already made [May 2004] significant progress in all these areas." (El-Swaify, 2004)

Progress reports on this project provide no insights into the conditions in Mosul and Dohuk university libraries, but note them receiving electronic articles,

journals and books as well as an electronic agricultural library; and computer and communication systems being installed at both the Universities. By May 2004, "The Essential Electronic Agricultural Library" had been introduced at the College of Agriculture and Forestry of the University of Mosul, offering more than 140 journals selected by 600 international scientists as the most essential to research and education in different fields of agriculture (USAID, 2004e). Broadband and satellite links were installed at both Mosul and Dohuk (USAID, 2004k), and a fibre optic cable had been laid to create a local area network in Mosul as part of the MCID project (USAID, 2004v). Iraqi faculty and students also have access to the University of Hawaii's research library through these enhanced computer networks (USAID, 2004r). Later it was announced that it was intended that a former Presidential palace would be converted into a Learning Centre for the College(USAID, 2004g).

University of Basrah

Basrah has been in the front-line in all three wars that Iraq has fought in the last 25 years. After the conflict in 2003, all the University's research laboratories and libraries were reported looted and/or destroyed (Shaw, 2003). The building of the University Central Library was certainly looted and vandalised. According to an Iraqi academic who returned to Basrah to visit his former colleagues, the looters
> "had set fire to most of the buildings including the libraries in different colleges and departments of the school. The remaining books, journals and research materials were decades out of date." (Ahmed, 2003)

Arnoult visited the library and reported that shelves, tables and chairs had been taken by the looters, and doors, windows, and other equipment were smashed. The collections had been gathered in several places in the library and burnt. It appeared that about 75 % of the collections were destroyed, but he was not able to ascertain whether the library's collection of 600 well-known manuscripts were safe or not (Arnoult, 2003a). There was further confirmation of the damage from other first hand accounts (Iraq Higher, 2004), as well as photographic evidence (Ahmed, 2003a). The 'Al Sharaka' programme team have reported that only 5,966 volumes, most of them more than 20 years old, remained in the Library (University of Oklahoma, 2004).

The catalogue records of the Law School Library at Basrah were either destroyed or stolen, along with some of the collection (DePaul, 2004b). However, the staff had demonstrated their commitment to the library through their efforts to protect the collection by taking material to their homes during the unrest following the outbreak of the war, even though these materials were in most cases over twenty years old and in poor shape (DePaul, 2003). The inadequacy of the space for the Law Library and its poor condition were also readily apparent during a visit to Basrah in March 2004 by Ms. Morris from DePaul University (DePaul, 2004b).

Other Universities and Colleges

John Agresto, the CPA's Senior Adviser for Higher Education, describing the situation in the other universities, pointed out that:

> "even the ones left untouched have little in them. In Kurdistan, there are hardly any books after 1980. It is the same for journals. The law library in Tikrit has a few hundred law students and 80 books in its whole library - and most of these are Xerox copies of Xerox copies stitched together." (Felfoldi, 2004b)

Al Nahrain University, the former Saddam University founded in 1988, is next to the main campus of the University of Baghdad, but about one-quarter of its size. It had strong ties to the former regime and was better funded, according to students and professors at the University of Baghdad. According to the initial UNESCO Mission, it was undamaged, but a later report suggested that it had also been looted (Toosi and Johnson, 2004). According to a survey undertaken for UNESCO, the library of the College of Law was "gutted to the ground" (UNESCO, Division of Educational Policies and Strategies, 2005).

The University of Technology in Baghdad (founded in 1960) had also been badly damaged by looting and burning after the war (Iraq Higher, 2004). However, at least one of the University library's collections appears to have survived. It currently contains some 25,000 books, but most are apparently more than 20 years old (University of Oklahoma, 2004). It is not clear to which library this refers, but staff had advertised in the community and managed to recover 40% of the books and journals that had been looted from the library of the College of Engineering (Spurr, 2005).

All the Colleges of the University of Technology and the Islamic University (founded in 1989) in Baghdad were reported to have suffered some damage by burning or looting or both. Most damage was reported for laboratories, computer rooms, workshops, libraries and convention/seminar rooms (UNESCO, Division of Educational Policies and Strategies, 2005).

Al Mansour University College in Baghdad, one of Iraq's private institutions, was not damaged in the conflict or by looters (UNESCO, 2003a), and its President has not reported any shortage of books and journals (Stipho, 2004).

The buildings of Al-Bakr University in Baghdad, apparently another private institution, were also reported as undamaged (Russell, 2003).

According to UNESCO, Al Anbar University, founded in 1987 in Ramadi, west of Baghdad, had suffered looting of one or more of its libraries (UNESCO, Division of Educational Policies and Strategies, 2005). According to the University's President, the library was certainly in poor condition, suffering from a shortage of recent publications, and lacking computers and an Internet connection. Nonetheless, the University authorities are aware that

> "The vast use of modern technology such as the Internet and the multimedia had created new realities in the fields of scientific research and education. Accordingly the University intended to adapt new conception in developing all the libraries and information resources and finding the most efficient ways of using them." (Habeeb, 2004)

Babylon University, founded in 1987 in Hilla, south of Baghdad, was a battleground for the opposing armies during the war and was severely damaged, but reopened for its 15,000 students in April 2003 (Al Joborae, 2004). The library was severely looted, and its collection completely lost (University of

Oklahoma, 2004). USAID moved quickly to provide some forms of assistance, and in July 2003 announced a grant to provide computers and technical equipment for establishing an Internet centre at the University (USAID, 2003b).

All the Colleges of the University of Kerbala (founded in 1987) were reported as damaged by burning or looting or both (UNESCO, Division of Educational Policies and Strategies, 2005), although there is no published report of damage to the libraries.

Further south, Kufa University, established in 1987 in Kufa and Najaf, has more than 11,000 students. Its Vice-President highlighted the need for up-to date books and journals during a visit to London, but - whilst referring to suffering because of the conflict - made no specific reference to physical damage to the University's premises or to losses from its library (Hussain, 2004).

The University of Al Qadisia, founded in 1988 in Diwaniyah, half way between Baghdad and Basrah, was visited by one of the initial UNESCO team and seemed to have escaped burning, although some limited looting was reported (UNESCO, 2003a). There was later confirmation that it had been damaged by looters, but no information about the status of the Library appears to be available, other than a request by the University's President for books and journals (Al Jabrey, 2004), and a report from a UNESCO survey that all colleges in the University were damaged by burning or looting or both (UNESCO, Division of Educational Policies and Strategies, 2005).

Further south, in Nasiriyah, the central or College libraries of Thi-Qar University, then no more than a year old, had suffered from looting (UNESCO, Division of Educational Policies and Strategies, 2005).

To the north of Baghdad, arson or looting is reported to have damaged all the Colleges of the University of Diyala, established in 1995 in Ba'qubah (UNESCO, Division of Educational Policies and Strategies, 2005), but the condition of the libraries has attracted no public commentary.

The University of Kirkuk in the North East of the country, although only founded in 2002, suffered extensive looting and damage after the conflict, and subsequently received two grants from USAID to provide equipment and furniture for the College of Law (USAID, 2004f). No reports have specifically mentioned the other University Libraries.

The northern universities in Kurdistan were reported to have been relatively undamaged in the war, but their facilities were less good than those further south and they had been dependent on 'Oil for Food' funding through UNESCO. Some of the northern universities do now have money available in their budgets for books, but need advice on the best books to buy (Bostock, 2004). One visitor, with previous experience in the region, confirmed that in July 2004 the three Kurdish universities (Dohuk, Suleimanyah, and Salahaddin) were short of books, information technology, and other resources:

> "The major complaint from faculty and administrators was their inability to communicate adequately with academics in Europe and the United States. Getting visas is hard enough when you have a country of your own (and thus a passport). Because the KRG [Kurdish Regional Government] region is not a

nation, it was almost impossible for scholars there to travel internationally. At each of the universities in the KRG zone, there was limited Internet access through a slow and unreliable satellite connection, typically with only a few terminals in some central campus location (like the president's office)." (Gray, 2004)

Dohuk University, which was founded in 1992, is a beneficiary of one of the USAID HEAD projects, but there have been no reports about the state of the University or its Library.

Suleimanyah, in the north east of Iraq, is one of Iraq's oldest universities, having been founded in 1968. It does not seem to have experienced problems with war damage or looting, or to suffer from the same lack of security currently evident in other parts of Iraq. The law school library at the University was relatively new, but very small. Its collection of resources needed improvement, but its air-conditioning equipment was still intact (DePaul, 2003). In an initial meeting with the staff of Suleimanyah University, in Baghdad in February, the DePaul team discussed ideas for the improvement of the library. At the end of the month the team, including a library specialist, travelled to Suleimanyah to finalise their plans (DePaul, 2004a). In addition to identifying the renovation that was necessary, the space was deemed to be inadequate for the library's needs (DePaul, 2004b).

The procurement of books from Iraqi and Egyptian distributors for Suleimanyah and the other 2 Iraqi university law libraries as part of the DePaul University project then began. Following initial studies, it was determined that, of the 3 university law schools partnered with DePaul University, the University of Suleimanyah was the best site for the establishment of the first legal research centre. Suleimanyah was probably the law library reported as expected to be the first renovation completed by the DePaul University project in time for the beginning of semester (USAID, 2004o), as it opened in September 2004 after being provided with legal texts, computers with internet access, and other equipment (USAID, 2004t).

Salahaddin University, in Arbil, to the east of Mosul in the Iraqi Kurdistan region, has grown to an enrolment of enrols approximately 13,600 students since its foundation in 1981. The library currently contains c.260,000 volumes, but most of these are reported to be more than 20 years old (University of Oklahoma, 2004). In addition to whatever support it might receive from the 'Al Sharaka' programme, Salahaddin University has also enjoyed the support of CPA North, which made a $40,000 grant for the purchase of new books for the University's libraries (CPA North, 2004), and the University was recently able to spend $85,000 at a local book fair (Publishers Association, International Division, 2004). CPA North also funded the establishment of the University's first Internet centre and classroom, providing 24 computers, a server, internet connection and other supplies and materials. Before this opened in May 2004, staff and students previously only had access to the Web at Internet cafes in the town (CPA North, 2004).

There have been no individual reports about the condition of Iraq's 45 Technical Institutes, which offer 2-year Diploma courses at undergraduate level, from which the best students are permitted to transfer to the 3rd year of comparable

Bachelors Degree courses in the universities. The war caused extensive damage to some technical institutes and colleges, mainly in the Centre/South of Iraq, but looting and arson caused most of the damage and about 80% of them were affected (UNESCO, Division of Educational Policies and Strategies, 2005). Given the nature of the curriculum, with its heavy emphasis on practical studies, the impact on libraries may not have been as severe as in the universities, and has not been considered noteworthy in the various reports examined.

Modernisation of university library services

The university buildings may be repaired sooner than the curriculum, which was affected not only by politics but also by economic pressures (Toosi and Johnson, 2004). To meet such needs, the USAID-funded 'Al Sharaka' Program claims to have been carefully designed to meet the critical needs of Iraqi higher education. Most Iraqi Universities do not have the funds for subscriptions to electronic journals and databases, and the creation of a nationwide electronic library network (costed at US $40 million including the technical infrastructure) was one of the specific proposals put to the Donors' Conference organised by the United Nations in Madrid in October 2003 (United Nations, 2003). Some do have money, but they all lack the necessary facilities (hardware and software, and furniture), and expertise necessary to provide access to them (Publishers Association, International Division, 2004). The 'Al Sharaka' Program aimed to help the universities provide access to these research databases, which were previously unavailable under the Saddam regime, and announced in April 2004 an agreement with EBSCO that all non-commercial institutions in Iraq - universities, schools and public libraries – would have unlimited online access to the Web-based research system, EBSCOhost® (EBSCO, 2004):

> "The approach of the program is to apply a focused set of activities that have been vetted with the Iraqis to meet higher education needs at national, campus, and program levels. In addition to the databases made available through the partnership with EBSCO, Al Sharaka also provides… workshops for all Iraqi University Presidents; … computers, reliable Internet access, and technical learning centers; support for Iraqi university libraries to rebuild their collections; …GIS and remote sensing training, and more." (EBSCO, 2003)

By October 2004, universities in Baghdad and Arbil Governorates (presumably Al-Anbar University in Ramadi, and Salahaddin University in Arbil City, as these were the partners in 'Al Sharaka') were reported to have had access to the EBSCO database. Access to this database was intended to be available nationwide for other Iraqi universities in due course, as well as libraries and schools throughout Iraq (USAID, 2004s), which suggests that the licence has been negotiated under the terms brokered by eIFL[4], the agency sponsored by the Soros Foundation.

On a trial basis, JSTOR[5] (the collective digital archive operated by the Association of Research Libraries in the U.S.A.) agreed to give the University of Basrah two years free access to its back files of 390 online academic journals (Spurr, 2004b). The Iraqi universities also agreed to form a consortium in order to negotiate licensing arrangements for other online materials (Publishers

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[4] eIFL – electronic Information For Libraries [online]: http://www.eifl.net/ [Accessed 30 December 2004]
[5] JSTOR [online]: http://www.jstor.org/ [Accessed 30 December 2004]

Association, 2004). However, the extent to which most Iraqi libraries will be able to take advantage of this in the near future appears severely limited until the current availability of PCs can be increased, until Internet access and the telecommunications network improve, and until Iraqi librarians, school teachers, and university academic staff are more familiar with the operation and potential use of ICT-based information and learning resources. The University of Hawaii's HEAD project was providing library information research skills courses for Iraqi scholars and students and training in computer and internet skills for academics and university library staff (USAID, 2004w).

The project led by the State University of New York at Stony Brook had similar aims for introducing modern systems. By May 2004, automated library systems and digitisation software had been reviewed for purchase. As well as purchasing contemporary volumes for their partner law libraries, they had also acquired a collection of older material to distribute (SUNY Stonybrook, 2004a). More than 1,500 books had been catalogued and prepared for shipment by September (USAID, 2004q). However, nothing appears to have been shipped to Iraq by early Autumn, and no progress reports on this project have appeared after that issued in September 2004, possibly because of staff changes at the end of the first year of the project's contract.

The DePaul project team similarly recognised the need for each institution to begin automating their records, and recommended the Arabic language version of UNESCO's CDS/ISIS library automation system that can both import and export MARC compliant records. It was noted that OCLC was beginning a major programme to develop Arabic language cataloguing, in collaboration with a regional service company, Arabian Advanced Systems. It would be possible for all three schools to share their catalogues as they develop and, although there is no Kurdish version of the software, the developer has indicated a willingness to begin working on a Kurdish version (DePaul, 2004b). CDS/ISIS was acknowledged as unlikely to be the integrated library management system that the Iraqi libraries would want to use in the medium term, but represented a good option for each library to begin computerizing its library records (DePaul, 2004d).

The Stony Brook University team had also noted that
> "A big question, relevant to all Iraqi university and research libraries, is whether to install integrated library systems now or to start with simple cataloging systems such as WINISIS and later move the data to more a sophisticated ILS… Clearly, we should coordinate technical solutions among the several DoS and USAID-funded library initiatives. We recommend a separately-funded (Department of State?) workshop that would bring to Iraq Arab library information technology specialists, perhaps from the Gulf States which enjoy a number of highly computerized university and research libraries." (Filstrup, 2004)

It is perhaps worth noting that it was not only the university libraries that have been assisted during the reconstruction of Iraq's information infrastructure. Only 3,400 computers out of 11,800 existing at universities before March 2003 were left after the looting (UNESCO, Division of Educational Policies and Strategies, 2005). For example, Mosul University Computer Centre, once regarded as one of the best training centres in Iraq, lost all its 3,100 computers, including many new PCs supplied only 4 months earlier, as well as its carefully hidden original software disks. The Centre reopened with 13 computers on 12th July, the first

Internet centre funded by the U.S. Army as part of its peacekeeping mission in northern Iraq. A second centre, with 13 more computers, opened later that month at the University's Medical College for use by graduate students and doctors. Six private Internet cafes are also planned for Mosul (Spolar, 2003).

Some of the major Iraqi universities (Baghdad, Nahrein, Mosul, Basrah) have succeeded in re-establishing access to the Internet. For example, the University of Technology was reported to have about 50 PCs connected to the internet in December 2003 (UNESCO, Division of Educational Policies and Strategies, 2005).

Much of the external support appears to have been concentrated on the 3 major universities, although it is clear that the rest were suffering from neglect if not from war damage or looting. By almost all accounts, the record of U.S. involvement in Iraqi higher education has, however, been disappointing. Of Iraq's two dozen ministries, the one for higher education was the last to receive funds, and it got the least (Asquith, 2004). UNESCO is, however, organizing a Round Table during the first half of 2005 with donor organizations, non-governmental organizations and representatives from the world's leading universities, along with senior staff from the Ministry of Higher Education in Iraq and from Iraqi universities. The meeting will identify Iraq's higher education priorities and how they should be addressed (Williams, 2004). A major World Bank loan for improvements to the Higher Education system is now also said to be in the final stages of negotiation.

School Libraries

One early report suggested that teachers and neighbours raced to the defence of some schools in the Iraqi capital during the looting that occurred when the government collapsed (Schofield, 2003). However, later evidence suggests that similarly effective defences were not formed at every school throughout the country, and some looting did take place to add to the deterioration in conditions that were the inescapable consequences of 20 years of lack of maintenance. The scale of looting is not clear, but a major programme of rehabilitation of school buildings was initiated by the CPA. The cost of necessary reconstruction or refurbishment was high. For example, it required a US $55,000 grant to refurbish one secondary school in Baghdad Governorate that had suffered from years of neglect and then was looted in 2003 (USAID, 2004w). In addition, in November 2003, it was announced that every Baghdad public school would be eligible to receive a US $750 grant to improve its physical environment, or purchase books. The CPA required a school administrator, two teachers, and a minimum of four parents (representing the community) to select appropriate projects (USAID, 2003f).

However, the Minister of Education, Abdul Sahib al-Alwan, said in March that the rehabilitation of Iraqi schools would not be completed until 2006/7 when a new curriculum and syllabi could be introduced (Institute for War & Peace Reporting, 2004c). The preparation of the new curriculum was expected to address a program for erasing illiteracy.

Guidelines developed for educational reconstruction in post-crisis situations suggest that

> "This is an opportunity to remedy past shortcomings and to improve the quality of schooling…" (Bensalah, 2002)

Part of the curricular reform and development will involve a review of textbooks and the topics in them to respond better to both the needs of the student learner and to the needs of national development. However, according to a Press Release from the CPA, the broader aims of the reform were said to be to facilitate, *inter alia*:

> • "students to obtain the knowledge, abilities, and skills that enable them to obtain information from multiple sources and to apply knowledge through analysis and logical thinking.
> • a curriculum that supports and is responsive to the needs of the workforce and aids in the comprehensive development and transformation of Iraq into a knowledge-based economy.
> • an expansion of the concept of curriculum to be broader than the textbook alone: to include knowledge, trends, and skills that the student must acquire inside and outside school.
> • students who are able to master modern fields, especially in the areas of science, math, languages, and information and communication technologies."
> (Lawrence, 2004)

Although the revision was to be informed by a review of international practice, there was – at this stage – no mention of the potential role of school libraries, albeit such a role might appear implicit in the aims outlined above. Indeed, initially, there had been no intention to try to create school libraries where none had existed previously. One USAID administrator commented:

> "There are no school libraries. In Iraq -- people think of schools in the United States and they compare them to schools. And the schools, all of the schools I went to in Iraq were simply classrooms, and there was one room for the headmaster or the principal of the school. There's no gymnasiums, there are no lunchrooms, there are no libraries, there's nothing else except the classrooms. Our plan was not to reconstruct all the schools of the country. We were taking what was there already and making it functional. We're not intending to transplant all of our infrastructure into Iraqi society. We think that would be inappropriate. It would also take a very long time and we're not sure that would be the best use of money right now. We have introduced internet cafés, but not in the schools…" (Natsios 2003)

However, work began in the new school year 2003/4 on a nationwide training programme to introduce new teaching methods concentrated on student-centered learning (USAID, 2003f). Interestingly, amongst the funds allocated by the U.S. Congress for re-construction was provision for establishing 162 model schools as Centers of Excellence (CPA, 2004a). It is not clear what this indicates for library provision or whether its implementation may have been delayed by the cost of repairing numerous schools that were damaged by insurgents trying to prevent them being used as polling stations in the elections in 2005 (Institute for War and Peace Reporting, 2005).

Public libraries

In Mosul, the Central Public Library was closed at the time of Arnoult's visit. Whilst there was some evidence of broken glass and forced doors, the inside of the Library, seen through the windows, looked in good condition: books seemed intact on shelves, and furniture was still in place. Arnoult concluded that looting

may not have disturbed the Library. However, he noted that it had held a collection of 401 manuscripts, and recommended that a further check should be made (Arnoult, 2003a).

In Basrah, the Central Public Library, which had already suffered from years of neglect, was totally destroyed by fire, probably after being looted for any equipment, although it was known that the library had kept 14 manuscripts, which could have been a target for looters. The outer walls were still standing, but the concrete was deeply damaged by high temperatures, suggesting that the method used was probably the same as in Baghdad: use of a specific fuel to activate the fire and burn the books and shelves (Arnoult, 2003a). Arnoult believed that the library had lost all its books (Arnoult, 2003c), and around 50,000 of its 80,000 books were indeed destroyed, many of them of great historical significance to Iraq. However, the Chief Librarian, Alia Muhammed Baker, together with family, staff and friends, had managed to save 30,000 books (Dewan, 2003; D'Angelo, 2004). She feared that the library's collection of texts chronicling the history and culture of the city would be lost if the library were to be bombed, and after appeals for assistance to the authorities failed, she took matters into her own hands, storing the books at her home and in a restaurant next to the library. Her story later became the theme of two children's books (Stamaty, 2004; Winter, 2004).

Work started on the first phase of the reconstruction of the Basrah Central Public Library in December 2003, and was completed in May 2004. The first phase of work involved structural repairs to the building, and the replacement of facilities including air conditioning systems. The second phase is intended to provide the library with computers, furniture, and new books. Funding for this project has come from the British government's Department for International Development, as part of CPA South's wider role in helping to rebuild Iraqi public services (D'Angelo, 2004).

Visitors to the UK reported that the public libraries throughout Iraq are in varying states of disrepair (Publishers Association, International Division, 2004). At the end of 2004, the UNESCO Division of Cultural Heritage also noted that the conditions of public libraries in the North and in the South of the country remained "critical and uncertain", and sought support amounting to US $700,000 for a 3-year project (UNESCO Division of Cultural Heritage, 2004). The initial objectives were to:
- Reopen the central public libraries in Mosul and Basrah.
- Raise the quality of services in public libraries by adopting standards, developing guidelines, documenting and disseminating best practices.
- Promote equal access for citizens to information about their society.
- Facilitate the use of information technology and improve knowledge of its use.
- Provide learning resources and information services that support and improve individual, family, and community life.
- Promote the role of libraries in society, creating and reinforcing good reading habits in children from an early age at national level.
- Promote literacy, reading development and lifelong learning process.

In addition the intention is to:

- Provide technical assistance to the Ministries of Public Works and Culture and the competent Iraqi authorities to prepare an appropriate programme for libraries and archives in Iraq.
- Foster networking and cooperation between research centres and national libraries and archives in Iraq, in the Arab region and worldwide.

The fate of the country's 144 public libraries has otherwise largely been unreported. Some assistance for their reconstruction appears, however, to have been made through USAID's Community Action Program (CAP), which based its activities on the requirements expressed by the local population. As early as November 2003, it was reported that a library project was initiated in Al Diwaniyah city (about 100 miles south of Baghdad) supported by CAP (USAID, 2003e). Similarly, it was reported in September 2004 that CAP has supported improvements to a community library in the Maysan Governorate in south-east Iraq in a project said to be representative of projects for rebuilding 'social institutions' throughout Iraq (USAID, 2004n). Other USAID programmes also contributed funds. A library in south-central Iraq was renovated with the assistance of a grant from USAID's Iraq Transition Initiative. The renovation work was reported to have increased book space and added rooms for community events and computers, as well as a children's reading room. The project funds were also intended to purchase new books for the library's collection (USAID, 2004p).

Because much assistance was being made through NGOs, it was not only conventional public libraries that received assistance. Development Alternatives Inc., "a global consulting firm that provides social and economic development solutions to business, government, and civil society in developing and transitioning countries" used USAID funds to purchase technical books for the Ala Cultural and Youth Center in Arbil to augment the centre's existing library to enhance research resources for the youth (USAID, 2003c).

Specialist libraries and information centres

Many of Iraq's special libraries were in government funded industries and their research centres, and several had been closed before the war began, either to achieve fiscal economies or because their purpose had been made redundant by Iraq's isolation. Ignorance of these closures compounded the confusion. One report queried the fate of the Scientific Documentation Centre's library (Quilty, 2003a), when this had in fact been closed several years earlier as part of an institutional reorganisation (Johnson, 2004). Most of the surviving specialist libraries appear to be those connected to museums, centres of scholarly research, or hospitals.

Nothing was sacrosanct as far as the looters were concerned. Unsurprisingly, the British Chamber of Commerce in Baghdad was "comprehensively looted" (Publishers Association, 2004b). Notwithstanding the French government's opposition to the decision to send troops into Iraq in March 2003, the library of the French Cultural Centre in Baghdad was also severely looted (Arnoult, 2003a), although it appears to have been quickly and successfully re-established (Fattah, 2004b).

Arnoult (2003c) has explained that there was no time during his mission to explore the fate of the many private libraries gathered by individual collectors and religious organisations in Iraq, but has implied that some of the looting was deliberately focused on items in these unprotected collections.

Museum libraries

Although lacking a library specialist, the first UNESCO mission had visited the Iraqi Museum's library, but made no comment on the vandalised state that was all too evident to other visitors (UNESCO, 2003a). Early reports probably exaggerated the scale of looting at the Iraqi (National) Museum of Antiquities, after journalists reported unconfirmed statements made on the spot by a former museum employee who was not aware of the arrangements that had been made for safeguarding much of the collections (Lawler, 2003). Damage in the administrative areas was in fact worse than in the exhibition rooms (Bogdanos, 2003), although the condition of the library was probably not helped by its being used as living quarters for American troops in the period immediately after the war (Russell, 2003).

Nonetheless, most of the Museum library's collection, reputedly one of the finest collections on the history and archaeology of the Middle East, was safe. It had been evacuated before the war by the Museum's Library Director, Zainat al-Samakri, and her staff, and had been completely protected (Filstrup, 2004). As early as 24th April, the scholarly community was assured by the Director of the Baghdad Museum, through a third party, that the Iraqi Museum's Islamic manuscripts were safe (Tripp, 2003). In common with most Iraqi libraries, however, the Museum's Library had been unable to acquire most materials for more than a decade and would need the support of the international scholarly community to rebuild the collection (Jones, 2005). U.S. Department of State funding will enable the library to be wired for computers and Internet connectivity (Filstrup, 2004).

At Mosul, evidence that some looters were organised and well informed thieves came from the Museum's library. A fire was started in the reading room, located in the basement of the Museum, but without consequences for the Library. However, the Library was clearly looted by specialists (Arnoult, 2003a). Thieves ignored aisles of books and stole only 20 of the most valuable volumes and atlases, some dating from over 200 years ago, according to Manhal Jabr, Director of Antiquities for Ninawa Province which includes Mosul (Atwood, 2003).

The destruction continued even a year after the official end of the war. In mid-May 2004, there were reports that unknown people had set fire to the Museum in Nasiriyah, in the south of Iraq, and it was completely destroyed. Its Library's collection of 3,900 books was either destroyed or looted (Jones, 2004b; Werr, 2004).

Scholarly research centres

The Iraqi Academy of Sciences in Baghdad, an independent research facility in Waziriyah founded under the Hashemites in 1948, held collections of manuscripts, periodicals, foreign language books, and unpublished theses. It also boasted an internet computer lab with 20+ terminals, and a printing press.

Quite soon after the city's fall, looters stripped the facility of all computers, air conditioners, electrical fixtures, furniture, and vehicles. The building was not burned, and Academy staff told Al Tikriti (2003) that they blamed local poor people for the looting. The Academy held over 2,000 manuscripts. Most had been transferred to the Saddam House of Manuscripts in 1998, but less than half of those retained by the Academy survived the looting, many of them still uncatalogued (Hiyas, 2004). Its digital library and the traditional library, containing especially books about ancient languages, were partially looted (UNESCO, Division of Educational Policies and Strategies, 2005). Two-thirds of the library's rare books had been stolen, but most of its collection of journals and newspapers was intact (Hiyas, 2004). Since nothing had been burned on the spot, it was hoped that the stolen books may re-surface in the future:

> "The library's collection is especially strong in language, literature, history and the humanities and has benefited from the donation of entire personal collections… Gone are microform copies of manuscripts and periodicals as well as the older books in Arabic, Ottoman and Persian. According to the Academy's remarkable head librarian, Ms. Juwan Mahmud, these books were not looted, but rather taken by someone with expertise in language and literature for safekeeping and that when the situation stabilizes, 'they will be returned.' Mahmud did not know who this was, nor had she had any contact with this person." (Watenpaugh *et al.*, 2003)

Although part of the collection had already been returned, and losses were estimated at 50% to 80% of the 58,000 published works in the Academy's collection, a room filled with bound Master's Degree theses completed at Baghdad universities between the 1960s and 1980s was untouched (Al Tikriti, 2003). Subsequently, the staff had taken measures to secure the remains of the library and control access to the stacks (Watenpaugh *et al.,* 2003). By the Spring of 2004, reconstruction efforts were evident, including 15 boxes of books delivered by the British Council (Fattah, 2004b).

Méténier (2003a) provided the first report of damage to another major institution, the library of the Bayt al-Hikma, the 'House of Wisdom'. Al Tikriti (2003) and later Watenpaugh *et al.* (2003) confirmed Méténier's report of its complete looting and burning. The Bayt al-Hikma, a semi-private research centre established in the 1980s and possibly refocused in 1995, took its name from an institute founded in 832 by the Abbasid Caliph al-Ma'mun that was during the Caliphate an unrivalled centre for the study of humanities and sciences, and particularly famous for its translations of Greek philosophical texts into Arabic (Whitaker, 2004). Ostensibly still supporting research in the arts and humanities and social sciences, with some 70 permanent staff members and 90 external contractors, the modern Bayt al-Hikma acquired the reputation of being intimately tied to the inner circles of power, with doctoral dissertations and other scholarly works attributed to members of Saddam's family allegedly ghost-written by its faculty. Both Bayt al-Hikma and the Academy of Sciences came under the control of the former Presidential Office, and that association may have sealed their fate (Watenpaugh *et al.*, 2003).

According to Dr. Abd al-Jabbar Naji, the Chair of the Bayt al-Hikma Department of History, several groups of looters entered the facility on 11 April, and took air conditioners, generators, computers, and other portable items of value. On 12 April, the looters returned, stripping the library and publications department of most of their books and valuable items. Under the 1974 Antiquities Law, Bayt

al-Hikma was not officially authorised to collect manuscripts, and the collection was relatively small. It was unclear whether these manuscripts were stolen or burned. Bayt al-Hikma's library lost several other research collections, but they were only copies that it may be possible to replace (Al Tikriti, 2003).

In Basrah, the Islamic Library, supported by an association founded in 1950, was looted but not destroyed. The collection, composed of about 400 printed books, has since been reconstituted by members of the association (Arnoult, 2003a).

Some reconstruction efforts have, however, been noted. Despite its support for the political orthodoxy of the Saddam regime, the Bayt al-Hikma was among the first to receive money for redevelopment from CPA, a $17,000 renovation grant, but only after allegedly being "cleansed" of high-ranking Ba'athists (Watenpaugh *et al.*, 2003).

Medical libraries

There are 17 health sciences libraries, one in almost every city in Iraq, attached to medical education institutions. Many of these medical colleges have teaching hospitals attached to them, which allows for use of libraries by hospital staff. In addition the Ministry of Health and over 15 major hospitals have significant libraries. However, Al Shorbaji reported that many of the country's medical libraries had been looted. Library collections, equipment, and in some cases furniture were removed from libraries or damaged. Many staff had left the country or changed to other jobs, leaving medical libraries in most cases run by one or two staff each (WHO/EMRO, 2003). Moreover, books, journals, CD-ROM and other educational materials had not been reaching the country after the conflict began (Al Shorbaji, 2004b). WHO has since begun to implement a rehabilitation plan for the medical libraries (Al Shorbaji, 2004a).

THE CPA, in collaboration with the Elsevier Foundation, the American Medical Association and an NGO arranged for 30,000 medical books to be distributed to health sciences libraries (Coalition Provisional Authority, 2004a). The "Health INternetwork Access to Research Initiative" (HINARI)[6], a joint venture between the United Nations and publishers that is aimed at making electronic medical journals available to scientists in developing nations for free or at reduced prices, had already begun to discuss the rapid inclusion of Iraq in the scheme when the war began (Butler, 2003). In September 2004, the World Health Organisation Country Office in Iraq organized and supported a training course in Amman, Jordan on HINARI for 21 participants from the Iraqi Ministry of Health, libraries of medical colleges, teaching hospitals and specialized centres (WHO funds training for librarians, 2004). The training aimed at providing health workers and specialists with the knowledge and skills to access health information via the Internet, ensuring that relevant information is widely available and effectively used by health personnel, including professionals, researchers, scientists and policy makers (WHO, 2004).

At the end of 2004, WHO officials met with the Dean of the College of Medicine in Basrah University to discuss the provision of books, journals and publications. The College of Medicine had already received large numbers of periodicals and

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[6] HINARI [online]: http://www.healthinternetwork.org/ [Accessed 30 December 2004]

publications from WHO, and two members of the faculty – including the Dean – had attended workshops on "Evidence Based Medicine" (WHO, 2005).

The needs in this field were equally recognised by the CPA. A $250,000 USAID grant was made to the Iraqi Medical Society Forum (IMSF) at the beginning of 2004 to fund the acquisition and distribution of American Medical Association journals (USAID, 2004b). From mid-summer 2004, colleges of nursing and dentistry were receiving new books and equipment, and medical books and reference materials were being distributed to 3 universities (USAID, 2004j). Six boxes of nursing manuals and medical reference materials collected by Jackson State University and the Mississippi Consortium for International Development were delivered to medical, dental and nursing colleges at their partner universities in northern Iraqi in Autumn 2004 (USAID, 2004u).

The impact on archives collections and services

> "A people without a memory are a people without a soul." (Bakhtiar Amin, quoted by Williamson, 2004)

Millions of government documents were reported as having been destroyed during and after the US invasion when 17 ministries were looted and burned (Williamson, 2004; Cole, 2004):

> "In the chaos that ensued with the fall of Baghdad on April 9, 2003, U.S.-led coalition forces, Iraqi opposition groups, and individuals seized hundreds of thousands of Iraqi state documents from government buildings, Ba`th [*sic*] Party headquarters, offices of the former intelligence and security apparatuses, military garrisons and other premises across Baghdad. Sensitive documents were later found in public buildings such as schools, as well as in private homes, apparently having been removed by officials of the former government, ostensibly for safekeeping, and then abandoned as military defeat became imminent. Similar scenes were witnessed in other cities and towns across the country. Former Iraqi government officials shredded, burned, or otherwise destroyed many documents during the preceding weeks, while countless others were destroyed as a result of the wartime aerial bombing campaign." (Stover, 2004)

Reports that looting and damage to these archival collections was ignored by American troops were spread rapidly, by the academic press (Recovering, 2003), by concerned Islamic scholars, and through organisations politically opposed to the war (Talbot, 2003). Establishing the truth of such claims can be difficult, particularly several weeks or months after the event when the facts may have been subtly altered through various re-tellings. For example, the inability of British troops to prevent looting in Basrah, and a comment about this made to a Reuters' reporter by one senior British officer that:

> "There is a release of pent-up annoyance and hatred against the Ba'ath Party and the Ba'ath regime but once that safety valve is blown...the business of protecting property becomes easier." (Georgy, 2003)

was retold a few weeks later as:

> "Other British troops at the time offered a less benign explanation: that coalition troops tolerated, and even encouraged, the looting of government buildings as the population's cathartic reaction." (Zia-Zarifi, 2003)

By the following year, another writer for the same pressure group had further transformed this into:

> "British officials publicly stated that they allowed the looting of Ba'ath Party buildings, which housed important archives, as a means of showing the population that the party had lost control of the city." (Stover, 2004)

Some journalists had no misgivings about looting government archives themselves. In the initial period after the American troops entered Baghdad, newspaper reporters appear to have had unrestricted access to Ministry buildings, and removed quantities of documents (Stover, 2004). A reporter for *The Daily Telegraph* showed scant regard for the integrity of Ministry files, exhibiting remarkable double standards by removing some files whilst as the same time reporting looting by others (Blair, 2003a&b). However, a number of reports that he allegedly based on files he found whilst deliberately searching for newsworthy material in the Foreign Ministry's offices subsequently led to unexpected retribution (Davies, 2004).

Archives in Baghdad and the southern cities were perhaps not alone in attracting the attention of looters. There were unconfirmed reports in April 2003 that there had been deliberate attempts in Kirkuk and Mosul to destroy historical records pertaining to the presence of the local Turkmen minority, particularly land title-deeds and registry office records (Riedlmayer, 2003a).

The attitudes of Coalition officials in Iraq towards preserving the documentary record of the Saddam regime seem to have been mixed. One early newspaper report indicated that even before the end of the war, steps were already in hand to:

> "hold meetings at all government ministries to begin planning how, with almost all the ministries' equipment and records stolen or destroyed, government can be revived." (Burns, 2003)

In November 2003, it was reported that the Coalition authorities had permitted Kanan Makiya, a Brandeis University professor, to take custody of 2.5 million pages of records taken from a series of underground vaults beneath the Ba'ath Party's national headquarters in Baghdad, representing much of the documentary record of the party's work over a decade or two. His intention initially appeared to be to remove these from Iraq to add to the Iraqi documents seized in Kuwait and northern Iraq, which he had been given after the Persian Gulf War in 1991 (Brinkley, 2003), but in a more recent interview it became clear that he was being assisted to establish a national archive, the Iraq Memory Foundation, in a commandeered building in Baghdad (Spector, 2005).

There was, however, a lack of clarity about the fate of other contemporary Iraqi government records. This was raised by one American academic who noted that an editorial in the *Washington Post* for 30 January 2004 had claimed that:

> "When coalition forces captured Baghdad, they took control of some 80 percent of the former Iraqi regime's documents - hundreds of millions of pieces of paper - and moved them to an undisclosed location outside Iraq. The only people who have been allowed to look at them are members of the Iraqi Survey Group, the U.S. intelligence unit seeking weapons of mass destruction in Iraq." (Palmer, 2004)

The removal of the Iraqi government's records, by whomsoever, did not find favour with leading Iraqis. Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali al-Husseini al-Sistani issued an edict in February 2004 calling for the return of government documents. He said these documents, looted from government departments, should not remain in the custody of individuals or be sold to anyone, because they included much valuable information. (Institute for War & Peace Reporting, 2004a)

The Iraqi government shared this concern - in one respect at least. Bakhtiar Amin, Human Rights Minister in Iraq's interim government indicated in November 2004 that he was aware that only a scattered collection of official documents of Saddam's secret police still existed (Williamson, 2004). The CPA responded by making grants to the Ministry of Human Rights for the rehabilitation of buildings to house the National Evidence Storage Facility, which will collect and analyze recovered documents and store forensic evidence (USAID, 2004c).

More concern was shown by the CPA about historic material, including a collection of rare, historic and modern books, documents and parchment scrolls pertaining to the Iraqi Jewish community, which were found in the flooded basement of the Iraqi Intelligence Service's (Mukhabahrat) headquarters in Baghdad in early May 2003. Upon removal from the basement, the wet materials were packed into sacks and transported to a nearby location where they were partially dried. The CPA arranged for conservators from the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration to travel to Baghdad in June to assess the condition of the materials and develop recommendations for their preservation, and they were subsequently transported to Texas for freeze-drying (US National Archives and Records Administration, 2003). Subsequently it was reported that the US National Archives were seeking private donations of up to $3 million to pay for the conservation and restoration work (Greenberg, 2004).

Similarly, support was provided for the construction of a new document centre in Mosul to house ancient religious manuscripts, previously stored in a tiny library space without a proper ventilation system. The new three-story building will include a modern library, a separate section for the rare documents, and a reading room for scholars to study the manuscripts (USAID, 2004d).

National Archives

A report in *The Independent* on c.15 April 2003, later emailed to the scholarly community, included an eye witness account of files of Ottoman archives "blowing in the wind" outside the National Archives (Fisk, 2003). Further comments from *The Independent*'s reporter Robert Fisk, who saw the National Archives building in flames and said that he tried unsuccessfully to fetch US marines in an attempt to save some of the collection, were repeated on a socialist web site:

> "I gave the map location, the precise name in Arabic and English. I said the smoke could be seen from three miles away and it would take only five minutes to drive there. Half an hour later, there wasn't an American at the scene and the flames were shooting 200 feet into the air." (Fisk, 2003)

However, these early reports about the fate of the Iraqi National Archives also began to be dispelled to some extent by the Japanese newspaper report that:

"Important materials and documents of the period of the Ottoman Turkish rule had been secretly moved away by the former Hussein Administration… [I]n the mid-March when the war seemed inevitable, the whole staff of 85 members of the library had moved away in a week the materials of the public archives to a tourism administration office inside the city under the instruction of the Minister of Culture, Humadi… It is said that it was because the library was located near the building of the Ministry of Defense and likely to be bombed, and also because they wanted to keep them from being taken away by the U.S. and British forces… After that the library and the archives were looted and burned, but Mr. Gazi Hassan, one of the staff of the library's reading room said on April 20, 'The major part of the important materials and documents are safe.' " (Jun, 2003)

The National Archives were located on the second floor of the National Library building, and Arnoult noted that the same kind of fire has been used to ravage the service, destroying the collections that were in the room, with furniture and equipment completely melted by heat and high temperature. Mary-Jane Deeb, a specialist on the Arab world at the Library of Congress, also remarked that some records were burned with the use of some intensely flammable material like phosphorous – "not the sort of thing a casual looter might use" - and some books also were scattered about the floor, possibly to give the impression that part of the collection had been looted (Hartman, 2004). The fires seem to have been intended to destroy sensitive records about Saddam Hussein's government. Only the "republican archives" - archival documentation from 1977 to the present - had been destroyed. These included the entire microfilm collection and all documentation related to acquisitions. The team found unharmed collections of books in rooms on the same floor as the rooms containing the ashes of the burnt archives and microfilms (Deeb, *et al.*, 2003).

The Library of Congress team found that the fires did not destroy large numbers of rare books and ancient manuscripts as initially feared, and the majority of the collections were intact. Earlier archives covering the period 1920 to 1977 and belonging to the Interior Ministry had been placed in rice bags and had not been damaged (Fischer, 2003).

Part of the collection was reported to have been moved to the same locations as the books of the National Library. It was claimed by the Iraqi authorities, particularly by the then Director of the National Library and Archives, Mr Khamel Djoad Hachour (a.k.a. Kamal Jawad Ashur), that what had been moved was mostly archival documents from the Mandate period up to 1958, but Arnoult was not convinced that this included the archives from the Ottoman period. He formed the impression that the Iraqi authorities were less interested in contemporary records and records management, and that the reconstruction of the National Archives was not a priority (Arnoult, 2003a).

Some 40,000 rare books and documents had been sent for safekeeping to the building of the Iraqi National Board of Tourism. In July 2003, they were found to be under a foot of water there, perhaps the result of a break in the city water supply network (Hartman, 2004). Dr. Khayal Mohammed Mahdi Al Jawahiri of the National Library and Archives confirmed in June 2004 that the material had been damaged, but offered an alternative suggestion - that the cause was a result of the water table rising (Johnson, 2004). Deeb reported that workers had been hired to get them out, but two months later they were still wet and

damaged by mould (Hartman, 2004). However, the CPA then repaired four freezers and transferred all the wet documents into them. In January 2004, Professor John Russell, the CPA Senior Advisor to the Ministry of Culture, explained that:

> "There is still the long-term problem of how to dry them out and preserve them, but the immediate problem of deterioration has been halted. We need to find a group of adequately funded conservators to set up a lab here and train some document conservators in Iraq." (Jones, 2004a)

Russell was also reported to have explained that:

> "We made a conscious decision not to try to transfer the Iraq National Archives out of the country, as that could have created no end of controversy among Iraqis, who might have seen it as the Americans stealing their heritage." (Jones, 2004a)

The finally tally of lost and damaged material may take some time to confirm. However, in April 2004, a London-based Arab newspaper, *Asharq al-Awsat*, reported Dr Eskander as stating that 60% of royal and ministerial documents from the Ottoman age had been lost. He said it would take a year to re-file the rest of the documents (Institute for War & Peace Reporting, 2004e).

Dr. Eskander is later reported to have stated that most of the National Archives' records, maps, and photographs had been lost as well. Some are alleged to have been damaged beyond restoration. Interviewed by another journalist later in the year, Dr. Eskander explained that a

> "… former Director – [Raad Bander,] once the preferred poet of Saddam Hussein - was dismissed after accusations that he removed rare books from the collection. But Eskander faults the former director for a different decision: moving the library's rare books and national archives to the basement of the nearby ministry of tourism in the pre-war frenzy. 'The best thing would have been to move those collections to nearby mosques,' he says, 'but there was a reason for choosing that ministry: It was a fortress of support of the Baathist regime and housed officials' from Mr. Hussein's intelligence forces. Eskander says the move meant the books and archives in that basement survived the burning and looting. But about two months after Baghdad's fall, he says, 'someone entered the basement, took what they wanted, and opened the water taps.' " (LaFranchi, 2004)

In a conference presentation a few weeks later, Dr. Eskander expanded on these remarks:

> "The looters took almost all rare books as well as thousands of archival records and documents. Apparently, to cover their crime, they flooded the basement by breaking some water pipes." (Eskander, 2004)

In discussion after presenting his paper, Dr. Eskander also shed some light on the fires that had destroyed some of the archival material

- "Before the war all archives had been subject to scrutiny by Saddam and his party
- Most archives were about his own party
- Many were fabricated to change history
- 3 days before the Americans invaded, the archive section were told to burn all archives relating to Saddam and his party
- After the war the archives were looted.
- Some was locals with an eye for a quick buck.

• majority were systematically looted by Saddam's people to remove all evidence of atrocities etc." (Eskander, reported by Stringer, 2004)

House of Manuscripts

At the end of April, a newspaper report noted that:
"US central command said more than 100 items had so far been handed in, including manuscripts taken from the Saddam Hussein Manuscript Centre, one of the great libraries in the Middle East." (Gibbons, 2003)

Regrettably this report also implicitly provided the first public suggestion that the Dar al-Makhtutat (the House of Manuscripts, formerly Dar Saddam lil-Makhtutat / Saddam House of Manuscripts), said to have the country's largest collection of manuscripts, may have been looted. However, on the very same day, a British expert on Middle Eastern libraries was providing the small community of professionals working in the field with reliable confirmation - from the institution's Director - that the collection, which included collections formerly in many private and mosque collections (and possibly those of the Iraq Museum), had been packed and transferred to safekeeping the previous winter, in anticipation of hostilities (Roper, 2003a). Further confirmation that this collection was safe came from Dr Donny George, then Director of Research at the Iraqi Museum, who had been invited to Europe and North America to speak at a number of meetings concerned with international support for Iraq's museums (Shaw, 2003).

Efforts to save the collection of the Dar al-Makhtutat had begun 4 months prior to the war and continued right up to the week immediately prior to hostilities. By 2003, the collection comprised an estimated 50,000 manuscripts of which 7,000 belonged to other institutions or private collections and were there for repair and conservation (Deeb, *et al.*, 2003). Al Tikriti (2003) reported that all the manuscripts were taken to a bomb shelter in the Yarmouk district of Baghdad, together with the results of a survey of provincial collections, whilst microfilms went to a second and CD-ROMs to a third location. According to the retired former Director, Usama al-Naqshabandi (who was succeeded in the post by his wife Dr. Dhamia Abbas Samarai), his staff undertook such protection measures although they did not have official Ministry permission to move the collection, and were even asked to slow their efforts by the then Minister of Culture, Hamid Yusuf Hammadi. An estimated 47,000 manuscripts from the Dar al-Makhtutat collection and c.3,000 from other collections, including the Iraqi Academy of Sciences, Mosul Central Library, University of Mosul Library, University of Tikrit, Kirkuk Central Library, Al Mustansiriyah University, and the University of Basrah were stored in the bomb shelter (Al Tikriti, 2003). A small conservation laboratory, with a well trained professional staff, had also been established there (Deeb *et al.*, 2003).

According to accounts given to Al Tikriti, the bomb shelter was under continuous armed guard by local volunteers. Looters had tried and failed to force the doors on 3 occasions, and on each occasion people from the neighbourhood had chased them away. Requests for protection apparently did not produce an immediate response from the American forces, and at some point, looters entered the preservation facility, which had not been moved, and stripped it of all computers, microfilming equipment, and preservation materials. Some days later, American

troops tried to take the manuscripts from the shelter to the Iraqi National Museum, but this was successfully resisted by the local community (Al Tikriti, 2003).

Arnoult (2003a) was able to visit the library and confirmed that:
> "the building is in a good state and has not been looted... the collection was transferred into a safe place in a secret shelter... I was not allowed to visit this site but... it was said that everything was correct (humidity, temperature) inside the shelter... [M]icrofilms (kept in a secret place in Baghdad) will be used for consultation when necessary and for massive digitisation. The laboratory and restoration unit (situated in a small house close to the Centre) ... have been completely looted... Globally, my visit to the Centre and to the Restoration unit left me unsatisfied in spite of the certitude that the most important Iraqi patrimony collection was safe."

Later, Al-Naqshabandi was to acknowledge that
> "Unfortunately, many of the manuscripts suffered damage either in transport or because they are being kept in inappropriate conditions... We need to restore them, but that requires modern technical equipment that we don't have." (Eddy, 2003)

Arnoult (2003a) recommended that until the situation was secured, and the previous premises have been restored to give acceptable conditions of conservation, the return of the collection to its original home was not desirable. He also highlighted the need for restoration and digitisation to be based on a coherent national policy encompassing other collections, using identical equipment and after technicians had been trained (Arnoult, 2003a).

The Awqaf Library

The Independent's reporter, Robert Fisk, provided the first mention of the burning of the library of Qur'ans at the Ministry of Religious Endowments (Maktabat al-Awqaf al-Markaziyah) (Fisk, 2003). Méténier (2003) also reported claims that the Awqaf Library, the oldest and most important public manuscript collection in the country, had been totally destroyed. It was later confirmed that the building of the Awqaf library was destroyed by fire on 13/14 April (Al Tikriti, 2003; Watenpaugh *et al.*, 2003). The awqaf were endowments set up to provide for charitable projects. They have historically occupied a special relationship to the state. Unlike most other types of landholding, a 'waqf' is free of tax, and that freedom is (at least theoretically) inalienable by the state. If the records have indeed been lost, there will be major legal complications in the future (Quilty, 2003b).

However, on 29 May, Al Tikriti (2003) interviewed the Awqaf library staff, who assured him that, with Ministry permission, they had taken steps prior to the war to move c.5,250 out of their total of c.7,000 manuscripts to an undisclosed location and the rest to the Qadiriyya Mosque complex, where they had been under armed protection. As a result of an incident at the Qadiriyya mosque, the guards had either been disarmed by US troops or abandoned their posts. The decision was taken to move the items from the mosque back to the Awqaf library. The library itself was no longer under armed guard, and on the same afternoon that the manuscripts were moved back from the mosque to the Awqaf library, the library was subjected to a highly organised and intentional looting

and burning, in which perhaps two-thirds of the returned manuscripts were stolen and the remainder were burned. Most of the lost manuscripts were from 3 collections that had been recently added to the Awqaf collection for safekeeping: the Kamal al-Din al-Ta'i collection, the Salih Salim Suhrawardi collection, and the Hasan al-Sadr collection which was on loan during renovation of Musa al-Kadhim complex. Apparently they had not been catalogued (Quilty, 2003b).

The Qadiriyya Mosque and its large research library, opened in 1954, appeared unscathed and secure when visited by Watenpaugh's team. The collection includes 65,000 publications and 2,000 manuscripts, many of which were stored for safe keeping prior to hostilities. Curiously, the long serving Librarian at the Mosque, headquarters of the Qadiris, one of the most important Sufi orders in the world, denied that any manuscripts from the Awqaf Library had ever been moved there (Watenpaugh *et al.*, 2003).

Arnoult visited the Awqaf Library, and confirmed that it had been totally destroyed by fire, apparently using the same method used in the National Library building, and probably looted. Only the outer walls were still standing. However, it was not possible for him to meet staff of either the Library or the administration because they did not come to the site regularly. He was, therefore, obliged to report that:

> "According to information collected abroad, the situation of the collection is as follows: about 40 % of the manuscripts must have been destroyed (by fire and by looting), as well as 90 % of the printed books." (Arnoult, 2003a)

Nonetheless, he was sufficiently convinced that part of the collection had survived somewhere to recommend the need to gather the remaining collections in some temporary location. More than a year after the war, the chief librarian, Mr. Salah Karim Hussein, confirmed that only 5,000 MSS remained, and that the rest had been looted or completely burned (Al-Naqshbandi, 2004).

Looting and recriminations

This paper has been primarily concerned to identify the extent to which theft and damage from looting have affected Iraq's libraries and archives. It is not the purpose of the paper to enter into a debate about who was responsible, or whether it might have been prevented, as those are particularly difficult issues to resolve when they take place during a period of conflict and disorder such as occurred in Iraq in 2003. A sample of opinions on that topic are included mainly to alert the reader to the potential for rumour and recriminations that exists in this difficult situation.

Much of the looters' attention appears to have focused on items with an obvious resale value, such as computers and air conditioning units, but there do appear to have been some opportune or well-informed thefts of rare books and manuscripts from some collections, as well as deliberate destruction of property records or records that might incriminate the previous regime and its adherents. Attention was soon drawn to the fact that assessing the losses of books and archival manuscripts, and identifying the whereabouts of the lost collections clearly required some attention (Gewertz, 2003), although the scale of losses will probably never be known, because in some cases records did not exist or were

destroyed. However, there is an ongoing debate about the fate of items that have disappeared, and it seems useful to include a review of these issues to conclude the examination of the impact on libraries and archives services.

More attention has, however, perhaps understandably, focused on Iraq's irreplaceable archives and manuscript collections, than on its library services. Following his visit to Baghdad, Al Tikriti recommended that,

> "In order to counter widespread conspiracy theories concerning the looting and burning experienced in the first week after Baghdad's fall, an independent international commission should fully investigate the events… especially since the looting appears to have been encouraged by unknown provocateurs and the incidents of burning appear to have been fully intentional and pre-meditated. Such an international commission might also be able to address rather dark accusations of "inside job" looting made by at least one UK journalist." (Al Tikriti, 2003)

Responsibility for the looting has been ascribed to various causes. One American commentator suggested that

> "In a sense, the pillage that accompanied the Anglo-American invasion represented Saddam's last act of leadership. The people were following his own predatory example. It helped, of course, that he had recently thrown open his dungeons. Along with the thousands of petty political prisoners, check bouncers, and pilferers came hardened criminals, tribesmen bent on reigniting vendettas, and psychopaths." (Rodenbeck, 2003)

Another American commentator sought to place the blame more squarely on the Iraqi nation as a whole (Pipes, 2003). Some Iraqis, however, clearly took the view that the damage to many of the city's principal institutions laid to waste by looters was the responsibility of the Coalition forces:

> "One exponent of that view is Gailan Ramiz, a Princeton-educated political scientist at Baghdad University, who sought out reporters at the hotel. Dr. Ramiz, 62, had bitter words for Mr. Hussein, but he added: 'I believe the United States has committed an act of irresponsibility with few parallels in history, with the looting of the National Museum, the National Library and so many of the ministries. People are saying that the U.S. wanted this — that it allowed all this to happen because it wanted the symbolism of ordinary Iraqis attacking every last token of Saddam Hussein's power.' " (Burns, 2003)

Whoever was responsible for the looting, the limited action taken to protect the national heritage from the looters had a far-reaching political impact, as one astute American newspaper reporter noted:

> "The failure to quell looting permanently diminished the U.S. in the eyes of ordinary Iraqis; the fact that it was young Shiite men who succeeded in driving the looters away and that Shiite clerics were able to persuade the looters to return what they stole, including works of art from the Iraqi National Museum, increased the prestige of the Shiite leaders among their own people." (Rieff, 2004)

A military investigation into some of the looting commenced almost immediately after the end of the war, under the direction of U.S. Marine Colonel Matthew Bogdanos who had two degrees in classical studies and another in law (New Fields Exhibitions, 2003), and a preliminary report was issued in mid-May (Bogdanos, 2003). Confidence in this investigation was damaged when Colonel Bogdanos, in a press briefing in September on his efforts to date, demonstrated that he did not have a clear understanding of the origin of some of the archival

collections, continuing to imply, as he had previously reported, that a large collection stored in a bomb shelter belonged to the National Museum when in fact they were from the House of Manuscripts:

> "Months before the war, the staff moved all of the manuscripts from the museum in 337 boxes, totalling 39,453 manuscripts, parchment, vellum and the like. They moved it to a bomb shelter in western Baghdad. On the 26th of April, we located that bomb shelter and began to arrange for the return of those items to the museum." (Bogdanos, 2003a)

This prompted one, better informed, British scholar/librarian to question why he did not know that:

> "these MSS (preponderantly on paper, not parchment or vellum) have not been in the Museum since the 1970s (and indeed significant numbers of them were never there)? This was pointed out after he made the same error in his May briefing…" (Roper, 2003b)

Months later, Bogdanos was still repeating these errors (Roper, 2004). Despite this confusion, it does seem that major collections placed in safe and secure locations before the war have been recovered, although in some cases they were inadvertently damaged.

Establishing exactly what happened during any war or period of major civil disorder is never easy, and it seems uncertain whether it would be possible to gather sufficient factual evidence to change strongly held opinions about who did what and why they did it. It is by no means certain that a further investigation such as Al Tikriti proposed would serve any useful purpose. The purpose of the looters seems clear: organised theft of valuable books and manuscripts for sale to unscrupulous collectors; opportunistic theft of items of some value to the people of Iraq who had been impoverished by the embargo; the destruction of some of the records of the Saddam regime; the destruction of ancient property records housed in the archives of the Awqaf and other collections; and arson to conceal evidence that might incriminate the looters. A major challenge facing future investigations appears, in some cases, to be the limited availability of inventories of what had existed. Nonetheless, the Iraqi Minister of Culture, Mufeed Mohammed Jawad al-Jaza'iri, indicated that the Ministry intended to conduct a thorough investigation into the pillage and arson that took place after the fall of Saddam Hussain's regime (Abdullah, 2003).

The Minister's resolve was perhaps prompted by reports that persisted long after the end of the war that looted items were being sold in local bookstalls. The claim that stolen books were being openly resold surfaced soon after the war, and has been substantiated by several visitors. Fernando Báez saw clear evidence of the sale of rare books taken from the National Library when he visited Baghdad with the first UNESCO mission in early May 2003, and recorded it in a personal account of his experiences published some months later:

> "En las calles, en las ventas de libros, pueden conseguirse volúmenes de la Biblioteca Nacional a precios irrisorios. Los viernes, en la feria de la calle Al-Mutanabbi, estas obras salen a la venta. Personalmente pude ver un tomo de una enciclopedia árabe con el sello oficial estampado en su portadilla." (Báez, 2003b)

Nabil Al Tikriti (2003) also included in his report a note that:

> "In recent weeks, books from the Bayt al-Hikma collection have been seen on sale in the square just outside the complex's entrance. When I passed through this square I noticed several recent model computers and printers on sale on a donkey cart, as well as some academic journal issues being sold on the sidewalk."

Watenpaugh's team similarly reported that it seemed possible that books stolen from several Iraqi libraries were openly on sale in the Suq, but included an interesting *caveat* in their report:

> "Baghdad book dealers report the availability for sale of books and manuscripts from all of the looted libraries and collections. Visiting the famous Friday book market at Al-Mutanabbi Street, we confirmed this fact, although the permanent bookshops have not – it seems – been implicated. Nevertheless, many of the book dealers have systematically removed any identifying markings – stamps, library cards, first pages and interior pages – that indicate the original provenance of the books." (Watenpaugh *et al.*, 2003)

The difficulty of proving ownership may have been behind a comment by the then Director General of the National Library, Kamal Jawad Ashur, who claimed in a newspaper interview in November 2003 that he and his staff could not do anything else but scour the bookshops and buy back as many of the Library's stolen books as possible (Gordon, 2003). His successor as Director General, Dr. Eskander, has also stated that the majority of the National Library's rare books were not destroyed, but stolen, and repeatedly claimed that they were being sold illicitly in markets in Iraq and neighbouring countries (Mite, 2004b; McCarthy, 2004).

Another reason underlying the authorities' inability to deal with the problem was revealed by the Minister of Culture, who was reported as claiming that in:

> "Downtown Baghdad… a majority of the books on sale are stolen - many from the National Library, which stands nearby. The Culture Minister says there are currently no laws with which to prosecute vendors dealing in stolen books…" (Mite, 2004 a)

Reports about the sale of stolen books also continued to appear long after the war, in some cases without having been recently verified. For example, Hala Fattah, a distinguished historian of pre-modern Iraq based in Jordan, writing in May 2004 recalled a conversation with Zain Al-Naqshbandi in the chief librarian's office at the Iraqi Academy of Sciences almost a year earlier, in June 2003 (when she had been a member of Watenpaugh's team), in which he had claimed that books stolen from the National Library were then on sale in the Maydan area, the historic quarter once referred to as "Old Baghdad" by Western tourists (Fattah, 2004a).

There may be other reasons for the continuing claims and rumours, and evidence that has not yet been disclosed. Speaking at the Archaeological Institute of America's annual Conference in Boston in January 2005, Abdul Aziz Hameed, Director of the Iraqi State Board of Antiquities and Heritage (SBAH), said that the SBAH had not received any report from the Bogdanos inquiry into the thefts from the Iraqi Museum at the outbreak of the war. As a consequence, another investigation was made by the SBAH, and a report on it had been sent to the Minister of Culture. He was not at liberty to discuss the content of the report, and he did not know when or if it would be made public (Jones, 2005).

The labour market and professional skills

Little has been reported about the size and capabilities of the professional workforce in post-war Iraq, but the picture does not appear to be encouraging.

Arnoult reported in August 2003 that the National Library and Archives staff was supposed to number about 119 persons (compared with about 160 before the war), but observed that

> "they could get a salary but they don't come regularly for lack of work to do. Some of these people have been trained but that was a long time ago (the initial training system was deficient and to be renewed in 2001-2002)." (Arnoult, 2003a)

Dr. Eskander took action to remove all the staff he judged to be corrupt and lazy from positions of responsibility, while promoting a number of qualified young female staff to higher positions, reorganizing the structure of the National Library and Archives, and radically changing the mechanisms of decision making and implementation by democratizing them (Eskander, 2004). Al Jawahiri (2004) stated that, in the summer of 2004, the National Library had only 31 staff, of which only 2 were librarians, and 2 were trained in 'documentation'. The discrepancy is marked, and one can only speculate that the others were staff of the Archives, and the cleaners and caretakers - or those whom Arnoult reported as non-attendees.

After visiting the stacks of the National Library and observing the state of disarray, the Library of Congress team commented on the lack of collection maintenance by the librarians (Deeb, *et al.*, 2003). Arnoult (2003a) reported there is an urgent need to address the lack of trained staff in the country, even for the most elementary tasks of collection care. However, one of the projects funded by the NEH's "Recovering Iraq's Past" initiative, is dedicated to the treatment and care of books and manuscripts in Iraq. Cornell University Library's Department of Preservation and Collection Maintenance will tailor the tutorial package to the climate zone and focus it on contemporary and traditional Iraqi materials, to enable librarians, archivists, preservation administrators, and others to develop basic and reliable responses to preservation challenges.

Staff shortages and skills gaps appear to be widespread. A librarian from the Academy of Sciences acknowledged that the capabilities of the library's staff did not match international standards (Hiyas, 2004). At Mosul, the University Library (or perhaps the College of Arts Library) has a staff of 80, of whom only 10 had professional skills (Filstrup, 2004). The librarian working with the DePaul University USAID project visited the Law Library at Basrah library and noted that, while the staff of eight had each worked for varying amounts of time in libraries, none of them had had library specific education (Morris, 2004). At Suleimanyah, the law library was overseen by a faculty member, and two staff who did not have library specific training. One had the undergraduate law degree and one had a degree which appeared to be akin to records management (Morris, 2004). The renovation of the 3 law libraries by this project is expected to include training the Iraqi library staff in relevant research techniques and aspects of library administration (USAID, 2004j).

School 'libraries' tend to be run by teachers. There are a few job opportunities in the private sector - e.g. information analysts supporting lawyers (Johnson, 2004).

Employers make little differentiation between graduates from the Technical Institutes' 2-year Diploma programmes and BA graduates from the University programmes. All start work as "Assistant Librarians" or in charge of small libraries. Library Science graduates are reported to have avoided library work during the later years of the Saddam regime because mostly it was poorly paid government employment. There are some hopes that, now that government employment is improving, the graduates may be considering library work again. Males are not likely to return to library work; females might but many have family commitments and may not rejoin the work force (Johnson, 2004). Méténier certainly expressed (2003b) some optimism about the energy and enthusiasm of the younger generation he had met while working in Iraqi libraries.

As most graduates sought other kinds of employment and did not join the professional cadre, the Iraqi Association for Libraries and Information currently has only about 150 members, although it has been in existence since 1968 (Al-Rawi, 2004). The Association's membership is thus smaller than the number of students who graduate from the 'library schools' each year. The activities of the Association had inevitably been disrupted by the war and its aftermath. It used to organise occasional meetings in Baghdad, and had published a journal twice each year, but had to suspend its activities in early 2003 (Johnson, 2004).

The minimal income of government employees during the latter period of the Saddam regime cannot have been conducive to staff morale and motivation, and may well have diminished managers' authority. Such problems may have been exacerbated by events in 2003. In researching the psychological effects of a major accidental fire in a Swedish library, Klasson (2005) observed not only the sorrow exhibited by the staff, but also feelings of anger and frustration as well as a drop in morale, and reported that physical and mental problems still remained some months after the fire. Whilst this aspect of the situation in Iraq has received no attention, it seems unlikely that such cataclysmic events as occurred in April 2003 made no similar impact on the staff of the libraries and archive services affected.

Education for Librarianship and Information Sciences

One of the major recommendations in Arnoult's report to UNESCO concerned education for Librarianship and Information Sciences professionals:
> "The reconstruction of libraries implies a necessary requalification of professionals through the setting of a temporary system of training until it is possible to create a basic teaching with diplomas for book, documentation or archive workers and to restructure careers.
> All the fields of librarianship and records management have to be taken into account through professional training
>   - locally thanks to local and regional professionals,
>   - abroad for the training of trainers.
> The following fields have to be privileged: preventive conservation, cataloguing, bibliographic research, computerisation, new technologies of

information, public libraries including libraries for children too." (Arnoult, 2003a)

Whilst not demurring from the thrust of his recommendations, his comments suggest that he may have been unaware or not well informed about the broad, albeit weakened, base of professional and technician education for library and information work that already existed in Iraq.

To create opportunities for a growing number of young people, the Iraqi universities have been continually expanded. 'Library schools' now exist in 3 Universities (Al Mustansiriyah University in Baghdad, and the Universities of Mosul and Basrah), with 2 Technical Institutes (similar to Further Education or Community Colleges) in Baghdad and Mosul known to be offering 2 year undergraduate Diploma programmes. According to data gathered for a UNESCO survey, however, 5 colleges were offering courses in Library Management, together enrolling 231 students (131 male; 100 female). In technical education institutions, students follow practically-oriented curricula, spending 70% of the time in practical activities and 30% in theoretical learning. The average of 23 students for each teacher in 2004 concealed wide variations between subjects and Institutes. There were also variations in the qualifications held:

> "The basic qualification to teach in the technical institutions is a master's degree. Instructor assistants are required to have a first degree. However, due to a shortage of adequately qualified teachers, individuals with lesser qualifications were hired. Thus, 50% of the faculty had only a bachelor's degree, while 40% had master's degrees and 10% hold a PhD." (UNESCO, Division of Educational Policies and Strategies, 2005).

The war with Iran had drained the state budget, and funds for study abroad gradually dried up. The last students to take postgraduate courses in Britain and the U.S.A. probably completed them in about 1988, and many of the librarians who were trained abroad before then have since left Iraq for better-paid jobs or personal security elsewhere. To offset the lack of opportunities for study abroad, the Iraqi Universities were encouraged to develop postgraduate programmes (Google, 2003). The 3 universities teaching Librarianship and Information Sciences all offer Bachelors Degrees, but 2 (Al Mustansiriyah and Mosul) now offer Masters Degrees, and Al Mustansiriyah offers a PhD programme. However, an archives programme dependent on cooperation of other Arab states was closed when Iraq became politically isolated, and proposals to establish a new one in Al Mustansiriyah University have so far been rejected.

The calibre and enthusiasm of the Iraqi teachers of Librarianship and Information Sciences have been taxed to the full as they struggled to develop their courses while coping with declining resources. No books about Librarianship and Information Sciences were bought after about 1985, and all foreign journal subscriptions ceased in 1992. The post-war disorder added to the problems. At Al Mustansiriyah University, 'Oil for food' money had been allocated for 25 PCs for the first ever computer laboratory that the Department of Librarianship and Information Science has been permitted to purchase for teaching its library science students. However, these had been stolen in the looting that took place immediately after the war, only 2 months after being installed, and the equipment had not yet been replaced some months later (Qassim *et.al.*, 2004). A small replacement IT laboratory has been provided to replace some of those taken by looters from the Department at Mosul University (Ismail, 2004).

Generally the Universities were quick to re-open after the war ended, and:
> "...the low level of student and faculty absenteeism impressed us at a time of rampant insecurity. Nevertheless, due to actual or imagined threats to personal safety women faculty members and students have found it increasingly difficult to come to school." (Watenpaugh *et al.*, 2003)

The Department of Librarianship and Information Sciences at Al Mustansiriyah University certainly felt the effects of the continuing insecurity. For example, students from Falluja, about 20 miles west of Baghdad, could not come to normal end of session exams in 2004 because of the security problems, and some were not able to come to a later, specially arranged, alternative examination session (Johnson, 2004).

Almost all academic staff with degrees from foreign universities have left, and the Departments of Librarianship and Information Sciences are largely dependent on academic staff wholly trained in Iraq. Foreign-trained Iraqi academics have largely left Iraq to seek work abroad, and seem unlikely to return until salaries and the security situation improve further. Of the former staff of the Department at Al Mustansiriyah University, 6 or 7 are now reported to be teaching in Libya, and 3 or 4 in Qatar, while one is in the U.A.E. (Qassim *et al.*, 2004). Basrah University seems to be suffering similar problems. For example, Zaki al Werdi, who became the founding Head of the Department in Basrah in 1986 after completing his PhD in Britain, is now working in the U.A.E. or Yemen (Ismail, 2004; Johnson, 2004).

All universities underwent significant changes in administration at the behest of the CPA in the academic year 2003/4. As part of an immediate process of de-Ba'athification, applied in a sweeping but arbitrary manner, CPA officials dismissed most Presidents of Universities, Deans of Faculties, and Heads of Departments (Watenpaugh *et al.*, 2003), without evaluating individual's commitment to a party whose membership was a normal requirement for many positions or career advancement. Amongst the casualties was Zaki Al Werdi's successor as Head of the Department of Library and Information Sciences in Basrah who was dismissed by the CPA because of his (possibly tenuous) connections to the Ba'ath Party. The woman who then became the Head of Department was, reportedly, not a qualified librarian (Johnson, 2004).

Both the Schools in Basrah and Mosul are allegedly suffering from severe staff shortages (Qassim *et.al.*, 2004). Teaching loads certainly seem to be high. The Head of Department at Mosul himself teaches 7 courses in the undergraduate programme and 5 in the Masters Degree programme (Ismail, 2004).

The courses have traditionally included some tuition through the medium of English, because some knowledge of English is needed for cataloguing and would be needed for acquisitions purposes (Qassim *et.al.*, 2004). English used to be needed for postgraduate study abroad, but an entire generation have now spent no time abroad, have never attended international conferences, and have not built connections with colleagues outside of Iraq. It is reported that the Ministry of Education has decided to re-open the Institute of Development of English Teaching because of its concern that Iraqi students' command of the English language generally has declined (Institute for War & Peace Reporting, 2004g).

Numerous projects undertaken as part of the reconstruction process have included the provision of PCs or focussed on the introduction of computerised database systems for management information. The demand for advanced information skills has been recognised by several International and Non-Governmental Organisations. The programme of training courses conducted for medical academics and librarians by the WHO has been suspended because of the security situation (Al Shorbaji, 2004b). However, a Training of Trainers in Geographic Information Systems was conducted by the Humanitarian Information Center (HIC) for Iraq with support from the Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) in November 2003. The trainees were drawn from the Ministries of Planning, Mines, Housing and Construction, and Water and Sanitation. The training was intended to provide Iraqi trainees with not only the latest skills in GIS software, but also the skills to pass this knowledge on colleagues in their respective Ministries, thus strengthening the use of geographic information in planning, monitoring, evaluation and decision-making processes (HIC, 2003).

This state of Iraq's professional workforce is all the more regrettable when remembering that Librarianship and Information Sciences education in Iraq was once amongst the best in the Arab world. The NEH-funded program 'Educating Iraqi librarians and archivists' effectively began in June 2004, when a team met with some Iraqi library science teachers in Amman, Jordan to begin to identify their needs for updating their curricula. Subsequently, the team will present a number of workshops in Amman in July 2005 to assist Iraqi faculty members to appreciate the significant developments that have taken place in the discipline and that need to be introduced or strengthened in their curricula (Johnson, 2004). The importance of developing in-country expertise was emphasised by the difficulties that the DePaul project encountered, failing to secure visas for the majority of its beneficiaries to attend a specialist conference in the U.S.A. (DePaul, 2004d). It is in the donors' interests to not duplicate each other's efforts, and it is also in the Iraqis' interest to disseminate training as broadly as possible. To this end, the DePaul project team attempted to facilitate contact between the 'Suleimanyah LIS faculty' (the library staff?) and the Harvard-Simmons project (DePaul, 2004b).

Problems and needs

Reconstruction and restitution are expected to be long processes. The extent to which the Coalition partners will engage in this process is uncertain. One faction in the U.S. government appears to favour a limited engagement in Iraq, whilst the other (said to be favoured by Paul Wolfowitz, recently nominated as President of the World Bank) envisages a long term programme combining military occupation and financial assistance modelled on the reconstruction of post-war Germany as a prosperous, democratic state (Daalder and Lindsay, 2003).

Normal life has not yet been resumed. Even 12 months after the war, in March 2004, one Iraqi academic reported that
> "... academic activities no longer have their old rhythm. Most faculty members do nothing at all except teach basic subjects. Now, there is no personal

initiative to do research or to properly supervise a student's thesis. We communicate by phone, from home. Scientific societies are inactive. There is no mail from outside countries, and no communication with Arab or foreign universities. In many ways, universities are worse off today than they were during sanctions. There are no conferences; there is no consultation work."
(Ali and Mukhtar, 2004)

More recently, however, some Iraqi government officials seem determined to paint an optimistic picture. Speaking at the AIA meeting in Boston, Dr Donny George, Director of the Iraqi Museum, commented that:
"Everyone is concentrating on the violence, but no one mentions that children are going to school, thousands of people are working with the government and getting paid, sometimes 60 times the salary they used to have. No one is mentioning that we have theatre and concerts… Normal life is coming."
(Kaufman, 2005)

Whatever the realities of the current situation[7], there are clearly lessons to be learned from the experience of war and civil disorder in Iraq that should be applied in dealing with similar disasters.

It is generally recognised that, particularly in times of war and major civil disaster, the first reports - especially those from unqualified or uncorroborated sources - may well contain a degree of inaccuracy, but the first reports are often the ones that form opinions. However, professional decision-making needs more comprehensive and up to date information. One key theme to emerge from the recent experience of the Iraq crisis was the role of the new Communication and Information Technologies in the production and distribution of news, contributing to both the fragmented nature of the information emerging from Iraq and, to a certain extent, to its coordination. However, the voluntary efforts of the moderator and contributors to the 'Iraqcrisis' email discussion list and the '2003-Iraq War & Archaeology' web site to coordinate the news have not captured all the information available, partly perhaps because these services do not appear to have been widely known and depended on a limited number of contributors to supplement the moderators' own not insignificant efforts. The Crisis Prevention and Recovery Practice Network (CPRP Net) was established in 2002 as a global community of practice, linking United nations Development Programme (UNDP) staff on crisis prevention and recovery issues, but is a moderated list and not entirely open to others (Swamy, 2005). It has taken another disaster to prod other international agencies, such as the International Telecommunications Union and UNESCO, into further examining how to improve telecommunications in emergency situations (Plathe, 2005). The information profession also needs to consider how it should identify, organise, and raise awareness of the new media sources so that they can be better organised, accessed and used in the wake of future disasters.

Assessing how the media coverage has affected international perspectives is not within the scope of this paper, but is already beginning to be undertaken by others. However, members of the library and information profession are, supposedly, trained to evaluate the sources of the information that they provide,

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[7] A statistical analysis of the security, economic and political situation may be seen in the Iraqindex, prepared by the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institute. [online]: http://www.brookings.edu/iraqindex [Accessed 30 December, 2004].

and equally should be expected to apply their professional judgement to the information that is presented to them. By the end of 2004, some journalists were resorting to using their Iraqi interpreters to gather news for them, because of fears for their security (Parrish, 2005). There is some evidence to suggest that librarians may not have always acknowledged that journalists are trained to report events in a manner that is newsworthy rather than necessarily objective, and that journalists do not generally have the specialist knowledge, time, circumstances, or editorial requirements that would ensure that their reporting of events such as occurred in Iraq is accurate and comprehensive. There seems to be a case for strengthening information specialists' understanding of how information is mediated for different forms of publication, not least to assist them to foster critical information literacy amongst the wider population.

It is also clear that, whilst the survival of some of Iraq's historic patrimony was owed to the foresight and determination of a few key individuals, much seems to have been the result of the unprompted intervention of a few patriotic citizens, concerned to rescue their national heritage. Disasters of one kind or another are always both likely and unpredictable - as other recent, natural events have demonstrated - and risk assessment and disaster planning should feature more prominently in both institutional management and professional education in the library and archives field, not only in Iraq but globally.

Now, however, the damage has been done, and the immediate priority must be to create the conditions in which it is possible to put effort and resources into the task of identifying the losses, repairing the surviving collections, reconstructing buildings, and updating the workforce to meet the Iraqi's own aspirations:
> "We hope, we hope, that we will get back to the status that we were at in the beginning." - Husam al-Rawi, University of Baghdad professor (Toosi and Johnson, 2004)

Although saying nothing about specific public services, the American-led expert mission identified a number of key conditions for reconstruction to be undertaken successfully:
1. establishing public safety throughout the country
2. expanding Iraqi ownership of the reconstruction process
3. creating employment and restoring the economy and social services
4. decentralising operational management for the reconstruction
5. improving communication to and from the Iraqi population to build confidence and optimism
6. mobilising reconstruction assistance from the broad international community
7. providing a substantial, rapid and flexible approach to Iraq's short to medium term need for reconstruction funds. (adapted from Hamre, 2003)

The first of these criteria had clearly not been met by the end of 2004, with the continuing lack of security and stability making a regrettable but inevitable impact on the scale of external support for reconstruction efforts. One recent analysis of reports on the American-funded reconstruction programme estimates that only one third of the money is actually being transformed into concrete assistance, while about one third is absorbed by the security costs of the contractors, and half of the rest disappears through various forms of corruption (Barton and Crocker, 2004).

The Iraqis themselves currently lack the funds, equipment, and personnel to cope with the restoration and yet:

> " 'None of the planned international initiatives can now be carried out inside Iraq', says Elizabeth Simpson, a professor at the Bard Graduate Center in New York who organised an Iraq session at the Archaeological Institute of America's [AIA] annual meeting in Boston [in January 2005]." (Kaufman, 2005)

Security concerns have clearly impacted on some of the assistance intended for libraries, as the personnel concerned have a natural reluctance to put themselves in a situation in which they are potentially at risk. For example, as early as April 2004, the security situation was already beginning to impact on the operation of the DePaul University's project. Specific adjustments were made to enhance the safety of the staff, including not only the employment of security guards at their residence/office and as drivers, and the purchase of bullet proof vests for the team, but also the use of a 'juba' (long traditional overcoat) and a head scarf by the female library specialist in order for her to move about more freely. Planned visits to Suleimanyah and Basrah were postponed and even visits to the Baghdad University Law Library were reduced (DePaul, 2004c; 2004d). In November 2004, the U.S. Embassy's senior consultant to the Iraqi Ministers of Education and Higher Education was murdered while travelling in a car in central Baghdad (Shadid and Graham, 2004).

The extent to which, in the library and archives field, the second, third and fourth of the criteria outlined above for reconstruction to be successfully undertaken are being met, in any way, by design or by default, is not clear from the published information.

From outside the country, it is not possible to assess the extent to which communication with the local population has been effective. The American, British and United Nations agencies involved do seem to be making efforts to publicise their activities through press releases and on their web sites. The greater volume of the American reconstruction efforts have been paralleled by substantial efforts to publicise what they are doing, and it may be that the activities of the British government and the international agencies have been more significant than will appear from a reading of this paper. However, whilst they may all have been attempting to make the wider international community aware of their Iraq's reconstruction, it may not be being well communicated within Iraq. Communication with some professional groups certainly seems to have been poor. The information that has been accessed for this report seems likely to have reached only a limited audience, even in the English-speaking Iraqi community, and it is not clear to what extent the Iraqi media are disseminating news of this activity or how effective that is given the recent fragmentation of the media in the country. Moreover, there is bound to be a degree of scepticism because, as one American educated Iraqi remarked, following a visit to his native country:

> "Information provided by government should always be treated with caution, particularly when the information it provides relates to its own performance and to the consequences of its actions. But in the case of Iraq, the situation has now become totally out of hand: life in Baghdad bears no relationship to the declarations that government officials have been making, nor with the images that we see on our television screens..." (Al-Ali, 2004)

At least one report has suggested that part of the problem may have been attributable to the attitude of the new Iraqi authorities. It was claimed that the initial Governing Council's Minister of Higher Education, Mr. Aswad, may have deterred the World Bank from immediately lending money for the reconstruction of Iraq's Universities, and thus created a situation in which his successor, Mr. al-Bakaa, subsequently found the Bank already fully committed to other projects (Asquith, 2004).

Nonetheless, it remains a fact that Iraq's isolation coincided with a period of major reductions in the funding and shifts in the priorities of the international and governmental agencies whose assistance for library development had been a familiar feature of their activities in the past. Ignorance of these changes probably compounds the Iraqis' frustration. Although American funded projects have proceeded as quickly as practicable, the library components have been a relatively modest part of the overall reconstruction effort. The Iraqis may be suspicious of the motives of the aid agencies (Watenpaugh, 2004d), and fear that there may be a lack of commitment (DePaul, 2004e). Contracts with the CPA were relatively short-term, and even the present USAID schemes seem to be funded on a year by year basis, providing little continuity and few opportunities to develop the trust of the local community and a deep understanding of their needs. This is not helped by the apparent failure to meet expectations. In the Autumn of 2004:

> "US Department of State sources confirm that almost none of the funding promised by the CPA as redevelopment aid for Baghdad's universities has materialized; though several of the smaller programs sponsored by the USAID that link US and Iraqi universities have had some positive results…"
> (Watenpaugh, 2004e)

Before Saddam effectively isolated Iraq, most Iraqis who studied abroad did so in Britain, and that generation is clearly frustrated by their inability to quickly rebuild their links with British Universities. One Iraqi scientist told a newspaper reporter that:

> "he and his colleagues have been disappointed by the response from the British government; there has scarcely been one." (Harding, 2004)

Commentators in Britain have expressed a similar perception:

> "Now the Iraqis are desperate for training in almost every field to make up the ground they lost during 14 years of punitive sanctions, cut off from the outside world. In response, … The British government has done nothing… [Yet] At a conference at the British Museum at the end of the war, Tessa Jowell, the minister for culture, stated that millions of pounds was being made available for reconstruction in Iraq." (Crawford, 2005)

Taken together with the British Council's limited ability to support assistance specifically for libraries, and poor communications within the country, this may have contributed to a perception in the Iraqi library and information science community that the last of the reconstruction criteria suggested by the American expert team seems to have been met only in part. In addition, efforts to assist libraries have probably been limited by the general reluctance of countries that opposed the Coalition's military action to provide international support for reconstruction, while the pace of UNESCO action in the field has been held back by the generally limited knowledge of the effects of war and looting on libraries, as well as by the reality that

" 'In general there is less support for libraries than the big museums, though we're trying to change that,' says a senior cultural consultant for the Iraq Reconstruction Management Organization. 'But people like a Rembrandt better than an old manuscript.' " (LaFranchi, 2004)

The tragedy in Iraq is heightened by the uncertainty about what has been lost, emphasising the need for more comprehensive cataloguing of collections, particularly of rare books and historic records, and for copies of such catalogues to be in secure conditions. The losses in Iraq also reinforce the importance of making and distributing copies, whether digital or photographic, of unique items in the collections of libraries and archives services. Fortunately, it seems that losses to the manuscript collections may not have been as great as feared. After examining the evidence currently available, we must incline to agree with the conclusion quickly reached by one early official visitor to Iraq that

"Most certainly, the great collection of manuscripts for which, during several days, even several weeks, we had so many fears, is safe and sound a part of the patrimony of humanity, infinitesimal in quantity but colossal in quality, is undamaged. Every precaution seems to have been taken for that treasure to fall neither into the looters' hands nor the coalition's. And if this patrimony is safe, it's due to Iraq and more particularly to the Director of the Centre for Manuscripts, whose emblematic personality must not make anybody forget the ambiguity or the sometimes expeditive methods. The major catastrophe didn't take place." (Arnoult, 2003a)

Méténier (2003b) has suggested that many of the lost manuscripts and archival records could perhaps be replaced with copies from other libraries, although there would clearly be some which had an irreplaceable intrinsic value. So far as the university library collections were concerned, little of the scientific and technical material that was lost could have had any contemporary significance, given that the libraries had made few if any purchases in the last 20 years. Losses in the humanities and social sciences were probably more significant. The symbolic implications of the looting suffered by libraries of all kinds may prove to have been greater than the real losses in most libraries.

"Those who mourn the 'treasures' destroyed by this frenzy overlook... the Library is so enormous that any reduction undertaken by humans is infinitesimal... The consequences of the depredations committed by the Purifiers has been exaggerated by the horror which these fanatics provoked." (Borges, 1993)

However, it is clear that over the last 25 years, and particularly in the last 2 years:

"Iraqi libraries have been deeply disturbed, in their premises, in their collections and in their personnels." (Arnoult, 2003a)

In commenting on the particular reconstruction needs of libraries and archive services, Arnoult (2003a) categorised the action needed as
1. "the architectural reconstruction
2. the reconstruction of collections
3. the "requalification" of personnels
4. the administrative and legislative reorganisation."

Accordingly, he drew attention to the need for the vandalised buildings to be repaired, or replaced if repairs were not practicable, and for temporary buildings to be provided when necessary. To reconstitute and bring the collections back to

standard would need to be achieved either by purchases or gifts. A particular problem would be the reconstitution of the patrimonial collections of the National Library and National Archives, which would require international co-operation with countries that had historic links with Iraq to arrange for the reproduction of destroyed documents. Perhaps significantly, René Teygeler, who from late August 2004 succeeded Dr. Zainab Bahrani for a brief period in the renamed and re-assigned position of Acting Senior Consultant for Culture with the Iraqi Reconstruction Management Office of the Embassy of the United States, is an expert in book conservation (Tiggeloven, 2004).

It is clear that more than repairing the damage to buildings and collections is required. The looters removed most of the equipment that would be needed for the operation of modern, highly automated library and archives services. Although this was probably limited by comparison with provision in European and North American institutions, it had been sufficient for the Iraqi professional community to be aware that they needed to be brought up to date (Al-Bayati, 2004). The devastation also affected many more institutions than Arnoult was able to visit, and it seems reasonable to accept his needs assessment as a comment that is equally applicable to the collections of contemporary government records and their management:

> "Clearly, a huge effort is required, not only to retrieve, restore and protect and re-house the historic materials, but also to build a modern archives, library and information infrastructure as part of the process of rebuilding the state of Iraq." (Shimmon, 2005)

A strategic plan for library development (and the underpinning infrastructure) is clearly needed. Arnoult (2003c) has questioned the extent to which the new Iraqi authorities are likely to attach any significance to this task. However, in October 2004, during visits to UNESCO headquarters by the Director-General of the National Library and Archives of Iraq and the Director-General of the National Centre for Manuscripts, the drafting of an action plan started. UNESCO's Division of Cultural Heritage and Communication and Information Sector are assisting the Iraqi authorities in the preparation of the plan which will comprise not only the rehabilitation of the National Library and Archives, the National Centre for Manuscripts, but also action in respect of school, public and university libraries, and the training of professional staff (UNESCO Culture Sector, 2004). The plan, for which funding is still being sought, was expected to be considered at the first meeting of the Sub-Committee for Libraries and Archives established by the International Coordination Committee for the Safeguarding of the Cultural Heritage of Iraq. The Sub-Committee was expected to comprise UNESCO staff from Headquarters and its Baghdad offices as well as international organizations working in the fields of libraries and archives including IFLA and ICA (UNESCO, 2004b). The meeting was initially scheduled for early February 2005, but appears to have been postponed until May 2005 (UNESCO, 2004c). The need for the plan will have been reinforced by the outcomes of a high-level meeting the current status of the higher education system in Iraq organised by UNESCO in February 2005, which noted that:

> "libraries are in a poor condition and are in urgent need of restocking with new books and journals in both Arabic and English; journals in electronic format are required." (Reddy, 2005)

One major task remains to be undertaken as a prelude to the reconstruction and modernisation of Iraq's libraries and archive services. Current activities are

possibly reacting primarily to damage inflicted during the war and its aftermath; may be distorted by the lack of detailed information about the situation in Iraq before the war; and are being implemented – for the most part - by agencies that had little prior experience in the country. The rehabilitation of the country's libraries and archives does not appear to be based on any overall assessment of needs and priorities. There is an urgent need for a thorough, authoritative, and more comprehensive assessment than has been possible to date to replace this fragmentary review of the situation in the country's libraries and its predecessors. The recommendations of the 2003 Tokyo meeting that a postal survey be undertaken seem impractical, as identifying potential respondents would be problematic. Only an on-the-ground study could not only review any damage arising from the war and subsequent vandalism, but also identify what is necessary to make good the neglect of buildings and depletion of collections over the last 20 years.

In Iraq's case, the problems of reconstructing its libraries and archives services are probably further complicated by its isolation from the increasing application of Communication and Information Technologies to information work. Although PCs were being assembled in Iraq in the 1990s (MOSAIC Group, 1998), few if any modern library management systems appear to have been implemented. Iraq's access to most international electronic databases was cut off following the Gulf War. Although the shift to electronic media has so far had a limited impact on Arabic language publishing, it has created the potential to make good some of the deficiencies in the collections of international and Arabic journals in Iraq's libraries. However, as Book Aid international (2004) has noted:

> "Replacing book stocks with targeted and appropriate materials, that will be well used, is a complex undertaking and requires a great deal of careful planning."

It is a matter for concern that the USAID HEAD projects have focused on the provision of English language material, even though one of the Arabic language databases is American owned[8], and the other is an OCLC partner.[9] The NEH-funded project for the education of Iraqi librarians will, however, introduce these to participants in its workshops.

Any study would also need to consider how and by whom the rehabilitation of Iraq's libraries and archives services should be undertaken. All too often outside agencies have themselves engaged in the delivery of technical assistance. These interventions have often weakened rather than strengthened indigenous education. Building local capacity is vital to underpinning sustainable development (Desai and Potter, 2002). In the aftermath of World War II, and particularly in more recent years, the international development agencies have, regrettably, developed considerable experience in the reconstruction of education systems that have been damaged not only through the promotion of unacceptable beliefs, but also by natural or man-made catastrophes. A summary of this experience has pointed to the need to consider the need to plan adequately not only for the physical resources that will be required, but also the human resources. This may require the development of new teaching styles and

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[8] Multidata Services, Inc. (MDS) [online]: http://www.multidataonline.com [Accessed 3-03-2005]

[9] AskZad [online]: http://www.askzad.com [Accessed 3-4-2005]

materials, creating a climate in which longer-term reform might be possible (Phillips *et al.*, 1996). Certainly in Iraq,

> "Creative thinking, innovative material, and student-centered learning have not been encouraged. Some staff members and trainees at the teacher training institutes said that they had heard of such methodology, but they lacked the knowledge of how to implement it." (Gray, 2004)

Moreover, as Klasson (2003) has explained,

> "the psychological effects of the disaster also called for attention. When dealing with psychological aspects of behaviour it is important to recognize that what influences people is not the actual situation, but how *they* [original italics] experience it... People in a major crisis, therefore, have to replace negative or malfunctioning thinking patterns with constructive and functional ways of thinking."

Iraq's LIS professionals have an understandable sense of pride, growing out of their recent history as leaders within the Arab countries prior to the advent of the Saddam regime. By the early 1980s, with limited external assistance during the previous 30 years, Iraq had established a School of Librarianship in Al Mustansiriyah University that would have stood comparison with many in Western Europe and North America. It is difficult to envisage how a professional workforce with contemporary skills in library and information science could continue to have been developed in circumstances that almost overwhelmed the whole of higher education in Iraq over the last 20 years, but it clearly did so. Equally clear, then, is the potential to rebuild the professional workforce. While they recognize that their isolation under the Saddam regime denied them access to knowledge of changes throughout the world, they do not necessarily appreciate the extent of changes, or why and how they were accomplished. When circumstances permit, there will need to be a significant effort to bring the programmes in the Departments of Librarianship and Information Sciences quickly up to date to enable them to produce the indigenous human resources that are fundamental to the efforts to rebuild Iraq's libraries and archives services.

The approach to these issues in the re-development of professional education in a country facing circumstances such as those in Iraq needs to be considered as part of the process of identifying the nature of technical assistance that might be needed, as well as how and by whom it might best be delivered. Equally clearly, a crucial factor will be the ability of the teachers of librarianship and information sciences themselves and their fellow professionals in Iraq to make a persuasive case to their own government for the necessary investment to be made to enable Iraq to overcome the isolation of the last 20 years and become a society that is again increasingly knowledge and information based.

here, however, and any factual errors unattributed to other sources, are the author's own.

Appendix

THE FATE OF SMALLER IRAQI HISTORIC AND RELIGIOUS MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS
(Source: Al Tikriti, 2003)

Collection	MSS Holdings	Comments	Source of information
Baghdad collections			
Deir al-Aba al-Krimliyin	120 Christian MSS	Condition not stated	
Maktabat al-Hidaya, Baghdad?	500 MSS	Condition unknown	Usama Al-Naqshabandi
Provincial collections			
Deir Mar Behnam, Mosul	unknown number of Christian MSS	Reportedly moved to a church in the al-Dura neighbourhood of Baghdad prior to the war	Usama Al-Naqshabandi, Yusuf Habbi
Maktabat Karakosh, Mosul	unknown MSS number	Condition unknown	Usama Al-Naqshabandi
Deir Mar Matti, Mosul	unknown number of Christian MSS	Reportedly moved to a church in the al-Dura neighbourhood of Baghdad prior to the war	Usama Al-Naqshabandi, Yusuf Habbi
Madrasat al-Jalili, Mosul	400 MSS	OK?	Usama Al-Naqshabandi
Maktabat Mahmud al-Jalili, Mosul	60 MSS	OK?	Usama Al-Naqshabandi
Maktabat al-Mufti, Arbil	120 MSS	OK?	Usama Al-Naqshabandi
Salah al-Din University, Arbil	402 MSS	OK?	Usama Al-Naqshabandi
Maktabat al-Awqaf, Sulaymaniya	6000 MSS	OK?	Usama Al-Naqshabandi
Al-Shaykh Muhammad al-Khal, Suleimanyah	350 MSS	OK?	Usama Al-Naqshabandi
Dar al-Makhtutat in Mosque of Hussein, Karbala	1200 MSS	OK?	Usama Al-Naqshabandi
Maktabat Amir al-Mu'iminin, Najaf	3000 MSS	OK?	Usama Al-Naqshabandi
Maktabat al-Hakim, Najaf	1600 MSS	OK?	Usama Al-Naqshabandi
Maktabat Kashif al-Ghita, Najaf	3000 MSS	OK?	Usama Al-Naqshabandi
Maktabat Al-Jamal al-Din, Suq al-Shuyukh,	180 MSS	Condition unknown	Usama Al-Naqshabandi

Nasiriyya			
Cleric's Private Collection, Diwaniyya	300 MSS	Condition unknown.	Usama Al-Naqshabandi
Bash A'yan al-'Abbasiyya, Basrah	1200 MSS	Should have been adequately protected by the leading families of Basrah, and OK?	Usama Al-Naqshabandi

AUTHOR

Professor Johnson visited Baghdad in 1981, and successfully established a number of collaborative activities between the then College of Librarianship Wales and Iraqi institutions, all of which were curtailed by the pressures on the Iraqi economy of the war with Iran. He has since maintained an active interest in library and information services in the Arab world, and is currently associated with the US NEH-funded project being undertaken by Simmons College Graduate School of Library and Information Science and the Harvard University Libraries to develop a training programme for the professional development of librarians and archivists in Iraq.

Since 1989, he has held senior positions at the Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, Scotland, initially as Head of the School of Librarianship and Information Studies, where he led the establishment of a wide range of courses and research in library and information sciences, publishing studies, and corporate communication. Following the merger of 4 Schools to create the Aberdeen Business School, his responsibilities now focus on the development of teaching and learning policy and the School's human, financial and technical resources. Previously he was in charge of industry liaison and continuing education programmes at the College of Librarianship Wales (the University of Wales School of Librarianship and Information Studies); Assistant to the British Government's Advisers on library matters; and an operational manager in public libraries.

He was Chairman of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) Section on Education and Training from 1991 to 1993, and Chairman of the Professional Board of IFLA from 1993 to 1995; Chairman of the (British) Library Association's Personnel, Training and Education Group from 1993 to 1995, and from 1996 to 2000 represented the Group on the Council of The Library Association; Chairman of the Heads of Schools and Departments Committee of BAILER: the British Association for Information and Library Education and Research from 1997 to 2000; and Chairman of the Executive Board of EUCLID: the European Association for Library and Information Education and Research from 1998 to 2002. He is currently joint editor of *Libri: international journal of libraries and information services*; and a member of the Editorial Board of *Education for Information*.

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