



Schweizerische Gesellschaft Mittlerer Osten und Islamische Kulturen  
Société Suisse Moyen Orient et Civilisation Islamique  
Società Svizzera Medio Oriente e Civiltà Islamica

## WRITING THE HISTORY OF IRAQ: HISTORIOGRAPHICAL AND POLITICAL CHALLENGES

Auditoire J.Frémond

IHEID - The Graduate Institute of International and  
Development Studies

132, Rue de Lausanne, 1202 Geneva, Switzerland

6 - 8 NOVEMBER 2008

Sponsored by:



Schweizerische Akademie der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften  
Académie suisse des sciences humaines et sociales  
Accademia svizzera di scienze morali e sociali  
Academia svizra da ciencias morales e socialas  
Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences



GERDA HENKEL STIFTUNG

EVUP ERDÖL-VEREINIGUNG  
UNION PÉTROLIÈRE

Thursday, 6 November 2008

09:00-09:30 **Welcome Remarks:**  
Phillippe Burrin, *Director IHEID, Geneva* & Anna Neubauer, *SSMOCI, Bern*  
**Introduction to the Conference:**  
Riccardo Bocco, *IHEID, Geneva* & Jordi Tejel, *SSMOCI, Bern*

### Session One - Dealing with the Past: Methodological Issues at Stake

**Chair: Peter Sluglett, University of Utah, Salt Lake City (USA)**

09:30-09:50 **Writing the History of Iraq: The Fallacy of 'Objective' History**  
Johan Franzen, *School of Oriental and African Studies, London (UK)*

09:50-10:10 **Iraq Political Theory: Advice from the Past (1939-1958) to the Present**  
Orit Bashkin, *Centre for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Chicago (USA)*

✧ Coffee Break ✧

10:30-10:50 **The Relevance of Contemporary American Historiography**  
Dietmar Herz, *University of Erfurt (Germany)*

10:50-11:10 **The Sectarian Master Narrative in Iraq Historiography: New Challenges**  
Reidar Visser, *Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, Oslo (Norway)*

11:10-12:10 **Discussion**

### Session Two - The Monarchy Revisited

**Chair: Joseph Sassoon, St. Antony's College, Oxford (UK)**

14:00-14:20 **The Difficulties of Writing the History of the Monarchy in Iraq after 2003**  
Hala Fattah, *Independent Scholar, Amman (Jordan)*

14:20-14:40 **Understanding Political Radicalization in Interwar Iraq as a Generational Conflict**  
Peter Wien, *University of Maryland, College Park (USA)*

14:40-15:00 **Literacy, Nation and Gender in Iraq, 1945-1958**  
Sara Pursley, *CUNY Graduate Center, New York (USA)*

15:00-15:30 **Discussion**

✧ Coffee Break ✧

### Session Three - Rethinking the Ba'hist Period

**Chair: Hamit Bozarslan, EHESS, Paris (France)**

16:00-16:20 **Understanding Ba'hist Iraq? Towards a Comparative Historiography of Dictatorships**  
Achim Rohde, *Asia-Africa-Institute, Hamburg University (Germany)*

16:20-16:40 **The Iraqi National Leadership (2003-2007) and Narratives of the Recent Past: The De-Ba'thification Issue**  
Fanny Lafourcade, *Institut d'Etudes Politiques, Paris (France)*

16:40-17:00 **The Genealogy of Tribal Idiom in Iraqi Political Discourse**  
Loulouwa Al Rasheed, *Institut d'Etudes Politiques, Paris (France)*

17:00-18:00 **Discussion**

**Friday, 7 November 2008**

**Session Four - Dealing with Victimhood:  
Whose Memories of Mass Violence?**

**Chair: Riccardo Bocco, IHEID, Geneva (Switzerland)**

- 09:00-09:20 **Violence, Memory, and Dealing with the Past in Iraq: The Perspective of Anfal Survivors in Kurdistan**  
Karin Modloch, *Centre for Modern Oriental Studies, Berlin (Germany)*
- 09:20-09:40 **"...to exterminate the Kurdish race": The Concept of Genocide as Part of the Production of Academic Knowledge in Iraqi-Kurdistan**  
Andrea Fischer-Tahir, *Centre for Modern Oriental Studies, Berlin (Germany)*
- 09:40-10:00 **Memories of the Intifada: Truth and Victimhood**  
Dina Khoury, *Department of History, George Washington University (USA)*
- 10:00-10:30 **Discussion**

✧ Coffee Break ✧

**Session Five - The Iran-Iraq War:  
Between Oral and Official History**

**Chair: Astrid Meier, University of Zürich (Switzerland)**

- 11:00-11:30 **The Triumph of the 'Nation': A Comparative Study of War Narratives of Iraqi and Iranian Veterans of the Iraq-Iran War**  
Babak Rahimi, *Program for the Study of Religion, Department of Literature, University of California, San Diego (USA)*
- "Qadissiyat Saddam": The gamble that didn't pay off**  
Cherine Chams El Dine, *Faculty of Economic and Political Sciences, Cairo University (Egypt)*
- 11:40-12:00 **Discussion**

**Session Six - Shi'a Actors in Post-Saddam Iraq:  
Partisan Historiography**

**Chair: Géraldine Chatelard, Institut Français du Proche-Orient, Amman (Jordan)**

- 14:00-14:20 **Navigating the Shoals of Partisan and Global Identity in the Historiography of Iraqi Religious Institutions**  
Robert Riggs, *University of Pennsylvania (USA)*
- 14:20-14:40 **The Rebirth of Arab Shi'a Political Thought: From Najaf to Beirut**  
Michaëlle Browsers, *Wake Forest University (USA)*
- 14:40-15:00 **Between Symbols and Action: The Claims of the Supreme Assembly for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq to Religious and Political Leadership**  
Elvire Corboz, *Faculty of Oriental Studies, Oxford (UK)*
- 15:00-15:40 **Discussion**

**Saturday, 8 November 2008**

**Session Seven - Representing Iraq History through  
Literature and Cinema**

**Chair: Hilary Kilpatrick-Waardenburg, SSMOCI, Bern (Switzerland)**

- 09:00-09:20 **Literary Glimpses of Iraqi Society in the XXth Century**  
Sami Zubaida, *Birbeck College, University of London (UK)*
- 09:20-09:40 **Are Iraqi Filmmakers Writing History or Just Fiction?**  
Lucia Sorbera, *Ca'Foscari University, Venice (Italy)*
- 09:40-10:00 **From Fragmentation to Reconstruction: Movies about Iraq**  
Nicolas Masson, *Project Consultant 'Palestinian Territories,' Middle East and North Africa Programme, Ramallah (Palestine)*
- 10:00-10:20 **Creating History: Poetry in the Service of Nation-Building**  
Leslie Tramontini, *Center for Near and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Marburg (Germany)*

✧ Coffee Break ✧

10:50-11:50 **Discussion**

**Session Eight - New Paradigms for Iraqi History?**

**Chair: Jordi Tejel, SSMOCI, Bern (Switzerland)**

- 13:30-13:50 **Identity and History in Iraq: The "Sunni Arab Paradigm" Revisited**  
Myriam Benraad, *Institut d'Etudes Politiques, Paris (France)*
- 13:50-14:10 **Building on Sand? Butressing the body of knowledge of the Saddam Era**  
Peter Harling, *International Crisis Group, Damascus (Syria)*
- 14:10-14:30 **Discussion**

✧ Coffee Break ✧

**Concluding Remarks**

- 15:00-16:00 **Concluding remarks:**  
Hamit Bozarlan, *EHESS (France)*, Peter Sluglett, *University of Utah, Salt Lake City (USA)* and Riccardo Bocco, *IHEID (Switzerland)*

**Please register your attendance by email: [jtejel@vtxnet.ch](mailto:jtejel@vtxnet.ch)**

**For more information, please contact:**

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**Access from Railway Station: Bus nr. 1 (Stop Sécheron)**