12 ICAANE

Proceedings of the 12th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East

Volume 1

Environmental Archaeology

Hammering the material world

Cognitive archaeology

Modeling the past

Networked archaeology

Endangered cultural heritage

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Edited by
Nicolò Marchetti, Michael Campeggi,
Francesca Cavaliere, Claudia D'Orazio,
Gabriele Giacosa, Eleonora Mariani

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The 12th ICAANE, Bologna: Foreword and Acknowledgments

Nicolò Marchetti

The defining event of the 12th ICAANE is, of course, that it has actually taken place, if not in a way that it could actually be foreseen. When the pandemic brought to strict lockdowns all over the world in March 2020, we were less than a month away from the Congress and this forced us to steer course through uncharted waters. That the 1033 initially registered participants were still 883 (of whom 64% regular and 36% students, plus *c*. 100 Middle Eastern officials) a year later within a totally different, remote formula is something to be credited to the trust as well as the sense of community of our colleagues and their determination to serve science and keep close mutual contacts alive despite all odds. 548 papers (including 192 of them distributed in 23 workshops) and 71 posters were presented in up to 15 parallel sessions: 142 papers about the main themes are published in these two volumes.

The Congress attempted at representing a multidisciplinary environment where to pursue interconnections (geographical and chronological as well) and inclusivity at all levels: just looking at the first authors, we have an almost perfect balance of women and men from 43 countries (Europe 68%, Asia 22%, North America 8% and Oceania 2%). Eight themes were selected in an attempt at representing the current breadth and urgency of global challenges and research perspectives: 1. Field Reports. Recent excavations, surveys and research; 2. Environmental Archaeology. Changing climate and exploitation strategies: impact on ecology, anthropized landscapes and material culture; 3. Hammering the material world. Characterization of material culture, processes and technologies; 4. Cognitive archaeology. Reading symbolic and visual communication networks and structures; 5. Modeling the past. Contemporary theoretical approaches to the archaeology of economies and societies; 6. Networked archaeology. Global challenges and collaborative research in the new millennium; 7. Endangered cultural heritage. Coordinated multilateral research, conservation and development strategies; 8. Islamic archaeology. Continuities and discontinuities between a deep past and modernity.

The trust that the ICAANE International Committee showed in 2018 towards the 12th ICAANE Organizing Committee of the Alma Mater Studiorum – University of Bologna about managing such a complex event must be acknowledged at the very onset. That the University of Bologna in the first place accepted to host an ICAANE was remarkable: the then Rector Francesco Ubertini is to be credited with unlimited enthusiasm for the idea and the Head of the Department of Legal Studies Michele Caianiello followed suit in ceding for a week to the Congress his most precious commodity, the perfectly functional Belmeloro lecturing complex, without which it would not have been possible to think to such an endeavour. The then Head of our Department of History and Cultures, Paolo Capuzzo, and our Department Administration were outstanding in showing at every corner flexibility and commitment as well as allocating resources for the Congress. We greatly benefitted from the experience and creativity in handling large scientific events of the FAM-Fondazione Alma Mater (and Alessandro Vriz, in particular, has been invaluable all throughout).

The ISMEO – Associazione Internazionale di Studi sul Mediterraneo e l'Oriente and its President Adriano Rossi allotted a grant for the Congress' organization and helped us assist and manage colleagues in Iran. The publishers Harrassowitz, Brill and Ante Quem supported the prize for the best poster by gifting books to the winners (C. Sadozai and S. Moriset "Post-excavation

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treatments of earthen archaeological sites"). Iperceramica and its CEO Corrado Neri assigned a prize in cash for the best paper on ancient tiles (M.-S. Zeßin "Marks on Glazed Bricks of the Neo-Assyrian Period from Ashur"), while the cash prize offered by Carpigiani remained unassigned. To all of them we are truly grateful for their generous support.

The Directors General of antiquities from Turkey, Iran, Iraq as well as KRG, Syria, Cyprus, Lebanon, Palestinian National Authority, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Oman and Egypt accepted to present the policies and needs of their respective Countries about cultural heritage in a plenary session: this was a great honor and we are deeply grateful to them for their enduring trust and friendship. In the Opening Session, then students Giulia Piraccini, Margherita Robecchi, Roberto Santoro, Alice Zamarchi (coordinated by Ahmad Addous) performed a poetry reading in Arabic, Turkish, Farsi and English of the "Hymn of the Rain (Unshūdat al-Matar)," by Badr Shākir Al-Sayyāb. The musician Réda Zine played a memorable performance: "Reviewing the MENA musical heritage. Gwana music from Guembri to electric guitar." We are most grateful to all of them as well as to the colleagues who accepted to e-chair sessions, to the four keynote speakers selected only on the basis of the quality of their submitted papers (here published as the opening essays of themes 2, 3 and 1), to all the participants who have been almost invariably sympathetic towards our shortcomings and many requests to them and to the legions of anonymous referees for their hard work which enormously improved the contents of these Proceedings.

Bologna Welcome and ER.GO with its Director Patrizia Mondin were ready to host colleagues and students to the best of their considerable ability: that in the end they did not have a chance to fulfill that, does not subtract from their keen availability. The online infrastructure, Ibrida.io of Search On Media Group, offered us an immersive and seamless experience of a remote conference fully functional under every aspect: not only the professionalism of Vito Esposito and his vast team was appreciated by all participants, but their subsequent acceptance of our request to grant free access to (and thus to keep online) the recordings of all sessions for almost a year after the end of the Congress added an immense value to its dissemination and tore down economic barriers in accessing state-of-the-art scientific knowledge for the global academic community.

The 12th ICAANE Scientific Advisory Board (Pascal Butterlin, Peter Fischer, Tim Harrison, Wendy Matthews, Adelheid Otto, Glenn Schwartz, Ingolf Thuesen) proved extremely helpful in steering the Congress out of controversies and helped taking strategic decisions at all steps. The energy and dedication of the 12th ICAANE Unibo Executive Team (Michael Campeggi, Vittoria Cardini, Francesca Cavaliere, Claudia D'Orazio, Valentina Gallerani, Gabriele Giacosa, Elena Maini, Eleonora Mariani, Chiara Mattioli, Jacopo Monastero, Valentina Orrù, Giulia Roberto, Marco Valeri and Federico Zaina) have been admirable before, during and after the Congress. The volunteers Vanessa Ferrando, Noemi La Cara, Ylenia Viggiano and Elena Bandiera generously gave us their time and talents, and G. Roberto designed all the graphics. Outstanding in their roles have been C. D'Orazio as Scientific Secretary of the Congress and F. Cavaliere as Editorial Coordinator: we are all indebted to their rigorous and meticulous organizational skills.

Harrassowitz Verlag with its Director Stephan Specht was as dedicated as it can be to the Congress and accepted to publish our Proceedings in Golden Open Access, while Jens Fetkenheuer has been a solid reference for all technical issues. The care and passion with which Federica Proni of Te.M.P.L.A. has typeset these two volumes cannot be praised enough. In releasing these Proceedings to the press, together with the other Editors we hope that they will represent a useful service to an international scientific community which is growing stronger and more closely knit after each ICAANE, hopefully standing up to the grave challenges lying in front of us for the protection, study, conservation and presentation of an ever more endangered cultural heritage.

Endangered Cultural Heritage

How Can International Partnerships Support the Study of Archaeology in Iraq? The Case Study of the Erasmus+ Capacity Building KA 2 Project "WALADU"

Nicolò Marchetti*, Çiğdem Maner**, Federico Zaina***, Licia Proserpio*, Burcu Sarsılmaz Coşan°, Hayder Kareem Al-Hamdani°°, Mohammed Abdulsada Al-Hashimi°°°, Laith Majeed Hussein^, and Adelheid Otto^^[1]

Abstract

Over the last decades Iraq has faced deep societal and economic changes due mostly to the dramatic conflicts occurring since the 1990s and the harsh consequences of their aftermath. Among others, these events have had a strong impact on the relation between universities, local authorities, and civil society at large. Such disruptions are apparent also in the fields of archaeology and cultural heritage. To counteract this situation, several international partnerships have recently promoted various initiatives for the documentation, conservation, education and communication of Iraqi cultural heritage. As a result, these initiatives have opened a new season of international collaborations and helped to reshape the role and commitment of archaeologists and cultural heritage experts in Iraq. In this paper we reflect on the results, lessons learned, and perspectives of the 2016–2020 Euro-Iraqi project WALADU, co-funded by the Erasmus+ Capacity Building KA2 scheme of the European Union (www.waladu.unibo.it).

Introduction and background

The relevance of archaeology and cultural heritage in Iraq has been well pointed out by Al-Hussainy and Matthews (2008): "*Archaeology came to Iraq before Iraq existed as a state*". The long and glorious history and the protagonists of archaeological research in Iraq have been discussed elsewhere (e.g., Larsen 1996; Winstone 2004; Foster, Foster and Gerstenblith 2005). However, here it is important to stress how this has been possible, especially between the end of WWII and the outbreak of the Second Gulf War in 1990, thanks to a positive synergy among national institutions, Iraqi and international universities, and research centers. Both academic papers (Foster, Foster and Gerstenblith 2005; Al-Hussainy and Matthews 2008) and grey literature reports (BANUU report 2020) have highlighted how the growing commitment of the Iraqi state, through the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage (hereafter SBAH), fostered the documentation, protection and promotion of its invaluable heritage between the 1950s and the 1980s. Such a thriving period came to an abrupt end one year after the invasion of Kuwait in 1990. An immediate consequence of the new conflict was

1 *Department of History and Cultures, University of Bologna; **Department of Archaeology and History of Art, Koç University; ***Politecnico di Milano/Museo Egizio, Turin; °Office of International Programs, Koç University; °°Department of Missions and Cultural Relations, University of Kufa; °°°Department of Mechanical Engineering, Al-Qadisiyah University/Iraqi Embassy, London; ^College of Arts, University of Baghdad/SBAH, Baghdad; ^^Institute for Near Eastern Archaeology, Ludwig-Maximilian University Munich.

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the cessation of every field project by foreign archaeologists in the country and the inability to conduct training activities. Although Iraqi archaeologists continued their work as best as they could, a first wave of illicit excavations and looting soon followed (Al-Hussainy and Matthews 2008; Brodie 2011a; 2011b). With the US-led invasion in 2003 of Iraq and the emergence of ISIS between 2014 and 2018, the cultural heritage of the country faced another, even greater, destructive period. The main effects on the cultural heritage sector can be summarized as follows: 1) The decrease in the number of staff responsible for the monitoring and safeguarding of archaeological sites and heritage monuments (especially between 2003 and 2006). These have been progressively more subject to destruction and looting (Al-Hussainy and Matthews 2008; Brodie 2011a; 2011b); 2) The reduction of international collaborations from the 1990s onwards in the field of archaeology. This had been one of the main pillars supporting the heyday of Iraqi archaeology.

Further issues emerged within the wider fields of archaeology and cultural heritage and concerned the collapse of the teaching and research quality at the HE level. The first state universities in Iraq were founded between the late 1950s and the 1960s. Until the end of the 1980s, these HE institutes represented a best practice throughout the Middle East, thanks to the steady increase of the national annual spending on education and culture and international collaborations (Shlash *et al.* 2008). During this period the first generations of Iraqi archaeologists emerged from the newly established departments of archaeology.

With the beginning of the Gulf War, the Iraqi HE system entered a long phase of profound crisis consisting in the dramatic drop in quality, access and competitiveness. Broadly speaking, factors responsible for this stark decline are represented by: 1) The low level of national financing for education; 2) Deteriorating infrastructures; 3) Lack of minimum standards in the form of teaching-learning materials (such as textbooks, libraries, laboratories); 4) Outdated curricula; and 5) The teaching staff poorly trained, demoralized and unmotivated. These shortcomings affected the entire HE system, including the field of archaeology.

Since the early 2010s, a slow but gradual recovery of projects related to field archaeology and cultural heritage and of the overall HE system has been observed. This restart is due to initiatives led by Iraqi public and private institutions and international research groups, backed by medium- and long-term funding schemes promoted by national and international bodies based in Europe and the USA. Among the most active international funding institutions in the field of archaeology and cultural heritage in Iraq are: the various EU (WEB A) and UNESCO (WEB B) schemes, the Aliph foundation (WEB C), and UCL's Nahrein network (WEB D). Broadly speaking, the wider aims of the projects supported by these funding schemes fall within four macro-themes:

- Macro-theme 1: Documentation and monitoring of the state of preservation of archaeological sites and heritage monuments.
- Macro-theme 2: Conservation or reconstruction of monuments and rehabilitation of museums and cultural institutions.
- Macro-theme 3: Education and training activities of Iraqi university, state or private personnel in the fields of archaeology and cultural heritage.
- Macro-theme 4: Communication of cultural heritage at local, national and international level.

This paper stems from the discussions, reflections and critical analysis of one of these projects: "WALADU – Developing and Structuring of BA Courses in Archaeology in Iraq".

In 2016 WALADU was developed by a Euro-Iraqi consortium including Iraqi national institutions, universities and international non-governmental bodies with the aim of contributing to the enhancement of teaching and research quality at the HE level (Macro-theme 3) in Iraq. The project was funded within the framework of "Erasmus+ Capacity Building Key Action 2 in the Field of Higher Education". The authors of this paper, who represent the main coordinators of each consortium partner, will provide a self-reflection on the results and the lessons learned during the four years of WALADU's implementation (2016-2020) according to a twofold aim. We wish to assess if and how international partnerships are really supporting and enhancing archaeology in Iraq by considering two key factors. First is the appropriateness of action considering the post-conflict national context and long-term sustainability. Second, we wish to provide recommendations for future archaeological and cultural heritage projects in Iraq regarding education and training activities.

Why does the EU finance education and archaeology in Iraq? The international dimension of the Erasmus+ program

Before plunging into our analysis, we need to reflect on why and how the European Union has financed a project aimed at supporting the teaching and practice of archaeology in Iraq. The Erasmus+ program is more known for financing mobility and educational activities inside the borders of the EU, and not for its international dimension. In reality, the powerful role that education and culture can play in international relations has become more and more apparent to European Union policy and decision-makers, especially when it comes to setting priorities and identifying actions to manage EU external relations (WEB E). According to this strategic plan, the Erasmus + program can be identified as the practical tool of the European public diplomacy, especially as far as their international chapters are concerned.

The international dimension of "Erasmus+" takes shape in different programs under its wide umbrella (WEB F). Among these is the "Capacity Building in the Field of Higher Education" (CBHE) that supports transnational cooperation projects. It is based on multilateral partnerships, primarily between HE institutions from the EU and international eligible partner countries (including Iraq; WEB G). Specifically, CBHE aims to support projects working for the modernization, accessibility and internationalization of HE in non-European countries. According to official EU data and statistics (WEB H), from the inception of the program in 2015 until 2019, eight projects involving Iraqi universities have been funded, WALADU being one of them.

Analytical Framework

Our analysis has been framed as follows:

1. Assessment of the project impact: To assess whether the WALADU project contributed to the improvement of the research and teaching quality in the field of archaeology in selected Iraqi HE institutes.
2. Assessing the collaboration: Considering the substantial drop in collaborations between Iraqi and international HE institutions described before, we will investigate if the project met the needs and perspectives of the Iraqi partners in this regard. This will be the occasion also to test the success of the integration between top-down and bottom-up approaches.

3. Explain the learning component: Identify key lessons learned from the implementation and the level of need and appropriateness for future works.
4. Explain the sustainability component: Identify seeds for long-term and sustainable change.

This analytical framework has been applied to critically discuss the results collected during the quality assurance evaluations carried out by the project members (internal evaluations) and private agencies (external evaluators). These evaluations were carried out via online surveys and interviews both at the end of the main intermediate steps (Work Packages) of the project (Formative evaluations) and at the conclusion of the project (Summative evaluations; WEB I). In total, 105 respondents provided their feedback on the project. The results of the evaluations (Section 5) and provide conclusive remarks and perspectives will be discussed in Section 6.

The WALADU project workflow

The WALADU project represented the first attempt to apply the Erasmus+ CBHE scheme in the field of archaeology in Iraq. The foundations of this initiative were laid in late 2015 when a group of Iraqi scholars from the University of Baghdad requested a formal collaboration with the University of Bologna to improve the overall preparation of Iraqi faculty members and students. The first meeting held in Bologna kicked off a series of consultations with European and Iraqi partners. This resulted in the creation of a consortium of six universities: three European (University of Bologna, the Ludwig-Maximilians Universität in Munich and Koç University in Istanbul) and three Iraqi (the University of Baghdad, the University of Kufa, and the University of Al-Qadisiyah). It also included as associate partners an Iraqi national institution (State Board of Antiquities and Heritage) and a non-profit international academic organization (the Association of Arab Universities). The consortium started its activities in February 2017 with the coordination of N. Marchetti.

The aim of the project was to help improve the quality of teaching and research in Iraqi universities in the field of archaeology and to increase student opportunities within the national labor market. To achieve this scope, the consortium identified a number of specific objectives (related to the three national issues listed above) and proposed a dedicated workflow. The specific objectives included:

1. To improve teaching and research capacity of the academic staff in the three Iraqi universities.
2. To modernize BA courses in archaeology by providing innovative educational offerings.
3. To increase international academic exchange and collaborations between the EU and Iraqi universities in the field of archaeology.
4. To develop new connections between Iraqi universities and the labor market in the field of archaeology so as to facilitate student opportunities within that labor market.

The project workflow was divided into eight work packages (WP), each with a different scope and set of activities. While the University of Bologna was in charge of the overall coordination of the project, each WP was led by a project member so as to involve and empower fully the various members of the consortium.

Framing issues and needs (WP1)

During the first six months of the project, the consortium's efforts focused on understanding the academic issues and needs of Iraqi universities in terms of teaching and research quality as well as their connections with the labor market.

To do so, two types of activities were conducted. The first consisted in the drafting of the Need Analysis Report (NAR) by the Iraqi partners under the coordination of the University of Al-Qadisiyah. The NAR included the need assessment of the Iraqi university system (WEB J).

The second type of activity was identifying local stakeholders in the field of archaeology, especially private entrepreneurs and the needs of the local labor market in terms of student preparation and collaboration with the universities. This step was particularly relevant for the project, considering the current low level of employability in the private sector for undergraduates in archaeology (WEB J).

The outcomes of these activities were then used to better frame the following steps of the project.

Trainings (WP2)

The WALADU training system methodology (TSM) consisted of four different types of training (Table 1) aiming to improve both the theoretical and practical skills of Iraqi scholars and to test them.

Type of activity	Type of training	Target groups	Expected outcomes
Theoretical training	Senior Scholar Intensive Training	12 Iraqi full and assistant professors	Improved teaching and research capacity
Theoretical training	Junior Scholar Intensive Training	12 Iraqi lecturers and other faculty members	Improved teaching and research capacity
Theoretical training and feedback	Summer School	2 selected Iraqi scholars trained; 22 international students	Teaching feedback and student exchange
Theoretical training	Cascade training	22 Iraqi senior and junior scholars	Improved teaching and research capacity
Practical training (With feedback)	Field training	10 Iraqi senior and junior scholars; 8 SBAH officers; about 100 BA students	Acquisition of updated fieldwork methodologies

Table 1: Overview of the aims, activities, target groups and outcomes of the WALADU training (WP2)

SENIOR AND JUNIOR SCHOLARS INTENSIVE TRAINING: Between late 2017 and early 2018, 12 Iraqi senior scholars attended intensive training at the Ludwig-Maximilians Universität and four junior scholars attended intensive training at Koç University and the University of Bologna (Fig. 2). The intensive training of these scholars consisted of common activities designed according to the issues and needs that emerged in the NAR. These included for example Archaeology and Art History, Akkadian language, Geoarchaeology, GIS, cultural heritage management, pottery studies and social anthropology. The intensive training of both senior and junior scholars included feedback activities (WEB K).

SUMMER SCHOOL: The Summer School was an opportunity for selected Iraqi scholars to further test their newly acquired skills and to bring students from all the partner universities together (Fig. 3). The two-week summer school was organized at Koç University in August 2018. Four students from each university were selected by their home institutions. The topics of the classes were discussed during the meetings of the project consortium and were based mainly on the needs of the Iraqi partner universities. As a result, digital humanities, archaeological science and cultural heritage management, which are not currently offered at Iraqi universities, were selected as the main topics of the summer school (WEB L).

CASCADE TRAINING: The Cascade training for Iraqi senior and junior academic staff members aimed to enhance the skills of the BA scholars in teaching, researching and international outreach following the same methodologies applied in the previous training. In particular, 22 Iraqi junior and senior scholars attended the training at the University of Bologna in December 2018. The training consisted of intensive classes on the different topics already tested during the previous training followed by a feedback system to test the newly acquired skills through the production of short essays.

FIELD TRAINING: The aim of the fieldwork training was to improve the practical skills of the Iraqi scholars, SBAH officers and students. The WALADU EU partners in collaboration with the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage (SBAH) decided to start archaeological survey training for Iraqi scholars, members of the SBAH officers, and BA students in current archaeological survey techniques. To do so, the project team organized four training sessions each lasting two weeks between 2019 and 2020 at the Universities of Al-Qadisiyah and Kufa. The training included different types of activities in the field such as archaeological site documentation using GPS devices, pottery documentation, orto-photogrammetric documentation of archaeological sites using drones, documentation of the current state of sites and laboratory activities (Marchetti *et al.* 2017; 2019; Maner, Al-Lami and Zaina 2020) (Fig. 4).

New syllabi and teaching materials (WP3)

To confirm the newly acquired teaching skills, one of the final tasks of both the intensive training and the Cascade training was to ask the Iraqi trainees to rewrite the syllabi of their courses. The result of this activity was the creation of 16 new bilingual (English/Arabic) syllabi in the field of archaeology and the creation and purchase of specific teaching materials and tools. The latter consisted of the development of three academic libraries (one for each Iraqi university) called WaLib including 300 academic books in English.

Promotion and implementation of the new courses and internships (WP4)

In order to allow students to learn about the new courses, Iraqi universities developed a double communication strategy. The new courses were advertised on the university's websites, often with *ad hoc* web pages. Furthermore, new bilingual brochures featuring the degree courses were created (Fig. 6) and distributed both in universities and in various high schools (in fact, the EDUU project funded by EuropeAid contributed as well to these goals).

The first relevant result is represented by the improved courses. Sixteen have been activated between the academic years 2018–2019 (10) and 2019–2020 (6). As a result, during the 2018–2019 and 2019–2020 academic years 367 students attended the 16 teaching units newly created or improved thanks to the WALADU project.

Moreover, the consortium, together with the SBAH and the private stakeholders identified in WP1, developed specific internship activities for BA students in Archaeology. The expected outcome of these activities was to develop internship programs in each Iraqi university and enrolling at least 60 students in them before the end of the project.

Management and quality assurance (WP5–6)
Erasmus+ CBHE must dedicate part of the project's lifetime to management activities so as to guarantee its overall quality. In order to guarantee the quality of the activities at any step of the project, the consortium developed a tailor-made system consisting of different types of evaluation processes.

Outreach and long-term exploitation strategy (WP 7–8)
To disseminate the objectives effectively, the methods and the protagonists of the WALADU project – the project consortium – planned three types of activities (WP7):

1. Online promotional products
2. Hard-copy promotional products
3. Promotional events

Another digital channel developed to support the project dissemination was the WaLink network (WEB M). WaLink was conceived by the WALADU consortium together with other international institutions to foster new collaborations beyond the lifetime of the WALADU project. Thanks to the international connections developed over the years by the project members, it was in fact possible to combine 6 international projects and 18 partners worldwide.

Discussion
In this section we analyze the impact of the activities outlined in section 4, based on the analytic framework and methodology defined in section 3.

1. *Assessment of the project impact*: Both the external and internal evaluations allowed us to assess the impact of the project after each WP. Already in WP1 the issues and needs of the Iraqi partners were correctly identified. As confirmed by the first external evaluator, "*the general information provided by the Need Analysis Report is detailed and allows us to understand the Iraqi academic framework*". WP2 were positively welcomed by the external evaluator who found the training "*effective, as all the expected outputs have been achieved according to the project work plan*". In terms of impact, the internal evaluation indicated that both Junior (76%) and Senior (74%) scholars as well as the administrative staff members (70%) "*expressed their satisfaction with the trainings' overall organization and methodology*".
   WP3 and WP4 activities played a crucial role in guaranteeing the full teaching and research efficiency of the newly trained scholars. Among the project partners, 86% were satisfied with the joint/creation development of the new bilingual teaching units and learning materials and their integration within the existing BA courses. The integration of the new teaching units with tailor-made equipment (WaLib and WaLab) was also acknowledged by both the internal and external evaluators.
2. *Assessing the collaboration*: Collaboration was of primary importance from the early stages of the project, especially with regard to the identification of potential stakeholders (WP1). This activity was fully coordinated by the Iraqi partners. As underlined by

the WP1 external evaluator, "*The organizers invited many government agencies, local stakeholders and the local communities from the three provinces* (i.e., Baghdad, Kufa and Al-Qadisiyah)".

3. *Explaining the learning component*. Three main learning components have been identified through the internal and external interviews.
   Language barrier. This issue was identified by the external evaluators as one of the major areas of improvement for both trainees and organizers from WP2 onwards. Following the recommendation of an external evaluator and project members – "*The inclusion of Arabic-speaking facilitators in future trainings would therefore be highly suggested*".
   Advocacy actions at the national level. The final evaluation drew attention to the necessity of a stronger involvement of the national institutions (such as government ministries) in this kind of project. Indeed, the external evaluator suggested "*a more structured action geared towards promoting a dialogue with ministries and authorities to advocate at the national level for innovative teaching methodologies that are in line with international standards to be included in the official curriculum*". Among other outcomes, a stronger commitment from the national institutions would have also facilitated the implementation of internship activities at the end of the project.
   Longer training. Although the success of the intensive training was underlined by the interviewee, the external summative evaluation report stressed the necessity to "*Consider longer scholars' training (especially for seniors) to ensure they are able to maximize their exposure to European universities teaching methodology and the universities' research environments*". While already considered by the WALADU team during the project design, this option is closely related with the funding provided by the EU for such activities. A possible solution could be that of focusing only on the Junior Scholars, who represent the future of the Iraqi research.
4. *Explaining the sustainability component*. The internal and external evaluations as well as the highlighted three main trajectories help to guarantee the sustainability of the WALADU project:
   Formalizing the collaboration in an established network. In the external evaluator's words, "*By signing the five-year cooperation agreement, the WaLink network will ensure regular exchanges on a variety of topics and ad hoc collaboration on further interventions, including possible new grants*". As part of the WP8 tasks, towards the end of the project the WALADU consortium brought together 22 partners from different projects, institutions, and universities and research centers within the wider WaLink network. The specific actions and sustainability of the network are regulated by articles 2 and 7 of the *WaLink Guideline* and the *WaLink Sustainability Plan* (WEB N).

BANUU project. The work begun by the WALADU project in 2016 is being continued through the EU-funded Erasmus + Capacity Building KA2 project called BANUU (2020–2023). This project aims to contribute to the improvement of the employability of graduates of archaeology and to generate fresh cooperation between the public sector and private enterprises to enhance new ways of employment for graduates.

Conclusions: New avenues for partnerships in Iraq

Overall, WALADU contributed to the improvement of archaeology education at the university level. It laid the groundwork for a sustainable approach towards heritage protection and for pointing out new ways of employability for archaeology graduates in Iraq. Investing in academic training, improving teaching-learning materials, and designing modern curricula, WALADU has worked in the direction of shrinking the gap between the educational opportunities offered by the universities in Iraq and the requirements dictated by economic development. This was made possible thanks to an international partnership supported by a top-down approach of funding. This also gave room for collaborations in the direction of creating bottom-up actions, according to the national and local needs within the Iraqi context. Against this backdrop, since Iraq is moving away from the conflicts characterizing its recent decades, the development of new projects was needed to take into account a larger and more differentiated range of actors. WALADU, like other international projects active today in Iraq, has been an initial action step in a post-conflict society that needs to rebuild archaeological teaching and practice. We believe that the next generation of projects should have different characteristics and goals. In our opinion, the long-term sustainability of archaeological practices in Iraq lies in community and public archaeology projects that must involve not only academia and national and local heritage authorities but also civil society at large (which was not directly involved by the WALADU project). Public archaeology projects would allow Iraqi academics to extend their links with public and private stakeholders and contribute to the rebuilding of the nation's cultural and social heritage. Moreover, this kind of project has proven to be beneficial in making archaeological sites more accessible to the communities who live near them, a fact which would support heritage protection as well.

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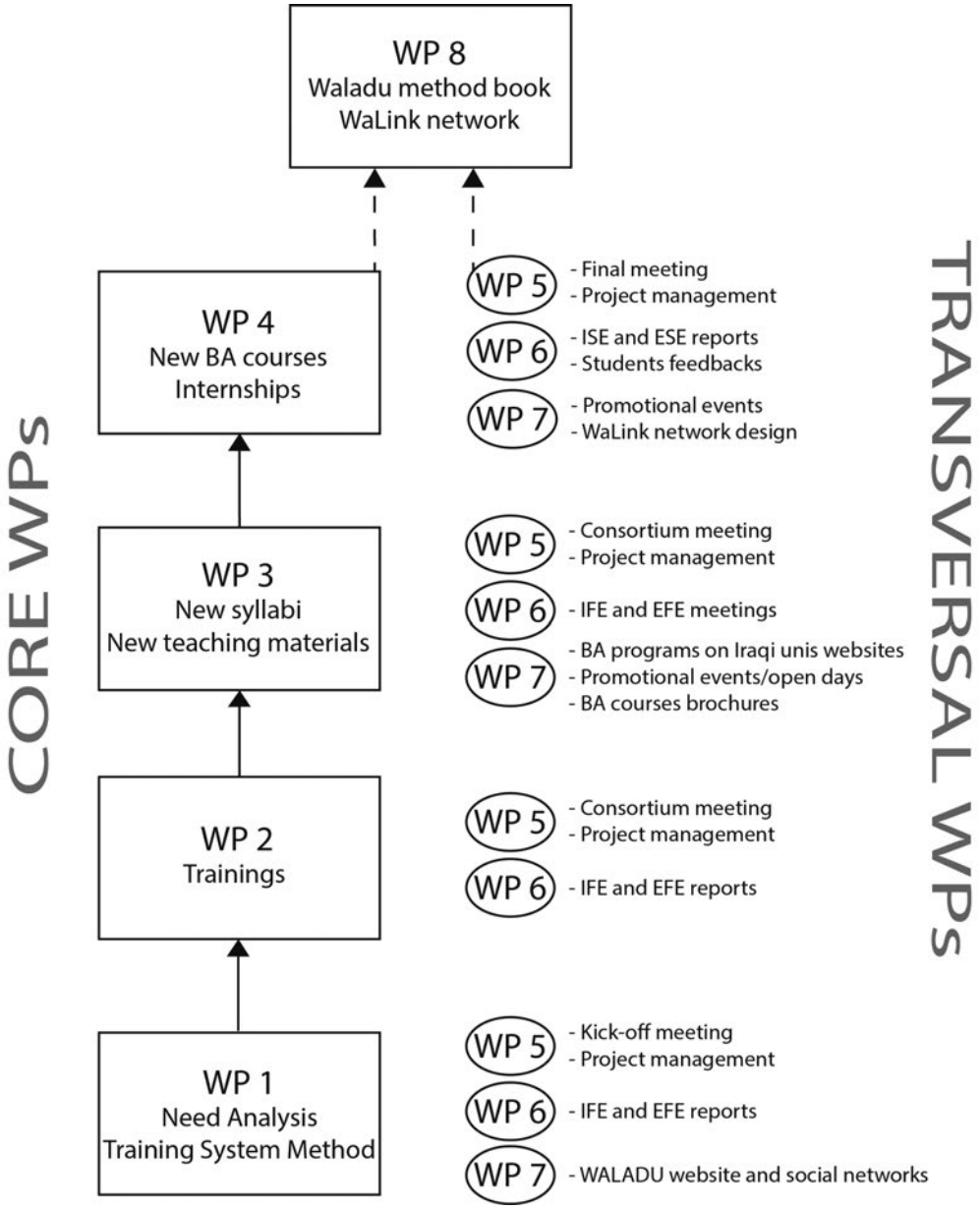

Fig. 1: The WALADU project organizational framework

Fig. 2: Intensive training at LMU

Fig. 3: Introducing Koç University during the WALADU Summer School in August 2018

Fig. 4: A student documenting an archaeological site during fieldwork training in the Kufa region

Fig. 5: WALADU fieldwork training

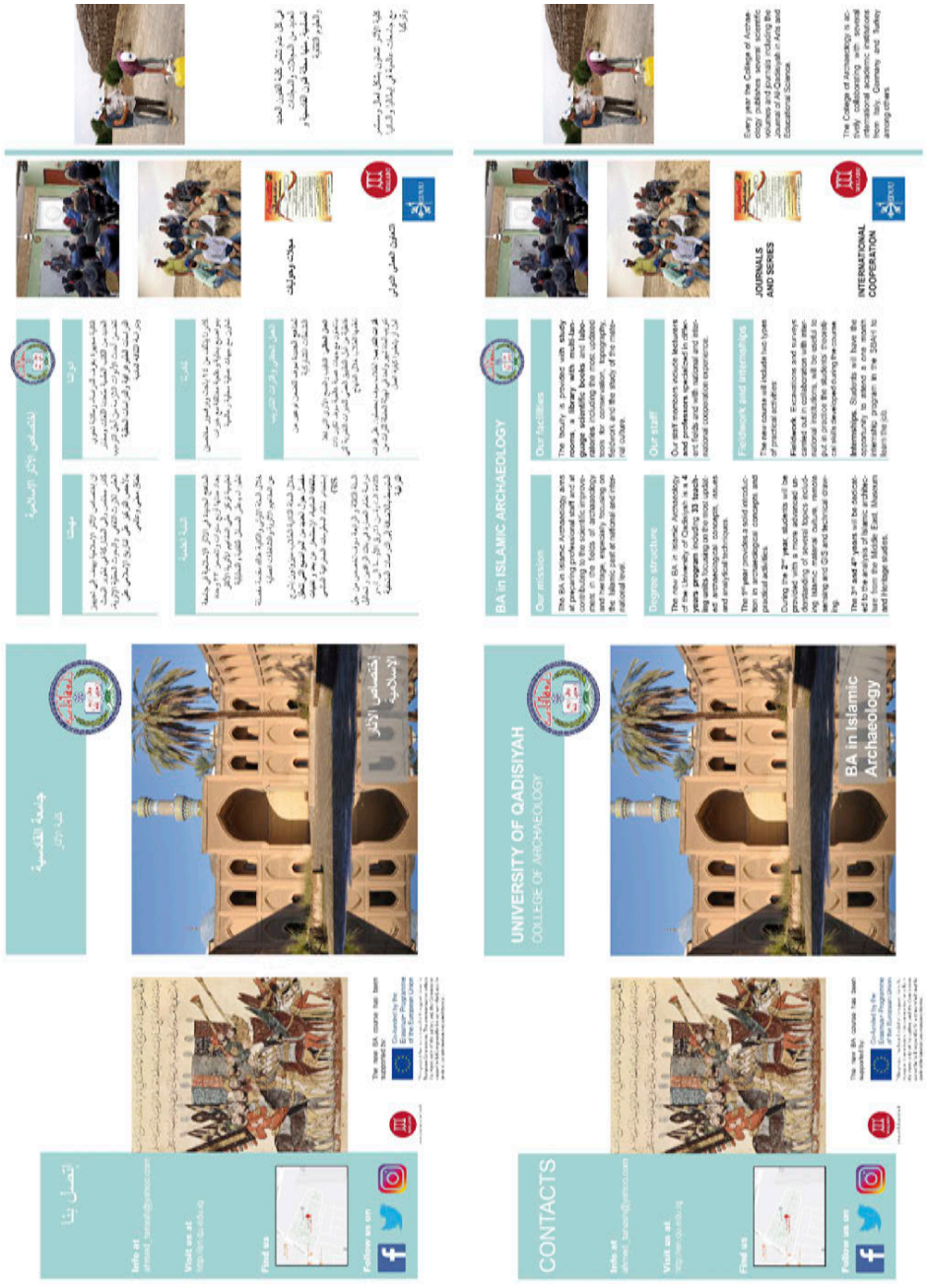

Fig. 6: An example of a new brochure for the BA course in Islamic Archaeology at the University of Al-Qadisiyah