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BRITISH FOUNDATION FOR THE STUDY OF ARABIA

LECTURE PROGRAMME 2010–2011

Questions? Contact Dr James Onley at j.onley@exeter.ac.uk

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Friday, 12 November 2010

“PRINCES, BROKERS, AND BUREAUCRATS: OIL AND THE STATE IN SAUDI ARABIA” a lecture and book launch by **Dr Steffen Hertog** of the LSE. Sponsored by the LSE Kuwait Programme. Organised in association with the London Middle East Institute, SOAS. **5:30pm in room G2 at SOAS**. Drinks reception in G3 following the talk.

Abstract: Steffen Hertog's recently-published *Princes, Brokers, and Bureaucrats* (Cornell University Press, 2010) is the most thorough treatment of the political economy of Saudi Arabia to date. It uncovers an untold history of how the elite rivalries and whims of half a century ago have shaped today's Saudi state and are reflected in its policies. Starting in the late 1990s, Saudi Arabia embarked on an ambitious reform campaign to remedy its long-term economic stagnation. The results have been puzzling for both area specialists and political economists: Saudi institutions have not failed across the board, as theorists of the 'rentier state' would predict, nor have they achieved the all-encompassing modernization the regime has touted. Instead, the kingdom has witnessed a bewildering mélange of thorough failures and surprising successes. Hertog argues that it is traits peculiar to the Saudi state that make sense of its uneven capacities. Oil rents since World War II have shaped Saudi state institutions in ways that are far from uniform. Oil money has given regime elites unusual leeway for various institutional experiments in different parts of the state: in some cases creating massive rent-seeking networks deeply interwoven with local society; in others large but passive bureaucracies; in yet others insulated islands of remarkable efficiency. This process has fragmented the Saudi state into an uncoordinated set of vertically divided fiefdoms. Case studies of foreign investment reform, labor market nationalization and WTO accession reveal how this oil-funded apparatus enables swift and successful policy-making in some policy areas, but produces coordination and regulation failures in others.

Biography: Dr Steffen Hertog is a Lecturer in the Department of Government at the LSE. He was previously Kuwait Professor at Sciences Po Paris and a Lecturer in the School of Government and International Affairs at the University of Durham. Email: shertog@gmx.de

Wednesday, 8 December 2010

“BELHAVEN OF ARABIA: THE SCOTTISH LORD WHO LOVED THE MOUNTAIN ARABS”, a lecture by Trevor Mostyn. Co-sponsored by the British-Yemeni Society. Organised in association with the London Middle East Institute, SOAS. **6:00pm in the Khalili Lecture Theatre, SOAS**.

Abstract: This is the story of a man who was beguiled by the mountain tribes, in part, because he associated them with the Scottish highlanders. Robert Udney Hamilton, later Lord Belhaven and Stenton, was a culturally sensitive figure who served with the Aden Protectorate Levies during 1931–34 and the Colonial Service in the Aden Protectorate during 1934–46. He recorded his vivid, penetrating and often very funny experiences in *The Kingdom of Melchior: Adventure in South-West Arabia* (1949) and *The Uneven Road* (1955). While in Aden, he developed an

interest in Yemen's ancient history and organized an archeological excavation at Shabwa, later presenting some of the antiquities he found to the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford in 1954. Trevor Mostyn will bring to life this charming, amusing and self-deprecating man who neglected his castles in Scotland to share the rough and tumble of Yemeni tribal and mountain life.

Biography: Trevor Mostyn is a reporter, author, and publisher. In 1965, he hitchhiked from Britain to India via Iran and Afghanistan before returning to read Arabic and Persian at Edinburgh University. He has lived in Saudi Arabia, Algeria, and Egypt. He was *The Tablet's* Middle East correspondent for ten years. In Cairo he was deputy correspondent for the *Financial Times*. He was also Macmillan Publishers' Middle East manager, travelling throughout the region for several years, before founding MEED (Middle East Economic Digest) Books. He is the author of eight books on the Middle East, including *Coming of Age in the Middle East* (1987), *Egypt's Belle Epoque* (1989), *Censorship in Islamic Societies* (2002). His latest book, *The Girl from Katamon*, a novel set in the Palestine Mandate, will be published in February. He is married to Lord Belhaven's grand-daughter. Email: trevormostyn@me.com

Thursday, 13 January 2011

“COSMOLOGY AND COMMERCE IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST”, a lecture by **Dr David Wengrow** of University College London. Held in conjunction with the Council for British Research in the Levant and the Palestine Exploration Fund. **6:00pm in the Stevenson Lecture Theatre, British Museum.**

Abstract: It was through contact with their gods that the ancient societies of the Middle East expressed their uniqueness, their distinct attachments to land, origins, and place. Yet in the temples of Mesopotamia and Egypt, the earthly bodies of the gods were ritually manufactured, nourished, and cared for in similar ways, using similar materials that could not be found locally in either area. In seeking to understand the roots of cultural difference—the distinctive ‘forms’ of Egyptian and Mesopotamian civilization—we are therefore drawn into a world of mixtures and borrowings, in which the neighbouring regions of Arabia and the Levant played pivotal roles. Dr. Wengrow's lecture will explore the cultural forces that bound together the Bronze Age societies of the Near East, and how those connections force us to rethink the nature and evolution of ‘early civilizations’. His talk will be based upon arguments presented in his new book: *What Makes Civilization? The Ancient Near East and the Future of the West* (Oxford University Press, 2010), copies of which will be on sale at the venue.

Biography: Dr David Wengrow is Reader in Comparative Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London. Email: d.wengrow@ucl.ac.uk

Thursday, 28 April 2011

“ANCIENT DILMUN: THE EARLIEST STATE IN ARABIA AND THE VAST MOUND CEMETERIES IN BAHRAIN”, by Steffen Terp Laursen of the Moesgaard Museum, Denmark. Co-sponsored by the Bahrain Society. Organised in association with the London Middle East Institute, SOAS. **5:30pm in the Khalili Lecture Theatre, SOAS.**

Abstract: Humankind's earliest-known written accounts record how the Dilmun state played an important role in Sumerian commerce and mythology. The Dilmun state emerged around 2000 BC, centred on Bahrain. At its height, its culture stretched from Bahrain in the south, to Kuwait in the north, and the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia in the west. Steffen Laursen will present fascinating archaeological evidence — art, temples, settlements, and the famous Dilmun burial mounds — to shed light on the remarkable early history of Bahrain.

Biography: Steffen Terp Laursen is an archaeologist at the Moesgaard Museum, Denmark and a PhD candidate in Prehistoric Archaeology at the University of Aarhus. He is the author of numerous papers on the burial mounds of Bahrain. Email: farkstl@hum.au.dk

Wednesday, 25 May 2011

THE BFSA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, followed immediately by the lecture listed below.
6:00pm in the Khalili Lecture Theatre, SOAS.

“LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY IN THE ARABIAN GULF”, a lecture by Professor Clive Holes of the University of Oxford. Organised in association with the London Middle East Institute, SOAS.

Abstract: Over the last fifty years, the Arabian Gulf has, little by little, taken on a regional identity that to some degree now supercedes that of the states that compose it. Politically, this was symbolised in the mid-1980s by the formation of the GCC. More recently, at grass-roots level, the forces of internationalisation and globalisation have brought radical change to social relationships, employment patterns and family structures. This lecture highlights the effects these changes are having on the relationship between language and identity in the Gulf, and pays particular attention to three phenomena: the recession of local linguistic identities in favour of regional ones; the spread of global English; and pidginisation as a consequence of labour migration from South Asia. One of the consequences of the latter two phenomena is a widespread anxiety at government level about the very survival of Arabic as a national language, particularly among the upcoming generations.

Biography: Clive Holes is Khalid bin Abdullah Al Sa'ud Professor for the Study of the Contemporary Arab World at the University of Oxford, and a Fellow of Magdalen College. His current main fields of research are the evolution of the contemporary Arabic language, written and spoken, and Arabic popular poetry as a form of social commentary and political dissent.

OTHER EVENTS 2010–2011

Wednesday, 8 December 2010

“QATARI FOREIGN POLICY AND MEDIATOR BETWEEN IRAN AND US” by David Roberts (Durham University). LSE Kuwait Seminar Series. **4:30–6:00pm in room KSW.G108, 20 Kingsway, LSE**

Thursday–Friday, 13–14 January 2011

BRISMES Postgraduate Conference, University of Manchester. For details, see: www.brismes2011.co.uk.

Wednesday, 19 January 2011

“Anatomy of an Oil-Based Welfare State: Rent Distribution in Kuwait” by Laura El-Katiri (Oxford Institute for Energy Studies). LSE Kuwait Seminar Series. **4:30–6:00pm in room Graham Wallas Room, 5th Floor, Old Building, LSE**

Wednesday, 16 February 2011

“COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT OF RENEWABLE ENERGY IN ABU DHABI/ALGERIA” by Dennis Kumetat (LSE). LSE Kuwait Seminar Series. **4:30–6:00pm in room STC.S78, St Clements Building, LSE**

Wednesday, 16 March 2011

“SHIISM IN SAUDI ARABIA” by Toby Mathiesen (SOAS). LSE Kuwait Seminar Series. **4:30–6:00pm** in room **Graham Wallas Room, 5th Floor, Old Building, LSE**

Wednesday, 11 May 2011

“The Persian Gulf and Pacific Asia: From Indifference to Interdependence” by Christopher Davidson (Durham University). LSE Kuwait Seminar Series. **4:30–6:00pm** in room **STC.S75, St Clements Building, LSE**

Monday–Wednesday, 27–29 June 2011

BRISMES CONFERENCE, Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter. For details, see: www.exeter.ac.uk/iais/all-events/conferences/brismes/index.php

Wednesday–Saturday, 29 June–2 July 2011

EXETER GULF CONFERENCE, Centre for Gulf Studies, University of Exeter. For details, see: www.exeter.ac.uk/iais/all-events/conferences/gulf2011/index.php

Wednesday–Saturday, 6–9 JULY 2011

GULF RESEARCH CENTRE CONFERENCE, University of Cambridge. For details, see: <http://grcevent.net/cambridge/index.php>

Thursday–Saturday, 28–30 July 2011

SEMINAR FOR ARABIAN STUDIES ANNUAL CONFERENCE, British Museum. For details, see: www.arabianseminar.org.uk