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Plain Language Statement

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A Marshland Material World: Mesopotamian Pasts, Sustainable Futures

You are being invited to contribute to a research and podcast project that explores the southern Iraqi marshlands and the material culture of the Ma’adan.

In this project, I seek to discuss deep time human landscape use of the Marshes and the past and contemporary threats and/or changes to them, e.g., climate change and water management, through the observation of Ma’adan materials and objects. In addition to this, I wish to address potential solutions for conservation and more sustainable futures, including how Archaeology and related disciplines may have a positive impact.

You may choose to take part by email or via Microsoft Teams (see attached Consent Form). Please note that participation is entirely voluntary, and that there will be no impact if you choose to decline or withdraw your participation.

Should you have any questions, or need more information, please reach out.

Thank you for considering participating. I greatly value your contributions.

What is the purpose of this project?

The project seeks to study natural, “ancient” materials used by the Ma’adan, such as reeds and clay, and explore what modern “counterparts,” e.g., plastics and concrete and other external pressures mean for the sustainability of the Marshes. The results will be presented through a podcast aimed at general audiences.

Current environmental and socio-political issues, perhaps most pressingly water management across the Middle East, climate change and sustainable solutions, and Indigenous rights, will be researched through the lens of different Ma’adan objects, both “ancient” and contemporary. I wish to explore unhelpful “Garden of Eden” narratives and ask in what ways Archaeology and related areas have constructed them, and what paths forward may help conserve the Marshes and the tangible and intangible heritages of its communities.

For this, I would like to invite experts from Mesopotamian Archaeology, Environmental Policy, or other relevant areas, who have engaged with these problems in the context of the Iraqi marshes, to share experience, knowledge, and thoughts, select samples of which may appear in the podcast script and recorded version.

The podcast aims to tell a compelling and urgent story that educates and inspires listeners to value this increasingly vulnerable environment and its unique culture.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen on the basis of your relevant professional experience, and the belief that you will be able to contribute valuable perspectives to the topics explored.

Do I have to take part?

Participation is entirely voluntary and requires your consent. If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without needing to give a reason.

What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be invited for a virtual interview, conducted by the researcher, Livia Dyring. This may take place on Microsoft Teams, in the form of a video call, or you may choose to respond to questions by email. The interview will also be overseen by supervisor, Daniel Calderbank, who will be present on the video call or CC’d on the email chain. It will be a structured interview, with questions being provided to you beforehand in a timely fashion. Interviews are estimated to take roughly 30 to 45 minutes. In the event of a video call, the conversation will be recorded, and the contents transcribed by the researcher. Email responses will be directly copied into Word.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

You may choose to be named or anonymised. If you choose to remain anonymous, all information collected about you will be kept strictly confidential. You will be identified by an ID number (e.g. P01, with the P standing for ‘Participant’) and transcriptions of your interview will be read by someone else so that your voice is unidentifiable in the podcast.

You may also withdraw or alter any contributions up to one month before final submission. Personal data collected will be handled in line with UK GDPR.

Please note that assurances on confidentiality will be strictly adhered to unless evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm is uncovered. In such cases the University of Glasgow may be obliged to contact relevant statutory bodies/agencies.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results from the study will be used to produce a podcast that aims to share the topic with the general public. With your permission, select samples of your contributions may appear in the podcast script and recorded version. The final script and recorded podcast may also – with your consent – be published in my (the researcher’s) online portfolio (see <https://liviawrites.com>) and shared elsewhere (e.g., on social media).

Should you wish to be anonymised, your name will be replaced with a unique ID number (e.g., P01), and your contributions read by somebody else. Original recordings and transcripts, in which participants are identified, will be retained in secure storage for 3 years by the University of Glasgow.

Who has reviewed the study?

The University of Glasgow.

Contact for Further Information

The researcher or their supervisor in the first instance. If you are uncomfortable with this, or have attempted without response, you can contact the College of Arts Ethics Officer.

If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of this research project, you can contact the College of Arts Ethics Officer. Email: [arts-ethics@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:arts-ethics@glasgow.ac.uk).

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE**

**AGREEMENT TO THE USE OF DATA**

I understand that Livia Dyring is collecting data in the form of recorded interviews for use in an independent study and podcast project at the University of Glasgow.

I have read the information sheet outlining the project and its methods and had the opportunity to ask any questions arising from that.

**I consent to participate in the interviews on the following terms:**

1. I can leave any question unanswered.
2. The interview can be stopped at any point.

**I agree to the processing of data for this project on the following terms:**

1. Use and storage of research data in the University of Glasgow reflects the institution’s educational/ research mission and its legal responsibilities in relation to both information security and scrutiny of researcher conduct.
   1. As part of this, under UK legislation (UK General Data Protection Regulation [UK GDPR]), I understand and accept that the ‘lawful basis’ for the processing of personal data is that the project constitutes ‘a task in the public interest’, and that any processing of special category data is ‘necessary for archiving purposes in the public interest, or scientific and historical research’.
   2. I understand that I have the right to **access** data relating to me or that I have provided and to **object** where I have reason to believe it has been misused or used for purposes other than those stated.
   3. Project materials in both physical and electronic form will be treated as confidential and kept in secure storage (locked physical storage; appropriately encrypted, password-protected devices and University user accounts) at all times.
2. Interviews will be transcribed, and the recordings held in storage by the University of Glasgow for 3 years. Select quotes and contributions may be included in the podcast script. The final version may be published online or shared with relevant persons, such as future employers or supervisors of the researcher.
3. I will be identified by name in the study unless I choose to remain anonymous. If I do choose to remain anonymous, all information likely to identify individuals will be removed or redacted.
4. I have the choice to leave any question unanswered.
5. NAMED PARTICIPATION: If I choose to take part as a named participant, I may withdraw from the project at any time up until its completion date without being obliged to give a reason. In that event all records of my remarks will be destroyed immediately.
6. ANONYMOUS PARTICIPATION: If I choose to take part as an anonymous participant, I understand that once the data collected has been anonymised, then in accordance with UK legislation (UK GDPR) I have no rights relating to the processing of the data unless I have legitimate grounds for concern that I remain directly identifiable from it or that it has been used for purposes other than those stated.
7. Project materials will be retained in secure storage by the University for three years for archival purposes (longer if the material is consulted during that time). Consent forms will also be retained for the purposes of record.
8. The anonymised materials may be used in future research and be cited and discussed in future publications, both print and online.
9. My contributions may appear in the podcast script and recorded version and published online on the researcher’s website and shared on social media. I have the right to choose whether I want to be anonymised, pseudonymised, or named.
10. By participating, you agree that your contributions fall under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Public License and may be included in the public outputs specified above. Creative Commons license grants a worldwide, royalty-free, non-sublicensable, non-exclusive, irrevocable license to exercise the right to reproduce and share the Licensed Material, in whole or in part; and produce, reproduce, and Share Adapted Material. You will be notified and asked for permission to proceed if any modifications are made to your contributions.
11. The podcast, both script and recorded, will be automatically protected from free distribution by others by UK Copyright Law. No Creative Commons licenses will be applied.

**TICK AS APPROPRIATE:**

I agree to take part in the above study on Microsoft Teams and that the data I provide falls under Creative Commons License 4.0 International Public License on the condition I remain anonymous.

OR

I agree to take part in the above study via email and that the data I provide falls under Creative Commons License 4.0 International Public License on the condition I remain anonymous.

OR

I agree to take part in the above study on Microsoft Teams and that the data I provide falls under Creative Commons License 4.0 International Public License on the condition my name and voice is replaced with a pseudonym and alternative voice of my choosing.

OR

I agree to take part in the above study via email and that the data I provide falls under Creative Commons License 4.0 International Public License on the condition my name and voice (if applicable) is replaced with a pseudonym and alternative voice of my choosing.

OR

I agree to take part in the above study on Microsoft Teams and that the data I provide falls under Creative Commons License 4.0 International Public License and wish to be cited by name. I understand that I will be allowed to see and approve use of my comments in pre-publication drafts of any outputs.

OR

I agree to take part in the above study via written emails and that the data I provide falls under Creative Commons License 4.0 International Public License and wish to be cited by name. I understand that I will be allowed to see and approve use of my comments in pre-publication drafts of any outputs.

**ALL PARTICIPANTS:**

I agree to the terms for data processing outlined above.

I confirm I have been given information on how to exercise my rights of access and objection.

Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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