

# BAREO

## Belgian Archaeological Expeditions to the Orient. Heritage in Federal Collections

**DURATION**  
1/10/2013 - 31/12/2017

**BUDGET**  
760.700 €

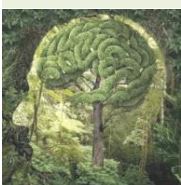
### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This interdisciplinary research project focusses on the archaeological expeditions to the Near East and Iran undertaken by Belgian federal institutions. The Royal Museums of Art and History (RMAH), the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences (RBINS) and the Universiteit Gent (UGent) played a leading role in this venture and have collected over time a wealth of documents and material pertaining to these expeditions: excavation archives (field notes, plans and photographs) as well as archaeological and bioarchaeological material. Ensuring their best possible preservation and organisation and optimising their accessibility for researchers will permit to exploit the full scientific potential of these data. This approach is within the framework of an international effort to preserve and valorise archives relating to archaeological excavations, to make them more readily available to the scientific community and to the general public. Furthermore, from an ethical point of view, at a time when such a large part of the national heritage in the regions concerned is the object of looting or destruction, it is the duty of those who contributed to its discovery to preserve as much data as possible for future generations.



The objectives of the BAREO project are, on the one hand, to offer optimal accessibility and valorisation of this heritage pertaining to the major archaeological expeditions to the Near East and Iran, on the other hand to exploit the unpublished data through selected research topics. From a methodological point of view, this research combines approaches belonging to four different disciplines (archaeology, bioarchaeology, historiography and archiving) and is divided into four coherent work packages:

1. Organisation of material and archive for best preservation and maximum exploitability:  
A detailed inventory of the Near Eastern and Iranian material held in the three participating institutions will be compiled. This material is constituted of artefacts, animal and plant specimens, human bones and expedition archives (field records, photographs and plans). A room in the RMAH will be dedicated to the storage of the archive, classified by site.
2. Improving accessibility of data for researchers  
An easy and complete access to this material will be provided for researchers and other potential users by the development of a database and its online publication.



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## 3. Multi-disciplinary scientific exploitation

Multi-disciplinary studies of particularly significant or emblematic aspects of these collections, combining the archaeological know-how of the RMAH, the bioarchaeological expertise of the RBINS and the archaeological and historical expertise of the UGent, will be conducted.

A thorough study of the literature available and the archival resources will be carried out in order to document the history of Belgian archaeological and bio-archaeological research in the Near East and Iran. The goal is to present as broad a view as possible of this facet of our national history and to define context, motivations and scientific and societal impact based on contemporary sources. These various questions will be addressed in the light of the available documentation: archives, press releases, old publications and oral testimonies from the actors of this history. The oral corpus will bring new light on the written sources, in some cases fill gaps in the documentation and offer a vivid image of near-eastern missions to the public. This study will result in the publication of a monograph on the role of Belgian archaeological missions in the Near East and Iran.

## 4. Enhancing the visibility and societal impact of the collections

To valorise and enhance the profile of the Ancient Near Eastern and Iranian holdings of the federal institutions a web site, online publications, exhibits, conferences and publications addressing both stakeholders in the field and the general public will be prepared.

This project stems from a will of the institutions involved to re-appropriate their history and revalue their heritage. The collections and archives in their possession are precious testimonies of this history; they not only allow us to address various aspects of Belgium's archaeological past but also to reflect on the future of this discipline. Telling the story of Belgian archaeology in the Near East is first and foremost raising the question of the place that our country occupies in the international context of this discipline. It is also telling the story of its various actors - archaeologists, researchers - of the institutions that developed it, supported it, financed it and now are entrusted with the conservation of the collections issuing from these expeditions. It is also evaluating the impact that they had on Belgian society in parallel with the way they were perceived by local communities and archaeological instances in the countries where they took place. Finally, at a time when archaeological research is all but stopped in several countries of the Near-East, it is undertaking a reflection on the future of Belgian archaeology in these countries.



## CONTACT INFORMATION

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## LINKS

<http://bareo.be>