

band annie's Weblog

I have a parallel blog in French at <http://anniebannie.net>

Jabra Ibrahim Jabra's house destroyed

source



The Baghdad home of great Palestinian writer Jabra Ibrahim Jabra—who settled in Iraq following the nakba—was destroyed by a car bomb last month.

Jabra's widow and son were both killed; countless papers, books, and paintings from the Iraqi and greater Arab art world were also ruined or destroyed. The NYTimes article about the event and its aftermath, which ran yesterday, is at times depressingly, at times irritatingly sweeping. The article is suffused with lyrical nostalgia: Jabra's legacy of beauty and art has been destroyed. An era (in Iraq, or in the Arab world) is over.

the Arab world) is over.

Roger Allen, the translator of Jabra's brilliant and celebrated *In Search of Walid Masoud* sounded the death knell for (Arabic?) literature:

"We're in an era when cultures habitually and even deliberately misunderstand each other," Mr. Allen said.

Someone like Mr. Jabra, he said, echoing others, "may not be possible anymore."

But professor and translator Issa Boullata, a friend of Jabra's, refused to go along with the sweep of the NYTimes story:

...he disagreed with the notion that the house was the atlatl, the ruins, of a bygone era. "Too pessimistic," he said, adding that Mr. Jabra was never pessimistic.

Remember Jabra Ibrahim Jabra:

* Read a piece by him that ran in *Al Ahram* in 2003, a year before his death: *Mystery in Mesopotamia*:

Mystery in Mesopotamia



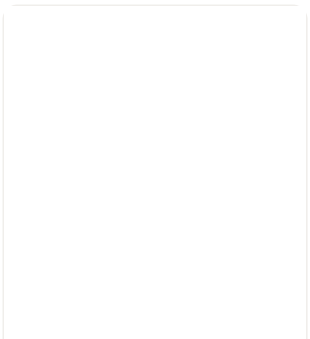
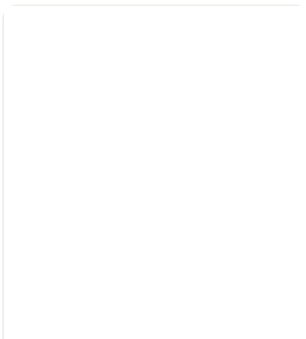
By Jabra Ibrahim Jabra

Jabra Ibrahim Jabra Following the occupation of Palestine in 1948, Palestinian writer Jabra Ibrahim Jabra (1920-1994), sought work in Baghdad, a city he fell in love with, one of whose natives he married, and which was to become the backdrop for most of his novels. The extract below deals with his early years in the city and his introduction to its then bustling social and cultural life. It is taken from his autobiography *Shari' Al-Amirat (Princesses' Street)*, Amman and Beirut, 1994.

ROBERT HAMILTON was an archaeologist, and for several years the director of the Rockefeller Museum of Palestinian Monuments in Jerusalem, where we often met, sharing a passion for Palestinian monuments and ancient history. We also shared a love of music and art, especially sculpture, or of what was available of that in the Jerusalem Museum that lay outside the gates close to Bab Al-Sahera and in the neighbourhood of the Rashidiya College, at which I was a professor for four years until coming to Baghdad. It seems that at the beginning of 1948 he left Jerusalem and joined the British archaeology mission in Baghdad, an institution dating back to the beginning of the 1920s.

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