

McGuire Gibson

McGuire Gibson devoted a great deal of this last year to the cultural crisis brought on by the war in Iraq. He attended international meetings in Tokyo, Paris, London, Berlin, Brussels, New York, and Berkeley, California, where he delivered lectures on the continuing destruction of hundreds of sites by well-organized looting. He wrote an op ed piece for *Newsday*, as well as several articles for journals dealing with cultural heritage (*IFAR Journal*, *Museum International*). He gave more than two hundred interviews to newspapers, television, and radio outlets and was filmed for three different documentaries. He also gave lectures on the Iraqi situation and on archaeological topics (Hamoukar, Nippur) to several audiences in Chicago (e.g., Chicago Humanities Festival), New York, and Washington, as well as Beloit College in Wisconsin and at Illinois Wesleyan University.

During the year, he was instrumental in making concrete steps to establish an American academic research institute that will be located in Baghdad when conditions improve. Although in existence since 1989 as the American Association for Research in Baghdad (AARB), this institution was not established in Baghdad because of the Gulf War and the sanctions. Now, however, the organization, renamed The American Academic Research Institute in Iraq (TAARII), has hired an Executive Director for an office set up in Chicago, and it has just hired Dr. Hala Fattah to be the Resident Director in Baghdad. Dr. Fattah will operate out of Amman, Jordan, until conditions allow her to set up in Baghdad. Fellowships and exchange programs will be announced in the summer of 2004.

Gibson serves as the President of TAARII. He also continues as the University of Chicago representative for the American Institute for Yemeni Studies. He remains on the board of the Council of American Overseas Research Centers.

Even while engaged in the activity related to the Iraq crisis, Gibson was able to do some academic research. With a student assistant, he brought closer to publication a report on the excavations at Nippur in the Sasanian-Islamic levels, and he has made substantial progress on one section of the Umm al-Hafriyat report.
