

## Christopher Woods

**Christopher Woods** devoted much of the last year to completing three papers concerned with the sun-god, Utu-Shamash, and his cult center Sippar. These studies, which focus on the early history of the god and the city, provide a counterpart to the author's work on the Shamash cult in the first millennium ("The Sun-god Tablet of Nabû-apla-iddina," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*, in press). "On the Euphrates" (*Zeitschrift der Assyriologie*, in press) seeks to recover the semantic relationships that led the Euphrates and Sippar to share the writing UD.KIB.NUN. It is found that the essential elements of this DIRI compound first designated the divine Euphrates; only as a secondary development did the city borrow the spelling from the river. The motivation for this orthographic borrowing lies, on one hand, in the functional overlap of the sun- and river-gods and, on the other, in the unique topography of the Sippar region. "The Paleography and Values of the Sign KIB" (Robert Biggs festschrift, in press) disentangles the various third-millennium cuneiform graphs that, by the Old Babylonian period, fused into the sign KIB, the orthographic root of the writing of the Euphrates and Sippar. "At the Edge of the World: Cosmographical Conceptions of the Horizon in Early Mesopotamian Sources" explores the role of the horizon in Mesopotamian cosmological thought as portrayed in text and art. Given the regularity with which Utu-Shamash traverses his cosmic path, the horizon falls under the aegis of the sun-god and a number of his primary functions — the dispensing of justice, the deciding of fates, and the predicting of the future — are closely bound up with the cosmic perimeter. In addition, Woods continued work on his book, *The Sumerian Conjugation Prefixes*.

Woods also gave three conference talks and invited lectures this year. In November Woods presented the paper "The Origin and Development of the Sumerian Writing System" at the Oriental Institute's symposium, "The Cradle of Civilization: The Legacy of Mesopotamia," commemorating the opening of the Mesopotamian Gallery. In March, he presented a summary of his findings in "On the Euphrates" at the 214th Meeting of the American Oriental Society in San Diego and he lectured on the sun-god in the "Religion in the Ancient World" series organized by the California Museum of Ancient Art.

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