

McGuire Gibson

McGuire Gibson in the past year has intensified a personal research interest in the role of kinship as the key paradigm in ancient Mesopotamia and neighboring areas. He is planning a small symposium on the subject in the near future. As an adjunct to his fieldwork in the Dhamar Plain of Yemen, he participated in the Fourth International Congress on ancient Yemen. This meeting was the first large-scale international archaeological congress in Yemen. The fact that more than forty scholars from Yemen and other countries presented papers attests to the tremendous growth in the field of Yemeni archaeology over the past ten years. At the conference, he was pleasantly surprised to be given a certificate and a sash of honor for service to the archaeology of Yemen. He is still involved with the American Institute for Yemeni Studies, serving as the Chicago representative on its board. He is also still a member of the board of the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (Washington), and he remains as president of the American Association for Research in Baghdad, a research entity that hopes to establish a center in Iraq when the embargo ends. In June 1998, he was a member of a small delegation that visited Oman to investigate the possibilities for more sustained research by Americans in that country.

A highlight of Gibson's year was a ten-day trip to Egypt following his field season in Yemen. Previously he had been in the country only for a three-day layover in Cairo in 1978. His seven days digging with Mark Lehner near the Sphinx at Giza, interspersed with trips to the suq and to other parts of Cairo, were most enjoyable. He also flew to Luxor for a first visit to Chicago House and the major monuments in the area. His host, Ray Johnson, arranged a visit and a guided tour by Kent Weeks of the tomb of the sons of Ramesses II in the Valley of the Kings.

During the year, Gibson gave a number of academic and public lectures on ancient and modern Iraq and Yemen. He was videotaped in an interview about ancient Near Eastern and Greek drainage and plumbing for a cable television program on the history of plumbing. He was also consulted on ancient money for another show that will air on the Discovery Channel.
