

## McGuire Gibson

Besides his involvement with the Nippur Publication Project, **McGuire Gibson** continued to work on another publication project with Dr. Mark Altaweel, a graduate of our Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations. By Internet, Gibson and Altaweel keep in touch with a group of Iraqi archaeologists who are the authors of manuscripts on excavations carried out by Iraqis over the past forty years. Iraq has had a vibrant antiquities service since the 1920s, and Iraqis have administered it since 1932. While welcoming foreign expeditions, even during the period of the Sanctions of the 1990s, when other governments prevented most foreigners from working in the country, the Iraqis have carried out their own continuing program of excavations and salvage operations, which were routinely published in the official journal *Sumer*. The publication of *Sumer* was badly affected by the Sanctions, due not only to lack of funds but also to the fact that paper, ink, computer supplies, and other necessities for printing books were included on the absurd Sanctions list. The journal fell far behind and could be published only sporadically until recently. The looting of the Iraq Museum and the offices of the antiquities service, which are in the same building complex, resulted in the loss or partial destruction of manuscripts that were ready to go to press. The current project, which is now in its fourth and final year, allows the Iraqi authors to reconstruct their reports in Arabic so that Altaweel can translate them into English. Alexandra Witsell redraws the figures and enhances photographs, then formats the plates. Benjamin Studevent-Hickman reads any cuneiform inscriptions that occur. Gibson edits the manuscripts in consultation with the authors and Altaweel. Then the reports are published in international journals. With initial funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities, and another from the U.S. State Department, they have been able to set up collaborations with a total of six Iraqi colleagues. The result of the collaboration has been two articles published in the British journal *Iraq* on surface reconnaissance and soundings in the north of Iraq; one on an important prehistoric site south of ancient Assur, soon to appear as a chapter in a German book; one long report on Tell al-Wilaya, near Kut in southern Iraq, published in two issues of the Belgian journal *Akkadica*; and another important report in *Akkadica* concerning a newly excavated site near Amara, which can now be identified as the ancient city of Pashime. Gibson and Altaweel are meeting the Iraqi colleagues in Istanbul for a week in July 2010 to check the final manuscripts of a book-length report on Tell Asmar, ancient Eshnunna, a site that was previously excavated by the Oriental Institute in the 1930s; another manuscript on Tell Muqtadiya, which is also in the Diyala region north of Tell Asmar; and yet another on Tell Muhammad, a site within the southeastern part of modern Baghdad. They also have a manuscript on the site of Tell Shmid, one of the mounds in the south of Iraq that was the subject of a salvage operation in the years just before the 2003 war, but it has been difficult to bring this one to a close because the colleague involved is a Palestinian, long a resident in Baghdad, who has not been able to obtain a visa to

meet with us in either Amman or Istanbul. As with all our colleagues, we have supplied him with Internet access, and we will try to finish the piece through that means. But nothing beats face-to-face contact, especially when trying to check on numerous details. There is one more manuscript, a book-length report on Iraqi work at Nimrud, ancient Calah, the Assyrian capital. This book will have, as its core, the Queens' Tombs, with their exquisite artifacts.

In addition to this work, Gibson has finally found the time to write up a report on a stratigraphic investigation on the Y Trench at Kish, which he carried out in 1978. This contribution will appear in a book on Kish, currently being completed by Karen Wilson. He also prepared for publication and read final proofs of an article on the Early Dynastic-Akkadian transition, a more developed presentation of material he first published in 1982. During the year, Gibson participated in three international conferences, one in London, which resulted in an unexpectedly long stay because of the Icelandic volcano. He still heads The American Academic Research Institute in Iraq (TAARII) and serves on the boards of the American Institute for Yemeni Studies and the Council of American Overseas Research Centers.

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