

McGuire Gibson

This has been a busy and productive year for **McGuire Gibson**. In July 2005, at the fifty-first Rencontre Assyriologique International in Chicago, he presented an overview of the University's activities in Iraq since 1903, especially since the founding of the Oriental Institute in 1919. This paper will be published in the proceedings of the Rencontre. At the same meeting, he chaired and made a presentation on the continuing destruction of sites in occupied Iraq. In January 2006, he took part in the British Association for Near Eastern Archaeology meeting in Edinburgh, Scotland, giving a paper on "Nippur: New Approaches to an Old Dig." This paper will be published in a book entitled *New Insight from Old Sites*. At the Sixth International Conference on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East, held in Madrid in April 2006, he spoke about the first three seasons at Hamoukar and he also chaired and spoke in a special plenary session on the current state of archaeology in Iraq. Later the same month, he presented a talk "The Dead Hand of Deimel" to an international conference on the Ubaid period sponsored by the University of Durham. The paper dealt with the power that old ideas, going back to the 1930s, still have on our thought about ancient Mesopotamia, even when those ideas have been proved to be wrong. This paper will also be published. In June, he spent a very pleasant three days in Santa Fe, New Mexico, taking part in a symposium Iraq, Ancient to Modern, sponsored by the Center for International Relations. Given the entire first morning, he outlined the history and culture of Mesopotamia from the Neolithic to the Sasanian period, but also showed continuities in some patterns of life even to the present day. The second day, his colleague at Chicago, Cornell Fleischer, spoke of the Islamic periods up through the Ottoman, and on the third, Phebe Marr did modern Iraq. Unlike the first two afternoons, which were free for exploring the town, the third afternoon was given over to audience questions for all three panelists.

Gibson continues to work with the Global Heritage Foundation (GHF) on a project to help the Iraqi State Board of Antiquities to develop site plans for a group of major sites with tourist potential. Graduate students in Chicago have done much of the work on the project, gathering material on the history and importance of the sites, including information on excavations. They have also created a set of maps, using satellite images purchased by the GHF.

He is playing a major role in preparing a conference on Protecting Cultural Heritage: International Law After the War in Iraq, which is being co-convened by the University of Chicago Cul-

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tural Policy Center and the Oriental Institute. In a preliminary meeting in Chicago in February, he delivered a lecture on the series of events surrounding the looting of the Iraq Museum and its aftermath. The main conference will be held in August 2006, at the Pocantico Conference Center of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund in New York.

In his role as the president of The American Academic Research Institute in Iraq (TAARII), which is a consortium of U.S. institutions with research interests in that country, Gibson spent a week in Amman, Jordan, in September 2005, in a conference that TAARII had organized, with National Science Foundation funds. The meeting brought together ten Iraqi and ten American social scientists to discuss the state of social science research in Iraq today, with the intention of assessing Iraqi needs and of creating opportunities for joint projects. He also spent ten days in Amman in June 2006, working with Mark Altaweel and two Iraqi archaeologists to reconstruct manuscripts of excavation reports that had been lost in the looting of the editorial offices of the Antiquities service in 2003. This two-year TAARII project, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, will result in publications in Arabic and English.

Besides his work for TAARII, he still serves on the boards of the American Institute for Yemeni Studies and the Council of American Overseas Research Centers. During the year, he also advised a group of scholars in the creation of a new research center in Mongolia.
