

Thomas A. Holland

Since the Oriental Institute Sweyhat Project did not have a field season in Syria this year, **Thomas Holland** combined a visit to Syria to attend the International Colloquium "Aleppo and the Silk Road" during September with a further week in Syria studying the pottery and other finds excavated during 1993.

The colloquium was held in Aleppo at the Shahba'a al-Sham Hotel under the patronage of President Hafez al-Assad of the Syrian Arab Republic, the Ministry of Culture (Minister, Dr. Najah al-Attar), and the Directorate of Antiquities and Museums (Director General, Prof. Dr. Sultan Muhesen). The five-day meetings included lectures on the "Nature of the Ancient Environment of the Aleppo Region," "Prehistory," the "Bronze and Iron Ages," the "Classical Periods," the "Islamic Periods," "Trade," and the "Production and Industry of Silk" by scholars from the Near and Far East, Europe, and two Americans, Holland and Whitcomb, who both represented the Oriental Institute. Holland's contribution entitled "Evidence for Trade at Tell es-Sweyhat During the Second Half of the Third Millennium B.C." and the other presentations are scheduled for a special Syrian publication during 1995. Apart from much new information presented in the scientific papers, highlights of the week included a tour of the ancient city of Aleppo; a visit to Djebel Sem'an, where a monastery was established in the fifth century A.D. that was made famous by the ascetic Simeon Stylites, who perched himself on a tall pillar in 425 and attracted a stream of pilgrims; and a tour of the joint Syrian/Japanese excavations at the prehistoric Dederiyeh Cave in the 'Afrin Valley, to the west of Aleppo.

Holland's main scholarly pursuit during the year was the preparation of the first final report on the excavations conducted at the Early Bronze Age site of Tell Es-Sweyhat in Syria. His comprehensive overview of the 1989-1992 Sweyhat excavations was published in *Archiv für Orientforschung* 40/41 (1993/1994): 275-285.
