

**RESEARCH****Tony J. Wilkinson**

**Tony J. Wilkinson** spent the months of September and early October 1997 establishing the first stages of a new Syrian project followed by another Amuq field season (see Tell Beydar Survey and Amuq reports above). In October 1997 the meeting of the East Coast Chowder and Marching Society was hosted by the Oriental Institute. This provided the opportunity to present some results of the Beydar and Amuq projects in an informal atmosphere. Much time was spent during the year working on two collaborative projects initiated to foster stronger ties between the University of Chicago and Argonne National Laboratory. The first grant entailed work with Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations Ph.D. student Elizabeth Friedman and Principal Investigators Ercan Alp (Argonne National Laboratory) and Aslihan Yener, on sedimentary cores taken through the lake basins of the Amuq plain. This work resulted in the presentation of a talk at the 1998 meetings of the Archaeological Institute of America entitled "The Investigation of Ancient Metal Pollution By Means of Trace Element Analysis of Lake Cores." This work will re-

sult in a joint paper, assembled by Liz Friedman, on environmental change in the Amuq. In 1998 a new collaborative venture with Argonne was initiated with McGuire Gibson and John Christiansen of Argonne National Laboratory. With the slightly sinister title of "Can Archaeological Data Be Used to Generate the Next Step in Social Modeling?," this project is intended to show just how we can use the latest results from archaeological survey and textual interpretation to construct a complete cyber community of ancient Mesopotamia. Building on the modeling expertise of ANL, this work is expected to mimic a Bronze Age agricultural community. By varying the inputs of rainfall, population structure, cropping patterns, and other variables we can see whether the inhabitants were able to live a sustainable life-style, or would succumb to the vagaries of the Middle Eastern climate.

In addition to the usual round of teaching and seminars, the following talks were presented in 1997/98: "Environment and the Development of Terraced Agriculture in Highland Yemen" was presented at the International Conference on the Archaeological Heritage of Yemen in San'a, on 9–12 March 1998. On 9 May 1998, Wilkinson was one of a group from the Oriental Institute who presented for the University of Chicago Alumni Association at Winnetka, Illinois at Archaeology for the New Millennium. This talk was entitled "Archaeology and the Landscape: New Approaches to Field Archaeology." On 19 June he attended a meeting of specialists and policy makers devoted to the subject of "Combating Desertification: America's Role in Ensuring the Future," sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution International Center. Building upon recent Oriental Institute archaeological surveys from Yemen and northern Syria, a paper was presented on the subject of "Human Settlement and Desertification in the Middle East: A Long-Term Perspective from Archaeology." At the plenary session of the Rencontre Assyriologique at Harvard on 5 July, a paper was presented on the subject of "Linking Texts and Archaeological Survey." Many of us pay lip service to the subject of matching archaeological and textual information, but the interface between the two fields remains fraught with problems. This paper attempted to show that archaeological survey can be effective in the interpretation of toponyms, in the recognition of specific features of local geography alluded to in the Nuzi texts, and at a more general level by providing valuable contextual information relating to the Mari texts. Finally a paper on settlement and the development of Yemeni terraced agriculture was delivered at the Seminar for Arabian Studies (15–18 July 1998), in London. Thinking that perhaps Wilkinson needed something to fill in his spare time, in 1997 *PaléOrient* nominated him to its Scientific Committee, a task that involves reviewing a range of manuscripts to be published in the journal *PaléOrient*.

The following papers appeared in 1997/98: "A Preliminary Late Quaternary Chronology for the High Plateau of Yemen," in *Geoarchaeology* 12 (1998); "The History of the Lake of Antioch: A Preliminary Note" in *Crossing Boundaries and Linking Horizons: Studies in Honor of Michael C. Astour on His 80th Birthday*, edited by G. Young, M. Chavalas, R. Averbeck; "Human-environment Interactions in the Highlands of Yemen" in *Festschrift for Beatrice de Cardi*, edited by S. Seawright, C. Phillips, and D. Potts; and "Southwest Arabia during the Holocene: Recent Archaeological Developments. (with C. Edens) in *Journal of World Prehistory*.