

Matthew W. Stolper

Matthew W. Stolper spent part of September 1998 at the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin reading fragments of late Achaemenid legal tablets excavated by the German expedition to Babylon in 1913. The fragments belong to an archive that promises exceptional information on the political career and economic connections of a Babylonian governor in the Persian provincial administration at the end of the fifth century BC. He will continue work on them in September 1999. His interim account of the Berlin texts will be published in the proceedings of the Second International Colloquium of the *Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft*, devoted to the history of Babylon. He also gave a paper on these texts and two other fifth century archives at a conference on Interdependency of Institutions and Private Entrepreneurs, one of a series of international symposia at the Middle East Studies program of Leiden University.

In "Lèse Majesté," a communication at the annual meeting of the American Oriental Society, Stolper suggested that accusations of speech against the Persian king found in a few early Achaemenid Babylonian legal texts are not flickers of resistance to Persian rule, but instances of a long-standing political dynamic (kings promoted competition to gather information), an established political institution (kings imposed loyalty oaths that required subjects to denounce each other), and a long-standing rhetorical trope (kings described themselves as just arbiters of conflict).

In "Lurindu the Maiden, Bel-ittannu the Dreamer and Artaritassu the King," submitted to a festschrift, Stolper identified a scribe who wrote records of day-to-day legal business as well as astrological texts and records of dreams, but who could

not spell the king's name, Artaxerxes, except in a hyper-learned way. An article for another festschrift presents three stray Middle Elamite administrative texts that came from Tall-i Malyan (ancient Anshan).

Stolper prepared a sketch of Elamite grammar for the *Cambridge Encyclopedia of the World's Ancient Languages*, an entry on *ganzabara* (an Old Iranian word for "treasurer," found as a loanword in Babylonian, Elamite, Hebrew, Aramaic, and other languages of the Achaemenid Empire and its successors) for the *Encyclopedia Iranica*, and a few shorter encyclopedia entries, notes on late Babylonian texts, and book reviews.

Stolper also made high-resolution scans of about 900 photographs of the Oriental Institute excavations at Persepolis. They have since been made available on the Oriental Institute website. The photographs of inscriptions will be linked to the on-line edition of the texts of the Achaemenid Royal Inscriptions project (ARI). Unpublished excavation photographs of the inscriptions are to be scanned and linked to the texts as well.

The historical journal *Annales* will publish Stolper's review article on *The Magisterial History of the Achaemenid Empire* by Pierre Briant, whom Stolper presented to President Sonnenschein for an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters at the June 1999 Convocation of the University.
