

## CHICAGO ASSYRIAN DICTIONARY

**Martha T. Roth**

This was a momentous year for the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary (CAD), with great highs and lows. We started by hosting the fifty-first *Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale* during the week of July 18–22, 2005, in celebration and honor of the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary. The *Rencontre*, the annual conference of Assyriologists and Near Eastern historians, art historians, and archaeologists, last met in Chicago in 1967, when just over one-hundred people attended. The 2005 meeting had more than 350 participants and involved massive amounts of planning by the organizing committee (Walter Farber, Jennie Myers, and Martha T. Roth) to house, feed, and entertain our guests. Many people in the building contributed to the success of the meeting. Gil Stein, Director of the Oriental Institute, graciously allowed the entire building to be taken over and set an example to all staff members to give their best efforts in making the conference a success. In the Volunteer and Education Office, Catherine Dueñas, Terry Friedman, and Carole Krucoff, assisted by Kathy Mineck, organized volunteers who helped with check-in and registration, staffed the information desk, checked bags in the Research Archives, and provided invaluable and cheerful assistance whenever asked. Graduate students were responsible for audio-visual support, gave visitors advice about the city, and also assisted with check-in and registration. John Sanders performed his usual miracles, transforming all formats of visual presentations to ones that could be read by the Oriental Institute's equipment. Museum Director Geoff Emberling arranged for the Museum and the building to handle hundreds of extra visitors. Markus Dohner designed the signage for the event, which proved so popular that the signs tended to disappear shortly after

they went up. John Larson located archival material from the previous Rencontre, Erik Lindahl installed bulletin boards in the galleries that displayed the material, and Ray Tindel dealt with the requests of those participants who wanted access to the collections before and after the event. Margaret Schröder oversaw the security arrangements. Tom Holland coordinated the arrangements for the booksellers. Kathy Mineck and Emily Teeter organized the participants' packets. Maria Krasinski and Monica Witczak were invaluable in planning for entertaining hundreds of guests. Maria and Kirk Schmink also handled much of the work of registration, and Kirk single-handedly prepared the Directory of Conference Participants. Olivia Boyd handled many of the organizational details. Clemens Reichel was the host for the participants from Syria, and, last but not least, Steve Camp helped coordinate the logistical planning.

Norman Solkhah, a great friend to the Oriental Institute and the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary, underwrote the costs for the Rencontre's closing night boat cruise on Lake Michigan. The Provost's Office, the Humanities Division, the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, the Linguistics Department, and the Divinity School provided funding for other social events and for subsidizing graduate students' registrations. All the effort before and during the conference paid off; the visitors to Chicago had a wonderful time and uniformly described this Rencontre as one of the best they had ever attended. We are deeply grateful for the support provided by everyone in the building. Truly, it takes a building ...

One of the highlights of the Rencontre was the appearance of the long-awaited P Volume of the CAD. Copies were rushed from the printer to the Institute where the volume was duly admired and consulted by participants to the conference. Tom Urban of the Publications Office was instrumental in getting the volume through the press and onto the book tables. The next volumes to appear will be T and T̄, which will be published in late 2006.

The only volume left to be published is the U/W Volume, work on which occupied much of the time of the Assyriological staff during 2005/2006. After the Rencontre, Jennie Myers and Joan Westenholz spent the rest of the summer writing draft articles for the remaining words in the volume. Joan Westenholz, a visiting scholar from the Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem, returned to Jerusalem in the fall after a productive five months in Chicago. Jennie Myers, who had been a valued colleague since 2002 and contributed to the P, T, T̄, and U/W Volumes, left us in September to work in Foundation Relations in the University of Chicago Development Office. Jacob Lauinger and John Nielsen, graduate students in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, have been working part time on the CAD since January 2006. They, along with Robert D. Biggs, Gertrud Farber, and Roth have begun the laborious and necessary task of checking every citation in the 2,260 manuscript pages of the U/W Volume.

Checking is an essential stage in the preparation of a volume that provides two benefits. First, the accuracy of all entries is secured by confirming the Dictionary citation against the original publication. Second, as the checkers examine texts by genre, often concentrating on their own areas of expertise, the entire volume is viewed through a series of unique cross-sections, quite different from that seen by the draft writer or by the editor who works on one article at a time. For example, in checking all the medical texts, or all the Neo-Assyrian letters, or all the Old Babylonian real estate contracts, the checker will often rectify inconsistencies across the articles, or discover new correlations between texts.

While checking is ongoing in Chicago, our non-resident consultants are reading the U/W Volume. Wilfred G. Lambert of the University of Birmingham, Simo Parpola of the University of Helsinki, and Klaas R. Veenhof of the University of Leiden are reading the manuscript of the volume and will send additional references and corrections to us to be incorporated into the volume before it goes to press.

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During the year we were aided by graduate student Katie L. Johnson, whose keen proofreading and inputting skills have been of immense assistance to our manuscript editor Linda McLarnan on the T, Ṭ, and U/W Volumes. Undergraduates Sabahat F. Adil, Sara Cohen, and Benjamin Gage, volunteering through the College Research Opportunities Program (CROP), were adept at inputting the U/W manuscript. Benjamin also spent countless hours transferring notes into volumes of books owned by the CAD. We are sorry to say goodbye to CROP student Matthew Saba who has helped us since 2002 with bibliographical chores, inputting dictionary articles, and organizing books; but we are pleased that he has chosen to come back to the University for graduate school, and we are looking forward to seeing him in the Research Archives next year. Elliott Goodman, a fourth-year student in the College majoring in Classics and Linguistics, has begun his service to the Dictionary by entering items into a bibliographical database, and much more bibliographical and lexicographical work awaits him.

The excitement and accomplishment of the Rencontre, the appearance of the P Volume, the impending publications of the T and Ṭ Volumes, and our entrance into the final stages of the final volume, U/W, were tragically countered by the death of Erica Reiner on December 31, 2005. Just months before, at the Rencontre — truly a celebration of Erica as embodiment of the CAD — she was, as always, the gracious hostess, welcoming old and new friends and colleagues.

Erica Reiner's service to the University and to the Dictionary extended over fifty years. She became editor-in-charge of the CAD in 1973 and served in that capacity until 1996. In her retirement she came to the Institute every day, read galleys, participated in checking, wrote books and articles, and in no way relinquished her passion for the Dictionary. Her absence is felt every day on the third floor of the Institute.

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