

JOURNAL OF NEAR EASTERN STUDIES

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The academic year 2022–23 saw the publication of *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 81, no. 2 (October 2022) and 82, no. 1 (April 2023), with a total of fourteen articles and twenty-seven book reviews. The featured scholarship covered the breadth of the premodern Near East—from Babylon to Thebes to Hattuša to Ethiopian Aksūm to Nippur to Cairo to Mecca to Jerusalem to Sasanid Iran, with the time span extending from Middle Bronze Babylonia to New Kingdom Egypt to Late Bronze Hatti to Neo-Assyrian Babylonia to Persian Elephantine to early Islamic West Arabia. Our authors tackled topics as diverse as divinized musical instruments, scribal handwriting in Egyptian tombs, poetic borrowings in royal siege accounts, the succession to the Hittite throne, religious diversity in early Islamic Iraq, and the salt trade in ancient Anatolia. One author reconstructed the contents of a medieval library from secondary references to it; another analyzed variant traditions about Mary’s conception of Jesus in Qur’anic tradition; and a third parsed the evidence for the arrival of Jewish mercenaries in Upper Egypt.

Great and original work continues to flow into the journal’s in-box: we received seventy-six original manuscripts between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023. Of them, forty-one were not approved for further review after consideration by the editors. The remaining thirty-five articles were sent to eighty-six peer reviewers for external review. Twenty-four manuscripts went through one round of review; ten went through two rounds; and one lucky manuscript was subjected to three rounds (and was, happily, accepted in the end). By the end of the year, thirteen of these manuscripts had been accepted for publication; ten were still under review or revision; and twelve were not accepted. The journal’s acceptance rate for the year was thus 17 percent of all submitted manuscripts.

The *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* continues to maintain its international standing. Authors of reviewed manuscripts hailed from not only the United States (14) but also the United Kingdom and Israel (4 each); Poland and Italy (2 each); and Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, France, Iran, Egypt, the Czech Republic, Canada, and Turkey (1 each). Our eighty-six reviewers were similarly representative of the international community of scholarship the journal reaches: fifty-three of the reviewers were based outside the United States, including in Australia (1), Austria (1), Belgium (2), Canada (2), Finland (1), France (7), Germany (9), Israel (7), Italy (5), Mauritius (1), the Netherlands (2), Norway (1), the Russian Federation (1), Spain (1), Switzerland (2), Turkey (1), and the United Kingdom (9).

Our reviewers also included colleagues much closer to home: Chicago colleagues who submitted formal reviews of manuscripts included Kay Heikkinen, Brett McClain, Augusta McMahan, Kiersten Neumann, Hervé Reculeau, Seth Richardson, Foy Scaif, Geoffrey Summers, and Theo van den Hout. Chicago colleagues who “pre-reviewed” papers prior to formal review included Rebecca Hasselbach-Andee and Fred Donner (twice each), as well as Helga Anetshofer, Ahmed El Shamsy, Dennis Pardee, Martha Roth, Yorke Rowan, Mehrnoush Soroush, Jeff Stackert, and Erin Walsh. We are profoundly grateful to our reviewers for their help. The anonymity of the process means that they rarely get credit for the thought, care, and time they contribute to making the scholarship we publish as good as it can be.

In other news, the journal instituted a new practice of screening submissions to determine whether or not they include unprovenanced materials among the evidence they present: authors are now asked to answer the question, “Does this manuscript include the first scholarly publication or announcement of any object in a private or public collection acquired after December 30, 1973, that is not documented before

that date or otherwise legally exported from the country of origin?” Asking this question helps the journal follow a policy of ethical publication much in line with that instituted in past years by the American Schools of Overseas Research and the *American Journal of Archaeology*—a policy that purposes not to promote trade in illicitly excavated or traded antiquities through their publication. We thank our colleagues Martha Roth and Morag Kersel for their advice in this matter.

The staff of the journal remained much the same this year: James Osborne as editor and (outgoing) book review editor (ancient); Seth Richardson as managing editor; and Fred Donner as book review editor (modern). Our stalwart student assistant Luiza Osorio Silva laid down her *JNES* pen at the close of the year to assume a teaching appointment in ancient art history and archaeology at the University of California, Irvine; we wish her all the best success. She is succeeded in the position by Jane Gordon, a cuneiform student in the University of Chicago’s Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations. We also welcome Mehrnoush Soroush, director of the Center for Ancient Middle Eastern Landscapes, as our new book review editor (ancient).
