

Seth Richardson

Seth Richardson spent this year preparing a text-edition volume of Old Babylonian administrative and economic tablets, which will appear in the monographic series IMGULA, and traveling out of Chicago several times for both research and lecturing. He went twice to the British Museum, spending a total of four weeks in residence there collating and copying for the IMGULA volume. This work in turn provides the backbone for a volume of historical studies, also in preparation, on politics and economy in the Late Old Babylonian period (ca. seventeenth century B.C.), as well as other short works touching on Assyrian trade in Babylonia at this time, private archives, and chronological studies.

During his March trip to London, he presented a lecture to the British Association of Near Eastern Archaeology, entitled “Mass Labor, Scope-of-Economy, and a Babylonian Rhetoric of Work,” on the economic evaluation of ancient labor projects. In November, he went to San Antonio, to present a paper to the American Schools of Oriental Research entitled “Forts on the River,” on the role of seventeenth-century Babylonian state interest in trade on the middle-Euphrates. In March, he was in Philadelphia to present a paper at the American Oriental Society meeting, entitled “Countryside(s): Modeling a Babylonian Exurbia.” Just recently, in May, he was invited to Dresden, Germany, to deliver a fourth paper and participate in a five-day conference on ancient labor, the proceedings of which will be published in 2006.

Richardson also concluded guest-curating the Dr. Norman Solhkhah Family Assyrian Empire Gallery in the newly-opened Empires in the Fertile Crescent: Ancient Assyria, Anatolia, and Israel exhibition in the Oriental Institute Museum. He continues work on several other projects such as the study of nineteenth–eighteenth century B.C. land redistribution documents from Yale and the Ashmolean Museum, which document fields between the south-Babylonian cities of Larsa and Lagash, part of a larger geopolitical struggle taking place at the time; a study of the historical development of divinatory literature; editions of Old Babylonian cuneiform texts in small collections; studies on the legal and social history of the Mesopotamian countryside, which will be published by Routledge in an edited volume in 2006; and several book reviews of current literature.

His teaching this year included a two-quarter collaborative graduate seminar entitled “Problems in Greek and Ancient Near Eastern History” that was co-taught with Professor Jonathan Hall (Department of History) and “Using Ancient Middle Eastern Pasts,” a reading course on historiographic uses of antiquity (from antiquity all the way up to the modern period); a survey of ancient Near Eastern social history topics in “Nomads and Fellahin,” covering the underclass, runaways, outsiders, the mad, and the dead; and an intensive graduate seminar covering the political history of the four-century-long Old Babylonian period.
