McGuire Gibson

McGuire Gibson continues to work with Mark Altaweel and three Iraqi scholars to publish in English several reports on significant archaeological excavations carried out by the Iraqi State Board of Antiquities over the past thirty years. This project, funded by the State Department through The American Academic Research Institute in Iraq (TAARII), is nearing its end, but the final reports will be two book-length publications from the Oriental Institute. One will combine reports on two excavations conducted in the Diyala area, a region that was the focus of important Oriental Institute excavations from 1929 until 1936. In the 1950s, Robert McC. Adams did an innovative settlement pattern study in the same area. In addition to the Diyala publication, the project is finalizing a large manuscript on the Iraqis’ work at the Assyrian capital Kalhu (modern Nimrud). This book will present the findings in the spectacular Queens’ tombs, as well as other operations on the acropolis of the city.

This year saw the following additional publications by Gibson reach print:

- “The Dead Hand of Deimel” in Beyond the Ubaid: Transformation and Integration in the Late Prehistoric Societies of the Middle East, edited by Robert A. Carter and Graham Philip (Studies in Ancient Oriental Society 63; Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 2010).

He has in press an article assessing the Diyala sequence, which should appear this year in a book from Heidelberg University Press, and he has finished his report of the re-investigation of the Y Trench at Kish, which will appear as part of Karen Wilson’s publication on Kish.

During the year, he convened a fact-finding and planning meeting in Philadelphia of archaeologists who have worked or wish to work in Iraq. This was the last time that many of the attendees had the opportunity to interact with Donny George Youkhanna, who died about two weeks later. The Oriental Institute had scheduled a lecture by Dr. Youkhanna for early June. In his place, Gibson delivered an appreciation of Dr. Youkhanna’s scholarly contribution to the field. A week later, at an event marking the completion of the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary, Gibson gave an archaeologist’s perspective on the CAD. In addition, in March he attended a meeting on the situation of Iraqi academics during war and occupation, sponsored by the Brussels Tribunal held in Ghent, Belgium. He delivered a presentation on the effect on academic life caused by the looting of archaeological museums, universities, and sites. He still serves as the president of The American Academic Research Institute in Iraq, and in that capacity he is currently endeavoring to establish a center in a rented property in Baghdad. He also continues to represent the University of Chicago on the board of the American Institute for Yemeni Studies. In addition, he still serves on the board of the Council of American Overseas Research Centers.

Petra M. Goedegebuure

The basic philosophy that forms the foundation of all Petra M. Goedegebuure’s work on the ancient languages of Anatolia — such as Hittite, Luwian, Palaic, and Hattian — is that she takes language as a social phenomenon, in contrast with the equally valid concept of language as a cognitive-biological phenomenon. This is reflected in her approach of combining philology and the cultural background of texts with language typology and functional grammar.

Petra’s specific aims are (1) to develop methods for applying modern linguistics to dead languages; (2) to further explore the Anatolian languages at the level of pragmatics, especially information structure and deixis; therefore (3) to arrive at a better understanding of the texts and the communicative goals of the ancient authors.

This year Petra spent most of her time teaching five classes, three in winter (Elementary Hittite II, Language and the Human (a core class co-taught with five other faculty from the departments of Linguistics, NELC, Slavic Languages and Literatures, and Germanic Studies), Readings in Palaic (a research seminar with graduate students in Hittitology), and two in spring (Elementary Hittite III and Hittite Linguistics).

The core class Language and the Human directed Petra toward semiotics, which she then applied to the visual aspects of Hittite culture in the presentation “Anatolian Aniconoclasm: Not Destruction But Deactivation” at the Oriental Institute Post-Doc seminar on Iconoclasm, April 8–9, 2011.

In the Linguistics class Petra explored ergativity, information structure, and aspect from a theoretical linguistic perspective, and asked her students to implement the results on their own. 