

John A. Brinkman has continued preparing a critical edition of Babylonian texts (1595-1155 B.C.) for the Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia project, at The University of Toronto. At the national meeting of the American Oriental Society in Atlanta in March, he delivered a paper on "Problems of Mesopotamian Chronology," in which he pointed out the evidentiary weakness of prevalent reconstructions of Babylonian historical chronology for the period 2400-1600 B.C. He also participated in a pilot seminar program presenting classical texts from ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Greece to Chicago public school teachers for classroom use. These teachers work with students ranging in age from 5-18 and from diverse social and economic backgrounds. The Epic of Gilgamesh proved a great favorite with all ages, and the teacher's adaptations were lively and varied. For five-year-olds, Enkidu's encounter with the prostitute became: "The beautiful woman did as the trapper asked and let Enkidu touch her skin." In one of the toughest city neighborhoods, a class from Englewood High School wrote and presented a Gilgamesh play—with considerable research into authenticity of costuming, architecture, food, music, and

customs—which proved to be the star attraction of the seminar’s first year. Nine of these Englewood students came to the Institute for a special tour of the Mesopotamian section of the museum and kept Mr. Brinkman going for an hour and half with their questions. As part of the ongoing work of the seminar, Brinkman has prepared an updated English translation of the Laws of Hammurabi and part of the Middle Assyrian Laws—to replace the last easily available translation, first published forty years ago. Sample updating:

old version:

If a seignior came forward with false testimony in a case, and has not proved the word which he spoke, if that case was a case involving life, that seignior shall be put to death.

new version:

If a citizen came to give false witness in a lawsuit and has not proved his testimony, in a case involving the death-penalty, that citizen shall be put to death.

