

Tony Wilkinson

Since joining the Oriental Institute in January 1992, **Tony Wilkinson** has been working towards the publication of various recently completed archaeological projects as well as looking to the future by helping establish new programs of field research. His main focus of activity remains the study of the ancient landscape and its relationship to the development of towns and the economic infrastructure of the ancient Near East.

Recent fieldwork at the Oriental Institute/University of Pennsylvania project at Tell es-Sweyhat has shown that landscape studies of a site in such a marginal environment can be of value to disciplines in addition to archaeology. The results of this work should therefore show how the ebb and flow of settlement upon the steppe may relate to changes in the demography and political geography of a region on the one hand and environmental change on the other (see separate report, pp. 44–47). Related studies undertaken in the summer of 1992 in the nearby Balikh Valley are starting to reveal similar patterns that will enable results from the two areas to be compared so that perhaps the cultural and environmental components can be filtered out. The project, conducted by the Oriental Institute jointly with a team directed by Peter Akkermans of the National Museum at Leiden, Netherlands, is based at Sabi Abyad, a site which in addition to its impressive Neolithic and Halaf building levels, boasts a building complex of Middle Assyrian date that must have been very close to the frontier of the Middle Assyrian empire.

Fieldwork in the Jazira necessitates a large program of writing and analysis, and a monograph on the ancient landscape of northern Iraq is in press, to be published later this year by the British School of Archaeology in Iraq. Work on a monograph on Tell es-Sweyhat and its landscape, to be published by the Oriental Institute Press, is also well advanced. Other articles on the landscape and economy of Upper Mesopotamia, either recently published or due out this year, include reports on northern Iraq (National Geographic's *Research and Exploration*, 1992), Titriş Höyük in Turkey (jointly with Guillermo Algaze and Adnan Misr in *Anatolica*, 1992), and on networks of ancient hollow routes (*Antiquity*, 1993).

Although unable to continue fieldwork in Iraq, he was still able to conduct research on the ancient Mesopotamian landscape by the use of satellite images, which enable large areas of terrain to be analyzed using a powerful Sun SPARC computer. This work, undertaken with John Sanders and McGuire Gibson, will enable most of southern Mesopotamia to be scrutinized for ancient canals, rivers,

settlements, as well as dune fields and marshes. The mapping program, drawing on the writers' own field work as well as that of long-continued Oriental Institute fieldwork around Nippur, Kish, Uruk, and the Diyala plain by McGuire Gibson and Robert Adams, should ultimately enable us to place the ancient communities of the Mesopotamian plain within a geographical context.

A great advantage of being in the academic context of the Oriental Institute after years in the field is that teaching opportunities enable research to be extended and new questions to be asked of old data. In addition to teaching a course on ancient landscapes, environmental change, and geoarchaeology within the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, he has delivered lectures in the Program of Classical Archaeology at Indiana University; the Department of Anthropology at Northwestern University; the Department of Geography at Indiana State University; the Society of American Archaeology meetings held in St. Louis, Missouri; the Environmental Seminar at the University of Chicago; as well as a number of workshops within the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations and the Oriental Institute.
