RESEARCH

Miguel Civil

Miguel Civil spent much of this year completing the files of the Sumerian Hypertext Project. All the sources, textual and lexical, for the study of the Sumerian language and literature are articulated in a large hypertext system. Most of the textual material is now

coded (he has been fortunate in having the help of a student, Ms. Fumi Karahashi, who has entered quickly and competently large amounts of data). Much remains to be done in editorial proofing and compilation of secondary files, such as textual matrices and source lists, but the corpus is sufficiently complete to allow him to spend time on the grammar section.

Civil has several articles in press and he is preparing the publication of a group of miscellaneous historical fragments, and of an Old Babylonian vocabulary that throws unexpected light on the vexing problem of the two themes of the Sumerian verbal stems. It turns out that the oldest native terms for the tense/aspects *ḫamṭu* and *marû* (until now unattested in Old Babylonian) are simply "long" (*gíd*) for *marû* and "short" *(lugud)* for *ḫamṭu*. This discovery goes a long way toward the explanation of a grammatical problem on which a lot of ink has been spent without definitive results.

Civil was invited to give a lecture and a seminar in Johns Hopkins about the reconstruction of ancient, isolated languages. He also lectured in the Institut del proxim Orient Antic (IPOA) in Barcelona on similar subjects. He participated there on the planning of a conceptual, anthropological glossary of Akkadian. He took part in the annual American Oriental Society Meeting with a paper on a neglected stratum of very ancient Semitic loan-words in Sumerian. He presented the hypertext project in a special session devoted to electronic processing and organization of Near Eastern textual materials, during the Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale in Prague.