

RESEARCH

Miguel Civil

In September, **Miguel Civil** appeared on the A&E TV channel trying once more to convince a certain public that the Sumerians were neither aliens from outer space nor had anything to do with “the twelfth planet.” In October, he was invited to examine some outstanding cuneiform texts in a private collection in Norway, among them an almost complete copy of the law code of Ur-Namma on an Ur III cylinder; he is preparing some of these texts for publication. At his return, he was asked to comment on the history of beer before a dinner for the members of the Oriental Institute at the River West Brewery in Chicago. He believes that it was not his talk, but rather the great dinner and the sampling of twelve beers that moved the participants to conclude unanimously that the event should be repeated. An edition of a fragment of an Ur-Namma royal hymn, on a tablet of Ur III date, and a study of a new significant source from Spain of the “Wisdom of King Ur-Ninurta” (1923–1896 BC) have appeared in *Aula Orientalis*. At the Annual Meeting of the American Oriental Society, he read a paper on several passages of the Sumerian Gilgamesh, proposing a topographic explanation for the enigmatic wells of Uruk in *Gilgamesh and Agga*, and correcting a misreading in the current edition of *Gilgamesh and*

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Huwawa. According to the new interpretation, Enlil tells Gilgamesh and Enkidu not only to provide food and drink for Huwawa's severed head but also to put it "as a decoration in the temples of the great gods." Interestingly enough, a stone head of Huwawa on an orthostat, part of a temple gate, was found at Tell Rimah. His conclusion was that more attention to landscape features and material culture can enhance our understanding of the ancient tales. Civil's book *Mesopotamian Lexicography*, part of Brill's *Handbuch der Orientalistik*, will appear before the end of 1998. The compilation of a complete electronic corpus of Sumerian texts, with new HLP and HTML versions, is progressing.
