

Tony J. Wilkinson

At the end of the summer, **Tony J. Wilkinson** traveled to Syria, first to visit the site of Qinnasrin, where Donald Whitcomb has a new field project, and then on to the Khabur Basin in eastern Syria. In the Khabur, camp was set up in order to conduct a brief two-week field season of geoarchaeological fieldwork around Tell Brak. Brak was well positioned for two (brief) forays to Hamoukar, where McGuire Gibson had a team undertaking an initial field season. The two field days at Hamoukar were rather busy, first in making preliminary interpretations of the geoarchaeology of the area, and second visiting the enigmatic southern part of the site complex. From Damascus it was then a short hop to San'a in Yemen for the 1999 campaign of "The Oriental Institute Project for the Archaeology of Yemeni Terraced Agriculture" (formerly the Dhamar Project; see separate report). In addition to the fieldwork the project forged a good working relationship with the Department of Archaeology at the University of Dhamar, where Wilkinson gave an inaugural lecture to the faculty of Arts and Humanities. This lecture resulted in the award of a University of Dhamar medal! After a brief two days in Chicago, Wilkinson then flew on to Boston for the annual meeting of the American Schools for Oriental Research, where a paper was presented on "Interactions between Humans and the Environment in the Yemeni Highlands" at a special session on the archaeology of Arabia.

In December, Gibson and Wilkinson organized a small workshop entitled *The Waters of Babylon*. The main aim of this small international group of scholars was to examine some of the recent results from remote sensing, archaeological, and textual research on the development of settlement and water systems in southern Iraq. It was especially gratifying to see Robert McCormick Adams fired up again and producing a new generation of maps of the Partho-Sasanian landscapes of southern Iraq. A related theme was also picked up in the year 2000 as part of the Interdisciplinary Archaeology Workshop when Jennifer Pournelle (University of California, San Diego) presented the results of satellite image interpretation for changing settlement in the southern plains of Iraq. The theme of the workshop in 1999/2000 was "Science and Technology," and this year there were two Oriental Institute convenors: T. J. Wilkinson and Aslihan Yener. The themes ranged widely from Indian Ocean trade to archaeometallurgy, and speakers included Maurizio Tosi, Tim Earle, Judith Todd, and Stanley Ambrose.

The California coast is delightful in March, and Dwight Reynolds and his colleagues from the University of California, Santa Barbara, are to be thanked for providing an invitation to give a plenary address on "Environmental Change and Human Activity" at their Annual Conference of Near Eastern Studies. The organization was excellent and the format of the conference catered

to a wide range of interests that took us well beyond the narrow confines of Near Eastern archaeology.

Back to reality in Chicago, most of the year has been spent trying to coax reluctant articles through ever extended publication bottlenecks. Experience over the last few years suggests that as computers get faster, the process of publication gets slower. Consequently 1999/2000 saw only one article appear: "Demographic Trends from Archaeological Survey: Case Studies from the Levant and Near East" in *Long-Term Demographic Trends in the Mediterranean Basin*, edited by John Bintliff and Kostas Sbonias, for Oxbow books. Most publication work was therefore spent checking proofs or editing and updating various publications, specifically the monograph *On the Margin of the Euphrates: Settlement and Land Use at Tell es-Sweyhat and in the Upper Lake Tabqa Area, Syria* (to be published by the Oriental Institute). This was reviewed in early 2000 and is in press for 2001. Although ostensibly presenting just the results of a small survey around Tell es-Sweyhat, this work deals with a broader canvas by providing an overview of some 10,000 years of settlement and environment within the area of the Tabqa Dam on the Syrian Euphrates. The help of Clemens Reichel and Donald Whitcomb in the production of major contributions to the volume is much appreciated.

May 2000 witnessed the second International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East, in Copenhagen. The organization of such a meeting is formidable and it is to the credit of the Carsten Niebuhr Institute and Ingolf Thuesen and colleagues that the sessions proved to be a success. Wilkinson presented a paper on "Interactions of Humans with the Environment" (but a rather different paper from that given in Santa Barbara), and was a discussant in a special session on the Orontes Valley. This session, organized by Timothy Harrison, a University of Chicago graduate, brought together projects from the entire Orontes Valley within both Syria and Turkey. It is hoped that this international cooperation will provide a foundation for future basin-wide cooperation.

This was also a year of diversification into the medium of radio with two appearances being made on WBEZ's *Odyssey* program and a third on public radio in Reno, Nevada.
