

Robert D. Biggs

Robert D. Biggs, while continuing his long-standing interest in third millennium cuneiform texts, has also continued research and writing in the field of Babylonian extispicy, the branch of the Babylonian omen tradition that made predictions and reached decisions on the basis of what the gods had “written” in the entrails, especially the livers, of sheep. While we would view such practices as unscientific and worthless, it was a much respected Babylonian “science” and was considered the most reliable means for the gods to communicate with humans. Hundreds of tablets of such material were included in Assurbanipal’s library in Nineveh and have been found wherever cuneiform texts are discovered throughout the ancient Near East.

He took advantage of attending the *Rencontre Assyriologique* in Heidelberg in July 1992 to confer at length with two colleagues who are specialists in this area of Babylonian scholarship. He has also pursued his interest in ancient medicine, and Babylonian medicine in particular. In this connection, he continues to be the contributing editor (for ancient Western Asia) for the *Newsletter of the Society for Ancient Medicine*. He participated in the University of Chicago Workshop in Ancient Societies whose topic in 1992–93 was “Medicine and Healing in the Ancient World.” He has begun working on a contribution on the human body in Mesopotamian texts to be included in the volume *Materials for the History of the Human Body in the Ancient Near East*, edited by Charles Jones and Terry Wilfong as a publication of the Oriental Institute Research Archives.
