

Matthew W. Stolper

In the spring of 1893, excavators at Nippur found a group of about 800 legal texts and fragments that came to be known as the Murašû Archive. The first selection of texts from the excavated group was published in 1898, and with each succeeding

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publication the archive became a richer source for studies in late Babylonian history and philology, Achaemenid provincial and imperial history, Old Iranian philology, West Semitic onomastics, and the background of the Biblical exile and return. The Murašû Archive is still the largest single written source on Babylonia in the period between Xerxes and Alexander. With the appearance in 1997 of *Istanbul Murašû Texts*, co-authored by **Matthew W. Stolper** and Veysel Donbaz, of Istanbul Archaeological Museums, the publication of the excavated Murašû texts is complete. The new volume, published in Leiden by the Dutch Historical-Archaeological Institute of Istanbul, includes autographed copies and annotated transliterations of 110 texts and fragments, with complete indexes, a descriptive list of 87 more fragments, and additions and corrections to previous publications of Istanbul Murašû tablets.

In a complementary article in preparation, Stolper and Linda B. Bregstein of Pennsylvania State University will publish isolated Murašû texts from the collections at the University of Pennsylvania and Yale University, along with other texts from the same historical setting, connected to the Murašû Archive by their contents or by the participants in the business they record.

In "Inscribed in Egyptian," a communication to the annual meeting of the American Oriental Society later submitted to a memorial volume for David M. Lewis, Stolper presents a Babylonian slave sale record from the reign of Xerxes that describes an Egyptian slave woman as being marked with her previous owner's name "in Egyptian" and discusses other evidence of slave marks seen as legible texts. In "Buildings on Bowlands," submitted to a memorial volume for Peter Calmeyer, Stolper treats scarce evidence that Achaemenid grants of land to state dependents included not only fields and orchards meant to produce income for the beneficiaries and taxes for the crown, but also associated building lots in the nearby villages. In "No Harm Done," submitted to a Festschrift to celebrate another colleague, Stolper discusses unusual texts from late Achaemenid Babylonian legal archives, contracts in which entrepreneurs guaranteed patronage and protection in exchange for payments and service.

An entry in the catalog of an exhibition of finds from Sepphoris in Galilee describes a stone sherd with a trilingual inscription of Artaxerxes I, part of an alabaster vessel of a kind sometimes found far beyond the borders of the Achaemenid Empire, for example, in a Sarmatian tomb in southern Russia and in the Mausoleum in Caria. With Research Archivist Charles E. Jones, Stolper prepared an entry for the *Encyclopaedia Iranica* on Richard T. Hallock, the Oriental Institute scholar whose life work on the Elamite administrative texts from Persepolis revolutionized the study of Achaemenid history. Stolper is also consulting on an English translation of Pierre Briant's magisterial *Histoire de l'empire perse de Cyrus à Alexandre*, published in French to great acclaim in 1996.
