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UNITS

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COMPUTER LAB / John Sanders

In August the Computer Laboratory installed two new computer systems:

- 1) a 400 MHz Macintosh G4 computer with 192 M RAM, 20GB hard disk, with an attached 11" x 17" flatbed Epson 836XL scanner;
- 2) a 733 MHz Dell (Pentium III) Windows 98 computer with 256 M RAM and a 10 GB hard disk.

The latter system will be used primarily for GIS projects, as I will be moving that software from the older Dell slide scanner computer over to the faster Pentium III machine.

With the help of the Lab's first assistant, Katherine Strange, by mid-summer the last three years of the Annual Report became available on the OI website. Having just returned from excavations in Syria, Katherine will continue working on the HTML markup of the most recent Annual Report and the lead articles from the OI News & Notes over the past 10 years that are not yet available on the website.

In early September I completed work on the website component for the up-coming "Treasures from the Royal Tombs of Ur" exhibition, as well as a page announcing the opening of the new Persian Gallery of the Museum.

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DEVELOPMENT / Tim Cashion

All are reminded of the memorial service for Hans Guterbock, Wednesday, October 4 at 4:00 PM in Bond Chapel. A reception will follow.

Also on October 4, Theo van den Hout will deliver the inaugural lecture of the year: "A Living, Breathing Tomb: Some Thoughts on the Continuity of Anatolian Culture in the Late Bronze and Iron Ages." Attendance is free, all are welcome. The lecture begins at 8:00 PM in Breasted Hall. A reception will follow.

Development highlights over the summer:

Naming of the Persian Gallery (the name is being withheld at the donor's request, and will be released later--the gift was \$500,000)

Creation of the Misty S. and Lewis S. Gruber Research Fund (Initial contribution: \$50,000).

Receipt of a five-year pledge for a total of \$250,000 from Commonwealth Edison. This is the largest corporate gift in Institute history.

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MUSEUM / Karen Wilson

September was a busy month for the museum, following an extremely intense summer. The new Persian Gallery opened to the public on Saturday September 9 to broad acclaim and was featured in articles in both the Chicago Tribune and Chicago Sun-Times. In addition, the gallery was covered on WGN morning news, which plans to return to do similar coverage of Treasures from the Royal Tombs of Ur. Thanks to all the museum staff who helped make this gallery such a success, and thanks also to those other members of the Oriental Institute community who were responsible for most of its content: Abbas Alizadeh, Chuck Jones, Matt Stolper, and Don Whitcomb. In addition, we are grateful to Tom Holland and Tom Urban, who read all the not-inconsiderable amount of text at least twice, without the advantage of having the objects in front of them so they could see what was being discussed.

The crates for Treasures from the Royal Tombs of Ur arrived on Tuesday the 19th, and the registrar in charge of traveling exhibitions for the University of Pennsylvania Museum arrived on the 25th. As of this writing on the 29th, all the objects have been unpacked and installed and the cases closed, so that what remains to be done before the first opening event on October 18th is installation of window shades, production of text panels, and lighting. It already looks stunning, so those changes can only serve to improve it even more.

September 29th was Getty Conservation Intern Eric Nordgren's last day with us. He is heading south to Florida to enjoy warmer weather and work for a conservator there.

Vicki Parry, the next Getty Intern, is scheduled to start the week of October 2, and Vanessa Muros, the new Assistant Conservator, is scheduled to begin the week of October 16.

During the summer, Museum Education joined with the Graham School of General Studies to present "Ancient Egypt in Chicago," a week-long seminar that attracted 55 participants from across the metropolitan area, as well as from 14 different states that ranged from Massachusetts to California. One participant traveled all the way from Argentina to attend! Special thanks to Jan Johnson, Ray Johnson, John Larson, Robert Ritner, and Emily Teeter, who worked

with Carole Krucoff to design the seminar and who served as featured speakers. Thanks also go to guest speakers John Foster, Harold Hays, Charles Jones, Stephen Parker, Justine Way, and Frank Yurco.

Along with a series of lectures and an opening reception in the Joseph and Mary Grimshaw Egyptian Gallery, the seminar included tours of the "Pharaohs of the Sun" exhibition at the Art Institute and the Egyptian exhibition at the Field Museum. Participants also attended the Philip Glass opera "Akhnaten," and took part in a closing banquet at the Quad Club. Many ended their stay by joining Michael Berger for a day-long architectural bus tour entitled "Egyptomania: Chicago Style."

This major project was a unique team effort whose success depended on the support and involvement of everyone in the Museum Education Department, as well as many faculty members and Oriental Institute staff. Thanks to you all!

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PUBLICATIONS / Tom Urban

Over the summer, for the Membership Office, the fall issue of News & Notes and the 1999/2000 Annual Report were prepared and sent to press. Both of these publications were sent entirely electronically, as we experimented with how best -- in house -- to prepare photographs for press.

In the Editorial Office, the Wente festschrift (SAOC 58) and Carol Meyer et al.'s 1993 season at Bir Umm Fawakhir (OIC 28) were printed, and Prof. Janet Johnson's Introduction to Demotic Grammar (SAOC 45) was prepared for re-issue in electronic format (14 PDF files) on the Institute's web server. If a decision were made to re-print SAOC 45, thirteen of the same fourteen PDF files would be used to do so.

Work continued on the Garrison/Root Persepolis Seals volume (OIP 117); all of the author's final corrections were entered and checked, and work has begun to recompose the plate volume. The end is in sight, and we anticipate having it ready for press this calendar year.

Most of the busywork (bibliography, internal references, and scanning of illustrations) on Emily Teeter's Medinet Habu scarab volume (OIP 118) and John Darnell's Theban road inscriptions volume (OIP 119) was completed over the summer. The push at the moment is to finish OIP 117 and 119.

Preliminary work also began on Abbas Alizadeh's volume on Chogha Bonut (OIP 120) and Markus Hilgert's second volume of Ur III administrative documents (OIP 121).

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RESEARCH ARCHIVES / Chuck Jones

Since our announcement of the new list RABooks in this newsletter (and elsewhere) in June, we have produced and distributed the following Acquisitions lists:

February 2000

March 2000

April 2000

May 2000

June 2000

July 2000.

The list for August-September 2000 will be distributed to subscribers later this week.

During the summer we also built a web site for the Acquisitions Lists: <http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/DEPT/RA/RABooks.html> where acquisitions lists will be archived and accessible to readers who prefer that medium.

It is our intention to continue to distribute the Research Archives Acquisitions List monthly -- free of charge. We hope also to use this list to distribute topical lists, lists of dissertations, and other useful material from time to time as they are developed here. As of today there are 343 addresses subscribed to the list.

Those wishing to subscribe to the list should send the following single line message:

subscribe rabooks

in the body of e-mail to majordomo@oi.uchicago.edu

Much of the summer was spent working on the on-line catalogue:
<http://oilib.uchicago.edu/oilibcat.html>

Hratch Papazian's dissertation proposal 'The "Per Shena": From Palace Estate to Sacred Storehouse. The Structure and Evolution of an Ancient Egyptian Economic Institution' joins the others on the Research Archives web site:
http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/DEPT/RA/DISPROP/papazian_diss.html

Please welcome the new Assistant Research Archivist Leslie Schramer, first year student in Archaeology, who will be working the Sunday shift and other hours during the week. She joins returning (continuing) staff Jake Lauinger and Mark Saathoff

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PROJECTS
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EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY / W Raymond Johnson

The staff of the Epigraphic Survey is preparing to return to Egypt next week, and, if all goes according to schedule (insha'allah), Chicago House will reopen its doors on Monday, October 16th. Egyptologist Tina Di Cerbo has been in Luxor since September 29th overseeing the opening and cleaning of the house; she and Finance Manager Moataz Abo Shadi, in Luxor for September workmen's payroll, report that all is well with the house and grounds. I will be in Cairo from October 10th till the 14th to meet with Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA) officials, to sign the season contract, and to meet with US Embassy and American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE) representatives. During that time other ES staff will be gathering in Cairo in preparation for Luxor, for last-minute supply-buying and checking in with the SCA. Each staff member is required to personally go out to SCA headquarters and be checked off the SCA Security Police checklist; we are greatly indebted to ARCE and in particular to Assistant Director Amira Khattab for very kindly assisting us with all this. I am also looking forward to meeting with recently appointed ARCE Director, Bob Springborg.

Staffmembers Emily Napolitano and Harold Hays arrived in Egypt on September 19 (to allow Harold some dissertation research time), and

report back that they are well, Cairo is hot as blazes, and Harold is getting valuable research work done.

I will have more to report in the November Newsletter, once we are settled and back at work. In the meantime, let me extend best wishes to you, our friends and colleagues back 'home,' for a pleasant and productive autumn and winter. We will miss you, but you will be hearing from us again shortly! Mas salama!

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INDIVIDUALS

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ROBERT BIGGS

Robert Biggs spent part of June and July studying cuneiform texts in the British Museum before participating in the Rencontre Assyriologique in Paris.

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JOAN CURRY

Due to what I believe is better news coverage and publicity more and more questions come to me about the museum. People want to know when the museum is open and directions to get here. Many are interested in the courses offered by the Museum Education Department. People call from across the country asking about the exhibit, "The Royal Tombs of Ur." This past weekend I passed out over 100 of the brochures about "The Royal Tombs of Ur" at an organization in downstate Illinois. Also my scrapbook, with as many additional pages as it can hold, is nearly full of news coverage. I will soon need to order another scrapbook.

I still get a few questions asking about acupuncture or Green Dragon tea but as more news coverage goes out these should become less.

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FRANCOIS GAUDARD

From June 26 to July 14, 2000, I taught an intensive three-week survey course "Pharaohs Alive!: An Introduction to Egyptology and

Archeology" for motivated high school students through the Graham School of the University of Chicago.

This course was taught for credit. It integrated classroom instruction with introduction to Egyptological resources, museum experience, and the preparation of a research paper.

The students had the opportunity to explore the archaeology, history, geography, religion and literature of the ancient Egyptians. They also began the study of Middle Egyptian and were able to read basic hieroglyphic inscriptions by the conclusion of the class.

I took advantage of the resources of the Oriental Institute, including calling upon several staff for presentations. I am grateful to Emily Teeter, Laura D'Alessandro, Justine Way, Ray Johnson, John Sanders, Tom Dousa and Eric Nordgren for their contributions.

We also had the opportunity to view the Art Institute's "Pharaohs of the Sun: Akhenaten, Nefertiti, Tutankhamen" exhibition, as well as the Field Museum's Egyptian Gallery. I would like to thank Casey Turner (Director, Division of Summer Studies, The Graham School) and Joseph Baruffi (Program Coordinator) for making those excursions possible.

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HARRY HOFFNER

HARRY HOFFNER, John A. Wilson Professor Emeritus in the Oriental Institute, will be giving an invited lecture on "Trade and Commerce in the Hittite Kingdom" at the 2000 Wheaton Archeology Conference on Friday afternoon, November 10th in the Billy Graham Center of Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois. The theme of this year's conference is "Travel and Trade in the ancient world." Among the other speakers are Kenneth A. Kitchen and Anson F. Rainey.

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CHUCK JONES

The first of among what I hope will be a long series of articles on developments in the electronic manipulation and presentation of ancient Near Eastern materials appeared in Ariadne late in

September. I am coordinator for text encoding, available web resources, and tool developments relating to the ancient Near East for Ariadne: <http://www.ariadne.ac.uk>

The articles in question are: "Electronic Homer", Martin Mueller Reading Homer electronically with the TLG, Perseus, and the Chicago Homer, and, "Knowledge Management in the Perseus Digital Library", Jeffrey Rydberg-Cox [and others] on the Perseus Project's new knowledge management and digital delivery tools. These two new articles join "Electronic Publication of Ancient Near Eastern Texts": Charles E. Jones and David Schloen reporting on a Chicago conference which explored XML tagging for ancient Near Eastern texts on the web. and "The Web Editor": 'Abzu and Beyond' Charles Jones muses on the history of the Internet presence of the University of Chicago Oriental Institute, which appeared earlier in the year. Anyone potentially interested in writing for Ariadne, which is aimed at both librarians and information science professionals in academic libraries, should get in touch with me to talk about it.

An exploratory group, including the Oriental Institute, and under the leadership of the Vanderbilt University Library, has received a planning grant from The Mellon Foundation to develop a proposal for the funding of a project to provide scholars with better access to a wide range of both retrospective and current resources on the ancient Near East and to the technology to develop such resources. As the chairman of the content committee of this group, I will be happy to discuss such issues with anyone who is interested.

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WALTER KAEGI

Walter Kaegi served on a five-member committee that reviewed 4 Historical Institutes in Greece (3 in Athens, 1 at Rethymno, Crete), at the invitation of the Ministry of Development, 11-17 September 2000. He completed a draft of a lecture to be translated into Italian for distribution before his lecture at Cagliari, Sardinia in late November. He also completed 2 book reviews for journals as well as bibliographical entries for *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*.

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MARK LEHNER

At the beginning of October we will resume our marathon program of clearing, mapping, and excavations at Giza, on our site about 300 m south of the Sphinx, and south of the great stone Wall of the Crow. We plan to work from October 1 until the end of November, take a break for Ramadan and the U.S. holiday season, then resume in early January. We hope to work until the beginning of June. We plan to expand our clearing of the overburden to the north and west. We also plan more detailed excavation of the great gallery system revealed in Part 1 (October 1999-June 2000) of our Millennium Project.

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CAROL MEYER

Plans are under way for the March 2001 season of the Bir Umm Fawakhir Project. The staff is assembled and security forms and proposal have been submitted. It will be a short study season to finish documenting the finds from the 1999 excavations. We need to draw that which was photographed, photograph that which was drawn, and carry out preliminary analyses of the seeds, bark, wood, bones, teeth, hide, wool, dung, and other organic remains. Chicago seems to have a shortage of archaeological floral and faunal analysts (though if anyone knows otherwise please let me know). The boxes of registered objects are stored in Quft, but since we cannot work there, they will have to be carried back to the Egyptian Geological Survey camp at Fawakhir, or to a magazine in Luxor.

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ROBERT RITNER

Egypt Revealed II. On September 16-17, a sequel to the successful "Egypt Revealed" conference of last year was held in Dallas. In company with Zahi Hawass, Kent Weeks, and Salima Ikram, Robert Ritner presented two lectures on Egyptian magic and medicine, followed by a panel discussion and book signing. Attendance was excellent, and all copies on hand of Ritner's SAOC volume on Egyptian magical mechanics were sold within the first two hours of the first morning. Ritner will be in France for the initial week of the academic quarter, participating in the Louvre conference "La magie en Égypte: à la recherche d'une définition," held in conjunction with the exhibit

Our Yaqush team had excellent accommodations at very reasonable rates (thanks to the negotiating skill of my Israeli graduate student Amir Sumakai-Fink) at Kibbutz Ashdot Ya'akov, situated where the Yarmuk River flows into the Jordan River, five minutes' drive north of the Yaqush site. This kibbutz is a large farming community with a dairy herd and extensive banana plantations, as well as some light industry in the form of a plastics factory. We stayed three to a room in air-conditioned tourist guest rooms (each with a bathroom, cable TV, and maid service) and we ate with the kibbutzniks in their dining hall. This place was chosen for its convenient location, but it exceeded our expectations--it was almost too comfortable for an archaeological dig! The guest house staff were friendly and helpful, and the quiet, beautifully landscaped bucolic setting, with flowerbeds, manicured lawns, and palm trees, and peacocks wandering the grounds, was very refreshing to the hard-working diggers, whom we roused out of bed six days a week at 5:00 a.m. to drive to the site, starting work at dawn and ending at 12:30 p.m. to beat the heat. In the afternoon, after showering and eating lunch, there was a rest period (during which some took advantage of the kibbutz swimming pool), followed by materials processing from 4:00-6:00 p.m., then dinner, and, on some days, an evening lecture. Fortunately, we enjoyed unseasonably cool weather in the high 80s and low 90s, in a region more than 200 meters below sea level which can experience spring and early summer temperatures well in excess of 100 degrees Fahrenheit. On the whole, there was very little illness and no heat-related ailments, although we became familiar with the regional hospital 20 minutes' away, perched high above the Sea of Galilee, where we had to take a few students for minor sprains and other mishaps. The students took advantage of our proximity to the scenic Galilee region in order to explore northern Israel on their own, including the tourist-trap town of Tiberias on the Sea of Galilee and the booming city of Haifa on the Mediterranean coast.

The late Douglas Esse had initiated the excavation of this important Early Bronze Age village site of Yaqush on behalf of the Oriental Institute in 1989 and 1991. A further 800 square meters of village houses were exposed this year by our team, almost doubling the existing exposure. As in Doug's digs, several well-preserved phases of architecture were detected, ranging from Early Bronze I (ca. 3300 B.C.) to the end of Early Bronze III (ca. 2300 B.C.). Tim and I were excited to detect a clear gap in occupation between EB II and EB III, supporting the hypothesis that ca. 2700 B.C. the EB III "Khirbet Kerak Ware" people, with a very different style of pottery and architecture

"Heka - Magie et envoûtement dans l'Égypte ancienne." Ritner will speak on "Nécromancie en Égypte ancienne."

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DAVID SCHLOEN

In the spring and summer of 2000, I undertook an extended three-month period of archaeological fieldwork. First, in May and early June, I directed large-scale excavations on behalf of the Oriental Institute at the Early Bronze Age village site of Yaqush in the northern Jordan Valley in Israel, near the Sea of Galilee. For this project an international team of 60 people was assembled, including 12 professional staff and 48 volunteer diggers. I and my University of Chicago graduate students Aaron Burke and Glenn (Joey) Corbett were joined by Prof. Timothy Harrison of the University of Toronto and his graduate students, together with four dozen volunteers from Canada and Austria. Most of the Canadian volunteers are students of archaeology or anthropology at the University of Toronto, and the Austrians are students of ancient Near Eastern studies at the University of Vienna. They were all eager to gain excavation experience, and many of them told us that they had profited greatly from their participation in the Yaqush project. We had a full field school program with course credit through both Toronto and Vienna, including evening slide lectures by me, Tim Harrison, and others; daily on-the-job instruction in the field and in afternoon labs processing pottery, lithics, and faunal and botanical remains; and several field trips by chartered bus to important sites of all periods in Israel and the West Bank. I focused my own efforts on supervising excavations in the field and organizing logistics (not a simple task for such a large team, requiring tools, supplies, storage, vehicles, and food, not to mention a couple of portable toilets at the site). Tim Harrison, who is a specialist in Early Bronze Age ceramics, visited the site frequently but focused his efforts on processing the backlog of pottery from earlier excavations at the site, sorting, counting, and weighing potsherds by provenience unit, thus creating a dataset that will be important for our future interpretations of the chronology and function of dwellings at Yaqush. Our graduate students had supervisory responsibility as well, using the opportunity to improve their own stratigraphic excavation skills as they learned how to instruct others.

related to that in north Syria and Anatolia, migrated into the region and established a new settlement on what was then an abandoned site. We were also able to confirm that in the EB III period alone there were four coherent phases of village architecture, which will permit us to refine the ceramic chronology of this cultural period and gives us a meaningful picture of whole groups of contemporary houses and their artifactual assemblages in each of these subphases. A number of Israeli colleagues visited us during our excavations and agreed with us about the importance of the site and the stratigraphic conclusions to be drawn from it.

From Yaqush, I and my students Aaron Burke and Joey Corbett moved south to the site of Ashkelon on the Mediterranean coast where we participated from mid-June until early August in the 16th annual excavation season of the Leon Levy Expedition, of which I am the associate director assisting director Larry Stager of Harvard University (formerly of the OI). The team there was about twice the size of the Yaqush team, with a bumper crop of 90 volunteer diggers this year. Joining us in Ashkelon as professional staff members were other University of Chicago graduate students, most of them veterans of several seasons there: Don Whitcomb's student Tracy Alsberg Hoffmann (our Islamic period specialist, but put to work this year supervising a Late Bronze Age Canaanite area, which she attacked with her usual gusto), and my students Gabrielle Novacek and Todd Ferry, who worked in an early Iron Age Philistine stratum. Among the volunteers with a Chicago connection were Laura Culbertson, an undergraduate NELC concentrator in Near Eastern archaeology, and Joel Baden, an incoming NELC graduate student in Northwest Semitics.

Highlights of the 2000 season at Ashkelon include the unearthing of dozens of coins of the Roman and Hellenistic periods (including a rare coin of the famous Cleopatra that was minted in Ashkelon itself, and made it onto our dig T-shirt as the find of the season); the large-scale exposure of one of the earliest Philistine architectural phases, dating to the late twelfth century B.C.; and the discovery of an open-air mortuary complex, complete with baking ovens (for funeral meals?) and storage pits, above a complex of subterranean Middle Bronze Age Canaanite chamber tombs. We also found a hieratic Egyptian ostrakon in an early Philistine level which is currently being deciphered. On the subject of things Egyptian, we enjoyed an extended visit from Lanny Bell, who is working on our Middle Kingdom (late 12th/early 13th dynasty) clay sealings, made with

hieroglyph-inscribed scarab seals; and we were also visited by Manfred Bietak, the Austrian excavator of the Nile Delta site of Tell ed-Daba, the great Hyksos capital Avaris. Prof. Bietak has come around to the view that Canaanite Ashkelon, in particular, had very close cultural and trade connections with Avaris, as one might expect, and he was eager to study our large collection of Middle Bronze Age pottery in light of what he has unearthed at Daba.

Methodologically, Aaron Burke took the lead this summer in implementing the new archaeological mapping software I and my wife Sandra have developed, which is now fully tested and was put into production for one entire 400-square meter excavation area, for which Aaron digitized all of the layers and features on a daily basis, printing out phase plans to give back to the field supervisors. This means that at the end of the season we had a set of highly accurate digitized maps of what we excavated, in full detail and double-checked in the field. These are now part of the permanent electronic archive of the excavation, linked in with the thousands of photographs and other information we have been computerizing over the years.

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OGUZ SOYSAL

In addition to his regular work on CHD and the preparation of the "Hittian Word List" Oguz Soysal continued in summer 2000 to contribute to the studies on the Ortakoy texts within his personal project "Ortakoy-Sapinuwa Epigraphical Research (OSER)." This project had been financially supported by the American Research Institute in Turkey with a fellowship granted for the research on the Ortakoy materials in 2000. The work in 2000 was conducted during June. Accompanied by Dr. Yasemin Soysal (who is member of Ankara Universitesi Dil ve Tarih-Cografya Fakultesi), the team went to Corum and took ca. 400 pictures of the selected original tablets (primarily the Hittian and bird oracle texts), which are deposited at the Museum of Corum. The previous activities of the season 1999 were briefly reported as "Epigraphical Studies from Hittite Sapinuwa" in ARIT Newsletter 27 (Spring 1999) p. 7, and read as papers at the 4th International Congress of Hittitology in Wurzburg (Germany) in October 1999 with Turkish title "Hattice Arastirmalarinda Son Durum." The first results of the epigraphic studies will be released by Oguz Soysal and Aygul Suel in a joint article "A Practical Vocabulary

from Ortakoy," which is currently in press for an American festschrift. As part of the work for 2000, they are now preparing other three joint articles for publication, in which they will continue to make the Ortakoy tablets accessible to the community of scholars in the humanities. The tentative English - Turkish titles are: "The Hattian-Hittite Foundation Rituals from Ortakoy / Ortakoy'de Bulunmus Hattice-Hititce Insa Rituelleri (I-III)."

In his trip to Turkey in this summer, Oguz Soysal had also opportunity to join several archaeological surveys at the vicinity of Sivas and to inspect some ancient sites like Kayalipinar and Kahvepinar. The first mentioned place promises to be an extremely important Hittite settlement as reported by the Turkish and German archaeologists at the 4th International Congress of Hittitology in Wurzburg in October 1999.

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THEO VAN DEN HOUT

This is the first of hopefully a whole series of contributions to the OI Newsletter. I am all settled now in my office, Erica's former office, 317. Feel free to stop by and pay me a visit. Up to now I have worked on my course preparations and started work on the CHD. Besides this there are three festschrifts asking for attention. My contribution to one of these will deal with the hieroglyphic Luwian words for "soul" and "self" while venturing into Lycian and Carian as well, another contribution will be a more elaborate version of the paper I read on Hittite literature here at the OI in October 1999. My thoughts on the third one are still too preliminary to say anything about it.

My other projects have been put "in the fridge" for the time being but I will let you know when work on them resumes. Let me finish by thanking you all for the warm welcome and the hospitality my family and I have encountered upon our arrival in the US!

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TONY WILKINSON

Reporting from Syria

This was a brief trip, mainly to work at Hamoukar, but I also took advantage of the opportunity to visit a British survey and landscape project near Homs, (directed by Graham Philip), the Ghab valley, and Don Whitcomb's excavations at Qinnisrin.

Northern Syria has now had two consecutive years of very low rainfall, and as a result many farmers have suffered severe crop losses and have been forced to sell many of their sheep and goats. Driving over the Tishrin lake on the River Euphrates, however, water levels seemed quite high. I understand that Arnulf Hausleiter and colleagues are undertaking more survey of what area is available for survey around Tell Ahmar. Work at Hamoukar is well underway and Mac's team have been excavating two 10 x 10 m trenches in area C in the northeast part of the mound. This is where a probably third millennium BC temple was exposed in 1999. On the large "southern extension" Colleen Coyle, Mark Altaweel, and myself conducted a number of soundings to investigate the nature of this massive but enigmatic site. Conventional archaeological mounding forms the central core of the site and extends over some 23 ha. Around this is a large undefined area of very dense sherd scatters that rest directly on the natural subsoil. These could either be very dense domestic habitation areas, middens or industrial areas, but they appear to be without any mudbrick or other buildup of building materials, which suggests that buildings were either of flimsy construction, tents or something of that nature. Beyond the dense midden area and related deposits extends a broad area of sparse to dense sherd scatters which continue the site over a total area of some 250-280 ha. However it is now clear that the site did not consist of one massive area of sedentary buildup, but was segmented into areas of mounding and more nebulous areas of artifact scatters. All cultural material appears to be dated to the early part of the Late Chalcolithic period, and it looks as if this site just predates the Late Chalcolithic settlement within Tell Hamoukar itself.

Jason Ur's intensive survey around Hamoukar is going well, and his small team of three is busy recording a wide range of sites and offsite data. Despite occasional dust storms they are able to manipulate the data in the field using ArcView GIS.

The dig house has been constructed to roof level and by the time of writing (September 28th) probably most of the roofing will be in place. Mac considers that it will not be possible to move in

immediately because the mudbrick needs to be cured, and wiring and plumbing still needs to be installed.

There is a new director of antiquities in position in Damascus, and I understand from Amr al-Azm, Mac's Syrian codirector, that there is a strong sense of mission in the new administration. This, we hope, will enable more scientific analysis and survey to be undertaken. Joint Syrian - foreign missions will be encouraged and applications for fieldwork will continue to be handled by the current director of excavations Dr. Michel Maqdassi. A new survey framework is being formulated by Amr al-Azm, and we hope this will provide a realistic framework for the collaboration of Syrian and foreign teams in future.

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ASLIHAN YENER

After a hiatus of 50 years, the OI team returned to the Amuq valley and set into motion surveys and renewed excavations at a number of sites (<http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/PROJ/AMU/Amuq.html>). The first five years were devoted primarily to geoarchaeological studies and a settlement survey. Activities between 1995 and 2000 also included a salvage operation at Tell al-Judaidah (Edens in Yener 2000a; Reichel and Friedman in Yener et al. 1996), pollen cores of the lakes Antioch and Golbasi (Wilkinson in Yener 2000a, Yener and Wilkinson 1996, 1997, 1998), the recording of profiles of damaged third millennium BC sites (Harrison in Yener et al 2000a), and the initiation of excavations at Tell Kurdu (Yener 1999; Edens and Yener 2000a and b). The foothills and Amanus Mountains were briefly explored in 1998 and 1999, and these investigations together with a reconnaissance of the Orontes delta link the overall regional investigations. Tell Atchana, the last of the previously excavated Amuq sites to be targeted was briefly surveyed during the summer of 2000. A number of tasks were successfully accomplished, including an intensive surface survey of the surrounding field systems and mound as well as photography of the status of the mound and its standing monuments. With the understanding that any future excavation would involve a substantial conservation effort, a photographic record of the current state of the monuments was completed. NELC students Jesse Casana and Simrit Dhesi and U of Toronto students Steve Batiuk and Heather Snow made efforts to

illustrate the excavated rooms from the same directions as published photographs in the original reports. Field collections revealed considerably denser concentrations of sherds on the north and northeast sides of the mound, in an area approximately 100 m out from the tell, beginning at the eastern side of the city gate extending about halfway down the northeast side of the mound. The area coincides with Woolley's observation that there may be an outer town wall running parallel on that side of the mound. While other erosional factors may produce such a field scatter, the evidence gathered by the survey is suggestive of the presence of a "lower town" in the fields below the mound now hidden by alluvial accumulation. An effort will be made next season to investigate the possibility of an outer town with a small test trench in these fields and a section on the adjacent drainage canal, a recent construct which controls flooding of the Orontes River and Lake of Antioch. In addition the remote sensing team from Bogazici University will target a 50m square to test for subsurface features where field scatters revealed unusual densities. The grand public buildings (so-called Yarimlim and Niqmepa palaces) that housed the central administration and religious core of this kingdom, are now in a dangerous state of collapse and any further research on this mound would need to address site preservation. The high rainfall has promoted the outgrowth of lush vegetation at Atchana, undermining the buildings constructed of mudbrick faced with basalt and limestone orthostats.

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To: OI Newsletter <oinews@babylon-orinst.uchicago.edu>
From: oinews@babylon-orinst.uchicago.edu
Subject: Addendum: OI NEWSLETTER - FIRST MONDAY - OCTOBER 2000

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TRANSITIONS / Gene Gragg

Welcome to the academic year 2000-2001. After several quiet years, with this year we enter into a period of shifts in academic personnel which will result, over the next several years, in a number of important transitions in the Oriental Institute. For this year, which we begin by commemorating the passing from our midst of Hans Gustav Guterbock on October 4, we welcome a new faculty member, Professor Theo van den Hout, as Professor of Hittitology. Prof. Harry Hoffner has now retired to emeritus status, but continues as co-editor of the Chicago Hittite Dictionary. Setting the stage for the future are on-going searches in Sumerian and in ancient Near Eastern history. The ranks of research associates are augmented by the appointment of Emily Teeter, Research Associate/Curator of Egyptian and Nubian Antiquities -- while continuing her ongoing education and outreach work, she will be working especially on a two-volume publication of objects from the Oriental Institute's Medinet Habu excavations. Finally we welcome this quarter as Visiting Scholars Prof. Abdu Ghaleb, archaeologist from Sana'a University, and Jose Castaneda, Egyptologist from the Universidad Autonoma Metropolitana, Mexico.

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