

# INTEGRATED DATABASE PROJECT

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## Introduction

The Integrated Database Project (IDB) completed Phase III in October 2016. Phase III was funded by a Museums for America Collections Stewardship grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services (MA-30-14-0541-14). During Phase III, records from two additional Institute departments were further incorporated into the database. We have now migrated nearly 40,000 records from the Center for Middle Eastern Landscapes (CAMEL) and over 50,000 records from the Museum Archives (table 1). In addition to integrating these records into the

*Table 1. Total records in the Integrated Database*

<i>Department</i>	<i>Records in EMu</i>	<i>Records on Website</i>
Research Archives	535,000	524,336
Museum Registration	276,735	234,781
Photographic Archives	188,627	103,804
Museum Archives	50,481	50,477
CAMEL	38,947	8,315
Museum Conservation	10,115	—

larger information network in our internal EMu system, all of the Museum Archives records and all CAMEL records for which there are no copyright restrictions are now also available online. This represents a major step forward for the public accessibility of information from the Oriental Institute's collections. Never before has the CAMEL or Museum Archives information been available to such a wide audience. These datasets join the Research Archives, Museum Registration, Photographic Archives, and Conservation; combined together, there are more than 1,000,000 records now in the IDB. Each day the usefulness of this information increases as it is further linked between departments, creating a data web that will reveal relationships that would otherwise remain hidden to the researcher (fig. 1).

Over the past few years, a number of important internal projects have been completed. The entire paper registration card collection and all the accession records have been completely digitized and incorporated into EMu. The archives of T. George Allen have been digitized and cataloged. We have now embarked on a project to digitize and transcribe the complete collection of photo registration cards in the Museum Archives. Several volunteers are working to scan and catalog archival photos of objects from our museum collection. Public domain library volumes and online resources are being cataloged by Research Archives volunteers. All of these resources are now available to anyone with access to the internet for research, education, and teaching. Further details about individual departments' accomplishments can be found in their annual reports.

Return to Search Results

**P. 21850**

Photo Number(s): 021850

Negative Number(s): –

Digital Number: –

Accession Photo Number: 1474

Accession Negative Number: –

Field Negative Number: –

Identifier: P\_21850.jpg

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**Description:**  
 Location: Oriental Institute A7369 Provenience: Iraq, Khorsabad Details: Dr. Watson Boyes and a group of students in front of the winged bull.

**Registration Number(s):**  
[A7369](#)

**Unit ID:** [P\\_21850](#)

Click the image to view full size



Figure 1. Photographic Archives record showing links to other collections via hyperlinked registration and photograph numbers

## Online Collections Search ([oi-idb.uchicago.edu](http://oi-idb.uchicago.edu))

The Online Collections Search has continued to undergo development over the last academic year. In September 2016, over 6,000 CAMEL records went live to the public, including thousands of declassified satellite images and digitized maps. For each of these records, CAMEL's geographical data allowed us to plot the maps' outlines within an Esri leaflet viewer on the web (fig. 2). We should thank our colleagues Sharon Grant and Peter Herbst from the Field Museum of Natural History for their help and inspiration for this idea. For researchers who want the original data, the GIS files can be downloaded via a "Download Files" link displayed on the page.

A number of fields were added in December 2016 to the Research Archives display, search, and facets, including fields for summaries, abstracts, language, and acronym. Abstracts are cataloged for all library materials that come with one. This adds a very important searching capability to the catalog as a research tool. Although the fact that we catalog all individually authored chapters and articles, it remains that the title fields do not always accurately reflect what the article is about. The abstract and summary field will help researchers find material that may otherwise have been missed. In the future, we will move to incorporate a full text search for all PDFs in the database. At the same time, the data format for the Museum Collections records was updated and the search was changed for museum registration numbers so that it reflected the same format as found in our print volumes (e.g., E9787F). Similar changes were made in January 2017 when each department's tab was separated into its own index, field registration number was added to the search for museum collection records, and records for lecture videos were updated and improved to increase findability.

In May 2017 the site underwent a major overhaul to convert it from a single page to a multipage application. This change allows a number of new improvements. First, users can

Return to Search Results

**Survey of Egypt: Key\_1\_100000\_Topo\_Maps\_of\_Egypt\_1**

Spatial Type: Map

Subcategory: Normal Desert

Creation Date: —

Resolution: 441

Description: —

Scale: 1:1250000

Visibility: 4

Source: Oriental Institute Archives Map Collection

Citation: British War Office, Intelligence Division The Center for Ancient Middle Eastern Landscapes, Oriental Institute, University of Chicago

Src: —

Language: English

File Format: TIF

CAMEL ID: 1012519

UUID: 877cc5ae-35af-44f5-8e8a-03c858e98088

Stable URL: <https://cdlib.uchicago.edu/id/877cc5ae-35af-44f5-8e8a-03c858e98088>

Click the image to view full size

Slide 1 of 1  
Key\_1\_100000\_Topo\_Maps\_of\_Egypt\_1

Download Files

Figure 2. CAMEL Record with Esri Leaflet Viewer

now right click to open records within individual browser tabs. Second, user behavior can now be tracked through Google Analytics on the site. For example, we know that in the first 90 days of activation, over 3,200 users visited the site in 7,200 sessions. The average session duration was 5 minutes and 24 seconds. 45% of use of the site involved users viewing the detail pages for individual records, 34% involved new searches, and 18% involved revised searches. The most popular record remained the iconic *lamassu* (OIM A7369, <https://oi-idb.uchicago.edu/id/10443a90-e395-4a2f-a81f-75a3b2312c1c>) with 159 views until a Twitter post went viral concerning OIM A8761, an ancient mace-head that looks like a fidget spinner. That record was viewed 209 times (<https://oi-idb.uchicago.edu/id/a15f109e-cd53-4600-99e8-12efa642bc93>). The most popular search was “Theban Tomb 158,” searched 67 times, with “Theban tomb 55 Ramose” and “Theban tomb 93” coming in close behind with 33 and 32 searches respectively. The preliminary results from the Google Analytics demonstrate that the vast majority of users are using a simple search method to view individual records. Only a very small percentage of users were building complex searches across multiple fields or multiple departments.

The conversion to a multipage application was accompanied by the implementation of stable URLs for each record in the database. Each record is now identified by a GUID (Global Unique Identifier). That GUID is part of the URL following <http://oi-idb.uchicago.edu/id/> and the stable URL with GUID is displayed at the bottom of every details page for each record (fig. 3). As GUIDs are intended to be globally unique numbers, our intention is to maintain these links indefinitely, so that users can confidently link to objects in our collections without fear of the link disappearing or becoming disabled. These developments are further improvements to ensure that the OI collections are accessible and sustainable for the long term future.

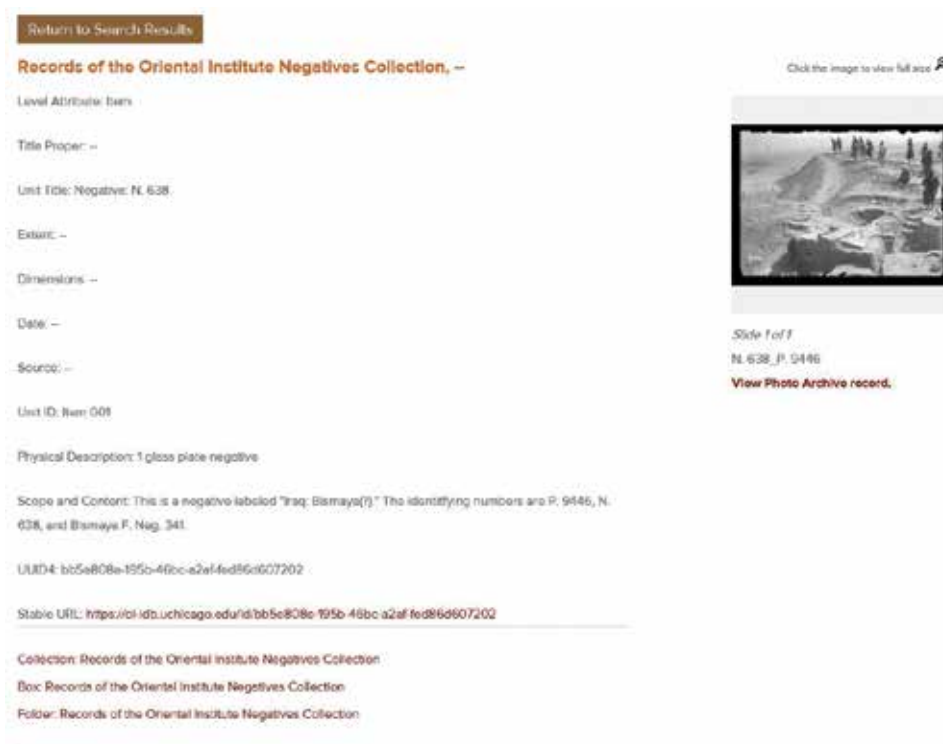


Figure 3. Museum Archive record with stable URL and hierarchy links

As we move forward, we will continue to improve the usefulness and functionality of the site. Within the next academic year, we will add addition search and faceting options, fix a number of minor display issues, expand the citations functionality to all records, add a tab for people and organizations, and add a separate tab for Epigraphic Survey records. We are also investigating implementing a login mechanism for users to save, annotate, and share records. Finally, we are interested in publishing our data as linked open data to the semantic web for incorporation into much larger datasets.

## Phase Four

In November 2016, Phase IV of the Integrated Database began. This phase focuses on two major and very important silos. One part of the project focuses on material from the Museum Archives. Archival material for cataloging and digitization has been selected based on regions most under threat, specifically excavation records from sites in Syria and Iraq including Tell es-Sweyhat, Khorsabad, Nippur, Hamoukar, Khafaje, Tell Asmar, Tell Agrab, and Ishchali. The second part focuses on material from the Oriental Institute’s Epigraphic Survey and will include migrating records from a 4D database into EMu as well as digitization of paper records in their archives. These datasets are a critical missing link in providing further metadata about the museum’s objects and publications now available through the Integrated Database, in particular information about discovery contexts and relationships to other objects. Records imported and created in Phase IV will be linked to the datasets that were transferred into the new database system during Phases I–III of the project and all non-sensitive data will be made

available in full through the public search webpage. Funding for Phase IV has come from a Museums for American grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (MA-30-16-0311).

## **Acknowledgments**

First and foremost, we would like to thank the funders who make this project possible: the Oriental Institute, the University of Chicago, the Institute for Museum and Library Services, and Aimee Drolet Rossi. It is also very important to acknowledge the very large team working on the IDB, including all the Oriental Institute faculty, staff, students, and volunteers who do the dirty work of cataloging, digitizing, and data cleaning on a daily basis. Their names can be found in the annual reports for the individual departments involved in the IDB project. This project, by its very nature, is collaborative and could not be done without the help of many people. Sincere thanks goes out to each and every team member who has helped make the IDB the success it is today.

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