

RESEARCH ARCHIVES

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In November 2017, Foy Scalf celebrated his ten-year anniversary as head of the Research Archives. It is a good time to reflect on these annual reports and the information they provide about the Oriental Institute library, its collections, and services. Reports for the last decade have relied on a similar look and format, but a few new elements have been added this year and a few of the obsolete elements have been removed. We continue to review what information is most useful to our community and supporters and adjust our reports accordingly. In each year's annual report, the head of the Research Archives has traditionally offered a short introduction about the current state of the library in a wider, often global, context. While thinking about the last ten years in the library and reflecting on its history for the OI's upcoming centennial next year, it has become clear how important the library is to the Institute's and University's missions and how dedicated its staff members have been to fulfilling those missions with the resources available to them. Johanne Vindenas and Charles Jones often come to mind. Not only did they work through good and bad fiscal times to build the Oriental Institute and Research Archives into what it is today, but they also strived to expand what it offers and preserve its collections for future generations.

A recent event well illustrates the current political climate facing libraries, archives, and museums, while simultaneously highlighting issues of economics and preservation. In July of 2019, a professor of economics at Long Island University published an opinion piece with *Forbes* entitled "Amazon Should Replace Local Libraries to Save Taxpayers Money." It unleashed massive outrage and a Twitter-storm backlash in response, which readers can review by looking up the hashtag #WeNeedLibraries. As many of the dissenters demonstrated, the piece showcased some fundamental misunderstandings of what libraries do, what they are for, who they serve, how they work, their social benefits, and their economic advantages. Of course, the attack on one of the most cherished, and unquestionably beneficial, American social institutions — the public library system, which is so incredibly important across any measurable spectrum, from literacy rates to inclusivity to community organization to childhood education — did not arise in a vacuum. The FY 2018 budget request to Congress included a \$23 million-dollar line item to close the Institute for Museum and Library Services, one of the most important federal funding sources for libraries, archives, and museums, and a direct funder of the Oriental Institute's Integrated Database project (the organization actually received an increase in funding for the end of FY 2018, but FY 2019 remains in question). Similar measures are being suggested at local levels across the nation where claims routinely call for more "efficiency" through "consolidation" of museum and library positions. Sometimes such "shared services" can actually result in the same or increased quality of service at the same or reduced costs; however, often these efforts increase costs to the public and/or reduce quality of service. It is interesting to see how often arts, museums, libraries, and humanities are the focus of such measures.

However, there is another aspect of this event that requires attention. After the backlash, *Forbes* deleted the opinion piece from their website. A Google search now brings up pages and pages of commentary with links sending readers to a 404 error where the story once existed. Now, one of the only places to access the article is through the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine, which makes attempts at archiving web content, and, which is, ironically, supported by federal funding from institutions

such as the Institute of Museum and Library Services, National Endowment for the Humanities, and the National Science Foundation. While many see any response by Forbes to the public pressure as a positive outcome, removing this opinion piece from the web is just as likely to drive its goals behind closed doors than open them up for debate. It would be easy to make extreme comparisons to Winston Smith in Orwell's *1984*, whose job it was to edit the historical record so that it conformed to political propaganda, but another aspect to raise is the question of how digital tools will affect the twenty-first century's formation and codification of knowledge. Our scientific, scholarly, and academic pursuits have been largely built on a process of falsification; we point to a hypothesis, raise evidence against it, and if deemed accurate, discard the old hypothesis. Yet, in an age of digital publication, it would be theoretically possible to simply "update" one's publications (or remove obsolete ones) to reflect newer evidence, but this would break the information chain weaving together scholarship and leave many references in the literature orphaned to inaccurate or nonexistent sources. There are many ways to ensure that doesn't happen, but such concerns also illuminate the importance of writing and print technology to the legacy of scientific achievement. It is one of the reasons our library, and its associated disciplines, is so committed to print. Many of our volumes do not exist on Amazon in digital editions, largely because many e-book formats have not been designed with the academic in mind (try citing a page number in an e-book that repaginates depending on the size of the text!). How all these intertwined questions are addressed over the next seventy-five years will have lasting effects and substantial implications for our shared human endeavor.

ACQUISITIONS

The Research Archives acquired 933 volumes in 372 accession lots of printed materials during the 2017–18 academic year (see table 1); 258 of these accessions came in via purchase, 114 through gifts, and 48 through exchanges.

Table 1. Research Archives Acquisitions July 2016–June 2017

<i>Month</i>	<i>Number of Accession Lots</i>	<i>Monographs, Series, Pamphlets</i>	<i>Journals</i>	<i>Total Volumes</i>
July 2017	28	33	19	52
August 2017	30	42	65	107
September 2017	24	61	19	80
October 2017	20	31	41	72
November 2017	28	40	50	90
December 2017	38	69	7	76
January 2018	38	52	30	82
February 2018	33	42	35	77
March 2018	37	84	13	97
April 2018	39	44	32	76
May 2018	44	62	21	83
June 2018	13	30	11	41
Totals	372	590	343	
Total Volumes				933

Almost one-half of these volumes consisted of additions to serial publications (402 volumes) and nearly one-third contributed to new journal issues (343 volumes). The remainder consisted of monographs (183 volumes) and theses (3 volumes). The average cost of each accessioned invoice was \$250 with an average of four volumes purchased on each invoice, suggesting that the average price per volume purchase was just over \$60. In preservation efforts, 556 volumes were sent for binding with HF Group in April.

ONLINE CATALOG

In 2017–18, the library staff and volunteers worked together to create over 10,000 new records in the library’s catalog within the EMU database platform that powers the Oriental Institute’s Integrated Database. Every volume acquired by the library is analyzed according to its contents and any section that has an attributed independent author is analyzed for our catalog. This includes all conference proceedings, Festschriften, and encyclopedias. In addition to the general bibliographic data captured for standard library purposes, we also catalog abbreviations and abstracts, all of which are searchable through the online catalog (<https://oi-idb.uchicago.edu>). These data are publicly accessible so that users can select and download information in a variety of formats — including comma separated values, CSL JSON, EndNote, and simple text — for use in software applications of their choosing.

Analyzing the individually authored content from newly acquired volumes results in many more database records than overall volumes in the library. The library holds over 66,000 individual volumes, but the database contains over 545,000 individual records. Predictably, articles account for the vast majority of these records (470,000 records), but these records are among the most useful for researchers as they are not typically indexed in other library systems (although articles are indexed on third party platforms such as JSTOR and are more frequently being integrated with library catalogs). With the download feature, users can import such records into their own bibliographies and software applications. These data expand the usefulness and purpose of the tool beyond that of a library catalog. On the one hand, the information provided tells users what is in the library and where to find it — a typical and necessary resource for any catalog. On the other hand, analyzing individual articles and reviews, along with their abstracts, provides a more comprehensive index to ancient Near East studies that empowers efficient, user-driven research.

Table 2. Catalog Records

<i>Year</i>	<i>No. of Catalog Records Added</i>	<i>Total No. of Catalog Records</i>
2017–18	10,000	545,000
2016–17	10,000	535,000
2015–16	15,000	525,000
2014–15	20,000	510,000
2013–14	30,000	490,000
2012–13	40,000	460,000
2011–12	30,000	420,000
2010–11	30,000	390,000
2009–10	40,000	360,000
2008–09	63,000	320,000
2007–08	62,000	257,000
2006–07	28,000	195,000

Table 3. Research Archives Analytics

<i>Type</i>	<i>Total No. of Records</i>
Total Volumes	66,451
Monographs	16,455
Monograph Sections	65,852
Series	1,521
Series Volumes	20,633
Series Volume Sections	89,032
Journals	1,013
Journal Volumes	28,341
Journal Volume Articles	314,765
Thesis	1,022
Pamphlets	2531
Reviews	118,941
Festschriften (Volumes)	608
Digital Invoice Records	1,484
Digital Cover Art Records	7,153
Adobe PDF	24,788

Through Google Analytics, we are now able to examine how users access our catalog information. We hope that over time this analysis will provide insights for how to better develop and improve the tools available to users. Over the course of the year, 42% of users looked at detail views of individual records, 42% conducted new searches, 14% used the revise search function, 1.4% used the search within results tool, 0.56% came to the site from a direct link, and 0.4% used the saved citations function. Currently it is clear that new searches for keywords are by far the most common searches. It is not always possible to tell if users are looking for library materials as popular keyword searches for “Egypt,” “Persepolis,” “Lamassu,” “Megiddo,” “Hammurabi,” and “Book of the Dead” will find results in every department. Keywords searches across all collections represent 30% of all user activity on the site. Queries where users have specified to search only the Research Archives catalog represent roughly 8.6% (8,723 events) of the total searches (101,357 events) for the year (versus 5.5% for the Museum Collection, 4.3% for the Photo Archives, 0.4% for the Museum Archives, and 0.36% for CAMEL). When users restricted their search to the Research Archives, far and away the most common searches were for keywords (3,950 events) and for authors’ names (3,337 events). Some of the most common search terms mimic the general keywords searches, including “Persepolis,” “Bronze Age Collapse,” “Hammurabi,” “Dagger,” “Hittite Warfare,” and “Egypt.” This type of information will provide a welcome and useful foundation to inform future development.

RESOURCES ON THE WEB

The online catalog remains the primary resource for the distribution of information about content related to the study of the ancient Near East. The catalog includes records for various websites and other online resources. The Research Archives maintains a limited set of open access online resources available from its webpage (<https://oi.uchicago.edu/research/research-archives-library>).

Introduction & Guide

https://oi.uchicago.edu/sites/oi.uchicago.edu/files/uploads/shared/docs/research_archives_introduction%26guide.pdf

An updated introduction and guide to the Research Archives contains a brief history, a guide to the Research Archives collection, and instructions for using the online catalog.

Acquisitions Lists

<https://oi.uchicago.edu/research/research-archives-library/acquisitions-lists-research-archives>

The acquisitions reports of the Research Archives are distributed in Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) on a monthly basis. This process has been active and continuative since September 2007.

Annual Reports

<https://oi.uchicago.edu/research/research-archives-library/research-archives-annual-reports>

Annual Reports for the Research Archives are available from 1969–2014.

Oriental Institute Staff Newsletter

<https://oi.uchicago.edu/research/research-archives-library/oriental-institute-staff-newsletter>

From February 1998 until March 2005 an Oriental Institute Staff Newsletter was circulated among faculty, staff, students, and the wider academic community. In the interest of preservation, remaining copies of the newsletter have been scanned and archived online.

Dissertations

<https://oi.uchicago.edu/research/research-archives-library/dissertations>

With the permission of the authors, the Research Archives provides access to Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) copies of dissertations completed in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations of the University of Chicago.

Dissertation Proposals

<https://oi.uchicago.edu/research/research-archives-library/dissertations/dissertation-proposals>

With the permission of the authors, the Research Archives provides access to Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) copies of dissertation proposals completed in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations of the University of Chicago.

Adopt-a-Book Campaign

<https://oi.uchicago.edu/research/research-archives-library/adopt-book-campaign>

The Research Archives has launched an “Adopt-a-Book” campaign in order to increase support for the Research Archives. Donors are recognized through personalized book plates made in their honor and placed in volumes of their choosing.

Social Media Sites

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Research-Archives-of-the-Oriental-Institute/153645450792>

The Research Archives now maintains an official page on Facebook. Information about recent publications of Oriental Institute scholars or reviews of recent Oriental Institute publications is distributed through this page. Currently, 3,315 individuals follow the Research Archives through this presence on Facebook.

DONATIONS

As discussed in the section on acquisitions above, the Research Archives had 114 donations to the library last year. This represents a significant portion of the overall total acquisition efforts. Donations allow us to fill important gaps in our collection, acquire duplicates of well-used volumes, and replace aging or damaged volumes. Many of these donations derive from volumes provided to the Oriental Institute by publishers who have requested to use an image in a book from the Institute’s collection. By policy, these publishers are required to provide a copy of the book to the library. Another important corpus of volumes is received from the Journal of Near Eastern Studies each year, through both exchanges and books submitted for review. In addition to these sources, the Research Archives would like to thank the following individuals for their support and donations to the library: Andrew Dolan, Gretel Braidwood, Cécilia Fluck, Nadine Goebel and the Max Planck Institute for European Legal History, John Holland, Carolyn Livingood, Malcolm Mosher Jr., Seth Richardson, Roberta Schaffner, Kate Sheppard, Olga Vassilieva, Bernice Williams and the late Ted Castle, and Bruce Williams.

VISITORS

The Research Archives had an ID card reader installed and activated on the front doors of the library in October 2017. Patrons must scan a University of Chicago ID card to unlock the library doors during all business hours. All University of Chicago ID card holders can enter during all regular

hours, ensuring that we maintain an open door policy to everyone in the university community. For outside visitors, temporary ID cards can be checked out from the front desk in the Oriental Institute lobby by prearranging their visit with the Head of the Research Archives. This allows us to more closely monitor the security and access to the library. However, since the system records each time an ID card is scanned, we have a record of the number of visitors to the Research Archives

for the first time in recent history. In randomly reviewing the number of entrances over a week in May 2017, we found a surprising number of patrons in the library. As individual patrons scan to enter the library, we've found roughly 200 scans per day belonging to between 97 and 201 unique patrons per day and a total of nearly 300 unique patrons over the course of the week. This is an unexpectedly high number for such a focused research library, even if this represents an end of the quarter peak just a few weeks prior to exams.

Many visiting researchers, members, and friends of the Research Archives visited over the course of academic year 2017–18. These include (in alphabetical order): Ellen Alexander, Haidar Al-Qarghali, Kimberly Beasley, José Carlos Castañeda-Reyes, Elizabeth Cummins, Marcin Czarnowicz, Howard Farber, Rozanne Klinzing, Andrea Middleton, Justin Mansfield, Larry Pahl, Marina Pucci, Saba Syed Razvi, Don Skoog, Martin Andreas Stadler, Laura Steward, Antoinette Swart, Rodrigo Ulloa, Michael Vandewerken, and Michael Watson. In addition to these individuals, the Research Archives also hosted tours for a delegation of the State Department and ten Iraqi archaeologists in July, the International Congress of Hittitologists in August, the Northwestern University workshop on Arabic manuscripts in August, a group from the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, the International Committee for Egyptology in September, the James Henry Breasted Society in December, the Great Chicago Libraries class from Elmhurst College in January, the prospective students of the University of Chicago in March, a group of Amherst alumni and David Wilson (grandson of John Wilson), and a special volunteers group in May. Several film interviews were conducted for the University of Chicago in the library's reading room, including one for Hazin Avdal in April. Each quarter, the library served as a location for proctoring comprehensive exams in the NELC department and Robert Ritner held a Ptolemaic Hieroglyphs class in our Gregory Areshian Collection space. My apologies to anyone who may have been missed.

Table 4. Library Patrons in May 2018

5/21/2018 → 202 ID Scans = 97 Unique Patrons
5/18/2018 → 176 ID Scans = 75 Unique Patrons
5/17/2018 → 199 ID Scans = 103 Unique Patrons
5/16/2018 → 215 ID Scans = 100 Unique Patrons
5/15/2018 → 212 ID Scans = 201 Unique Patrons
Total: 287 Unique Patrons

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

The library has continued to host a robust volunteer contingent, fluctuating between one- to two-dozen individuals at any given time, constituting roughly 25% of all volunteers in the Oriental Institute. Volunteers have transformed the Research Archives by providing the necessary manpower to expand our capabilities and extend our services. In addition to cataloging library materials, Research Archives volunteers are in the midst of massive digitization projects such as scanning and transcribing cards for the Museum Archives, scanning and transcribing cards from the Archaeological Corpus Project, adding references to objects in the museum collection, and much more. Given the library's budgetary constraints, it would be absolutely impossible to duplicate the scale of the work that they do. This work is not abstract; each week thousands of new records become available on the Search Our Collections website. These new records allow for researchers to access information never before

publicly available, most of which was completely unknown prior to its online publication. They are owed far more than the meager thanks offered in this annual report. I hope they receive the same fulfillment of a job well done and the camaraderie of being “in the trenches” during their volunteer stays as I do from their presence in the office. Many thanks to Ray Broms, Betty Bush, Gaby Cohen, Kim Crawford, Meg Forajter, Irene Glasner, Elizabeth Green, Bettina Hammer, Kat Jarboe, Alex Jimer-son, Emily Kane, Polina Kasian, Kristin Leasia, Zoe Ma, Jacqueline Mendoza, Marge Nichols, Randy O’Neill, Olivia Puccetti, Roberta Schaffner, Sharon Shapiro, Gabriele Correa da Silva, George Thomson, Annie Zhu, and Amy Zillman.

STAFF ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Over the last year, there have been major changes in the staff who help run the Research Archives. After ten years in the office, Laura Krenz ended her tenure in the library when she became a mother to baby boy Oskar in May 2018. I’m sure our patrons will miss Laura’s presence around the library as much as I will. She was one of the first employees hired when I took over the library in fall 2007 and she was a consistent face in our office for a decade. We wish her and her new family all the best. Sasha Rohret left us this summer after two years assisting in the library. Rebecca Wang, Sunwoo Lee, Amy Zillman, and newest recruit Emilie Sarrazin will be taking up the slack in their stead and helping me keep the Research Archives the efficient and well-oiled machine it has become. Considering that most days of the week patrons can access the library at 7:00 am, our services are now available for fifty-four hours each week. This schedule would be impossible without the help of the library staff and I thank them for their collaboration, good cheer, and dedication. I have been extremely lucky to have such quality staff members.
