

MUSEUM

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The staff of the Oriental Institute Museum had a productive year of activity focused on completing the Gallery Enhancements Project (GEP). While beyond the scope of this Annual Report, the GEP was completed on schedule, and special viewings for the reinstalled galleries were offered at the OI Centennial Gala and at a subsequent public open house, both in September 2019. Because of the GEP, activities including special exhibitions, object loans, and research visits were reduced in fiscal year 2018–19.

The GEP was initiated in 2014 and was made possible through the generosity of an anonymous donor and additional funding. The majority of some fifty-five new cases manufactured by Helmut Guenschel, Inc., based in Baltimore, were delivered and installed this past fiscal year. In this final year of the GEP, we also continued to work with our same outside exhibition design team of Elizabeth Kidera (Museum Exhibit Design and Architecture) as exhibition designer, Franck Mercurio (Mercurio-Exhibits) as exhibition developer, and Lori Walsh (Walsh Graphic Design) as senior graphic designer. Many thanks to them as well as to the entire museum staff. Not only did the museum staff give up their summer work hours in order to finish the GEP on schedule, but their professionalism, hard work, and drive made the final months a wonderful experience. Their efforts were very much appreciated! Finally, thank you to the many members of the OI community who have shared their enthusiasm for the GEP with us and also shared their expertise in order to improve the displays.

MUSEUM ATTENDANCE

The total number of visitors to the museum in the past fiscal year (July 1, 2018–June 30, 2019) was 46,995. The overall decline in the number of visitors for the period in which the Gallery Enhancements Project was being realized is likely a reflection of necessary gallery closings. Many thanks to Vick Cruz, director of visitor services and security, for recording our visitor statistics.

CONSERVATION

Conservation's responsibilities in support of the Gallery Enhancements Project continued throughout the year. From conservation assessments to material identifications, the Conservation staff was kept busy. Conservation treatments continued to be performed throughout this time (fig. 1). Priority was given to those objects requiring treatment in order to be placed back on exhibit. In the case of objects coming out of storage for the first time (or after a long absence from the galleries), some type of treatment was often needed before going on exhibit. One of the more familiar objects in the galleries, Petosiris's coffin, was probably the most high-profile patient in the lab this year. After years of triage (urgent care) on the areas most at risk on the coffin's painted surface, the coffin was finally able to undergo a more extensive conservation treatment. While the coffin base was on exhibit continuously, the lid had been removed from display over ten years earlier due to structural concerns. Both the coffin lid and bottom section spent several weeks in the lab, undergoing extensive cleaning and



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Figure 1. Assistant conservator, Stephanie Black, cleaning and stabilizing an Eighteenth Dynasty Egyptian basket (E2106) from the foundation deposit of Queen Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahri on the West Bank in Thebes. Figure 2. Associate conservator, Alison Whyte, preparing the base of Petosiris's coffin (E267B) for turning on its face to access the back surface. This process occurred after consolidation of the painted surface and structural stabilization of the wooden sections. Figure 3. Conservation pre-program intern, Mackenzie Fairchild, working on the conservation of a baked clay kernos (A28709–A28714) from Mesopotamia.

stabilization of the painted surface and the structural components of the coffin sections (fig. 2). The coffin is now back on exhibit in the Joseph and Mary Grimshaw Egyptian Gallery, both the lid and base once again exhibited in the proper orientation surrounding the mummified remains of Petosiris.

While priority was given to Gallery Enhancement activities, time was spent on other projects. What follows are some of the highlights of the year. In September, D'Alessandro attended the International Institute for Conservation's conference on Prevent Conservation: The State of the Art, held in Turin, Italy. The topics ranged from latest advances in environmental guidelines for museums and state-of-the-art display cases for mummified remains to scientific advances in techniques for studying cultural heritage. It was an opportune time to meet new colleagues and reconnect with former colleagues from the international conservation community.

In October, the packing of the first shipment of Persepolis Fortification tablets began. With a devoted and dedicated team of volunteers—Sue Padula, Kate Leiber, Stephen Scott, and Jeremy Walter—the packing of the nearly two thousand tablets commenced. By the spring, their scrupulous attention to detail and hard work paid off in the tablets being ready for transport right on time. It was very rewarding to see the excellent condition of the tablets in Tehran as the boxes were opened in the presence of our Iranian colleagues later that year.

In November, we were introduced to the Materials Research Science and Engineering Center (MRSEC) here at the University of Chicago. With the kind encouragement of Dr. Heinrich Jaeger of the Department of Physics, Justin Jureller, the facility manager, provided a tour of their facility and offered staff the potential for training on a variety of equipment. This access will potentially allow us to identify organic materials, such as binding media in pigments and organic residues in ceramics. In this same spirit of collaboration, Justin arranged for us to have two objects X-rayed—a ceramic

rattle and a copper alloy “clamshell” container, slated for display in the newly reinstalled Edgar and Deborah Jannotta Mesopotamian Gallery. The resulting images, provided by Kieran Murphy, the operator of the X-ray machine, showed clear evidence of the contents of the two objects. While not specifically identifying the actual material inside the two objects, the shape and densities visible in the images allowed inferences to be drawn. This information was incorporated into the text copy for the display case labels. We look forward to a close collaboration with the center in the coming year and the opportunity to expand the analytical capabilities of the Conservation laboratory.

In January, Stephanie Black, assistant conservator, attended a three-day workshop, sponsored by the American Institute for Conservation, that provided both theoretical and practical training in the identification of wood samples of any species, including proper sampling techniques.

Also in January, Alison Whyte, associate conservator, was invited to give a presentation on the Gallery Enhancement Project at Elks Memorial to the Chicago Area Conservation Group. Alison’s presentation was part of a larger program where conservation colleagues from the Art Institute and the Field Museum also gave updates on their institution’s current projects.

That same month, Mackenzie Fairchild joined the lab as a pre-program conservation intern (fig. 3). Mackenzie was working on her conservation graduate school admission requirements, one of which is several hundred hours of practical experience in a variety of conservation laboratories. Mackenzie came to the OI after graduating from an undergraduate program in art conservation and restoration and had already completed many hours of conservation treatments at a variety of conservation studios in the city and abroad. After seven months at the OI, Mackenzie accepted an internship at the Field Museum.

In February, the conservation staff presented a workshop for the Material Science of Art course (Suzanne Deal Booth Conservation Seminar). We demonstrated several analytical techniques to the students, including the use of ultraviolet imaging and the theory behind portable X-ray fluorescence, as well as examples of conservation research and treatment issues.

April was a busy month. Whyte and Black attended a one-day workshop on the theory of photogrammetry taught by J. P. Brown, senior conservator at the Field Museum. Photogrammetry allows for the creation of 3-D data from 2-D images. It is a less expensive alternative to 3-D laser imaging and is used in many cultural heritage applications. We hope going forward that this will be another skill set added to the conservation lab’s repertoire.

Also in April, the Louvre borrowed seven objects from the OI from the site of Tell Tayinat in Turkey for inclusion in their exhibition *The Forgotten Kingdoms, Heirs of the Hittite Empire*. While the

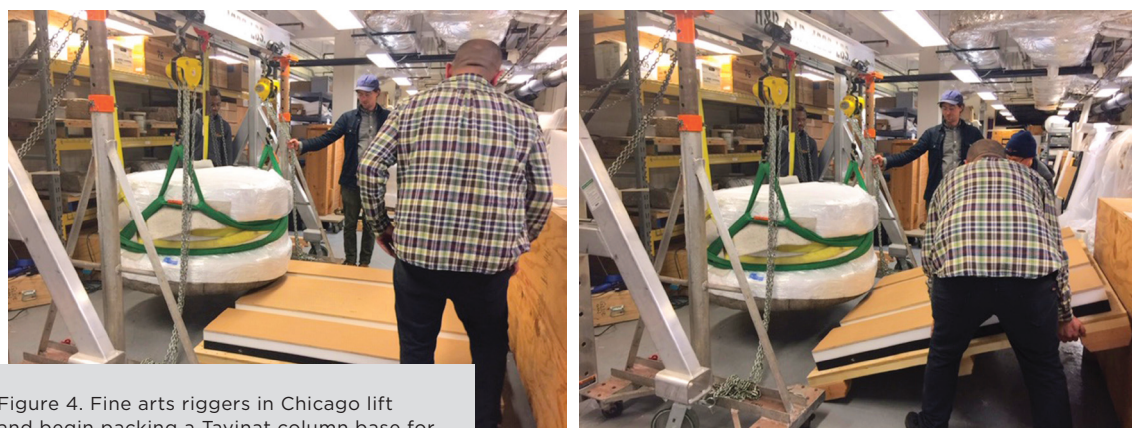


Figure 4. Fine arts riggers in Chicago lift and begin packing a Tayinat column base for transport to the Louvre, April 2019.

total number of objects requested was modest, the total weight of the loan was not. The loan translated to over 15,000 lbs. of artifacts, including two 4,000 lb. column bases. The sheer weight of the stone objects (all carved from basalt) made it one of the more interesting loans in recent history. Just getting the objects crated and ready for transport required a fine arts rigging company, both here in Chicago (fig. 4) and at the Louvre in Paris. While in Paris, the curator of the exhibit learned that one of the column bases was actually upside down and requested that the column base be flipped for exhibition. The French fine arts riggers happily complied (fig. 5). Conservators D'Alessandro and Whyte served as couriers for the loan. On the outbound trip, D'Alessandro's trip coincided with the horrific fire at Notre Dame, an experience that will never be forgotten.

The highest profile activity that Conservation was involved in this year was the return of the Persepolis Lion and Bull to Chicago. Planning for the return of the



Figure 5. Fine arts riggers at the Louvre in Paris turning over one of the OI column bases for the exhibition *The Forgotten Kingdoms, Heirs of the Hittite Empire*.

sculpture began nearly a year before the sculpture departed its temporary home in Boston, where it was on long-term loan to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. After a preliminary visit in November to assess the condition of the sculpture, D'Alessandro conferred with colleagues at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts over the course of several months to finalize the shipping arrangements. It is not possible to overstate how collegial and helpful our colleagues in Boston were throughout the entire process. In preparation for the arrival of the nearly 4,000 lb. sculpture, a study was carried out by the engineering firm of WJE Associates to determine whether or not the floor load of the Persian Gallery would be sufficient to support the added weight. WJE determined that additional support would be required to safely support the sculpture in its planned location in the gallery. During the summer, the support was constructed in the basement underneath the location for the new display on the first floor of the museum. Under Conservation's supervision, the sculpture was packed in Boston, shipped to Chicago, and finally installed with much fanfare in the galleries. We were all very relieved that the entire process proceeded without a hitch and the sculpture withstood the rigors of the trip unharmed. It now looks very much at home in its pride of place in the Robert and Deborah Aliber Persian Gallery.

REGISTRATION

This year most of Museum Registration's time has been taken up by the Gallery Enhancement Project activities (GEP). Over 10,500 object movements took place in relation to the GEP; this included over a thousand new objects that came out for exhibit consideration. Other GEP related object

moves involved over seventy pots drawn by Shannon Martino for new display case labels and some three hundred objects for 3-D scanning as part of the development of Ann Hamilton's art installation at the Mansueto Library. We have continued to take the opportunity to photograph objects while they were off display, so that images of them can be added to the Integrated Database (IDB).

The New Exhibition Objects Module

Over the past year we've continued testing the Exhibition Objects module. In June 2019, we went live with the new module and it is now ready to be incorporated into our exhibit workflow.

Photo Permissions

From July 2018 through June 2019, we processed 199 image requests. This includes requests for existing images as well as requests for new photography. During the past year the Photographic Archives assistant position was filled by Jacob Smith and Emily Kane.

Loans Outgoing

In the autumn, tablet A7821 was loaned to the Yale Babylonian collection for the *Ancient Mesopotamia Speaks* exhibit. The Horus falcon that is usually on display in the Egyptian Gallery (E10504) was lent to the Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts on campus for the Atlas Unlimited art installation during the winter term. In spring 2019 a few basalt objects from Tell Tayinat went out on loan to the Louvre Museum (Paris) for the *Royaumes Oubliés/ Forgotten Realms* exhibit. These included two large column bases (A27858, A27860), a camel head (A60936), and a duck weight (A27852) from storage, as well as one of the small reliefs of an Assyrian soldier (A27856), a block with lion's head (A27857),





by Professor Tristan Carter of McMaster University (Canada) and a long-term study loan of flint tools from the Braidwood excavations at Warwasi returned from the Penn Museum.

Acquisitions

The registrar went to Utah in March to assist Conservator Stephanie Black to pack the Blosser donation of ceramics, metal objects, and coins.

Requests

In total, the Registration Department has responded to 125 different requests this year involving 11,250 different objects and generating over 25,000 object movements. Apart from the requests relating to the GEP already mentioned, other requests included research (532 objects), class use (90 objects), and photography by both staff and researchers (over 500 objects).

(In addition, the tablet collection has generated some 77 request records, most for scanning or storage evaluation [over 400 tablets for storage evaluation, 130 for pXRF analysis, 86 for class use, and 229 for research, a total of 1,776 object movements]. While the tablet curator's assistants moved the objects in question, the registrars made the location changes in the IDB.)



and a block with Luwian inscription (A23427) from display. A relief from Persepolis (A73100) that had been on loan at the MFA Boston for over eighty years returned to us in May and is now installed in the Persian Gallery. The weight of this object necessitated the construction of a floor support down in the basement. While this was being put in, four storage cabinets had to be emptied and moved elsewhere. Three of them have now been moved back; the fourth has moved permanently to another storage location. An analysis loan of obsidian from the Amuq sites was returned

Visiting Researchers

While the focus was on the gallery renovation it was necessary to restrict the number of visiting researchers, so there were only a couple of short visits this year. David Lightbody and Brain Alms came to study a stone vessel with carved falcon (E13947) in July 2018. Martina Rugiardi looked at sherds from

the site of Rayy in February. We did, however, give priority to the Collections Research Grant (CRG) 2018–19 recipients as follows: Serenella Mancini visited in January/February to study and analyze ceramics from Istakhr (Iran) and, while visiting to study the Persepolis archive for her CRG on the waterscapes of ancient Persia, Marie-Laure Chambrade also took the opportunity to examine a small collection of sherds from Pasargadae (February).

Classes and Special Events

Professor Donald Whitcomb used a selection of sherds from Jundi Shapur (Iran) and Beth Yerah/ Khirbet Kerak (Israel) for an Islamic ceramics class in October. He also used some sherds from Fustat for a class in April. A variety of manuscripts, book bindings, tablets, and tablet casts were used by Foy Scalf for manuscript classes in October and November. A similar selection was also made available for a Dominican University evening class taught by Foy in February. Stelae were made available to students in the Middle Egyptian class taught by Brian Muhs as follows: stela E16958 for study by Tara Olson and E16953 for Emily Thibreau. The Hadrian papyrus (E8349) and an Islamic writing board (E49447) were displayed in a Breasted Society event in June. In the same month, Brian Muhs also used the Hadrian papyrus for a gallery talk. Colleagues Helen Gries, from the Vorderasiatisches Museum (Berlin), and Ariane Thomas, of the Louvre Museum, visited to look at Khorsabad glazed bricks in May, while in Chicago to attend a curatorial workshop hosted by Northwestern University and the Oriental Institute.

Oriental Institute Faculty, Staff, Researchers, and Students

Bruce Williams and Lisa Hiedorn have continued to access the pottery from Serra and Dorginarti for their respective volumes in preparation. Karen Wilson continued with checking certain Nippur objects as the OIP volume on the Inanna Temple nears completion. In February Tasha Vorderstrasse studied coins from Carthage for a paper given at the Seventh Century Numismatic Round Table in Worcester (UK) in April 2019. Doug Inglis came in to take photos of some fifty objects selected by Tasha Vorderstrasse; this relates to a grant obtained by Carol Ng. The photos will be used to create 3-D images of objects for STEAM



teacher resources that will appear on the OI website. In the spring, Michael Johnson photographed nearly 250 objects and sherds from Tell al-Judaidah (Amuq, Turkey) for the Judaidah database in OCHRE.

And during the academic year we have had the assistance of work study student Maja Sunleaf. She has been taking record shots of objects while they were off display for the GEP and started to add them to the IDB.

EXHIBITION DESIGN AND PRODUCTION

2019 has been a momentous year for Exhibition Design and Production, formerly known as the Prep Shop. The successful completion of the Gallery Enhancements Project, which saw the complete re-design and reinstallation of the entire museum, was a massive undertaking that has resulted in a beautiful museum that will remain engaging for years to come. In addition to this enormous project, we also built and installed the temporary centennial exhibition, *The OI at 100*. Together, these projects necessitated bringing on four additional preparators and three mount makers, and we truly couldn't have done it without them. So we would be remiss if we failed to thank preparators Kathleen Cescon, Erin Bliss, Olivia Gallo, and Claire Ritchie, who all contributed to these massive projects. Our mount makers, Andy Talley of Talley and Talley Mount making, Judy Radovsky of Fulcrum Mountmaking and Exhibitions, and Earl Locke, all made it possible for us to reinstall nearly every single object in the museum. Finally, I would like to particularly thank our manager of exhibition design and production, Josh Tulisaiak. Without his long hours, and in particular his graphic design knowledge and skills, none of this would have come together. It has been a pleasure to work with all of these people, which given the scale of this project, is a testament to their care and professionalism. Thank you all!



MUSEUM ARCHIVES

2018–19 was filled with a variety of projects, researchers, and events for the Museum Archives. Great strides were made in the way of access and research, as well as contributions to the OI centennial. The Museum Archives contributed images to variety of projects, curated an exhibit for the Special Collections and Research Center at the Regenstein Library, and continued to catalog the archive in order to make it more accessible to researchers at home and abroad.

Access

Students and volunteers tirelessly cataloged the Museum Archive's collections this year, in particular the Oriental Institute's Directors Correspondence. We are nearing 70 percent completion on this project, which means that over seven thousand folder-level records have been cataloged since the beginning of 2019. This also means greater access to a correspondence collection that begins in the 1890s and continues until the present day. It is one of the collections that is most widely used by research and scholarly communities. This is a huge boost in transparency for the archives since this information was not previously accessible to the public.

The Museum Archives has also provided the Research Archives access to negative cards and expedition records for digitization. The generosity and resources of the Research Archives continue to make records available to researchers online.

New Research/Visitors

The Museum Archives hosted visitors from all over the globe this past year. Researchers and requests came from a variety of institutions including the Louvre, the University of Lyon, Bryn Mawr, the





Institute of Science and Technology, the Metropolitan Museum, the New York District Attorney's Office, and the University of Sydney, as well as the Chicago area.

Collections that were most requested this year included the Papers of Robert and Linda Braidwood, the Papers of Benno Landsberger, records of the Directors Correspondence, records of the Diyala Expeditions, James Henry Breasted Papers, records of Jarmo, records of Medinet Habu, records of Megiddo, records of Persepolis, and records of the Oriental Institute's Negative Collection.

Projects

The Cultural Heritage Experiment (CHE) was started in the fall of 2018. This is an archival object-lending program that loans out pieces of the OI Museum Archives to undergraduates for the academic year. 2018–19 was our first year, and it was a huge success! Almost a hundred students participated in the lending program while also taking part in associated programming throughout the year. All objects were returned at the end of spring quarter, and a successful 2019–20 season of the project has begun. The CHE was so well received that the Johns Hopkins University Archives is starting a Cultural Heritage Experiment in the spring of 2020.

The centennial year also brought with it many tasks for the Museum Archives including the curation of the exhibit *Discovery, Collection, Memory: The Oriental Institute at 100* at the Special Collections and Research Center at the University Library and the contribution of images and text to the centennial volume, *Discovering New Pasts: The OI at 100*. The Museum Archives also supported the special exhibit at the OI.

Additionally, the Museum Archives has been involved in a variety of outreach efforts in order to reach the campus community and beyond. Archival materials are regularly supplied for tours, exhibits, undergraduate and graduate classes, and volunteer training.

Acknowledgments

Special thanks goes to Foy Scalf and the Research Archives for teaming up to work on digitization projects like the negative cards and IMLS grant requirements, as well as IDB support and regular archival advice. Thank you to everyone who assists in evaluating archival materials including Helen MacDonald and Susan Allison. Special thanks to Josh Tulisak for all of his help with the CHE promotional materials. Thank you to Knut Boehmer for his ability to walk into a room and fix all technical issues. Thank you to Jean Evans for her support of archival projects at home and abroad. And last, but never least, thank you to students and volunteers who do so much on a daily basis, especially Jeff Cumonow, Fan Ge, Olivia Perozo, and Mike Ramberg.

SUQ

Denise Browning's goal for the Suq this year has been to adapt the downsizing of the Suq to make way for the new lobby design. We were tasked with removing the bookcases, jewelry case, children's book turnaround, poster display, and the new book display table, while finding creative ways to display all of these items within the walls of the Suq. We met our deadline and created nice, new textile-covered shelving in the store for the jewelry.

We are very fortunate to have added two new docents this year. We welcomed Merle Cherney and Amber Patania, who have been great assets to the store. Ray Broms celebrated his tenth anniversary with the Suq this year! Our other docents, Alice Mulberry, Louis Despres, and Ann Schumacher, along with Ray, add their many talents to the Suq, to educate and give the best service to our customers. Extra thanks to Norma van der Muelen, who designs our wonderful jewelry for the Suq and who celebrated her fortieth year with the Suq this year!