

RESEARCH ARCHIVES

FOY SCALF

Many innovations came to the Research Archives library this year. Along with changes in faculty and staff, the change of our institution's name to Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures (ISAC), announced in April, made one of the most significant impacts. As part of this new identity, ISAC's manager of exhibition design and production, Josh Tulisaiak, updated signage throughout the library, including the exterior welcome, interior orientation, and staff office signs (fig. 1). The graphic display at the back of the reading room, which for the past four years has highlighted the Archaeological Corpus Project, is being redesigned to give an overview of the history of the library. The new display will be revealed during the 2023–24 academic year. Additional outcomes of the name change include some reorganization of the institute's publications within the library—moving the Nubian Expedition series from S/OINE to S/NE and the postdoctoral seminars series from S/OIS to S/ISACS—as well as the development of new reports for departments throughout the building.

Much-needed improvements were made this year to the overall safety and security of the library, our patrons, and our collections. High-resolution security cameras were installed on both levels of the library



Figure 1. New signage for the Research Archives library: exterior welcome sign (left) and interior orientation sign (right). Design and layout by Josh Tulisaiak.

with clear views of the entrance, exit, stairwell, reading room, and hallways. With the cameras, ISAC security personnel can monitor the library at all hours and have access to archived security footage. These security cameras have already proven useful: a lamp stolen from the library's reading room was returned after the thief was identified and reported to the dean of students.

Complete collection monitoring is also now possible after the installation of radio frequency identification (RFID) security systems. RFID tags inserted into our books are monitored by a set of security gates in the hallway outside the library's entrance. Every volume will be tracked as it moves in and out of the library. The RFID tags are passive, requiring no power; they are activated when they come within range of the radio signal of the security gates or RFID workstation. Each tag is programmed with an identification (ID) number tying it to our database records for the book. As a book with a tag passes through the security gates, it triggers an alarm. Library staff are notified through security software developed by Bibliotheca, a leading company in library security infrastructure. We are currently in the process of adding RFID tags to all 75,000 volumes in the collection. It is essential to acknowledge the support from Theo van den Hout and Brendan Bulger in allocating the funds to proceed with these important improvements.

There is an ongoing effort to update our EMu collection management client software commensurate with an upgrade of our EMu servers to a 64-bit environment. This update will require a jump from EMu version 5 to version 9. This year we were able to update from Ubuntu 18 to Red Hat 7 in preparation for a larger upgrade. We are currently waiting for Axiell software engineers to finish accommodating our many customizations by installing EMu version 9 on a new server running Ubuntu 22. This change will finally bring our EMu system into the 64-bit world; however, the change will affect users, as the client software update includes a complete redesign of the graphic user interface. Training and testing will occur in the winter and spring of the 2023–24 academic year.

PATRONS AND USAGE

In 2022–23, the library ID card reader recorded more than 32,000 transactions representing 2,625 unique patrons who visited the library in person and swiped an ID card to enter. Of course, most visitors were from the University of Chicago campus community. However, increasing pressure on quiet study spaces across campus has resulted in a dramatic rise in the number of visiting students from all university departments; the patron population of the Research Archives library is increasing—and increasing fast. Of the 2,625 patrons who visited this year, members of the student body represented well over 2,300. Many such students are primarily seeking a place to study and concentrate. As predictable, the principal use of our collections remains in the hands of our power users—the more than 200 faculty, staff, students, and visiting researchers from around the globe who come to take advantage of our comprehensive collection of research materials as well as the efficiency of our organizational structure and classification system.

Over the course of the academic year, more than 100 volumes circulated to offices throughout the ISAC building for the research needs of students, faculty, staff, and visiting scholars. These publications ranged in date from 1912 to 2022, reflecting the importance of access to reference data both new and old.

This year we had the pleasure of hosting many visiting researchers, including Imane Achouche, Ashley Arico, Emily Cole, Ashley Demma, Peter Dorman, Jorke Grotenuis, Don Hamerly, Gilad Itach, Elise MacArthur, Andy Moore, Janina Mueller, Megan Sands, James Schwinn, Wayne Sedlak, Dale Simpson, Julius Tabin, Steve Vinson, Milton Wakschlag, and Stephania Walters. Following the suspension of Elmhurst University's Great Libraries of Chicago honors course during the pandemic, students from Elmhurst, along with their professors Carolyn Cielsa and Elaine Page, renewed their annual visit to the Research Archives. Luke Joyner and his students likewise incorporated a visit to our facilities in their Architecture of the Public Library course for the University of Chicago. And the University Communications team used our library's Elizabeth Morse Genius reading room for several video production events and photo shoots. As in years

past, we also offered orientation tours for prospective students and incoming graduate students. In September 2022, we participated in ISAC's hosting of Axiell's 2022 North American User Conference.

ACQUISITIONS

The Research Archives library had an extremely productive acquisition effort in 2022–23 (table 1). A total of 1,315 volumes were acquired for the library in 366 accession lots—more than one accession lot every day of the year; 270 accession lots arrived through purchases, 72 through gifts, and 24 through exchanges of the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* with other publishers and institutions. For the 270 accession lot purchases, the Research Archives library expended more than \$53,000, plus over \$4,500 in shipping costs. As recognized in last year's report, we would not be able to reflect such growth without the continued support of the library's budget and infrastructure. To that end, we gratefully acknowledge the generous increase to the library's budget established by former ISAC director Christopher Woods and implemented by interim director Theo van den Hout and associate director of administration and finance Brendan Bulger. Our entire community owes them a debt of gratitude for recognizing the Research Archives as the heart of ISAC. We have also been able to supplement our budget through collaboration with Denise Browning, who sells the library's duplicate volumes in the ISAC Museum Shop (formerly the Suq).

Table 1. Research Archives acquisitions, July 2022–June 2023

Month	Number of accession lots	Volumes		
		Monographs, series, pamphlets	Journals	Total
July 2022	37	79	26	105
August 2022	43	91	22	113
September 2022	14	84	62	146
October 2022	35	69	20	89
November 2022	37	80	16	96
December 2022	28	61	30	91
January 2023	46	65	77	142
February 2023	28	42	28	70
March 2023	37	50	101	151
April 2023	15	53	56	109
May 2023	19	66	40	106
June 2023	27	84	13	97
Totals:	366	824	491	1,315

ONLINE CATALOG

Research Archives staff added approximately 12,500 new records to the library's catalog in the EMu collection management system this year (table 2; numbers are rounded up to the nearest hundred). This number represents a 50 percent increase over the previous year. Thanks and gratitude for entering this data into

Table 2. Catalog records added

Year	No. of catalog records added	Total no. of catalog records
2022–23	12,500	590,000
2021–22	7,500	577,500
2020–21	5,000	570,000
2019–20	10,000	565,000
2018–19	10,000	555,000
2017–18	10,000	545,000

the institutional digital repository through Axiell’s EMu software are due almost entirely to the staff and volunteers of the Research Archives library (see Acknowledgments below). Records are available online for searching, sorting, and downloading in a variety of formats (<https://isac-idb.uchicago.edu>).

Within the next two years, the Research Archives library will reach 75,000 total volumes (table 3) and more than 600,000 catalog records—nearly double the 40,000 volumes in the library (with 400,000 catalog cards) in 1969 prior to the founding of the Research Archives. Catalog records with links pointing to online content continued to grow, reaching 133,888 records. In addition to requiring labor to enter these links, they need to be maintained because websites often change the structure of their URL addresses, requiring updates to the records in our catalog. When digital object identifiers (DOIs) are available, we include them

Table 3. Research Archives analytics

Type	Total no. of records
Total volumes	72,124
Monographs	17,760
Monograph sections	76,588
Series	2,002
Series volumes	23,119
Series volume sections	106,211
Journals	1,058
Journal volumes	30,170
Journal volume articles	331,031
Theses	1,075
Pamphlets	3058
Reviews	124,658
Festschriften (volumes)	774
Digital invoice records	2,780
Digital cover-art records	16,712
Adobe PDFs	42,157

in our metadata to help ensure the long-term viability of links in the catalog, and we encourage publishers of online content to employ a registered permalink or DOI system for sustainable access to these online materials. Many of our records include multiple links: one directly to publishers' online options and others directing users to aggregator databases such as JSTOR. A continuing desideratum is to incorporate links in the catalog to general online resources, such as online dictionaries, grammars, text editions, websites, blogs, and other relevant media.

The online collections search (<https://isac-idb.uchicago.edu>) that encompasses the catalog of the Research Archives library had over 21,000 users conduct more than 36,000 sessions, with an average session duration of nearly five minutes. Analytics recorded 82,509 total events, of which 68,279 were unique; events include new searches (41,601), viewing details of a record (31,397), revising a search (7,622), searching within results (979), and access via a direct link (907). The most popular events included viewing records for the *lamassu* (ISACM A7369), the record for volume 1 of James P. Allen's edition of the Pyramid Texts, and a cylinder seal depicting Ishtar (ISACM A27903).

DONATIONS

The Research Archives continues to benefit greatly from generous donations of both funds and books. Over the past three years, we have been working to assess thousands of volumes donated from major academic libraries such as those of Miguel Civil, Stephen Cole, Eugene Cruz-Uribe, McGuire Gibson, Janet Johnson, Shelley Luppert-Barnard, and Don Whitcomb. This year we received the office library of Fred Donner, which will help tremendously in filling long-standing gaps in our Islamic materials. We would like to thank the following for their thoughtful gifts (in alphabetical order): Susan Allison, Alex and Tigran Areshian, Bob Biggs, Denise Browning, Ling Chan, Catherine Chou, the estate of Miguel Civil, Bill Cospes, Stacy Davidson, Fred Donner, Gertrud Farber, Walter Farber, Anne Flannery, Gita Ghei, McGuire Gibson, James Holland, the ISAC Museum image permissions staff, the ISAC Museum Shop, ISAC Publications, the ISAC volunteers' library, Kim Masters, Marilyn Murray, Donna Panzica, Miller Prosser, Martha Roth, Kavin Sampson, Mehrnoush Soroush, Emily Teeter, Theo van den Hout, Bruce Williams, and the estate of Carole Yoshida.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Over the years, the Research Archives library has been extremely blessed with amazing teams of dedicated staff and volunteer members. Without their hard work, collaboration, and help, the library would not be able to fulfill its incredibly high expectations. We have had an exceptional staff this year, and I would like to thank Amy Zillman, Tanya Olson, Courtney Doner, Christian Borgen, and Marta Díaz-Herrera for being such an amazing team. Any patrons who have interacted with them know well how crucial and helpful they are.

I would also like to thank our steadfast volunteers, who, despite the interruption that COVID-19 posed, continued to help us digitize, organize, clean, and enter our data. What we can offer would suffer tremendously without them. Many thanks to Betty Bush, Jane Clinkert-White, Kym Crawford, Claire Mokrauer-Madden, Cliff Peterson, Hilarie Pozesky, Jeremy Walker, and Eric Whitacre for their many efforts over the year.