“THE SCHEME OF THE GREAT BOOKSHELVES”

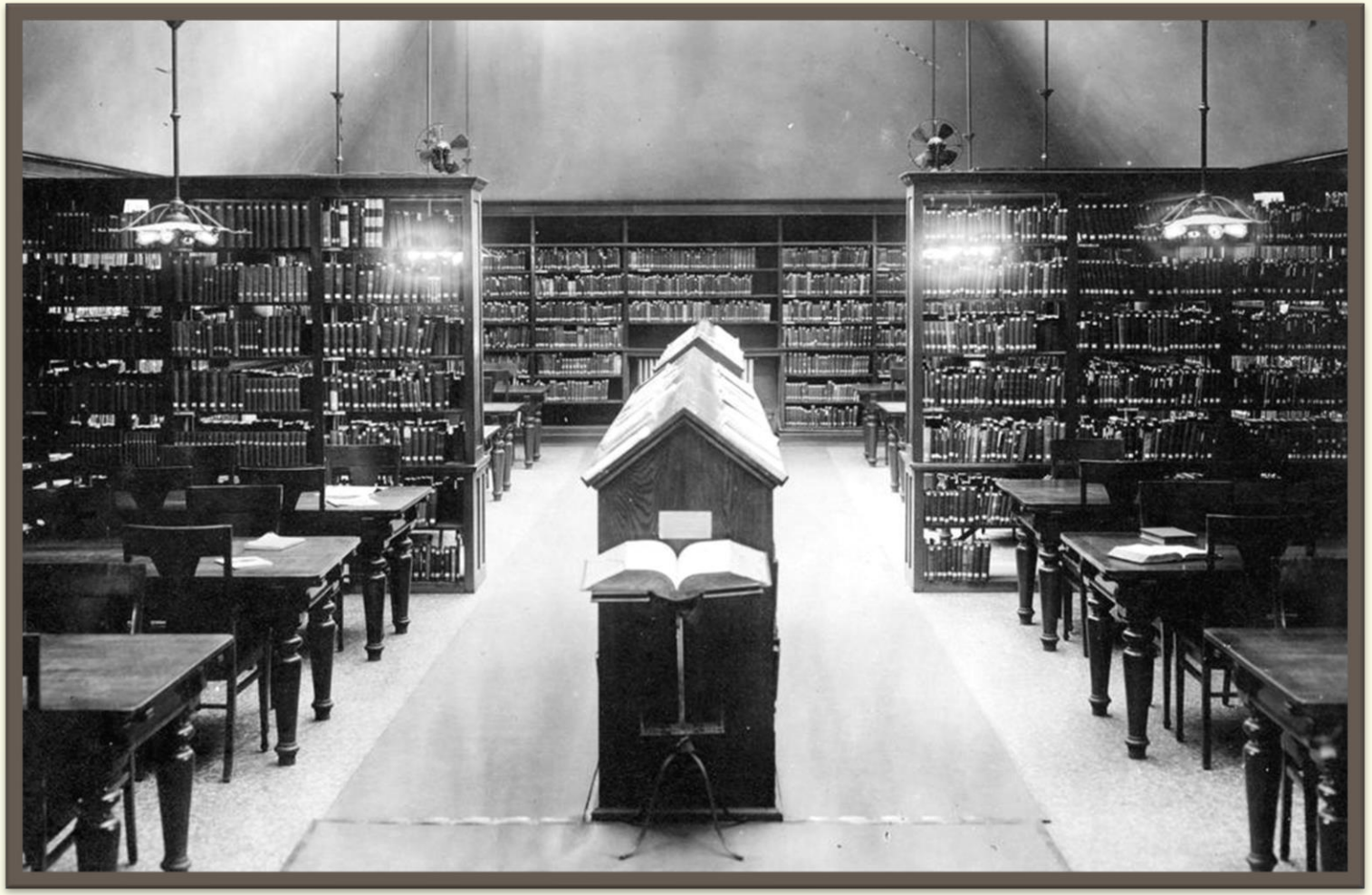
The Research Archives of the Oriental Institute and Continuity with the Past

May 13, 2013

YOUNG PROFESSIONAL LEADERS
ORIENTAL INSTITUTE

Oriental Institute Library

Oriental Institute library in Haskell Hall circa 1920



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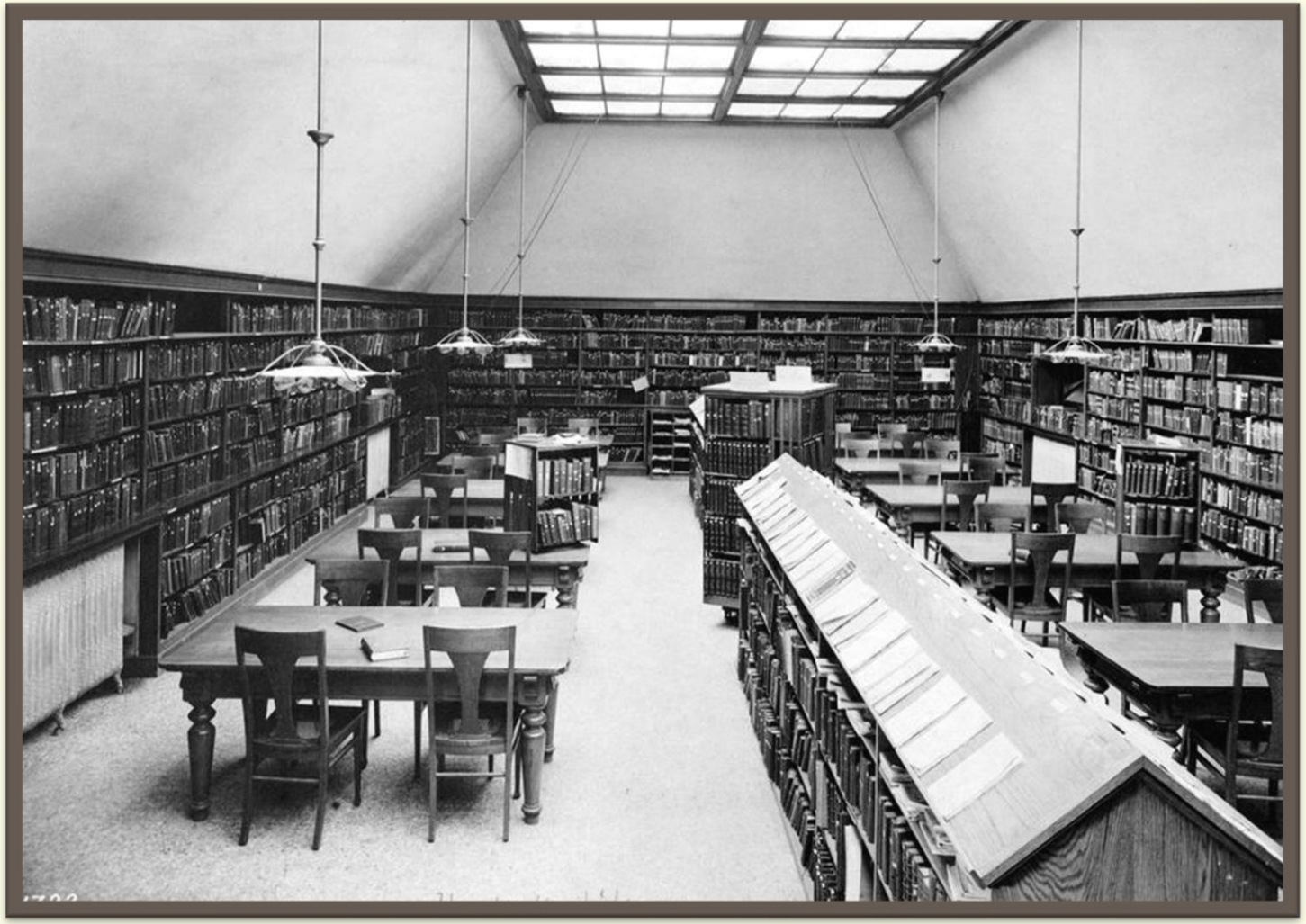

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Oriental Institute Library

Oriental Institute library in Haskell Hall circa 1920

Oriental Institute: New Building

Oriental Institute Groundbreaking

Oriental Institute: New Building

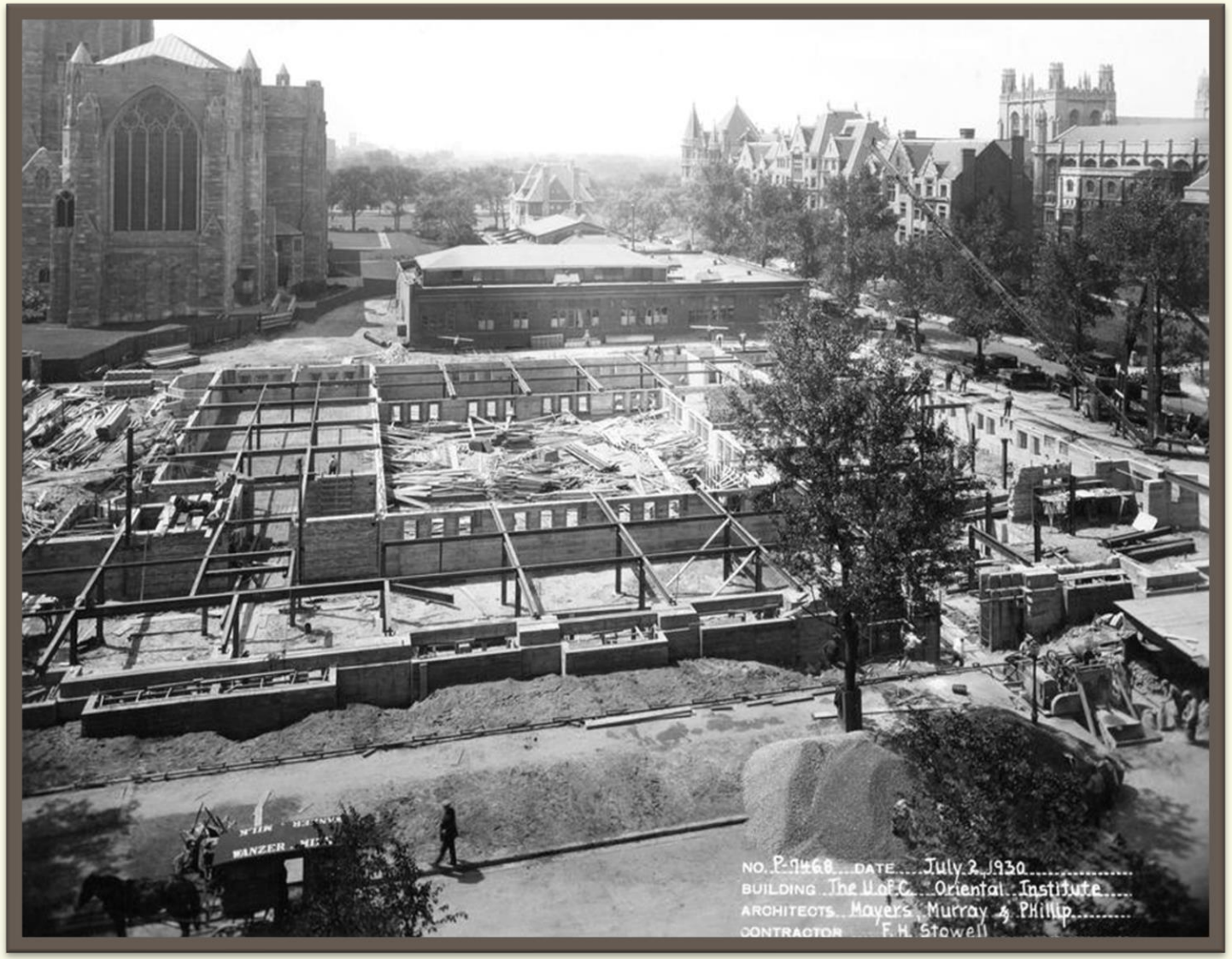
Oriental Institute Construction

Oriental Institute: New Building

Oriental Institute Construction

Oriental Institute: New Building

Oriental Institute Construction



Oriental Institute: New Building

Oriental Institute
Construction

Oriental Institute: New Building

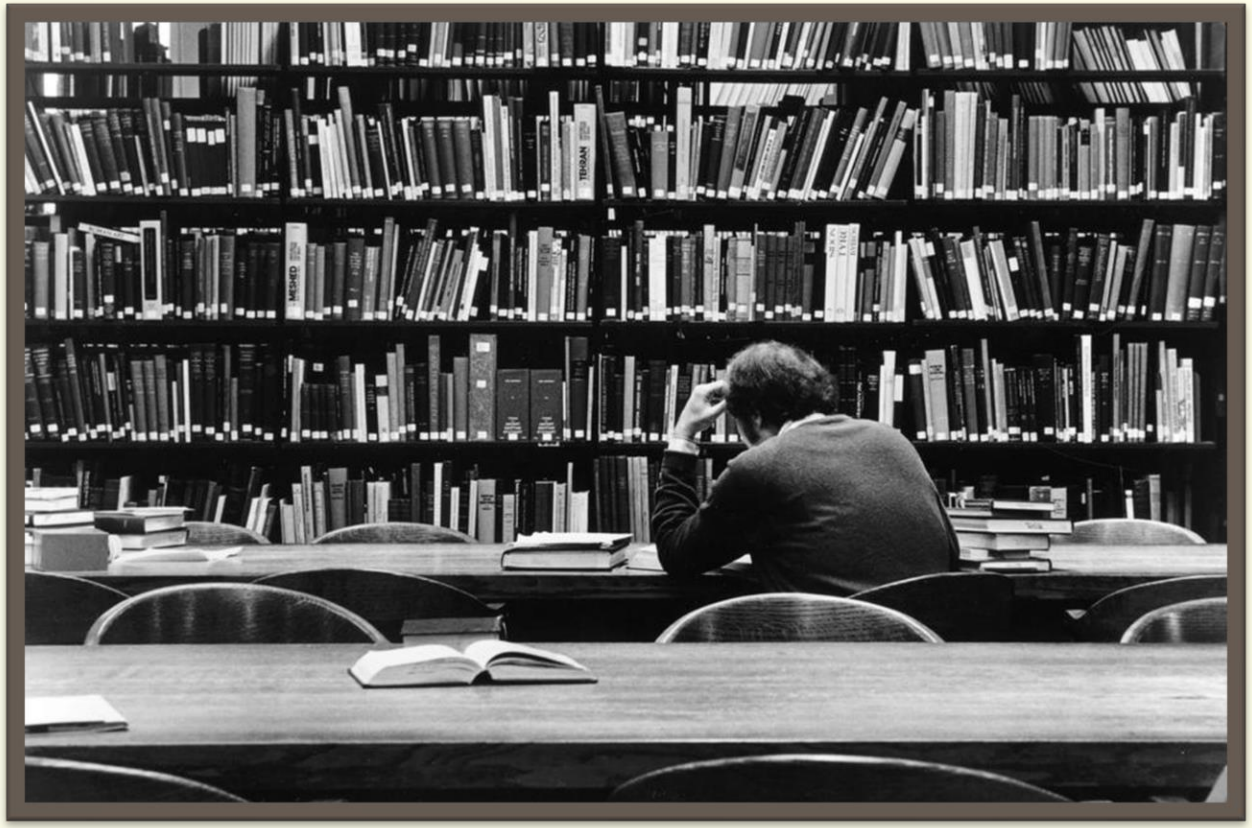
Oriental Institute
Construction

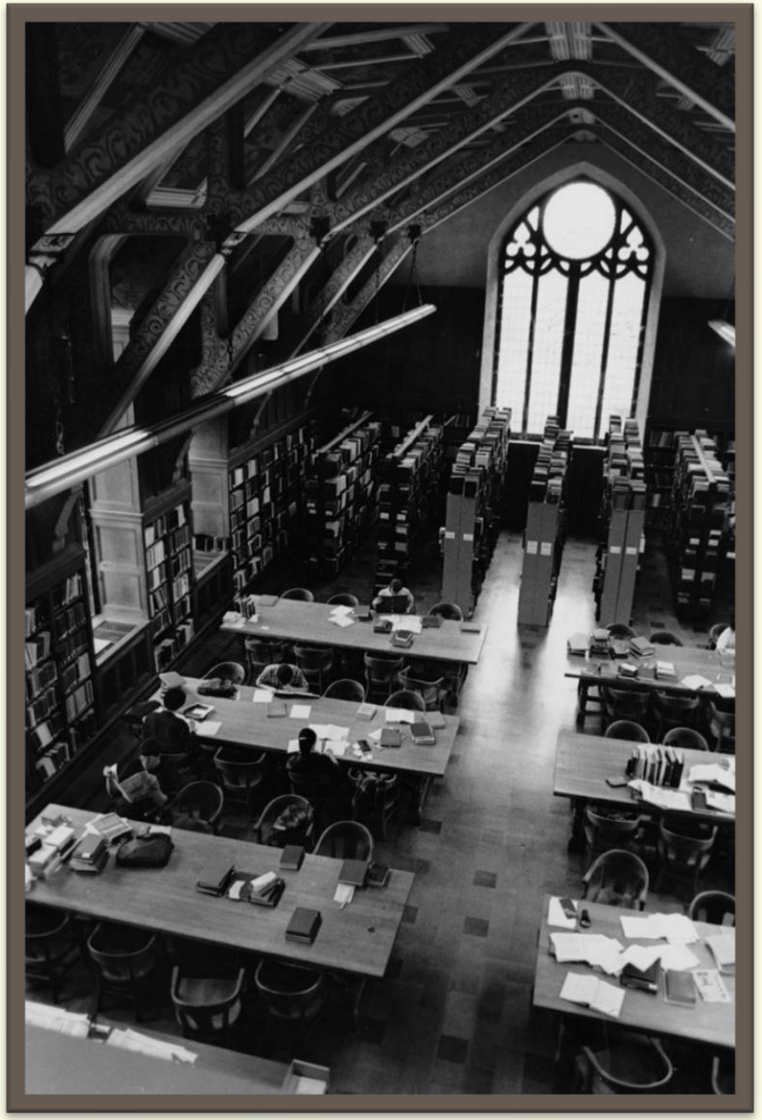
Oriental Institute Library

Oriental Institute library
circa 1930

Research Archives

Research Archives in the 1980s

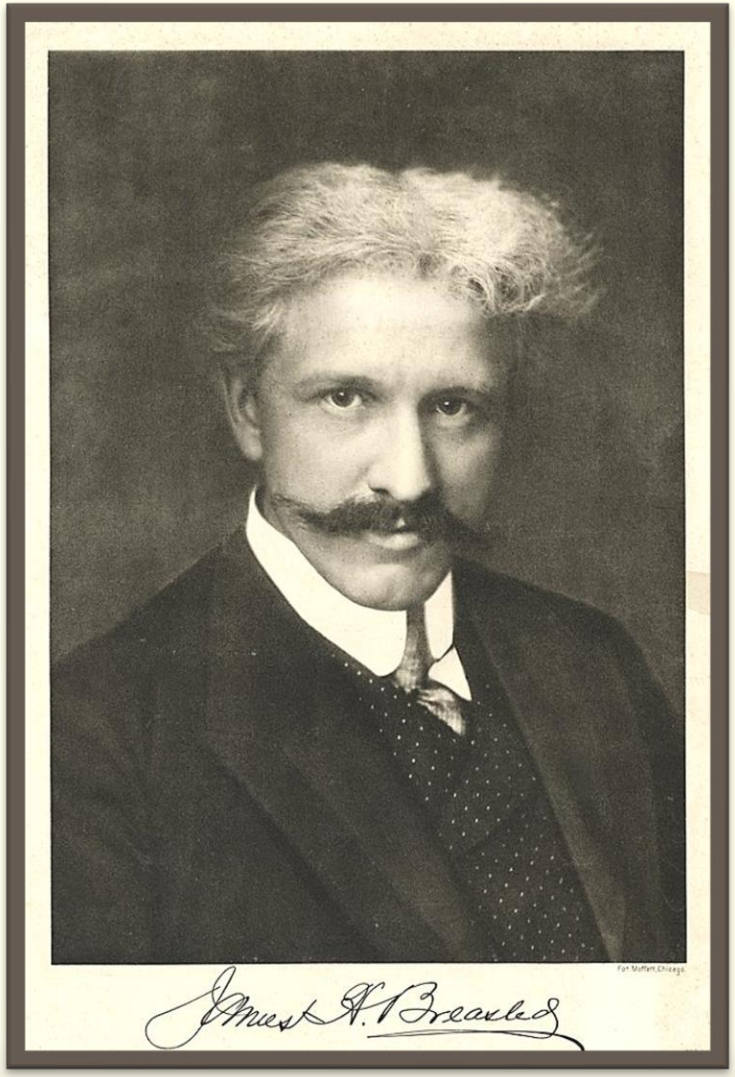




Cataloging the Ancient Near East

"The volume of evidence left us by ancient civilizations of the Near East is, however, so vast that it is impossible for any single brain to carry the details which would make possible instructive comparison of evidences from all the different civilizations and from various groups of sources. Some form of catalogue or index is therefore indispensable."

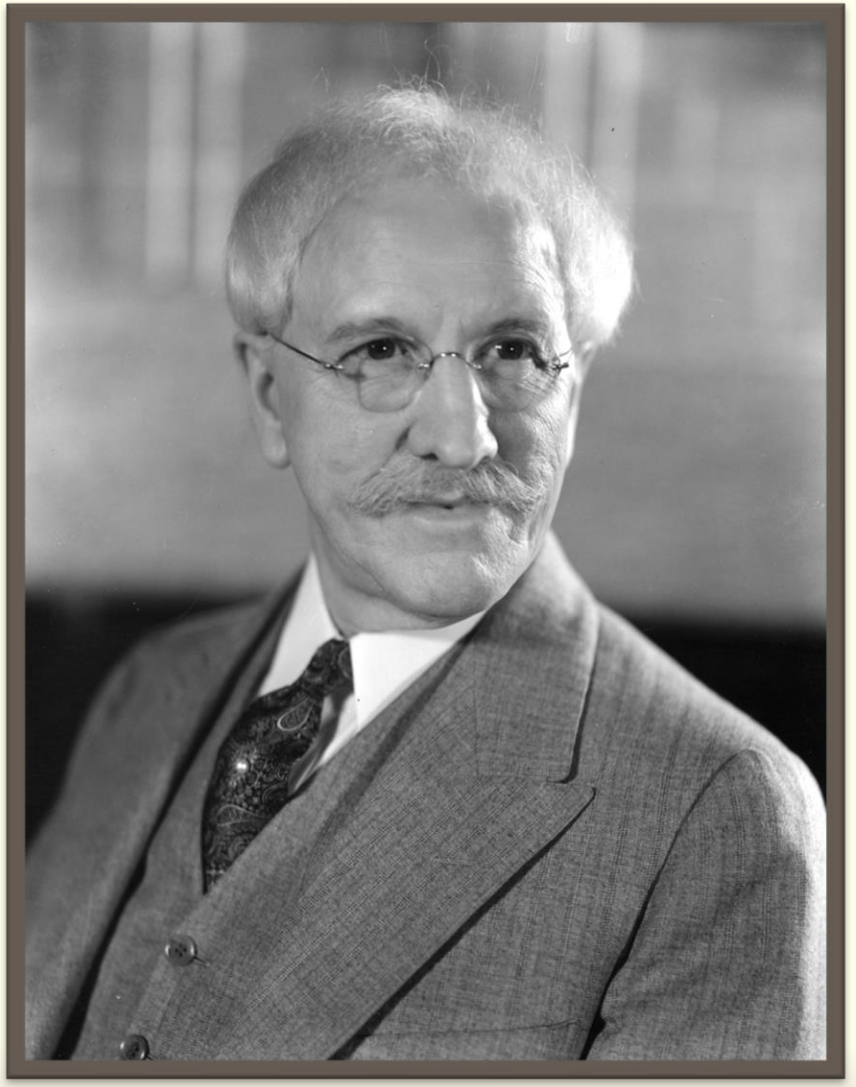
- James Henry Breasted. *The Oriental Institute*, p. 406



Cataloging the Ancient Near East

"What the Dictionary is doing for a *language* should likewise be done for the *whole range of evidence* surviving from the ancient oriental civilizations as a whole. … *The project is one of the most important in the whole range of humanistic research*. It is an urgently needed tool. The Institute is the obvious agency to produce such an encyclopedic organization of the evidences revealing the life and history of ancient man. For financial reasons alone, however, the Institute cannot at present undertake it. … Nevertheless, the writer cherishes the hope that the larger and more comprehensive plan … envisaged may eventually be carried out by the Institute."

- James Henry Breasted. *The Oriental Institute*, p. 406-407



Integrated Database Project: Objectives

1. Ensure sustainable software environment appropriate for cultural heritage requirements

2. Make data accessible to scholarly and public audiences

3. Integrate data between institutional departments in unprecedented ways

4. Expand the scope and utility of the data and data functionality with core users in mind including staff, scholars, and public

5. Explore possibilities for further integration between sister institutions and projects

Integrated Database Project: History

2005-2009

- Determine Project Scope and Course
- Choose Vendor
- Customize Client Software

2009-2011

- Phase I: Data Migration
- Research Archives (450,000 records)
- Museum Registration (230,000 records)

2012-2014

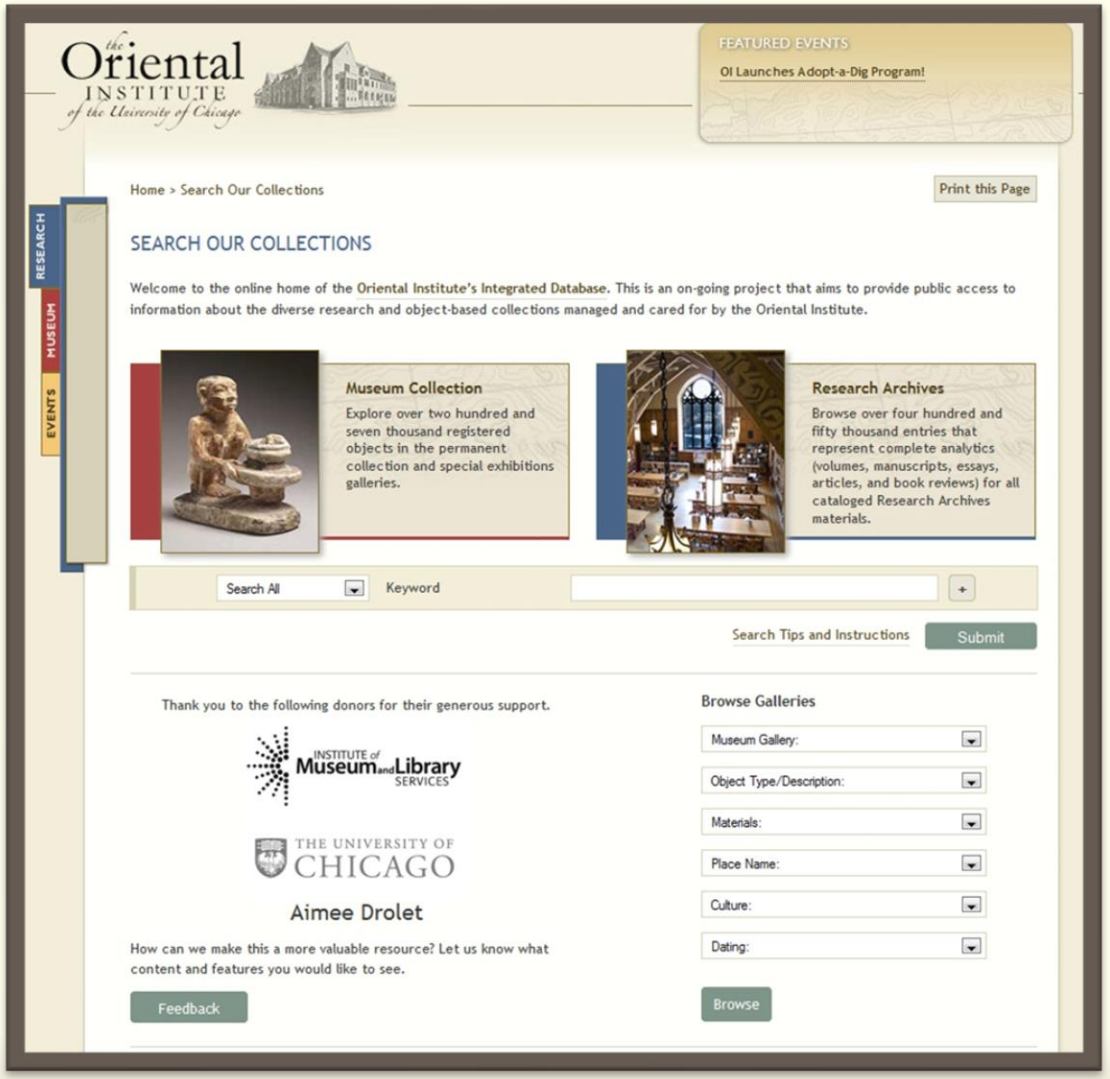
- Data Cleanup
- Data Integration

2012-2015

- Phase II-IV: Migration of Further Data Silos
- Conservation, Digital Photos Database, CAMEL, Museum Archives

Collection Search: The Integrated Database

- Integrated Searching
- Build custom searches across two data silos
- Browse collections based on preselected criteria

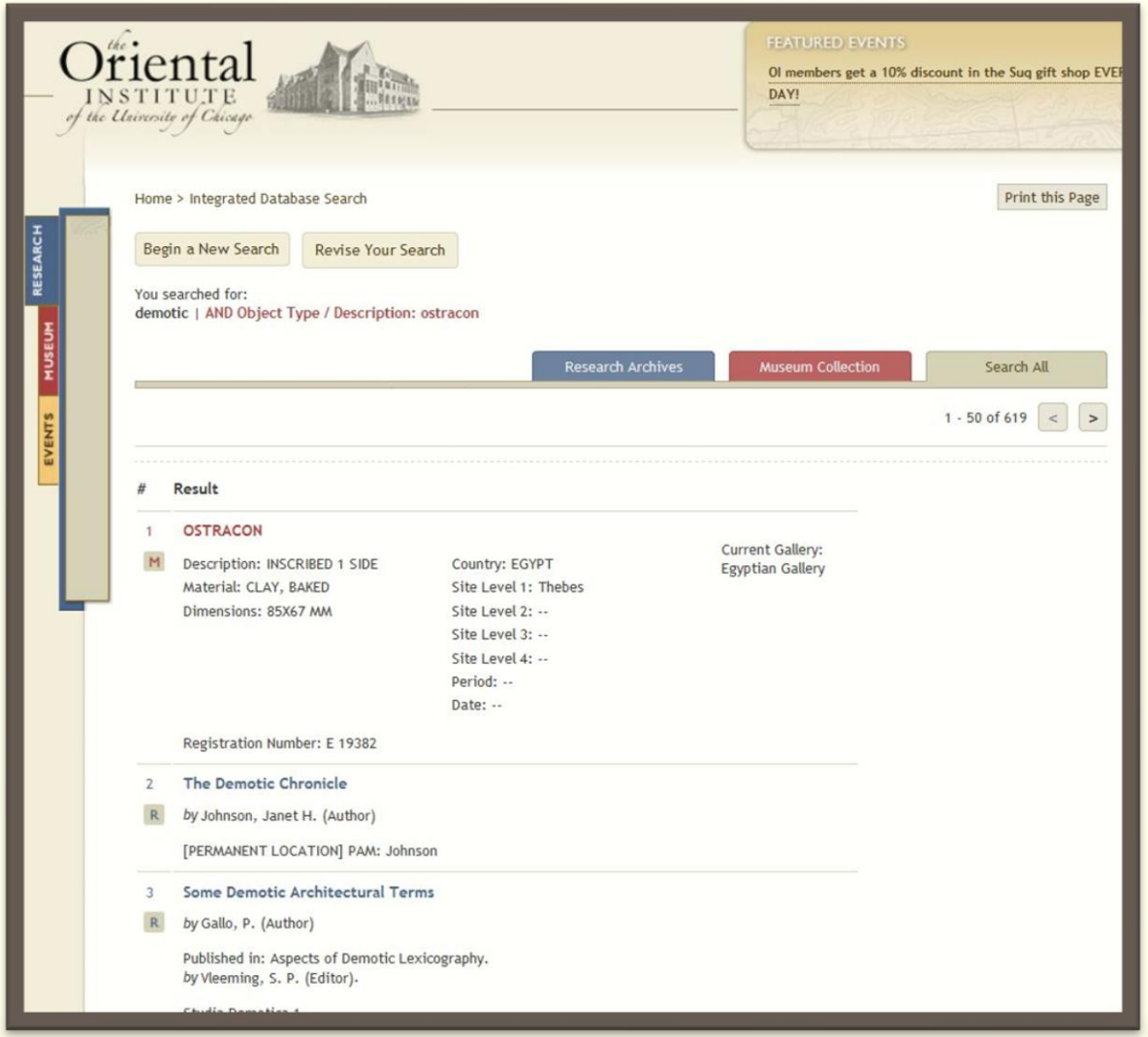


Online Collections Database

- Integrated Searching
- Build custom searches across two color coded data silos
- Integrated Museum Registration object data with Research Archives bibliographic records

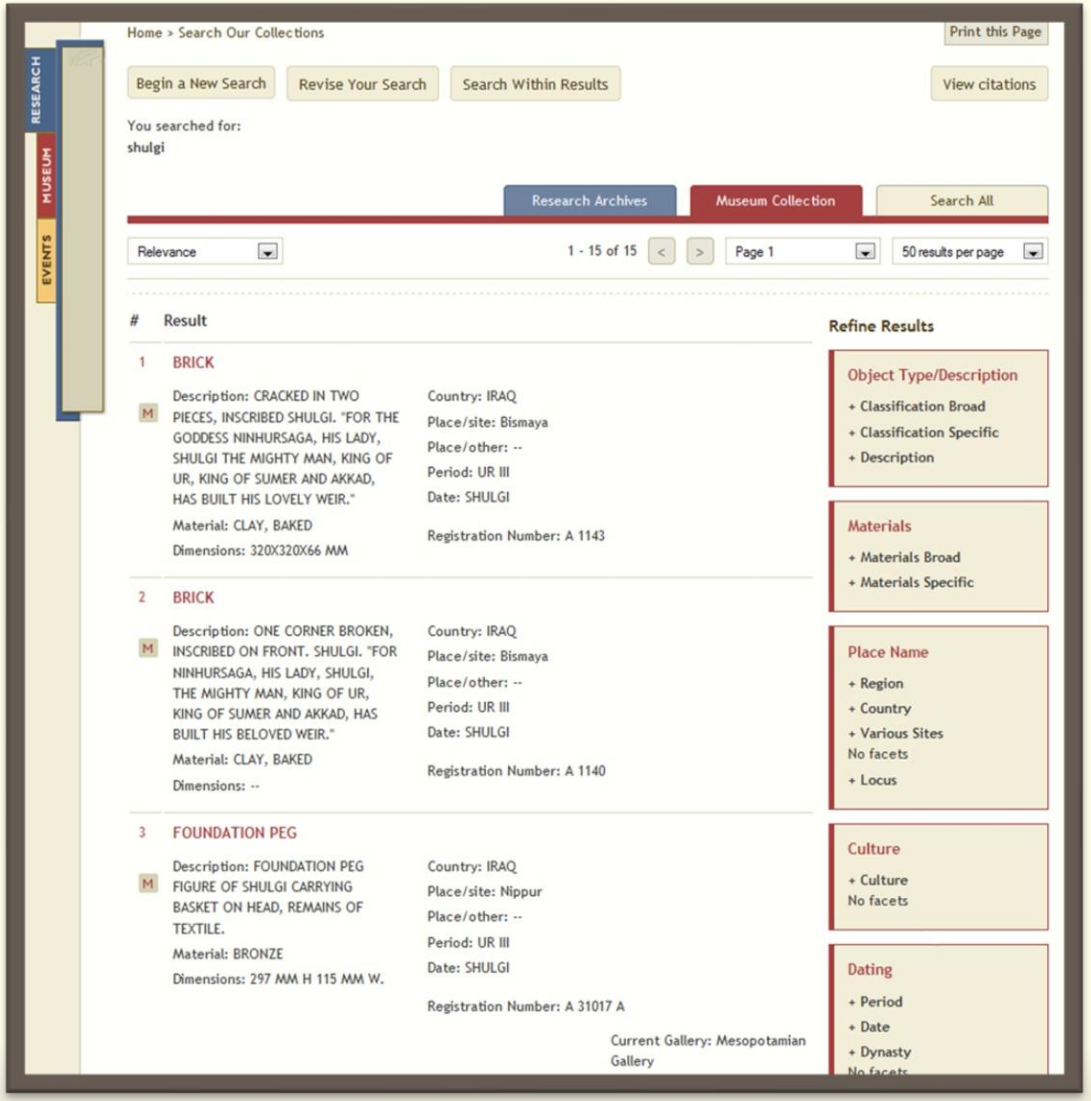
Collection Search: The Integrated Database

- View color-coded and integrated results easily filtered through tab controls and facets



Collection Search: The Integrated Database

- Quickly filter between data silos with tabs
- Refine searches with facets related to particular data silos



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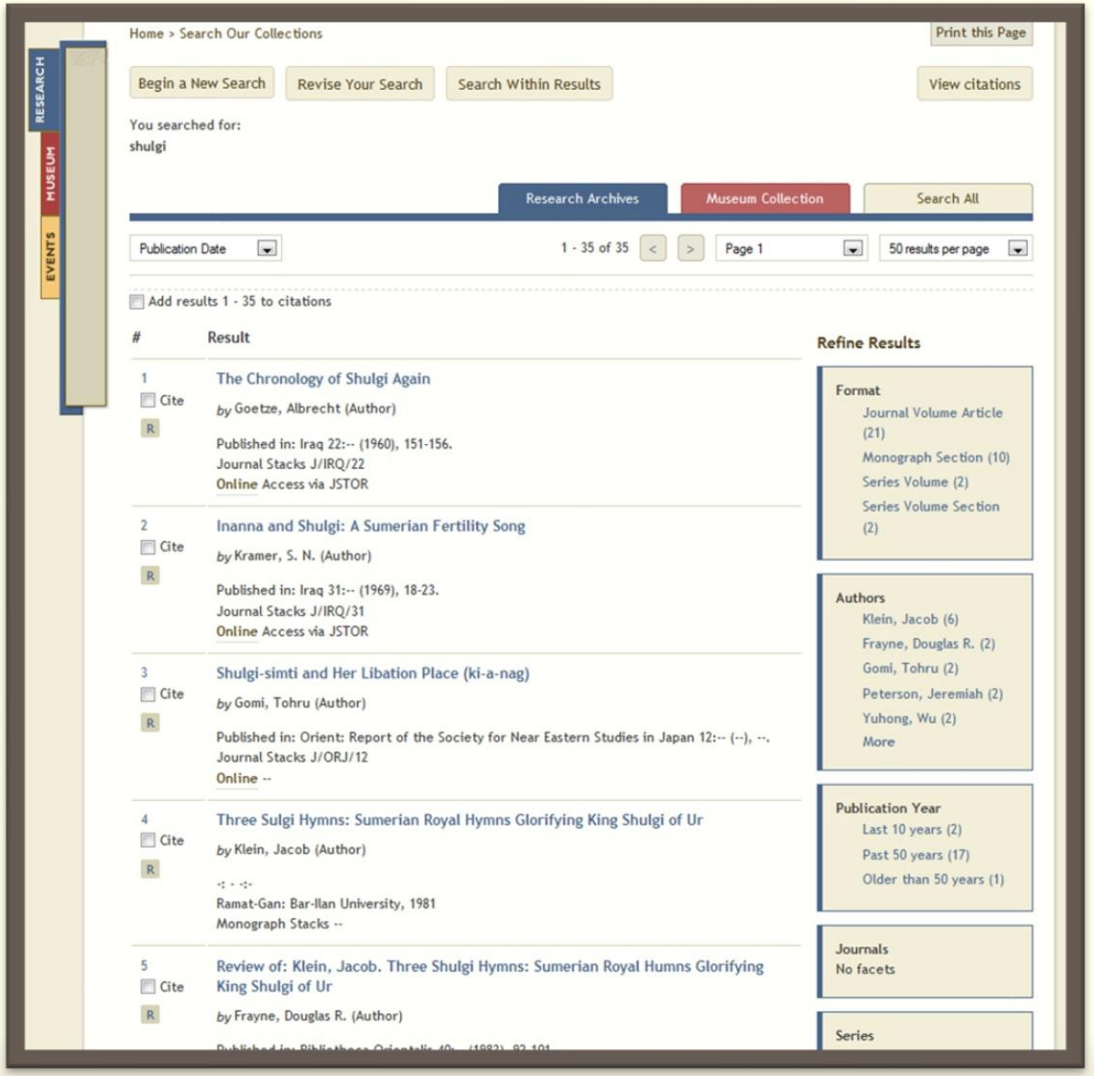
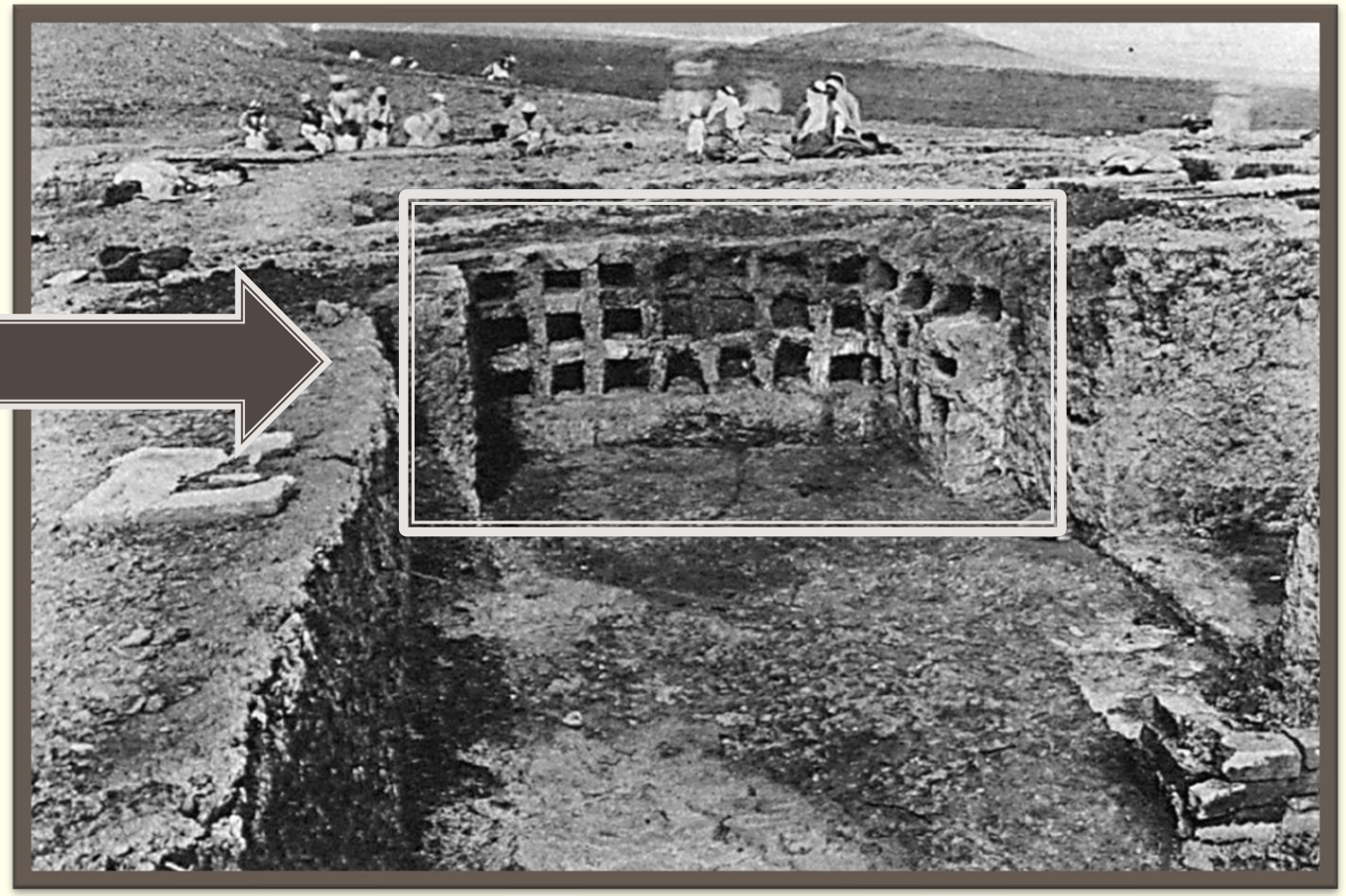


Integrated Database Project: Summary

1. Sustainable platform for data stewardship
2. Integrated bibliographic and object data searching, sorting, and browsing
3. Migration of further data silos and integration between bibliographic, object, conservation, archival, photographic, and GIS data
4. Expanded data entry to include archaeological field data, author's biographical data, links between volumes and volume reviews (and vice versa), and further thesaurus refinement for integration between silos
5. Eventual integration between fellow institutions

Ancient Libraries and Archives

Niches for tablet storage in the Nabu temple at Khorsabad



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