

ACHEMENET PROJECT

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The Achemenet Project at the Oriental Institute began in April 2014 (see *Oriental Institute 2013–2014 Annual Report*, pp. 9–11, and *News & Notes* 223: 12–13). The aim of the project is to provide an online catalog of objects of the Achaemenid period (ca. 550–330 BC) in the Oriental Institute Museum’s holdings, including high-quality photographs of selected objects, such as seals and sealings, coins, architectural fragments, jewelry, stone vessels, and other objects of daily life for the achemenet.com website (e.g., figs. 1–2). From the start of the project until the end of June 2015, Achemenet has cataloged more than 600 objects, photographed 360 registered objects (many with multiple views), prepared 999 archival photographs, and scanned and uploaded 3,512 archival documents (excavation record cards). The project is scheduled to be completed by the close of 2015.

The Musée du Louvre and Professor Pierre Briant (Collège de France), are currently redesigning the Achemenet website (<http://www.achemenet.com/>), which Briant brought into existence about ten years ago to display searchable records and images of artifacts and



Figure 1. Babylonian Daiva inscription of Xerxes (XPh), Persepolis, ca. 486–465 BC. Oriental Institute Persian Expedition, 1931–1939. OIM A24120 (photo D. O17118: Anna Ressman)

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Figure 2. Handle of a pestle, made of green chert. Aramaic inscription. ca. 478–466 BC Persepolis. Oriental Institute Persian Expedition, 1931–1939. OIM A23201 (photo D. 028304: Austin M. Kramer)

archival sources from museum collections around the world. The website's relaunch later in 2015 will incorporate digital material contributed by the Achemenet Project, as well as images and editions of selected documents contributed by the Oriental Institute's Persepolis Fortification Archive Project (as indicated in the *Oriental Institute Annual Reports for 2006–2007*, p. 101, and *2008–2009*, p. 106).

The Oriental Institute has the largest, most significant, well-documented collections from Achaemenid Iran in North America, most significantly collections from the Oriental Institute's Persian Expedition at Persepolis, Istakhr, and other sites in Iran (1931–1939). An important focus of the Achemenet Project is to better document and digitize materials in these collections, including those displayed in the Robert and Deborah Aliber Persian Gallery, as well as the many items in collections storage.

The Oriental Institute Achemenet Project was made possible in its first twelve months (April 2014–March 2015) by a grant from the Roshan Cultural Heritage Institute. For the period between April and December 2015, we are grateful for additional support from the France Chicago Center of the University of Chicago. These funds have permitted Project Researcher Tytus Mikołajczak (a PhD candidate in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) to lead the research and prepare the materials for *achemenet.com* and the Musée du Louvre, which is the main digital repository for all materials for *achemenet.com*. Funds from supporting institutions were matched in both instances by the Oriental Institute, which supports the work of our project photographer, Austin Kramer.

An agreement regarding the Achemenet Project was co-signed by Jean-Luc Martinez, director of the Musée du Louvre, and Gil Stein, director of the Oriental Institute. Our project partners at the Louvre in 2014–15 were Béatrice André-Salvini, Yannick Lintz, and Salima Amann. Marielle Pic was appointed as the new director of the Département des Antiquités Orientales at the Louvre in 2015. Julien Cuny, the newly assigned curator responsible for Achaemenid and Sasanid Iran, has recently taken responsibility for managing the Achemenet Project at the Louvre. Salima Amann of the Louvre continued to handle the data and images provided by the Oriental Institute Museum.

The project was supported by Oriental Institute staff, including Registrars Helen McDonald and Susan Allison have retrieved many batches of objects for Tytus and Austin. Conservation staff Laura D’Alessandro, Alison Whyte, and especially Simona Cristanetti, have carried out conservation assessments of objects. Our head of photography, Anna Ressman, has contributed images of a number of gold objects and continued to ensure that our images meet the standards of the project. John Larson has provided access to the archives from Persepolis, including registers compiled by Ernst Herzfeld relating to the Frataraka (also known as Fratadara) Temple.

All images and records shared with the Louvre are being added to the Oriental Institute’s Integrated Database as part of its own online collections initiative, allowing for online searches. Curatorial Assistant Kiersten Neumann has uploaded object images (made by Austin Kramer), assisted the uploading and editing of data, and facilitated the image and data sharing with the Louvre. Kiersten also transferred 999 archival photographs previously published in the microfiche edition *Persepolis and Ancient Iran* (see <https://oi.uchicago.edu/collections/photographic-archives/persepolis-and-ancient-iran>) to our collections database. Foy Scalf, head of the Research Archives, continued to support the Achemenet Project. An important development, facilitated by Foy Scalf with the assistance of J. P. Brown of the Field Museum, was the creation of a new “crystal report” from our database that summarizes object data, images, and bibliographical information in a single PDF document. Our volunteers and work-study interns, Shoshanah Spurlock, Joe Barabe, and Jeffrey Newman, have helped scan and upload Persepolis excavation record cards and photographic images.

In March, project researcher Tytus Mikołajczak presented a paper on “Newly Recovered Inscriptions from Persepolis in the OI Museum” at the annual meeting of the American Oriental Society in New Orleans, describing “rediscoveries” of inscriptions from Persepolis made in the course of the Achemenet Project, including the scantily attested Elamite version of the inscription of Xerxes known as XPl, as well as Greek inscriptions from the Fratadara Temple whose whereabouts had been forgotten in the scholarly literature.

In addition to filling a gap in the detailed publication record of Persepolis and other Achaemenid-era collections, a long-term advantage of the project is the wider dissemination of information and images about fragmentary sculpture, stone vessels, small finds, jewelry, inlays, and metal objects facilitate research on the Achaemenid period.
