

SPECIAL EVENTS

Brittany F. Mullins

The Oriental Institute hosted a variety of events for our members, donors, and the general public during the 2014–2015 academic year. We celebrated our largest fundraising event, the biennial Gala, in addition to hosting exhibition previews, the annual postdoctoral seminar, two book signings, two James Henry Breasted Society events, a ballet preview, and multiple other events for our constituents and the University. Several events are highlighted below, and we hope you were able to join in the festivities. We would like to thank our generous donors and members, whose support make our exhibits, programs, and special events possible.

James Henry Breasted Society Event: Beyond the Galleries

On December 11, 2014, members of the James Henry Breasted Society (JHBS) journeyed beyond the walls of the galleries, into the lofts of the Conservation Lab, through the stacks of the Research Archives, and down into the vaults of Registration. JHBS members were able to speak with Oriental Institute conservators, registrars, and researchers regarding the science, technology, and scholarship used to preserve and protect our collections. They were also treated to a sneak peek of the upcoming exhibit, *A Cosmopolitan City: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Old Cairo*, and learned how each area works collaboratively to present a special exhibition. During the reception, guests were able to speak with Tasha Vorderstrasse about her role as exhibit co-curator and the challenges in developing the exhibit.



Head Conservator Laura D'Alessandro demonstrates conservation techniques to the Breasted Society at *Beyond the Galleries* (photo: Spencer Bibbs)



Co-curator Tasha Vorderstrasse gives James Henry Breasted Society members a preview of artifacts from the special exhibit *A Cosmopolitan City* during the *Beyond the Galleries* event (photo: Spencer Bibbs)

A Cosmopolitan City: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Old Cairo Exhibition Preview

Members and their guests joined us for an exclusive preview of the special exhibit *A Cosmopolitan City: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Old Cairo* on February 15, 2015. Guests learned how a vibrant, multicultural community made up of people from different faiths existed in Fustat (Old Cairo) from the seventh to the twelfth century. The exhibit features more than seventy never-before-exhibited objects from the Oriental Institute collections along with loaned objects from the Walters Art Museum and Yeshiva University Museum. A highlight of the exhibition is a group of manuscripts from the Cairo Genizah, which were preserved as part of a collection within the Ben Ezra Synagogue in Old Cairo. Co-curators Tasha Vorderstrasse and Tanya Treptow treated guests to a brief lecture and tours of the Marshall and Doris Holleb Family Special Exhibits Gallery, detailing the re-discovery of a Cairo Genizah document in the Oriental Institute's own collection.

This exhibition was made possible by the generous support of members of the Oriental Institute.

“1177 B.C.: The Year Civilization Collapsed” — Lecture by Author Eric H. Cline

On February 25, 2015, the Oriental Institute was fortunate enough to welcome Eric H. Cline, professor of Classics and Anthropology and chair of the Department of Classical and Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at The George Washington University, to give a lecture on his recent book, *1177 B.C.: The Year Civilization Collapsed*. Following the lecture, Dr. Cline answered questions regarding the collapse of the many Late Bronze Age civilizations, including the Egyptians, Mycenaeans, Minoans, Hittites, Assyrians, Babylonians, and Canaanites. After the lecture, Oriental Institute members and the public were invited to join Dr. Cline in the Edgar and Deborah Jannotta Mesopotamian Gallery for a reception and book signing.

Eleventh Annual Oriental Institute Postdoctoral Seminar

Postdoctoral fellow Ilan Peled organized the eleventh annual seminar hosted at the Oriental Institute March 6–7, 2015. This year’s conference, titled *Structures of Power: Law and Gender Across the Ancient Near East and Beyond*, brought together domestic and international scholars to explore how gender relations were enforced by the legal system, government entities, religious institutions, and cult practices in the ancient world with a focus on the Near East. Speakers and panelists were treated to a curator-led tour of the Oriental Institute and attended a dinner hosted in the Deborah and Edgar Jannotta Mesopotamian Gallery. This provided the speakers and those participating in the conference with the opportunity to discuss their research with their colleagues.

Each year these lectures, presented by experts on the conference topic, are free and open to our members and the public thanks to the generous support of Dr. and Mrs. Arthur Lee Herbst. A publication of the conference is currently in production.

2015 Oriental Institute Gala: Bringing the Past to Light

What a night! The 2015 Oriental Institute Gala, *Bringing the Past to Light*, was held on April 30, 2015, at the Four Seasons Hotel Ballroom in Chicago. Walls of light led our guests through swaths of diaphanous curtains into the lounge and silent-auction area. While enjoying cocktails and conversation, guests bid on specially curated treasures, not typically carried in the Suq, in addition to art and jewelry from abroad generously donated by our supporters.

As the doors opened to the ballroom, guests entered through domes of crimson into a softly lit ballroom, accented by colossal images of objects from the Oriental Institute’s collections. Director Gil Stein presented the James Henry Breasted Medallion, the Oriental Institute’s highest honor, to Thomas C. Heagy for his leadership and volunteer service as a Visiting Committee member and for his outstanding support of the Oriental Institute and our mission. Following the presentation, guests were captivated by two arias from *Aïda*, performed by tenor John Concepcion and soprano Jenny Cook. This was a surprise developed especially for Tom, which combines his love of the opera and passion for ancient Egypt.



Sponsorship Chair Norman Bobins (in red bowtie) and guests enjoy the silent auction



James Henry Breasted, as portrayed by R. J. Lindsey, conducts the live auction

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W. Ray Johnson and Nadine Moeller share how they are bringing the past to light at the Oriental Institute 2015 Gala (all Gala photos: Joel Wintermantle)



Honoree Thomas C. Heagy accepts the Breasted Medallion from Director Gil J. Stein



Guests applaud honoree Thomas C. Heagy after he received the Breasted Medallion



Past and present Breasted Medallion recipients Thomas C. Heagy, Jill Carlotta Maher, Orpheus J. Sopranos, and Janet Helman



Soprano Jenny Cook performs an aria from Giuseppe Verdi's Aïda

Following the performances, James Henry Breasted, as portrayed by R. J. Lindsey, conducted our live auction, which included a special dinner in the galleries catered by Food for Thought, and a getaway to London with private tours of the British and Petrie Museums.

The evening concluded with dancing and a dessert buffet in the lounge, which was transformed by walls of light and music. Guests dined, danced, and imbibed until late in the evening. Overall, this was our most well-attended Gala and a groundbreaking year for generating over \$100,000 in financial support for the Oriental Institute.

A special thanks goes to Norman R. Bobins and our Gala Advisory Committee: Andrea Dudek, Jill Carlotta Maher, Harvey Plotnick, and Rebecca Wilson.

David A. Kipper Ancient Israel Lecture Series

The Oriental Institute welcomed Jodi Magness, Kenan Distinguished Professor for Teaching Excellence in Judaism at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, to deliver the third annual David A. Kipper Ancient Israel Lecture on May 4, 2015. Dr. Magness' lecture, titled "New Discoveries in the Ancient Village and Synagogue at Huqoq in Israel's Galilee," focused on recent finds during her excavations, including stunningly detailed mosaics revealing depictions of a Samson cycle from the Bible.

During a workshop, Dr. Magness met with graduate students from the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, the Divinity School, and the Department of Anthropology to reconsider the animal bone deposits at Qumran, typically understood as the remains of ritual meals, and discuss whether sacrifices were offered there.

The David A. Kipper Ancient Israel Lecture Series focuses on the history and archaeology of ancient Israel and was established through a gift from Barbara Kipper and the Kipper family. The program includes an annual public lecture as well as a workshop for faculty, graduate, and undergraduate scholars at the Oriental Institute.

James Henry Breasted Society Event: TimeLine Theatre's *Inana*

On July 9, 2015, our James Henry Breasted Society members gathered at the TimeLine Theatre in Lakeview for a viewing of the play *Inana*, which tells the story of an Iraqi museum curator who makes a life-altering decision to rescue antiquities from destruction during the United States' invasion of Baghdad in 2003. Breasted Society members enjoyed a reception in the theater's rehearsal space and a pre-show discussion with TimeLine's founder and associate artistic director Nick Bowling. Following the play, Gil Stein, director of the Oriental Institute, Pamela Nehring, Board Member of the Iraqi Mutual Aid Society, and Patty Gerstenblith, Distinguished Research Professor of Law at DePaul University, held a panel discussion with the audience focusing on questions of archaeological and cultural heritage.
