

THE  
ORIENTAL  
INSTITUTE  
OF THE  
UNIVERSITY  
OF  
CHICAGO



FIFTH EDITION OF THE HANDBOOK

# The Task of the Oriental Institute

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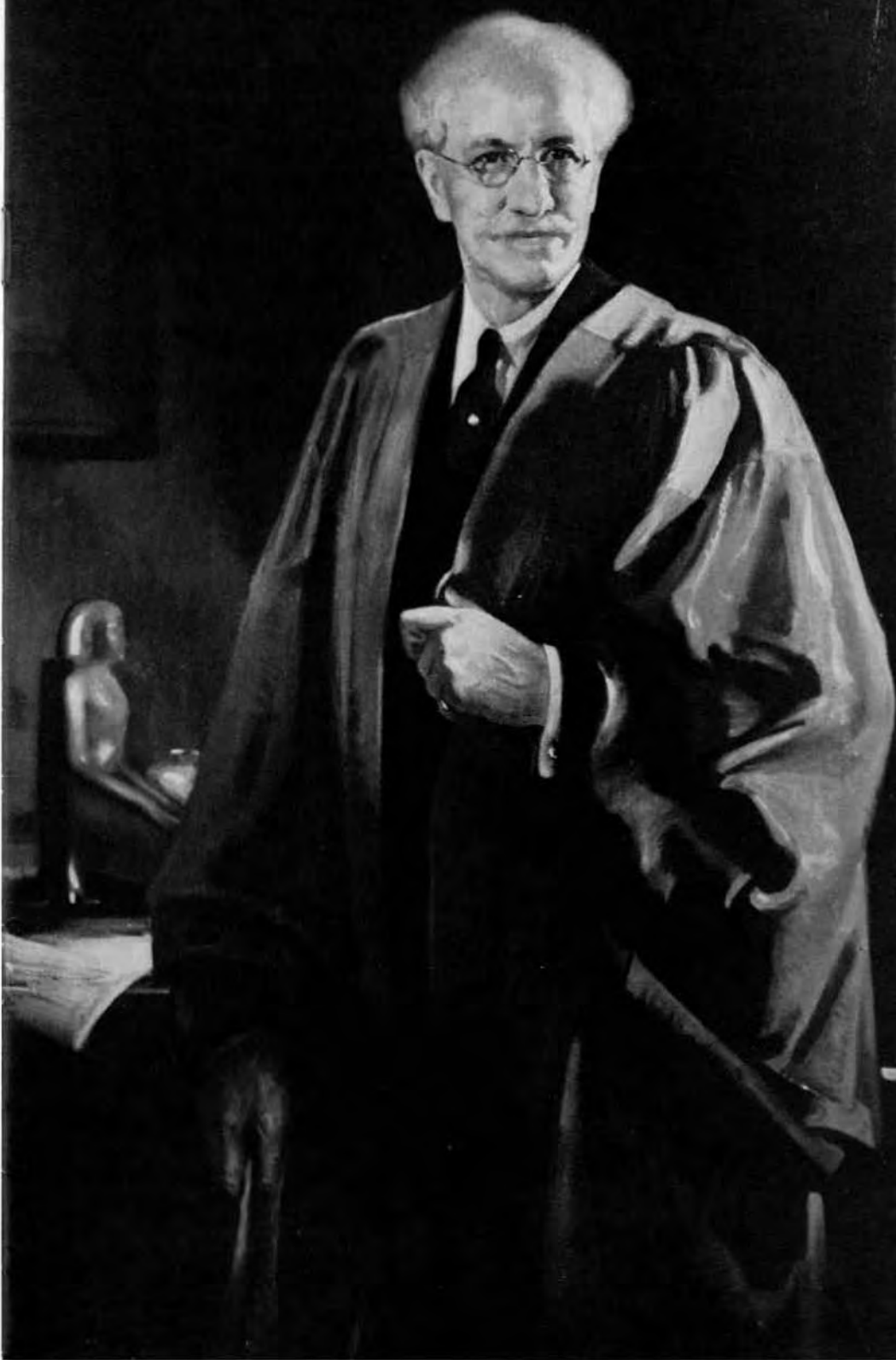
MUCH is known of the Stone Age as well as of the period of recorded history. But what of the years between, during which occurred the beginnings of civilization, of organized life, of invention, of art, of social conscience?

In pursuit of the answer to this challenging question James Henry Breasted made his first field trips to the Near East forty years ago. He soon recognized that no one scholar, nor even a group of scholars in a university department, could succeed in recovering the widely scattered evidence. From these early experiences grew his vision of a single organization through which trained archeologists might rescue the physical evidence in the field, and philologists and historians might study and interpret the evidence.

Dr. Breasted's devoted scholarship, contagious enthusiasm, and organizing ability found fruition in the creation of the Oriental Institute in 1919. Before his lamented death in December, 1935, he saw the Institute producing an ever increasing yield of long-buried historic materials.

The first director of the Institute was rightly aware that the modern world cannot be fully understood except in terms of the old. Thus no mere antiquarian interest spurs the workers of the Institute in their search for new "firsts" of man's culture. The exhibits in the Oriental Institute Museum are not curiosities of casual interest; they are the newest clues about the oldest civilizations. It is hoped that the few examples pictured and described on the succeeding pages will awaken the interest of those unfamiliar with the purpose of the Oriental Institute.

*Portrait of James Henry Breasted  
by John C. Johansen*



# The Institute Headquarters

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**F**OR the first time in the history of modern research the study of early man has been granted facilities comparable to those found in the laboratories of the natural sciences. The Oriental Institute building at 1155 East 58th Street, Chicago, is a central research laboratory, dedicated to the investigation of the early human career. From it the Institute's far-flung activities in the Near East are directed, and to it the evidence found in the field is brought back for study, exhibition, and publication.

On the main floor of the building are five exhibition halls containing collections from the ancient Near East, most of them drawn from the Institute's own expeditions. The museum is open to the general public, and a cordial welcome is extended to all interested groups. (For museum hours see the last page of this handbook.)

Also located on the main floor is a handsome lecture hall. In the basement are workshops for the reception and organization of material sent home by the field expeditions. A beautiful library on the ancient and modern Orient, shown opposite, is located on the second floor. The remainder of the building is given over to offices, classrooms, and research rooms for the study and publication of the original evidence.





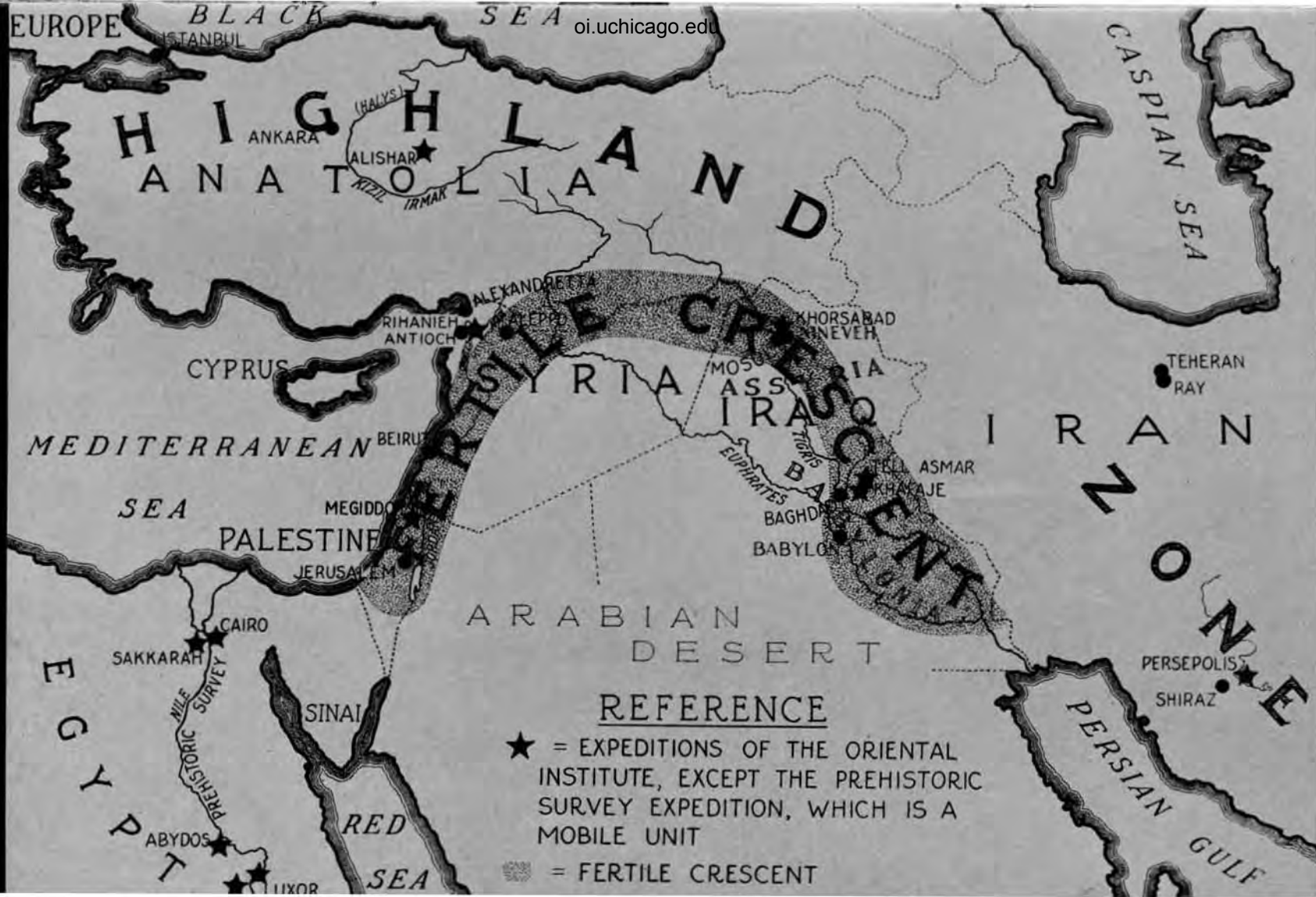
# The Scene of Operations

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THE process by which man lifted himself from savagery into civilization is most clearly studied in that section of the Near East which is folded like a horseshoe around the eastern end of the Mediterranean. This region constitutes an almost inexhaustible storehouse of perishing and still unsalvaged evidence of early human development. It is no accident that three great world religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—grew in such soil. Here, too, the first great civilizations worked out the fundamental principles and techniques of modern life, which were then transmitted to our world through the medium of Greece and Rome.

In this region the Oriental Institute's field expeditions have operated along a front of some 3,500 miles. Since the first field reconnaissance just after the World War, the Institute has dispatched some twenty-five scientific missions, surveys, or expeditions carrying on field operations. The more important projects are indicated on the map and are listed on the last page of this handbook.

Through these operations the Oriental Institute is slowly accumulating materials for sketching the outlines of the world's greatest epic, the rise of man. The search carries with it something of high romance. It fills the Institute's staff with an eagerness to discern more fully the causes and the nature of that mysterious buoyancy of the human spirit which, lifting irresistibly for thousands of years, brought mankind out of the depths. On this new crusade the Institute turns its face to the ancient Orient.



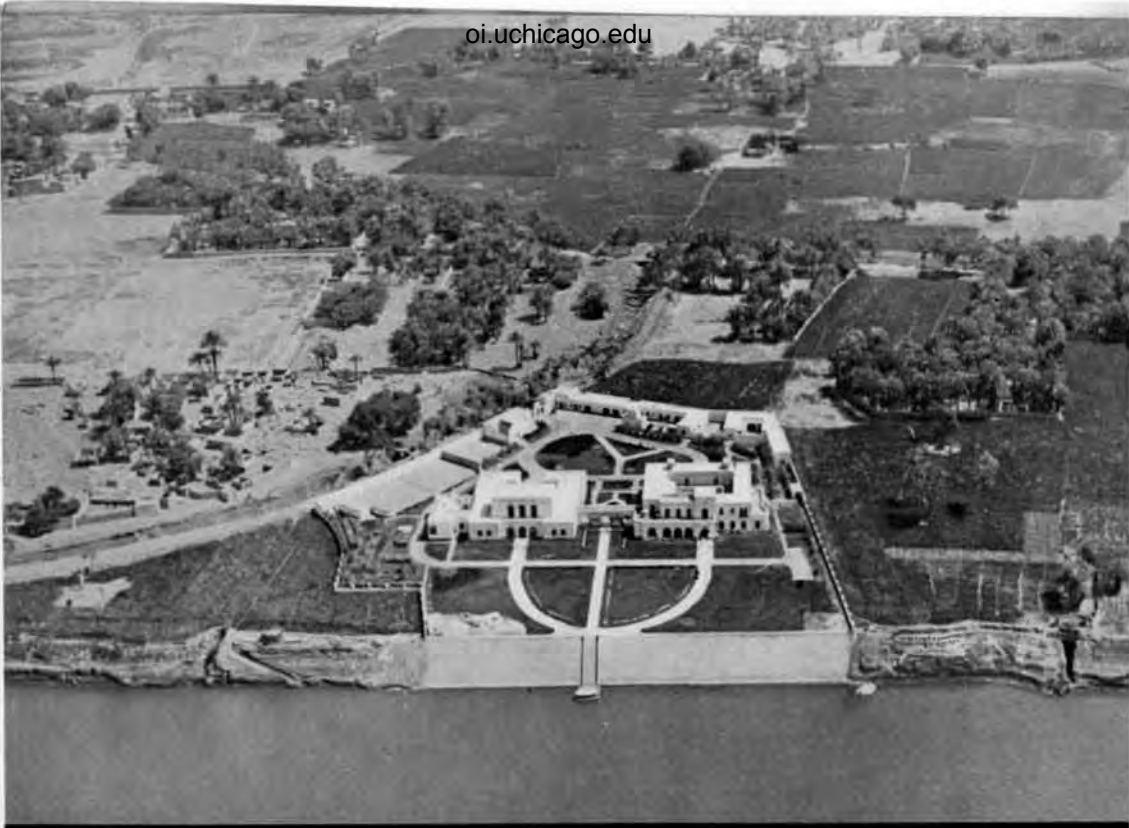
# The Field Expeditions

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THE search for original evidence often takes workers into remote and difficult places. Properly safeguarded and efficient work requires adequate housing and complete technical equipment. The machinery and inventions of modern man are thus utilized to probe the dim shades of his past. Frequently these modern devices have brought to light evidence that the ingenuity of ancient man anticipated many of the mechanical and intellectual achievements of our present age.

The housing of a staff and its equipment in the field is usually of a temporary nature. However, if a project promises to continue for some years, more adequate provision must be made. The upper photograph shows the Egyptian Headquarters on the Nile River, between Luxor and Karnak. From this carefully planned structure the Epigraphic and Architectural Surveys have been studying the temples of ancient Thebes. As these great temples are exposed to constant forces of destruction, the expedition is recording them in detail in an effort to preserve the rapidly disappearing evidence.

In Palestine the Megiddo Pass through the Carmel Range has been the perennial meeting ground of warring armies. Megiddo was so famous as a battlefield that its Greek form, Armageddon, means to us the final field of conflict between the forces of good and evil. For eleven years the Oriental Institute has been excavating the mound of Megiddo, shown in the lower photograph. The expedition house stands on a natural terrace, while the artificial mound shown at the right is the product of successively destroyed and disintegrating towns, each constructed on the debris of its predecessor. Excavation discloses layer after layer of civilizations from recent times on top to Stone Age man deep below.



# Uncovering the Evidence

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THE Mound of Megiddo (Armageddon) in Palestine has particular interest for students of the Bible. Because this town saw so many battles, it needed elaborate precautions against siege. The large photograph shows Institute workmen excavating the water system which was used when the city was invested. An enormous pit, entirely filled with rubbish when discovered, descends 120 feet from the top of the mound to the tunnel shown in the photograph at the upper left. The length of the tunnel from its entrance shaft to the cavern and its spring is more than 160 feet. It is high enough for a woman to walk with a water jar on her head. The bend in the wall shows the point at which workmen of the twelfth century before Christ met when drilling from the two ends of the tunnel. Another striking discovery by the Oriental Institute at this site was a series of stables in which Solomon kept the blooded horses which he traded with hither Asia and Egypt.

The ten-inch statuette shown in the lower photograph was probably one of those Baals against whom the followers of Jehovah contended. When found in the ruins of Megiddo it was completely covered and disfigured by a mass of copper corrosion. Skilful work in the Institute workshops disclosed that the copper statue was overlaid with gold leaf as shown. It now is an important bit of evidence in the museum at Chicago. The little statue depicts a god of North Syrian type and may be dated about 1200 B.C.

Excavations in North Syria by the Oriental Institute and other agencies have shown the intimate connection between the land of Canaan and the region to the north. Further research in the little-known but crucial cultures of North Syria will undoubtedly extend these relations and permit a new understanding of that area in which the children of Israel played so important a part.



# Tutenkhamon of Egypt

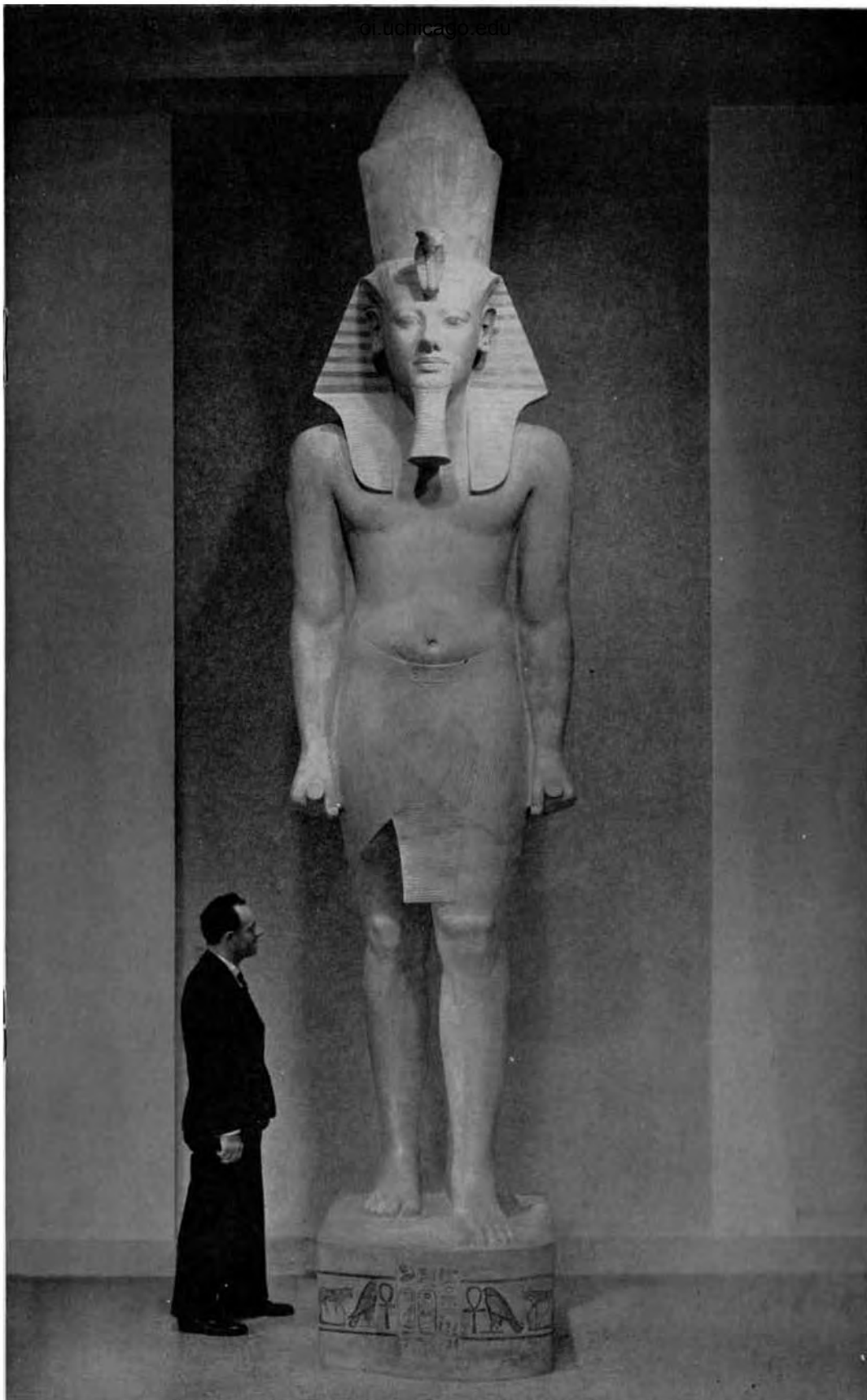
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THIS colossal statue is recognizable as a portrait of the Egyptian Pharaoh, Tutenkhamon. The statue came to light when the architects of the Institute's expedition at Luxor wished to determine the reason for a slight bend in a wall. This bend suggested that the wall had accommodated itself to an earlier structure lying nearby. Excavation then disclosed the foundations of an older temple, with the shattered remains of two colossal statues. One of these is housed in the National Museum in Egypt. The one shown here is in the Egyptian Hall of the Oriental Institute Museum in Chicago.

When it was found, the statue had been broken and used as the foundation for a structure of Roman times. Its present appearance is a result of careful repair and mounting by the Institute staff.

The resemblance of the statue to the depictions of Tutenkhamon which were found in his tomb is obvious. The inscriptions now found carved on this figure of Pharaoh give the names of the two kings who succeeded Tutenkhamon. In order to embellish their own temple they appropriated this portrait of their predecessor and had their names carved in place of his. The statue is thus important as a document witnessing the troubled politics of Egypt about 1350 B.C.





## Before and After

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**A**N ANTIQUITY is a document of historical and cultural importance; it tells a story of the intellectual or mechanical achievements of man at a certain period. However, if it is cut off from its setting of horizontal position, vertical depth, associated objects, and condition at discovery, it loses a great part of its value. Exact field records and thorough excavation are essentials of proper archeology.

Throughout the world unauthorized persons are engaged in digging which is not archeology. Most of this is illicit search for salable antiquities, pursued by natives in secrecy. Antiquities discovered in this way and appearing without proper record have a limited value as historical documents. The upper photograph shows part of the mound of Tell Asmar in Iraq before the Oriental Institute began operations there. Looting natives had dug random pits in the search for archeological treasure, thereby effecting a tragic destruction of evidence.

The lower photograph shows a part of the same mound after the Oriental Institute had cleared a level dated 2500 B.C. The workman in the foreground is engaged in the final clearing of the elaborate drainage system of a Babylonian palace. On the right, in front of the workman, a drain empties into the vaulted brick sewer which provided effective sanitation for this palace. We see the Babylonians as "modern" in their desire for a more civilized and gracious life. This construction, which has no market value, is a far more valuable document in the history of man than salable objects of art found by illicit digging and lacking any record of position and association.



# The Nature of the Evidence

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INTO the work of his hands man has put his emotional aspirations. No bit of evidence may, therefore, be neglected, but every piece must find its place in the story, whether it be a colossal statue or a lump of clay. Scraps of pottery, the discarded fragments of ancient kitchen ware, are of crucial importance for dating purposes. Archeologists who are expert in pottery may *predict* the dating limits of an untouched mound by observing the broken potsherds lying on the surface. They owe this expertness to a generation of careful observation and recording of pottery as it lies in archeological stratification.

Deep down in a North Syrian mound, welded together by corrosion, were found the statuettes shown in the upper left photograph. Painsstaking cleaning at Chicago revealed figures of six gods and goddesses less than a foot high, fashioned of copper, with silver adornment. Dated about 3200 B.C., they are the earliest statuettes of metal known. The two shown at the upper right, after cleaning, indicate man's progress in craftsmanship at the very beginning of the metal age. Their great antiquity and their location in the crucial area of North Syria make them discoveries of extraordinary importance.

The great winged bull shown opposite formed one side of a gateway in the Palace of Sargon of Assyria (700 B.C.). Forty tons of stone, it stands sixteen feet high and symbolizes the might and majesty of the Assyrian emperor. This creature was called a "cherub" by the ancients. The Old Testament uses this name for such a winged beast, but later Jewish thought and Christian art seriously misunderstood the nature of a cherub. The transportation of this colossus from Iraq to Chicago presented extraordinary mechanical difficulties. Respect for the ancient engineers is enhanced by the Institute's experiences in handling such mass.



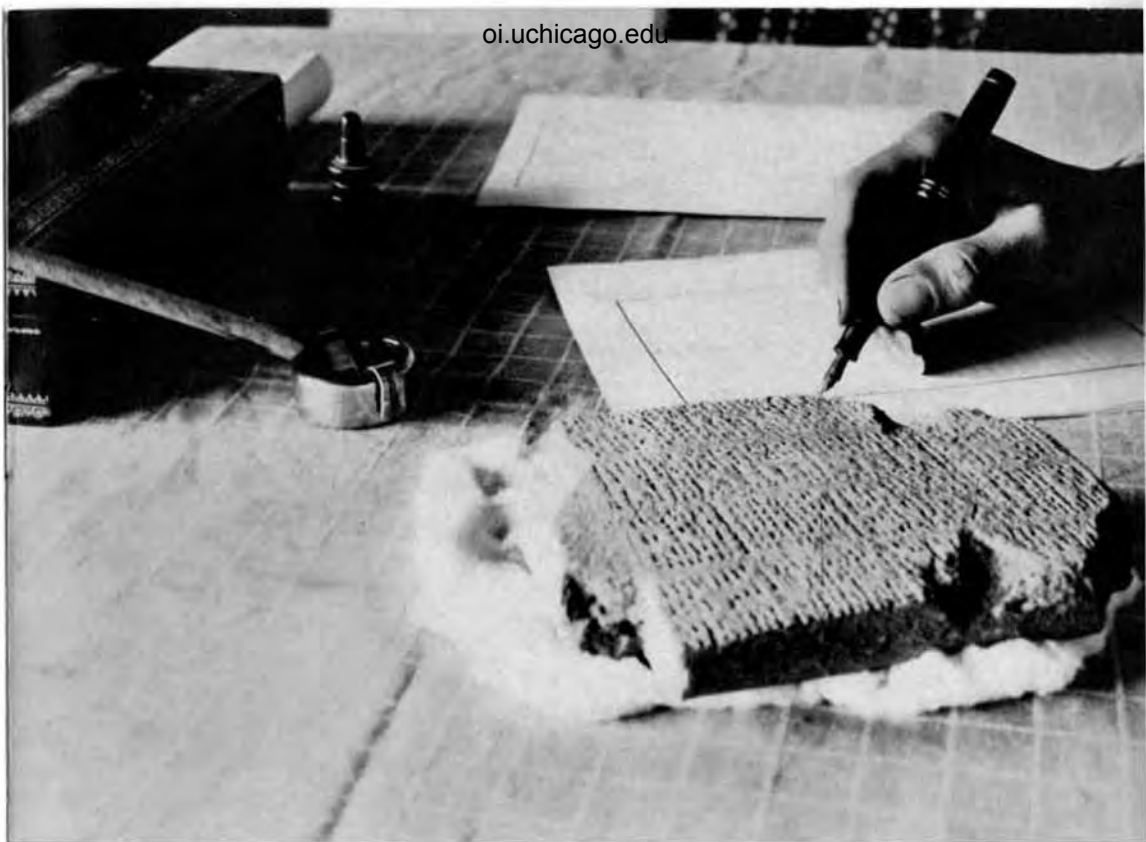
# Stone, Gold, Papyrus, and Clay

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THE story of early man is gradually being pieced together from such physical evidence as has been shown in water tunnels, statues, and architectural remains. But even more important are written documents which give the words of ancient man himself. These are the source materials of history. The Egyptian hieroglyphs were carved in enduring stone; a cursive form was written in ink on papyrus. The cuneiform records of Western Asia were chiefly pressed into soft clay tablets. All such documents present surpassingly valuable material for the reconstruction of social, economic, and moral life. Through the study of thousands of cuneiform tablets the Oriental Institute is building up an amazing story of consecutive centuries of economic change, a process which cannot be studied so clearly or for so long a period elsewhere in human history.

The cuneiform clay tablet shown opposite was discovered by the Institute in the library of Sargon of Assyria (700 B.C.) It lists about one hundred Assyrian kings, running back from the time of Sargon to the latter half of the third millennium before Christ, and gives new and important information on the earlier history of Assyria.

Under a corner of the Audience Hall at Persepolis Darius the Great placed the stone box shown opposite, containing a gold and a silver tablet. In the photograph the excavator is supporting the silver plaque, while the gold plaque still rests in the limestone box. The cuneiform inscription is written in three languages, Old Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian, and gives the limits of the Persian Empire about 515 B.C., twenty-five years before Darius marched to Marathon.



# Reconstructing the Past

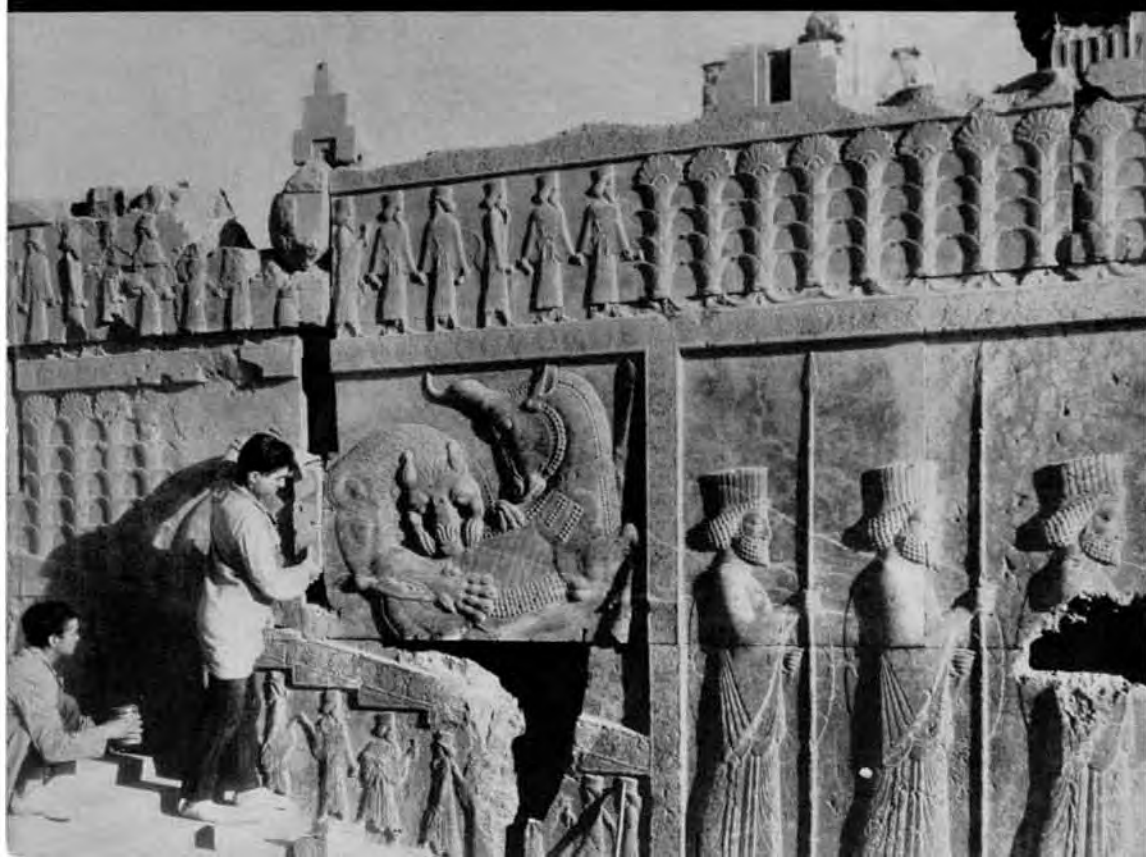
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**L**EGEND says that Alexander the Great, madly jealous of the past glory of Persia, left a drinking bout to set a torch to the palaces of Darius and Xerxes at Persepolis. The great walls and ceilings crashed down in a heap of bricks and ashes, leaving a few lonely columns to mark the place of once spacious halls. The excavations of the Oriental Institute are giving some confirmation to this racy legend. The removal of great masses of crumbled brick and ashes has uncovered priceless and majestic works of art.

On the east side of the Audience Hall of Darius and Xerxes the excavators found a magnificent complex of staircases, 240 feet in length, embellished with relief sculptures showing a New Year's reception of the Persian emperors. On the right the Medes and Persians of the royal army stand at attention. The corresponding section on the left shows foreign peoples bringing tribute to the emperor. Presumably New Year's gifts were brought up these same staircases into the Audience Hall. In a vast room filled with a forest of soaring columns the Persian emperor sat to receive the tribute of the world.

Proper archeology involves reconstruction of the ancient scene. That reconstruction may be by charts or plans, by the written word, or it may be a physical restoration of broken parts. The great staircases of Persepolis were splendidly preserved by their protective covering of brick and ashes, but a certain amount of breakage over the centuries was inevitable. The lower photograph shows Institute workers setting back in place fragments of stone which had been dislodged. Such restoration is symbolic of the archeologist's constant effort to recover and preserve the hitherto missing pages of man's story.





# Presenting the Results

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THE field archeologist brings home his objects and his records so that a staff of experts may study them under favorable conditions and present their findings to the world. Presentation takes two forms: exhibition and publication.

The Oriental Institute's portion of the objects found is exhibited in its museum, of which the Egyptian Hall is shown here. Careful selection of materials, arrangement in logical order, and concise labeling are important factors in making these exhibits intelligible to visitors. The success of the presentation is indicated by the constant interest of groups and individuals.

Through an extensive publication program the results of the Institute's work reach a much wider circle of interested persons than can visit the museum. To keep the general reader informed of the main facts developed by field work it publishes "Oriental Institute Communications," written in nontechnical language and plentifully illustrated. Scientific presentation of source materials, including full and final accounts of field operations and results, is contained in "Oriental Institute Publications," intended primarily for the specialist. There are other series dealing with specific phases or problems of ancient civilization.

In an attempt to give ancient works of art a longer life, the Institute publishes, in full color, examples, of the best wall paintings found in Egyptian tombs. The illustration opposite, depicting a nobleman of the fifteenth century before Christ hunting birds in the marshes, gives only a hint of the beauty of these volumes.

In fulfilling the task to which it is dedicated—the presentation of a unified and scientific story to the scholarly world and to the public—the Oriental Institute will disclose ever more clearly the highest process in our universe: the unfolding life of man



# The Oriental Institute

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## OFFICERS OF ADMINISTRATION

JOHN A. WILSON, *Director*  
HOWARD B. MATTHEWS, *Executive Secretary*  
T. GEORGE ALLEN, *Editorial Secretary*  
WATSON BOYES, *Museum Secretary*

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## PROJECTS OF THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE

The Prehistoric Survey of Egypt	The Megiddo Expedition in Palestine
The Sakkarah Expedition in Egypt	The Syrian-Hittite Expedition
The Egyptian Coffin Texts Project	The Anatolian-Hittite Expedition
The Abydos Expedition in Egypt (with Egypt Exploration Society)	The Iraq Expedition in Babylonia
Ancient Egyptian Paintings	The Iraq Expedition in Assyria
The Epigraphic and Architectural Surveys in Egypt	The Iranian Expedition
	The Assyrian Dictionary
	The Archeological Corpus

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*The Human Adventure*, an eight-reel talking picture sketching man's rise from savagery to civilization in terms of the Institute's researches, is available at reasonable rates in both 16- and 35-millimeter size. Screening time, 72 minutes.

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## MUSEUM HOURS

June–November: Week days and Saturdays—10:00 A.M.–5:00 P.M.  
Sundays—11:00 A.M.–5:00 P.M.  
December–May: Week days—1:00–5:00 P.M.  
Saturdays and Sundays—11:00 A.M.–5:00 P.M.

These hours are subject to change. For latest information telephone Midway 0800, Local 518.

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This fifth edition of the Oriental Institute handbook omits description of field expeditions and researches detailed in earlier editions. An account of the background and history of the Institute is given by James H. Breasted in *The Oriental Institute* (Volume XII of "The University of Chicago Survey").