

News & Notes

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ON THE COVER: Students working on ceramics with the Pots of Empowerment project (see page 4)



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



I am writing as I watch the sun rise over the prehistoric mound of Tell Kurdu, silhouetting the excavation team of my colleague Rana Özbal, professor of archaeology at Koç University in Istanbul, already hard at work on the summit of the mound. I am sitting in our newly built Tayinat Archaeological Project expedition compound, or *kazı ev* in Turkish, constructed of prefabricated portables, or containers, laid out at the base of the mound, which ironically was first investigated by the Institute's Braidwood-led Syrian-Hittite Expedition in the 1930s. We are here at the gracious and generous invitation of Rana and her team, in the aftermath of last year's devastating earthquakes, which destroyed more than 90 percent of the ancient city of Antakya (classical Antioch), including our own expedition compound.

Today, a little over a year and a half since the earthquakes, Antakya's dense urban landscape has been transformed yet again. The widespread destruction, exhaustively documented and reported in the media, has been replaced by a vast, eerie space of empty lots, the rubble of thousands of buildings and homes having been hauled away in preparation for an ambitious, comprehensive rebuilding of this ancient city.

My Antakya experience has been an indelible one, and it has been a powerful reminder of the formative importance of cultural landscapes, a point my colleague Mehrnoush Soroush, professor of ancient Near Eastern studies and director of ISAC's Center for Ancient Middle Eastern Landscapes (or CAMEL), drives home in her reflection on the pioneering history of the Center and its founder, Tony Wilkinson. Mehrnoush also outlines an ambitious vision for CAMEL's future as a center of innovative scholarship, notably, by way of example, the application of artificial intelligence in archaeological documentation. Look for future reports on this rapidly expanding and exciting area of ISAC research.

In a second piece, Prof. Soroush highlights another exciting ISAC undertaking, her Pots of Empowerment project, funded by a grant from the University of Chicago Women's Board. Anyone who has spent time on an archaeological field project in the Middle East will relate to her encounter with the Iraqi Kurdish women employed to wash pottery on her project, the Erbil Plain Archaeological Survey, directed by an ISAC/Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations graduate, Jason Ur. Rather than simply relying on their labor as pottery washers, however, Mehrnoush directly engaged these women in her efforts to build a typology of the medieval and Islamic ceramics of the region, a vitally important yet long-neglected part of the region's rich cultural history. As Mehrnoush recounts, her experience yielded valuable research results while meaningfully engaging members of the local community, who—not surprisingly—showed considerable interest in learning more about their own history.

Finally, with the approaching centennial anniversary of the Epigraphic Survey of Egypt, I am pleased to note the opening of a special exhibit, "ISAC's 'Fifty-Cent Men': How the Gold Reserve Act Altered the Business of Archaeology." Curated by Anne Flannery, head of ISAC's Museum Archives, the exhibit documents a little-known but critical moment in the long and illustrious history of the Epigraphic Survey and Chicago House, the expedition's headquarters in Luxor. Installed as a satellite exhibit in the lobby of the Charles M. Harper Center of the University of Chicago Booth School of Business, the exhibit is on display until May 2025. Be sure to check it out!

TIMOTHY HARRISON
Director

POTS OF EMPOWERMENT

AND THE TYPO-CHRONOLOGY OF LATE HISTORIC CERAMICS ON THE ERBIL PLAIN*

by Mehrnoush Soroush

In late August 2022 I was in the city of Erbil, in the Kurdistan Governorate of Iraq, serving as the associate director of the Harvard-based Erbil Plain Archaeological Survey (EPAS). Working with a group of local Iraqi Kurdish women, I led an effort to sort through thousands of pottery sherds that had been stored over the past decade of our team's survey of the site, aiming to improve their organization and ensure their preservation. This experience was mind opening. I had met these women previously, but I had never had any serious conversations with them. In Erbil, local women are generally absent from the professional life of archaeological projects. They are hired as workers, mainly to wash pottery and occasionally to do basic data organization. I personally had not seen any Iraqi Kurdish women contributing to the intellectual life of any project.

That summer, the barriers between us began to crack. Over the course of a few days of work, we asked one another about our families and talked about our kids—as mothers do—but we also talked about “research.” I noticed that my female colleagues occasionally stopped in the middle of their work to think and ask about the date of pottery pieces that interested them or that they had learned about in college. I realized these women all had bachelor's degrees related to archaeology. However, in the work environment, the women are relegated to administrative tasks or manual labor in field projects. Observing the enthusiasm, curiosity, and meticulous care with which these women worked, I asked myself: What if they had the skills to do more than simply sort through objects? Could we empower them to analyze sherds independently, giving them an active role in the creation of archaeological knowledge?

In the background of these thoughts, my mind was, as usual, preoccupied with how to grapple with the main barrier to my research—namely, the lack of a reliable ceramic typology for northern Iraq's late pre-Islamic and Early Islamic periods. A few months later, I came to the realization that the two problems are similar in nature, and I aspired to address them together. A generous three-year grant from the University of Chicago Women's Board for a project titled “Pots of Empowerment” allowed me to take foundational steps in this direction.

As a landscape archaeologist, I study human–environment interaction history at scales beyond habitation sites. In particular, I examine the long-term water history of arid environments and the social, technological, and ecological factors contributing to change and evolution in water management technologies and strategies. Landscape archaeologists rely heavily on dated archaeological sites to determine the date range of landscape remains, such as irrigation canals, ancient road systems, and agricultural fields. For the dating of archaeological sites, we rely on catalogs of ceramic types called *ceramic typologies*.

These ceramic types are established on the basis of excavated sites in the region. The periods that are better represented in archaeological sites are better represented in ceramic typologies. The overwhelming majority of archaeological projects excavate pre-Islamic sites or the pre-Islamic layers of multiperiod sites. Historically, Western archaeologists, most of them men, have traveled to the Middle East in search of remnants of great ancient empires. The people living in the region, and the remains of their most recent history—the Islamic period—have been seen as distractions on the way to the truly valuable treasures of ancient civilizations that lie buried under the sand. As a result, ceramic typology is poorly understood for the periods from the advent of Islam (ca. 600 CE) until modern times almost everywhere in the Middle East, including the Kurdistan region of Iraq.

In this Eurocentric colonial endeavor, local populations have historically provided labor for the extraction of their heritage. To help correct some of the mistakes of the past, most Western projects now partner with local archaeologists as research collaborators. Nevertheless, in my opinion, the Occident/Orient intellectual barrier persists. On the one hand, key team partners are typically men. On the other hand, these male colleagues participate mainly in data collection and have little opportunity to contribute to and therefore learn about the process of knowledge production. As a woman who was born and raised in the Middle East, I represent a small minority in Western archaeological practice.

As the principal investigator of the three-year Women's Board pilot project, I collaborate with Dr. Seth Priestman, a globally



TOP TO BOTTOM: Figures 1-3. The first day of fieldwork at the site of Mastawa; discussing and evaluating ceramic collections; communal ceramic washing at the storage facility.



TOP TO BOTTOM: Figures 4-6. Students examining different ceramic fabrics; boxing a reference ceramic collection for use in future analysis and training; a student learning how to enter ceramic information in Excel.



TOP TO BOTTOM: Figures 7-9. Students working on real ceramic study tasks after guided practice, independently and as a group.

renowned ceramic specialist of the late antique and Islamic periods, to improve our understanding of the typo-chronological development of the Erbil Plain ceramic sequence in the late antique and medieval periods. Building a comprehensive ceramic typology for a historical period requires timely and expensive excavations over generations. However, systematic and lab-based comparative analyses, for which Dr. Priestman is renowned, can also establish a relatively good basis for ceramic differentiation by associating the types, materials, and decorations frequently found together at sites that were occupied over short periods.

Instead of a solo study conducted by foreign specialists, we pursued this research while simultaneously providing intensive training for Kurdish women who already have a bachelor's degree in archaeology or who have worked on archaeological projects in various capacities. The first year of our project was carried out under the permit and with the support of EPAS, directed by Harvard professor Jason Ur. A campaign of fieldwork, intensive study, recording, and ceramic analysis was undertaken over a fourteen-day period between August 26 and September 8, 2023, during which all team members participated in all activities. We took a slow approach to the survey; all activities were done together, with ample time for explaining the goals of each activity and for questions, practice, correction, and feedback.

Our season started with two days of fieldwork, gathering large surface collections of pottery from selected areas on the two medieval sites of Mastawa and Kilisa. EPAS preliminary analysis had suggested that the sites were occupied from the middle to the late Islamic periods. On the first day, we explained the goals of the project, the reasons for the ceramic collection, and the basic principles of collection strategy (fig. 1). During the collection, we convened regularly to discuss our collections; the participants were eager to learn more, especially about different methods of collecting and the reasons behind them (fig. 2). On both days, we ended fieldwork early to return to the museum and work as a team in washing and organizing the pottery while exchanging conversations about our collections and the day's work (fig. 3). These conversations helped the team build friendship and trust. Students were particularly eager to discuss their studies and course projects and to ask questions about archaeological surveys and ceramic analysis. Most of our Kurdish colleagues knew very little English. I learned some Kurdish prior to the field season. We practiced both languages as we tried to have small conversations. But the team collaboration was made possible thanks to the polyglot project members, Ms. Nihayat Muhammadrahim and Mr. Aram Amin, who translated all conversations between English, Kurdish, and Persian.

Analysis of the collections was conducted for eight full working days at the Erbil Directorate of Antiquities. The trainees were introduced to the full range of concepts of ceramic analysis—fabric, temper, typological characterization, data, presentational organization, reporting standards, and much more. They examined and became familiar with the identification of different fabric types under a DinoLite electronic microscope and with hand lenses, and they had extensive practice separating the pottery groups into categories defined by Dr. Priestman (figs. 4–6). The training was very successful. The trainees showed great enthusiasm and curiosity about all the topics that were introduced and notable progress in understanding and implementing these concepts as they helped with the project (figs 7–9). They expressed much interest in

continued learning about ceramic analysis after the field component was over and envisioned themselves as specialists in ceramic and archaeological research (figs 10–12). An unexpected lesson was that our research, which started out extremely slowly because of its educational component, sped up tremendously in the last two days as more people were able to participate in the analysis.

The ceramic analysis suggests that both sites were occupied mainly during the later Early Islamic period (ca. ninth and tenth centuries CE) and later Middle Islamic period (ca. fifteenth and sixteenth centuries), with little, if any, pottery securely placed between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries. More seasons are needed to refine and validate this result and to investigate whether the results from these two large sites represent regional settlement history or individual site histories. A recent publication by Karel Nováček and colleagues has similarly suggested increased urban activity in the region in the Early Islamic period and a regional settlement decline after the eleventh century. The increased activity in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries might be connected to a new wave of economic investment in the early Ottoman period that also included the building of several subterranean qanat water systems, which I have been studying for the past few years.

In conclusion, when we imagine an archaeologist, our culture has taught us to picture a white man in search of the remains of pre-Islamic history. I hope to contribute to changing this perception. Understandably, the Pots of Empowerment project is only a small step. Nevertheless, I hope it can serve as a model for other Western institutions to further engage the local cultural-heritage sector in the intellectual components of their research. Furthermore, I aim to contribute to paving the way for everyone interested in the archaeology of the Middle East beyond the pre-Islamic empires, so that we can investigate the history of the recent past with which Middle Eastern societies are most strongly connected and in which they are invested.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank all the members of the first season of the Pots of Empowerment project for their incredible dedication and passion and for achieving a lot with little in the way of resources—in particular, Mr. Aram Ahmad Amin for taking care of all the logistics and organizational needs, for translation, and for his contribution to the research; Ms. Nihayat A. Muhammadrahim for her crucial contributions in translation and teaching; and the rest of the team, Ms. Gara Hasan Saleh, Ms. Sazan Nasr Vahid, Ms. Belana Maaruf Rashid, Ms. Kazhin Talaat Qader, and Mr. Sina Soltani. I would also like to thank the Kurdistan Regional Government General Director of Antiquities, Kak Kaifi Mustafa Ali, and the Director of Antiquities of Erbil Governorate, Kak Nader Babakr, for permitting us access to their country's archaeological and museum resources, as well as Prof. Jason Ur for allowing this season of the project to be carried out under the EPAS permit.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:

Ur, Jason A., Nader Babakr, Rocco Palermo, Petra M. Creamer, Mehrnoush Soroush, Shilan Ramand, and Karel Nováček. 2021. "The Erbil Plain Archaeological Survey: Preliminary Results, 2012–2020." *Iraq* 83: 205–43.

Nováček, Karel, Miroslav Melčák, Lenka Starková, and Narmin Ali Muhammad Amin. 2016. *Medieval Urban Landscape in Northeastern Mesopotamia*. Archaeopress Archaeology. Oxford: Archaeopress.



TOP TO BOTTOM: Figures 10-12. A guest helper who joined us for a few days (the women often must manage many roles to pursue a career); students receiving certificates of completion; celebration and farewell.

THE PAST AND FUTURE OF THE CENTER FOR ANCIENT MIDDLE EASTERN LANDSCAPES

by Mehrnoush Soroush



The Center for Ancient Middle Eastern Landscapes (CAMEL) was founded in 1998 by Tony Wilkinson, a pioneer in landscape archaeology who, most archaeologists agree, revolutionized our understanding of the ancient landscapes of Mesopotamia and the broader Middle East.

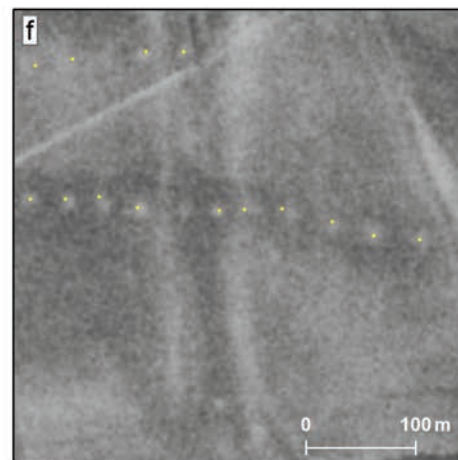
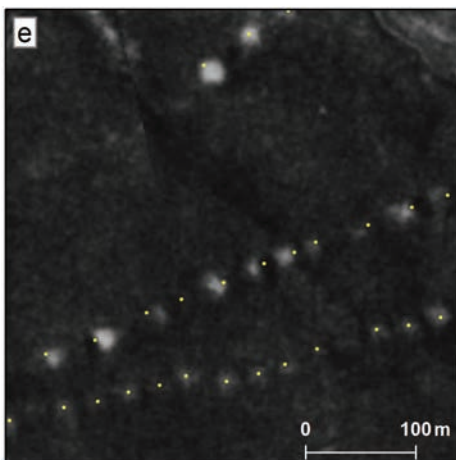
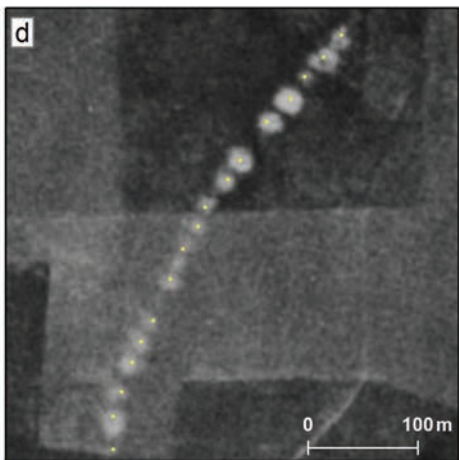
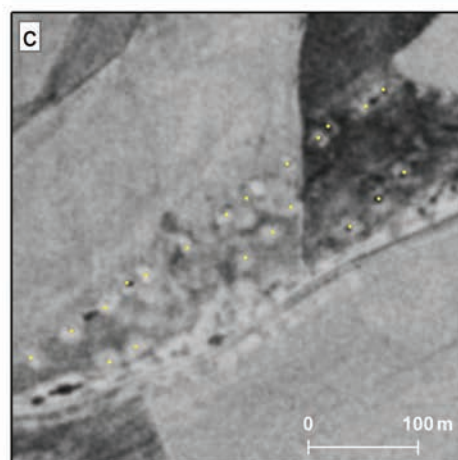
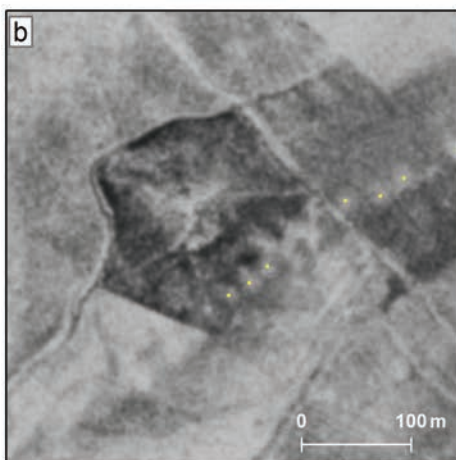
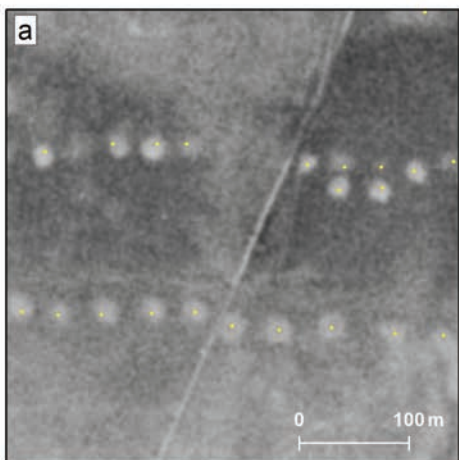
Wilkinson was the assistant director of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq when the 1990–91 Gulf War put an end to foreign archaeological projects in that country. This presented an opportunity for ISAC (then the Oriental Institute) to hire him as a research professor through the initiative of professor emeritus McGuire Gibson, who recalls being truly impressed by Wilkinson's exceptional ability to “see” and explain the complex evolution of ancient Middle Eastern landscapes. Outside Iraq, Wilkinson was actively using many of his pioneering ideas in new territories, such as Yemen and Oman.

In a landmark book, *Archaeological Landscapes of the Near East* (University of Arizona Press, 2003), Wilkinson offered a systematic, multidisciplinary, and multiscalar approach to studying the human past by directing attention to human activity outside

dense habitation areas, the typical archaeological site in the public's perception. His work led to the recognition and adoption of “landscape archaeology” as a distinct archaeological research activity. Landscape archaeology engages with the Earth's entire surface as a cultural landscape. Archaeological sites are just one part of a broader landscape with many forms of material remains that account for the long-term history of human–environment interaction. CAMEL became Wilkinson's incubator where he, along with his graduate students, set a model for the documentation and analysis of a wide range of archaeological remains, including waterworks, road systems, agricultural fields, production sites, and more.

Wilkinson's many survey projects across the Middle East were complemented by systematic laboratory research on historical satellite imagery that had captured Middle Eastern landscapes in the late 1960s and early 1970s before the wave of agro-hydraulic modernization and urbanization destroyed the ephemeral traces of millennia of past human activity. Archaeologists have always been keen to “see” archaeological sites from the sky, so as to gain a comprehensive view of both the sites and their geographical settings.





OPPOSITE: Archaeological remains of ancient landscapes, such as these large canals, often go unnoticed and are quickly destroyed by urbanization and agricultural expansion. Shushtar, Iran.

THIS PAGE, TOP: Remains of ancient subterranean water systems, known as qanats, are occasionally still preserved on the fringes of historic settlements. Jupar, Iran. Copyright: © S. H. Rashedi.

THIS PAGE, BOTTOM: Declassified historical satellite images preserve information about ancient landscapes that have since been lost. The white dots in the declassified CORONA imagery are evidence of qanat shafts in various states of preservation.

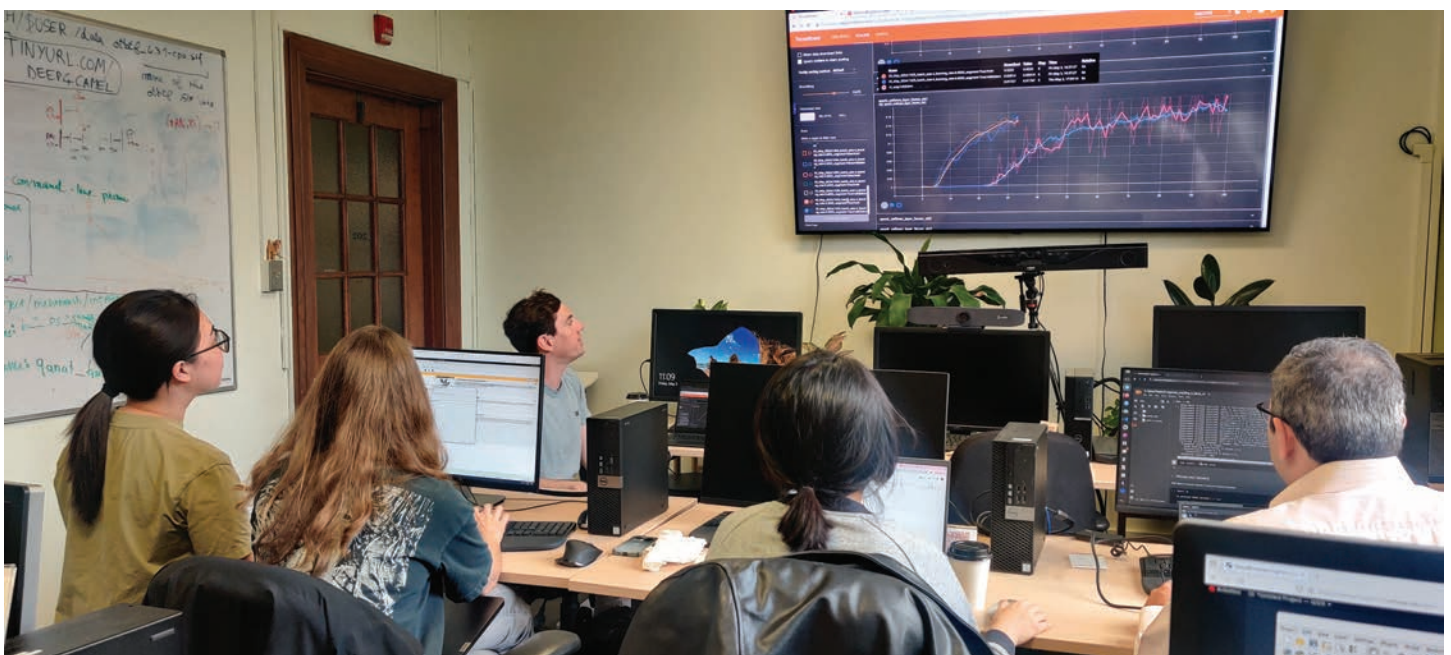
(I hope you have a chance to visit ISAC's current special exhibition *Pioneers of the Sky*—it beautifully shows the history both of aerial photography in archaeology and of ISAC as one of the pioneers of aerial imaging.) Although forbidding financial and technical barriers and restricted access to aerial imagery initially prevented the wide adoption of aerial imaging techniques, the situation changed in 1995 when the US government started to declassify thousands of Cold War-era reconnaissance satellite images. Wilkinson's newly founded CAMEL became the first and most intensive user of these collections.

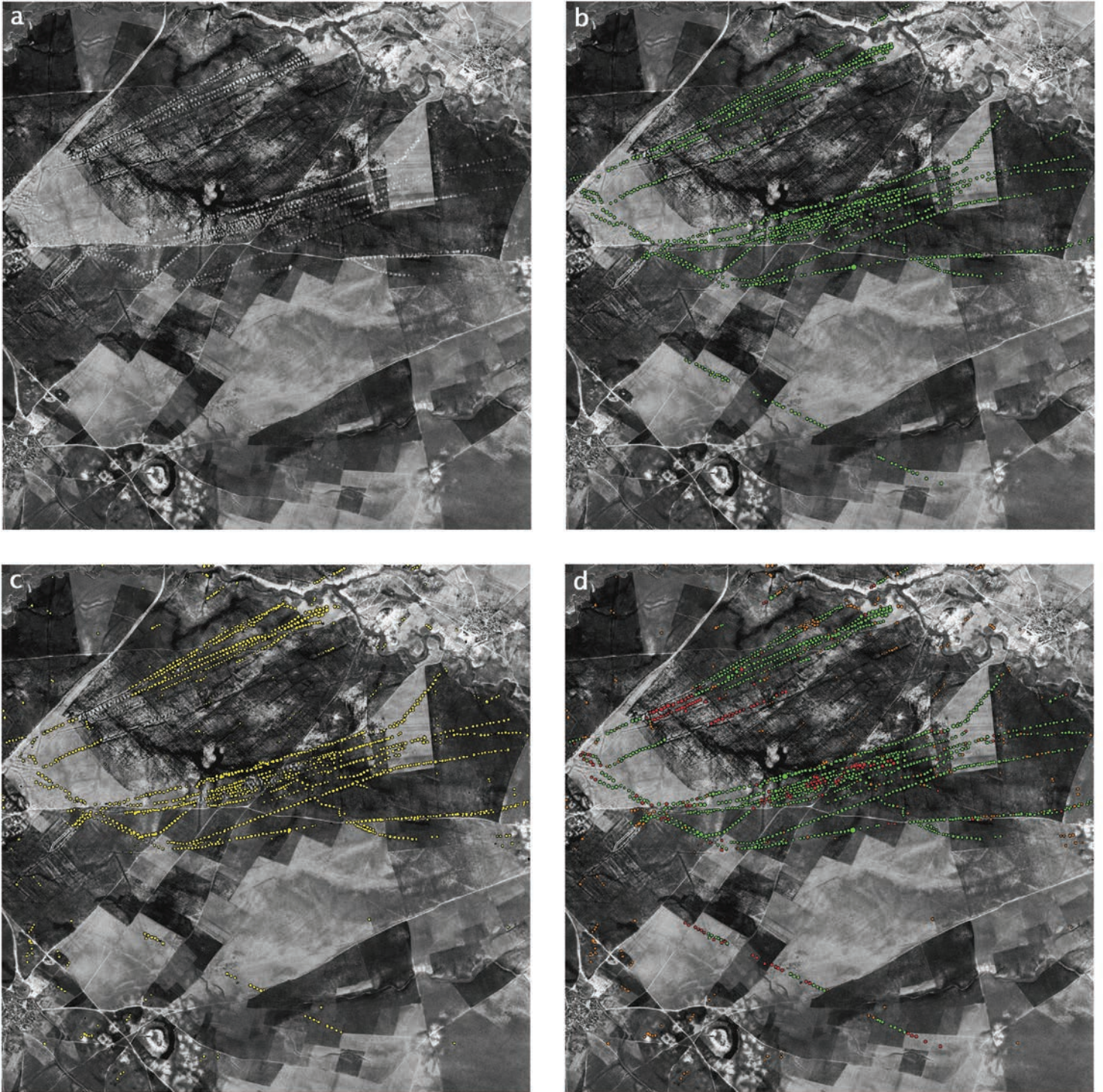
CAMEL ordered thousands of CORONA negatives and negative scans, inspected them systematically, and integrated them with several other forms of spatial data. As such, another focus of CAMEL's early years was to apply the emerging science of geographic information systems (GIS) in archaeological research, allowing for the integration of large and diverse data sets and performing sophisticated modeling and analyses on large-scale and deep-time archaeological questions. The next generation of CAMEL directors further democratized access to spatial data by digitizing CAMEL's large collection of images and maps and providing online access to this data set, and they explored new applications of digital technologies in landscape archaeology. As CAMEL's new director, I was tasked with (re)imagining the future of CAMEL.

Over the past two years, with the help of a fascinating team of University of Chicago students and the support of ISAC's faculty, staff, and leadership, CAMEL underwent several renovations and restructuring, from physical space to management practices and research planning. I see the future of CAMEL in two main areas: research support and innovation. CAMEL's first role is to promote and support learning and the application of spatial analysis, particularly for landscape archaeological research. Student research staff learn through apprenticeship, by conducting research projects and investigating questions that support researchers from the University of Chicago and the broader archaeological community. In addition to the work requested by our patrons, CAMEL systematically invests in facilitating access to spatial and archaeological data, including a

countrywide database of Afghanistan's archaeological sites compiled by the Afghanistan Heritage Mapping Project, led by Prof. Gil Stein and CAMEL's managing director, Dr. Anthony Lauricella, and the Anatolian Atlas, led by Prof. James Osborne and CAMEL supervisor Dominik Lukas (bit.ly/Anatolian_Atlas). Furthermore, we continue to facilitate public access to our digital spatial database. Through a collaboration among CAMEL, ISAC's Research Archives, and the Big Ten Academic Alliance, CAMEL's public geospatial data are now easily searchable through a map-based interface as a collection of more than 50,000 georeferenced data sets from a wide range of contributing institutions (bit.ly/Geoportals>NN).

In addition to research support, CAMEL strives to maintain its reputation for research innovation. One of the areas in which CAMEL has started to focus heavily is the application of artificial intelligence (AI) in archaeological documentation. While AI and deep learning have revolutionized many industries, they have not been systematically adopted in archaeology because of technical, infrastructural, and financial barriers. Archaeology and cultural-heritage management still rely heavily on visual inspection and manual detection of remains on satellite and aerial imagery because teams in these fields typically lack the intricate skills required for integrating AI into their remote-sensing workflows. CAMEL has launched a collaborative project that aspires to create a breakthrough in the use of AI-assisted archaeological detection for large-scale mapping of cultural landscapes. The first phase of the project focuses on the detection of massive subterranean water extraction and transportation systems, known as qanats, that peppered the landscapes of North Africa, West Asia, and Central Asia until the mid-twentieth century. This choice was motivated by my ongoing research on the water history of West Asia in *longue durée*; however, we hope to make the workflow and tool kit developed for this research accessible to archaeology and cultural-heritage professionals who face similar challenges with the slow pace of discovery and monitoring of archaeological landscapes at regional scale.





ABOVE: Assessment of an AI qanat detection model according to common AI evaluation practice. *a*, image assigned to model; *b*, human-trained qanat shafts (i.e., labels); *c*, computer-detected qanat shafts (i.e., predictions); *d*, identification of correct and wrong predictions, comparing *b* and *c*.

OPPOSITE: CAMEL team monitoring the performance of an AI model being trained to detect traces of old qanat shafts on declassified historical imagery, during a May 2024 hackathon led by Remi Cresson (front row).

ISAC'S "FIFTY-CENT MEN"

HOW THE GOLD RESERVE ACT ALTERED THE BUSINESS OF ARCHAEOLOGY

by Anne Flannery

With the support of the University of Chicago Booth School of Business, the Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures has installed a satellite exhibit in the lobby of the Charles M. Harper Center, which will be on display from May 2024 to May 2025. The exhibit objects and archival documents are from the collections of the ISAC Museum and Archives. Tasked with curating an exhibit related to a business theme, the narrative focuses on a tumultuous moment in the history of the United States and ISAC as they navigate the throes of the Great Depression. In celebration of the centennial anniversary this year of the Epigraphic Survey expedition to Egypt, the exhibit follows the unfolding crisis taking place there in the first few months of 1934.

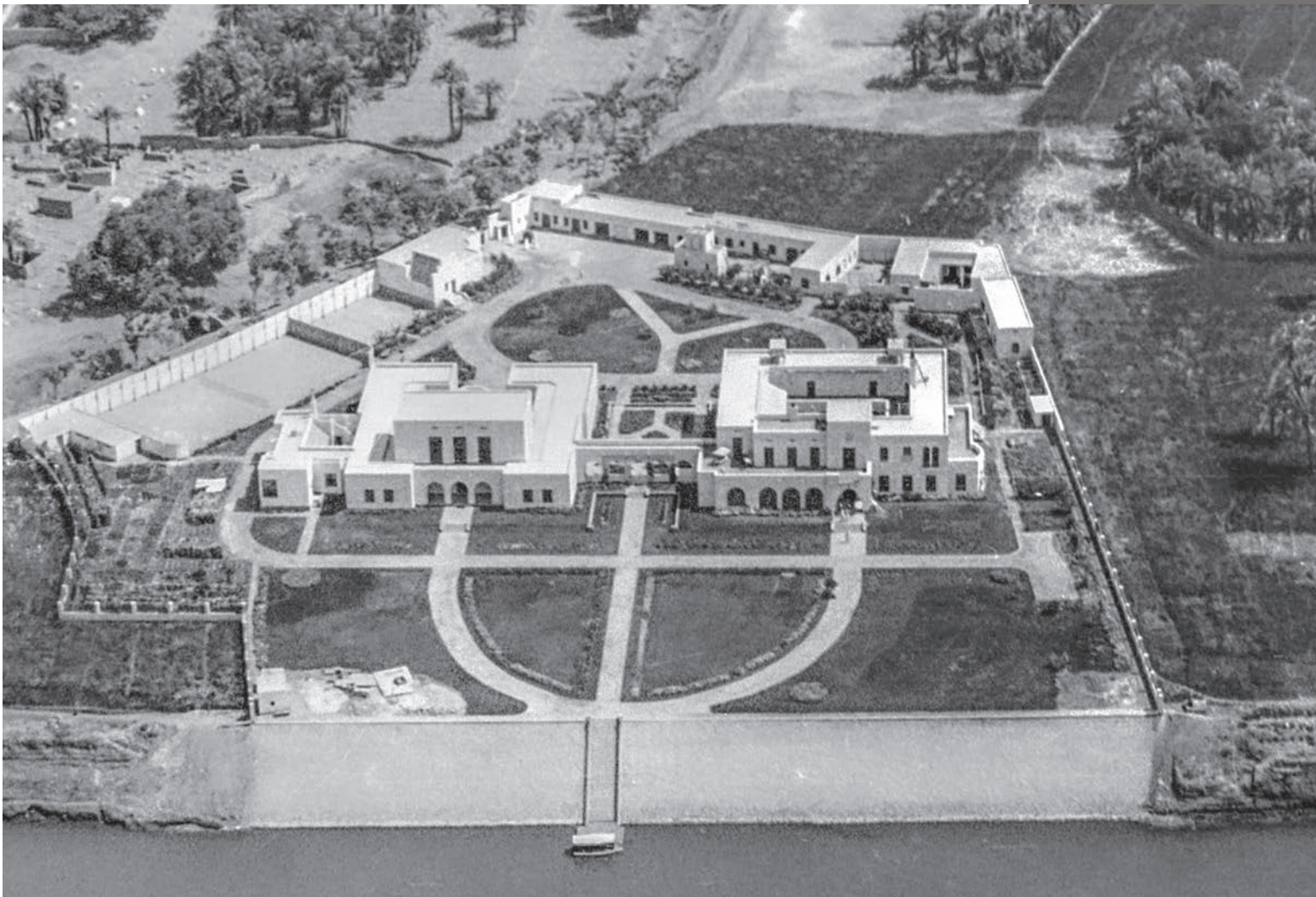


Figure 1. The newly built Chicago House on the east bank of the Nile at Luxor, 1933. ISAC Museum Archives photo N. 11749.

CHICAGO HOUSE AT LUXOR, EGYPT

In 1924, ISAC established its first expedition headquarters on the west bank of the Nile, in Egypt near Luxor, to serve as the home of the Epigraphic Survey. In 1931, the expedition moved to a new, more permanent complex on the east bank. Known as Chicago House, it is shown in the photograph in figure 1 (opposite) shortly after its construction was completed. The Survey is dedicated to epigraphic work on the tombs and temples at sites such as Medinet Habu, most famous for the imposing mortuary temple of Ramesses III. In addition to documenting the inscriptions and reliefs of these sites through photography and line drawings, the Survey is also committed to conservation, preservation, and site management as part of its core mission. It is here that a very real American economic crisis played out in early 1934. It all began with gold.

THE GOLD STANDARD

In 1933, the United States was taken off the gold standard by executive order. Although Americans were allowed to retain gold products such as jewelry and collector's items—like the ring and coin shown in figures 2 and 3—they were required to sell all gold currency to the government, effectively transforming the precious metal from a currency into a commodity. This order was followed by the Gold Reserve Act of January 30, 1934, signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt at the height of the Great Depression. An attempt to stabilize money supply in the United States, this legislation transferred the gold reserves in all Federal Reserve banks to the US Treasury, with the aim of stemming deflation by devaluing the dollar. The authors of this law anticipated that the dollar would depreciate to a value no lower than 50 cents. Although depreciation never reached that extreme level, the law drastically affected markets at home and abroad. At the time, the Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures at the University of Chicago (ISAC)—then known as the Oriental Institute—was active not only in Chicago but also at five archaeological sites in West Asia and North Africa. The devaluation of the dollar created turmoil across these excavations. At ISAC's Epigraphic Survey in Luxor, Egypt, for example, every staff member's livelihood was soon thrown into question, and it was feared that the staff would become "fifty-cent men" if the worst-case scenario became a reality and the dollar's worth plummeted to fifty cents.



Figure 2. Scaraboid inscribed with the cartouches of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III set in a modern gold ring. Carnelian, gold (modern). Egypt. New Kingdom, Dynasty 18 (ca. 1479-1458 BCE). Gifted in 1969. ISACM E25039. Photo by Susan Allison.



Figure 3. Rasulid coin that mentions the ruler and the profession of the Islamic faith. Gold. Yemen. Islamic period, Rasulid Dynasty, reign of al-Mansur 'Umar b. Ali (1228-1249 CE). Purchased in 1929. ISACM E13752. Photo by Susan Allison.

SKYROCKETING INFLATION

The Gold Reserve Act worked to curb inflation but massively impacted ISAC's institutional budget. The shrinking value of the dollar was most keenly felt by the members of its international excavations, whose salaries had dramatically decreased in real value to approximately 60 percent of their previous worth. To sustain the high living costs entailed by foreign expeditions, staff at these sites had to be provided with significant financial supplements. The effects of inflation were not limited to ISAC's international endeavors but were felt across the entire spectrum of its finances: in the pro forma expense projection for 1934-35, the Institute's leaders found that the budget would have to be increased by 89.19 percent over the previous year in order to meet its financial burdens.

CRISIS

By February 1934, this inflation of the budget had brought ISAC's expedition in Luxor to the point of financial and administrative crisis. The site's staff hoped that their director, Harold Nelson, would downscale the Epigraphic Survey's projects and redistribute the associated funds to the staff to alleviate the financial hardship caused by the devaluation of their salaries. Nelson resisted this approach and attempted to continue to carry out the Survey at its full pace. In a letter to ISAC director James Henry Breasted explaining the situation, Nelson complained that unclear communication to staff in both Chicago and Luxor had amplified the staff's anxiety, creating ill will and opposition to each new project he proposed during this period. With the season coming to an end, all parties were dissatisfied, and Nelson feared that valuable staff departing the site in March would not return for the following season unless an immediate resolution to these disputes could be found.

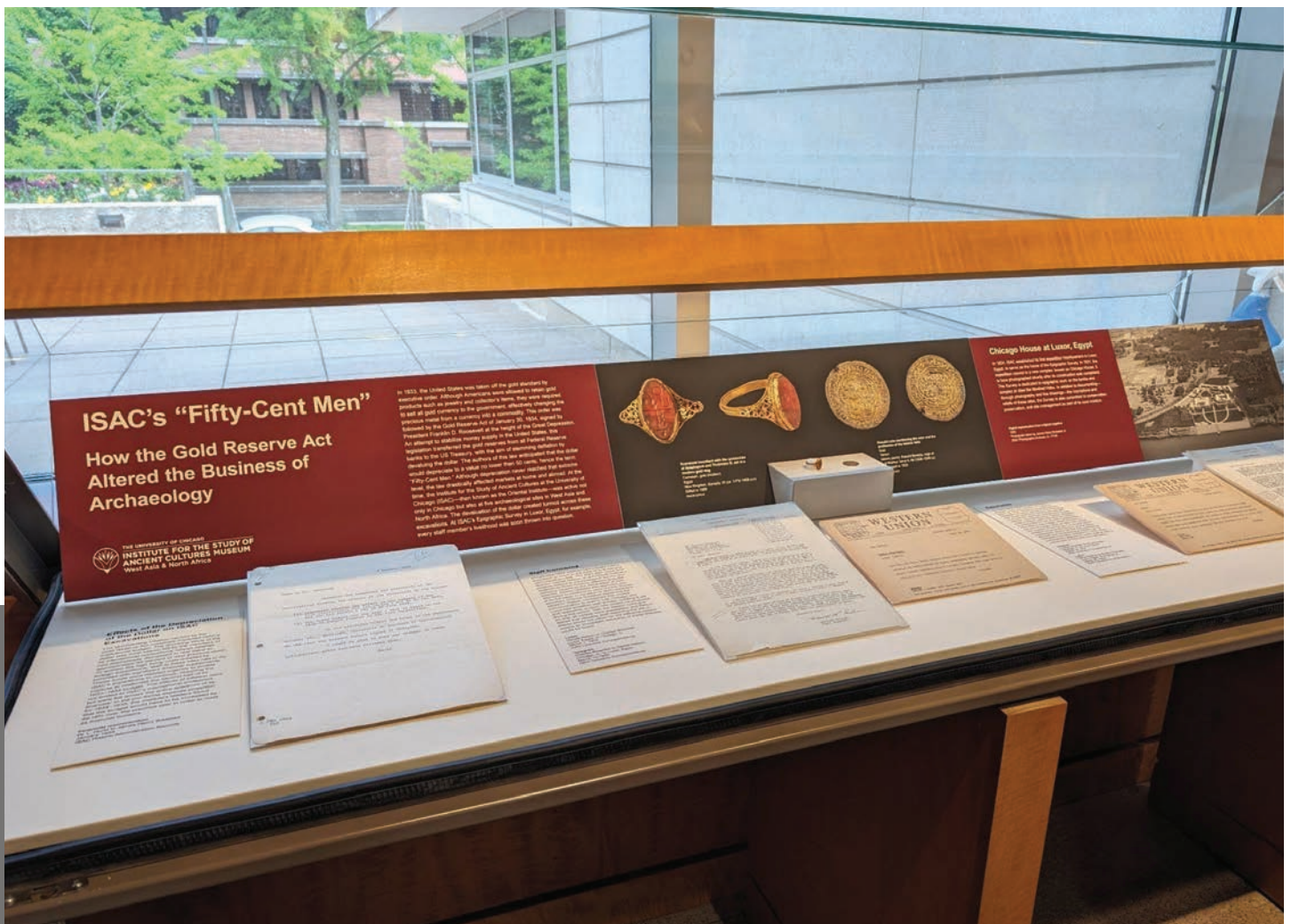
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<p>VIA EASTERN</p> <p style="margin-left: 100px;"><u>NLT</u></p> <p>SONNEL</p> <p>CAIRO (EGYPT)</p> <p style="margin-top: 20px;">INFORM STAFF ORINST FULLY COMPENSATING ALL SALARIES FOR DOLLAR DEPRECIATION FROM JANUARY FIRST TO JUNE THIRTIETH NINETEEN THIRTY FOUR STOP DESPATCHING IMMEDIATELY DRAFTS FOR FIRST QUARTERS SUPPLEMENTS AND THEREAFTER ADDING SUPPLEMENTS TO MONTHLY CHECKS STOP TRAVEL ALLOWANCES BEING INCREASED PROPORTIONATELY STOP WE EXPECT SOON REPORT FAVORABLE SALARY ADJUSTMENTS FOR YEAR BEGINNING JULY FIRST</p> <p style="margin-top: 20px;">ORINST MID 0800 LOCAL 500</p>	<p>MARCH 16, 1934</p> <p>CHICAGO ILLINOIS</p> <p style="margin-top: 20px;">BREASTED</p>													
<p style="font-size: x-small;">THE QUICKEST, SUREST AND SAFEST WAY TO SEND MONEY IS BY TELEGRAPH OR CABLE</p>														

RESOLUTION

The crisis led to a flurry of communications between Luxor and Chicago. In a cable of March 15, 1934, Breasted conceded that the Epigraphic Survey's spending for the following year would need to be reduced dramatically to provide the necessary supplements to staff salaries. The following day, however, Breasted wrote to Nelson again, this time committing to provide the full cost of salary supplements from ISAC's own budget, allowing Nelson to put his full budget, devalued as it was, toward the Survey's research (fig. 4). It is unclear where Breasted acquired the funds to provide these supplements. Nelson himself was surprised at this swift and comprehensive solution, as he indicated in a letter of March 22, 1934, which conveyed the gratitude of the Luxor staff for ISAC's commitment to their work and well-being. Until the next crisis!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The exhibition (fig. 5) was curated by Anne Flannery and organized by the ISAC Museum's staff: Susan Allison, Robert Bain, Laura D'Alessandro, Marc Maillot, Helen McDonald, Kiersten Neumann, Joshua Tulisaiak, and Alison Whyte, with support from Andrew Baumann, J. Brett McClain, and Emily Teeter.



OPPOSITE: Figure 4. Telegram, Breasted to Nelson. Chicago, Illinois, to Luxor, Egypt, March 16, 1934. ISAC Directors Correspondence.

ABOVE: Figure 5. Installation of the exhibit in the lobby of the Booth School of Business at the University of Chicago in May 2024.

CRUISE THE AEGEAN WITH ISAC DIRECTOR TIMOTHY HARRISON

Epic Journey across Time: Heroes, Saints, and Emperors
An ISAC cruise on the Aegean
led by Timothy Harrison, ISAC Director

Full Cruise: April 9–26, 2025

Leg one: April 9–18: Cyprus, Rhodes, Turquoise Coast

Leg two: April 16–26: Asia Minor, Eastern Macedonia, Thrace

This April, we step back in time to explore the lavish treasures of Byzantine emperors and seafarers on a cruise aboard the elegant Emerald Azzurra yacht. Join your host, ISAC director Timothy Harrison, on a journey that takes you to Byzantine frescoes, lavish tombs, and world heritage sites in Turkey, Greece, and Cyprus. Cruise to less visited ports, marvel at cliff-top Venetian castles, and join us on excursions to Ephesus, Troy, Meteora, and Athens on this luxury experience.

In addition to Timothy Harrison, ISAC travelers will be joined by art historian Christopher Noey and former curator Keith Christiansen from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Denis Feeney from Princeton University, and Rev. Dr. Gregory W. McGonigle from Emory University for lectures and discussions about the art, history, archaeology, and religion of the region.

This tour is offered in two 10-day legs, with the option to combine both for one 18-day excursion.

From April 9 to April 18, we set sail on “Epic Journey Across Time: Cyprus, Rhodes and Turkey’s Lycian Coast,” where we will explore the world’s largest divided capital city, the birthplace of Aphrodite, and stunning Byzantine frescoes as we sail less traveled shores. Highlights of this cruise include submerged ancient ruins, Neolithic settlements, Roman villas, and Crusader castles.

From April 16 to April 26, we embark on “Byzantium, Devotion, and Domination: Turkey to Greece,” a cruise that will send you sailing over the legendary waters of Homer’s *Odyssey* in the paths of the ancient Greeks, Macedonians, Romans, Jews, Byzantines, Venetians, and Ottomans. This leg of the tour will visit the Library of Celsus in Ephesus, survey field work at Troy, scale the monasteries at Meteora, and give you an option to observe an Orthodox Easter service in Greece.

There are also opportunities to embark on a pretour prelude to Capadocia and Istanbul from April 4 to April 10.

For the full tour itinerary and pricing, please visit https://bit.ly/ISAC_Tours or reach out to mwelton@uchicago.edu.

To register for this tour, contact Arrangements Abroad at 1-800-221-1944 or by email at trips@arrangementsabroad.com.



2024–2025 ISAC LECTURES

We kick off this year's ISAC Lecture Series with a celebration of a century of fieldwork in Luxor—three back-to-back lectures on ancient Egypt, including a *Chicago on the Nile* special exhibition lecture and book signing with ISAC's Emily Teeter.

Sunday, October 20, 4:00 pm

Emily Teeter, ISAC curator (retired)

**Special exhibition lecture and book signing for
Chicago on the Nile: 100 Years of the Epigraphic Survey**

Stop by the ISAC galleries prior to the lecture to explore the newest ISAC special exhibition, *Chicago on the Nile: 100 Years of the Epigraphic Survey*. We are excited to host Emily Teeter for a lecture that celebrates the history and impact of a hundred years of fieldwork by ISAC's Epigraphic Survey in Luxor, Egypt. Following the lecture, Teeter will sign copies of her new book, *Chicago on the Nile*. This lecture is cosponsored by the Chicago chapter of ARCE.

Wednesday, November 6, 7:00 pm

Rune Nyord, Emory University

Join us as we welcome Rune Nyord, associate professor of ancient Egyptian art and archaeology at Emory University, whose research centers on the history and discipline of Egyptology as well as the conceptions and experiences of representation, ontology, and personhood in ancient Egypt.

Wednesday, December 11, 7:00 pm

Jacquelyn Williamson, George Mason University

Explore Amarna with Jacquelyn Williamson, the author of *Nefertiti's Sun Temple: A New Cult Complex at Tell-Amarna*. Williamson is involved in the ongoing investigation of Kom el-Nana at Tell el-Amarna, the site of a sun temple associated with Queen Nefertiti.

Wednesday, February 5, 7:00 pm

Braidwood Visiting Scholar Lecture

Cheryl Makarewicz, Christian-Albrechts University

Wednesday, March 5, 7:00 pm

Catherine Kearns, University of Chicago

This March, prior to our ISAC tour of the Mediterranean including a stop at Cyprus, we welcome University of Chicago assistant professor Catherine Kearns from the Classics Department. Kearns's research examines the intersections between social and environmental change in Mediterranean landscapes during the Iron Age. Her book, *The Rural Landscapes of Archaic Cyprus: An Archaeology of Environmental and Social Change*, was published by Cambridge University Press in 2023.

Wednesday, April 2, 7:00 pm

Derek Kennet, ISAC, University of Chicago

Join us for a lecture by one of our newest ISAC faculty members, Derek Kennet, the Howard E. Hallengren Professor in Arabian Peninsula and Gulf States Archaeology. Kennet's interests center around the archaeology of Arabia, the Gulf, and the Indian Ocean and South Asia, principally in the Early Historic to Late Antique and Early Medieval periods, with a focus on the Sassanian and Islamic periods.

Wednesday, May, 7, 7:00 pm

Naoise Mac Sweeney, University of Vienna

We close our series with a lecture by Naoise Mac Sweeney, professor of classical archaeology in the Institute of Classical Archaeology at the University of Vienna. Mac Sweeney's research centers on aspects of cultural interaction and identity, with a focus on the ancient Greek world and Anatolia from the Iron Age to the Classical period. She is the author of *Troy: Myth, City, Icon* (Bloomsbury, 2018) and *The West: A New History in Fourteen Lives* (Dutton, 2023).

PLEASE NOTE

With the exception of Emily Teeter's October special exhibition lecture and Jacquelyn Williamson's December lecture, each of these lectures takes place on the first Wednesday of the month at 7:00 pm (Central) in Breasted Hall. The lectures will also stream live through ISAC's YouTube channel; ISAC members will receive a dedicated live-stream link through our monthly members' email. If you do not receive member emails, please contact Brad Lenz at blenz@uchicago.edu.

If you are unable to attend or to watch the lectures live, we will post them on ISAC's YouTube channel about a week after they take place so that you can view them at your leisure. Join us after each lecture for a reception in the ISAC Museum's Edgar and Deborah Jannotta Mesopotamian Gallery. ISAC receptions are a wonderful opportunity to talk with the lecturer, fellow patrons, and ISAC staff and faculty about the topics discussed in each lecture.



NEW ISAC PUBLICATIONS

A Master of Secrets in the Chamber of Darkness: Egyptological Studies in Honor of Robert K. Ritner Presented on the Occasion of His Sixty-Eighth Birthday

edited by Foy D. Scalf and Brian P. Muhs

Robert Kriech Ritner (May 5, 1953–July 25, 2021) was the Rowe Professor of Egyptology at the Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures. His trendsetting scholarship revolutionized our views of ancient Egyptian religion and helped launch a renaissance in the study of magic in the ancient world. In this volume, twenty-seven of Robert K. Ritner's closest friends, colleagues, and students have come together to honor him by presenting the latest ground-breaking research in Egyptology and beyond.

<https://isac.uchicago.edu/research/publications/SAC/sac3>

A Master of Secrets in the Chamber of Darkness

*Egyptological Studies in Honor of Robert K. Ritner
Presented on the Occasion of His Sixty-Eighth Birthday*

EDITED BY FOY D. SCALF AND BRIAN P. MUHS



INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF ANCIENT CULTURES
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
STUDIES IN ANCIENT CULTURES • NUMBER 3

Unpublished Bo-Fragments in Transliteration III (Bo 6087–6434)

by Oğuz Soysal

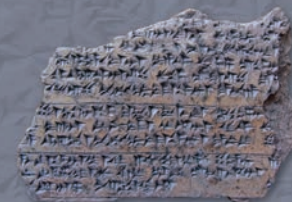
This volume continues the systematic edition of the unpublished Boğazköy tablets bearing the siglum “Bo” in the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations in Ankara. As in previous volumes, the text fragments are presented in both photographs and transliterations and are accompanied by succinct philological notes. The fragments dealt with are mostly of a religious nature—predominantly rituals, festivals, cult inventories, and oracular texts. Each text edition is accompanied, wherever possible, by information about its assignment to a Hittite text or text genre, the date of the composition, the fragment's measurements, and previous bibliography.

<https://isac.uchicago.edu/research/publications/CHDS/chds4>

UNPUBLISHED BO-FRAGMENTS IN TRANSLITERATION III

(Bo 6087–Bo 6434)

OĞUZ SOYSAL



CHICAGO HITTITE DICTIONARY SUPPLEMENTS • 4
INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF ANCIENT CULTURES
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Medinet Habu X. The Eighteenth Dynasty Temple: The Façade, Pillars, and Architrave Inscriptions of the Thutmosid Peripteros

by the Epigraphic Survey

This volume continues the Epigraphic Survey's publication of the Eighteenth Dynasty Temple of Amun at Medinet Habu. Its photographs and detailed facsimile drawings document the reliefs and inscriptions on the temple's facade and the peripteral pillars surrounding the central bark shrine. Originally decorated in the reign of Thutmose III, these sections of the temple underwent substantial modifications in later periods. An accompanying booklet includes translations of all the inscriptions and detailed epigraphic commentary on the relief scenes.

<https://isac.uchicago.edu/research/publications/ISACP/isacp1>



ISAC DISCOVERY TOURS

In May, ISAC's docents launched a weekly Discovery Tour program. These hour-long, docent-led tours of the ISAC Museum take place every Saturday at 1:30 p.m. The tours meet in Breasted Hall for a brief overview of our history and work, and then head into the galleries to explore our collections. The tours are free and open to the public, and there is no need to register.

Throughout the summer, ISAC Discovery Tours have been a successful way to attract new visitors. We have consistently hosted groups of fifteen to forty people, often split among three docent guides. While most of the Discovery Tours cover general highlights of the ISAC Museum, a few tours have focused on specific ancient cultures and particular sections of the galleries. Each Discovery Tour has inspired ISAC patrons to explore the ancient cultures we represent a bit more deeply than they might on their own. We are grateful for each of our docents who have signed up to lead these tours—each docent voice truly communicates a key point of the ISAC mission to the community: to help the public understand the development and functioning of the ancient civilizations of West Asia and North Africa from the earliest Holocene through the medieval period.

The Discovery Tour program has been meticulously planned and managed by two longtime ISAC docents, Marilyn Murray and Margaret Schmid. Marilyn and Margaret have acted as Discovery Tour leads each week through the summer, often giving overflow tours. ISAC's administration is extremely grateful for their continued dedication to this initiative and to the entire docent program.

If you are interested in joining us on a Discovery Tour, simply show up at Breasted Hall on a Saturday at 1:30 p.m., and bring your curiosity!



ISAC docents Margaret Schmid (*left*) and Marilyn Murray (*right*) prepare for a Saturday Discovery Tour.

ISAC ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES

Are you interested in learning more about the cultures of ancient West Asia and North Africa? Do you want to dive into the research that ISAC undertakes guided by our scholars? Join us online this autumn as we explore Egyptian hieroglyphs and Babylonian religion and mythology. ISAC members receive a discount on all adult education courses.

Introduction to Egyptian Hieroglyphs (Part 1)

Instructor: Foy Scalf, PhD, research associate and head of the ISAC Research Archives

September 3–October 22

8 weeks, Tuesdays, live on Zoom and recorded

Experience the thrill of decipherment by learning to read the “sacred carvings” of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs. Introduction to Egyptian Hieroglyphs 1 is designed as a step-by-step guide for beginners toward unraveling the mysteries of the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic script and the structure of its language. Students will be introduced to elements of ancient Egyptian grammar and learn to read texts commonly found on museum objects, including examples drawn from ISAC’s own collections. By the end of the class, students should expect to be able to understand a variety of short Egyptian inscriptions and grasp the fundamentals of grammar and vocabulary necessary to continue their study of the “words of the gods.” Bundle this course with Introduction to Egyptian Hieroglyphs 2 to get a complete overview of the entire ancient Egyptian language, providing you with the skills and resources necessary to tackle any Middle Egyptian text.

To register, visit: <https://bit.ly/ISACGlyphs1>

Introduction to Egyptian Hieroglyphs (Part 2)

Instructor: Foy Scalf, PhD, research associate and head of the ISAC Research Archives

November 5—January 14

8 weeks, Tuesdays, live on Zoom and recorded (class does not meet on November 26 or on December 24 and 31)

The secrets of the scriptorium await you! Students who combine Introduction to Egyptian Hieroglyphs 1 and Introduction to Egyptian Hieroglyphs 2 will obtain a comprehensive overview of the ancient Egyptian language and script. Building on the foundations laid in the first part of this double course, students will continue to build their knowledge of ancient Egyptian vocabulary and grammar. By the end of the course, students will have completed a reading of the classic ancient Egyptian literary work *The Tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor*, as well as excerpts from many other famous stories and inscriptions. With a vocabulary of more than 300 words, an understanding of the range of grammatical constructions in Middle Egyptian, and a toolkit of resources for further study, students who complete the two-part course sequence will be prepared to read any text written in Middle Egyptian hieroglyphs.

To register, visit: <https://bit.ly/ISACGlyphs2>



Babylonian Religion and Mythology

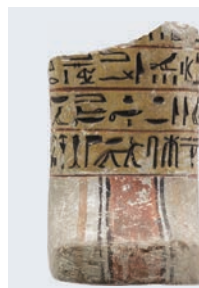
Instructor: Zach Rubin, PhD, Brown University

October 7–December 2

8 weeks, Mondays, live on Zoom and recorded (class does not meet on November 25)

Welcome to Babylon, the city that bridges heaven and earth! In this course, we will explore how the ancient inhabitants of Babylon and its domain encountered the divine forces in myths, rituals, and everyday life. Witness the rise of Marduk, patron god of Babylon, as king of all gods, as encountered in the heroic poem *Enuma Elish* and celebrated each year in the New Year’s ritual. Survey the Babylonian cosmos from the depths of the netherworld to the highest pinnacle of heaven, and meet their powerful inhabitants, from the demonic Lamashtu and Pazuzu to the mighty goddess Ishtar. Delve into the lives of priests and scholars who dedicated their lives in the service of the gods, as abundantly recounted in cuneiform records. Learn Babylonian wisdom arts such as divination, astrology, and exorcism, and see how they blur the boundaries between religion, magic, and science. Investigate how the divine world pervaded other aspects of life, from elite politics to daily interactions. Explore the context of these religious traditions within history: how they engage with the earlier traditions of ancient Sumer, and how they were received by generations after the extinction of cuneiform writing. No prior knowledge of Mesopotamian history is required for this course.

To register, visit: <https://bit.ly/ISACBabylonianReligion>



LEARN EGYPTIAN HIEROGLYPHS
WITH EGYPTOLOGIST FOY SCALF

Bundle Introduction to Egyptian
Hieroglyphs 1 and 2 and SAVE!

CHICAGO ON THE NILE

100 YEARS OF THE EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY IN EGYPT

A SPECIAL EXHIBITION AT THE ISAC MUSEUM
SEPTEMBER 17, 2024—MARCH 23, 2025

In 1924, an Egyptologist, an artist, and a photographer—the staff of the University of Chicago's new Epigraphic Survey—began the task of recording the scenes and inscriptions carved on the walls of the enormous, 3,000-year-old temple of Pharaoh Ramesses III at Medinet Habu near Luxor. It was the culmination of a long-standing dream of James Henry Breasted, the first American Egyptologist and founder of ISAC (then the Oriental Institute), to both copy and publish all the historical texts in the Nile Valley. The Epigraphic Survey was established to undertake this unimaginably ambitious program of field research.

A century later, the Epigraphic Survey continues to fulfill Breasted's mission. Housed at Chicago House in Luxor, the expedition has documented some of the most important—and endangered—records to survive from ancient Egypt, using a well-established and tested method to create highly accurate facsimiles of the carvings and texts and to publish them as a permanent archive.

The special exhibition *Chicago on the Nile* features photographs, artifacts, original artworks, and publications that illuminate a century of endeavor to preserve the records of Egypt's ancient past, along with engaging accounts of life and work at Chicago House in Luxor over the past 100 years.

CHICAGO ON THE NILE

100 YEARS OF THE EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY IN EGYPT

A SPECIAL EXHIBITION

SEPTEMBER 17, 2024—MARCH 23, 2025

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ISAC MUSEUM

Visitor information and Museum hours:
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