

OI NEWSLETTER - FIRST MONDAY - FEBRUARY 1998

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FROM THE DIRECTOR / Gene Gragg

We have sent out our call, compiled the responses, and here you have the result. This first attempt already provides an invaluable snapshot of January, 1998, at the Oriental Institute -- with some helpful indications of events coming up. Many thanks to all who contributed! We know that many of you are still trying to decide what activities should generate a Newsletter contribution. We expect that a healthy range of individual differences will remain the norm, as a stable form and approach for the Newsletter gradually evolves. Needless to say, especially at this early stage, any reactions to the content and data-gathering procedure will be particularly helpful.

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COMPUTER LAB / John Sanders

The Lab now has an IBM-compatible, Pentium-based computer, with 128 MB RAM and 6 GB of hard disk storage, a ZIP(1<H3>Material added April 30e storage drives, and a Nikon 35mm slide or print scanner set up and running in the Lab. The machine is available for use for scanning or image processing (with PhotoShop 4.0) by appointment, best on Tuesday - Thursday, 11:00am - 5:00pm.

Some Oriental Institute Website statistics to illustrate that people want the kinds of information we make available via the internet.

1. A year ago, the last week of January 1997, we had a total of 60,151 "hits" (file requests) during the previous seven days, whereas for the same time in 1998 we had 108,000+ "hits".
2. Except for the Christmas holiday period, the website has now had 17 straight weeks of over 100,000 "hits" per week, coming from an average of over 80.
3. On average, we now download between 1.5 gigabytes to 2.0 gigabytes of documents and images per week to scholars, students, and the general public worldwide.
4. Between the Museum, Institute research projects, and individual scholarship projects the OI website now contains over 1000 images and maps.

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MEMBERSHIP & DEVELOPMENT

MEMBERSHIP / Tim Cashion

Members Lectures:

Feb. 18, 1998: LECTURE CORRECTION. Our lecturer this evening will be David Reese of the Field Museum. The lecture, beginning at 8:00 PM in Breasted Hall, is entitled "Man and Animal in the Ancient Mediterranean and Near East." The lecture by Gil Stein originally advertised for this date will take place on April 22. Apologies for the error.

Membership Figures:

In January 1998, the Oriental Institute had 1296 paying membership households. In early December 1997, 180 lapsed members were sent promotional packets inviting them to rejoin the Oriental Institute. Respondents totaled 40 (22.2%) with 36 renewals (20%).

DEVELOPMENT / Cynthia Echols

The year end appeal for 1997, mailed with the Annual Report to all Oriental Institute members, set a new record for the Institute: \$334,642. Included in this total are: some \$80,000 in corporate gifts and some \$87,000 in support for various projects and field expeditions excluding the building project.

The Legacy Campaign, our fundraising drive to support climate control, renovation, and expansion has reached \$9,243,530 of the \$10,115,000 goal. The Development Office and the Legacy Campaign Executive Committee, a volunteer leadership group, are making every effort to secure the final \$871,470 needed by the close of June 1998. Our thanks to all of you who have supported this fundraising drive. The naming opportunities associated with the Legacy Campaign in recognition of major gifts now "spoken for" include the Reading Room (The Elizabeth Morse and Elizabeth Morse Genius Trusts), the basement multipurpose room (The LaSalle Banks), the temporary exhibits area (individual donor who has asked that public announcement be reserved for later date), and also a number of cases within individual galleries.

The Visiting Committee (University Trustee Robert Schloerb, Chairman; University Trustee John D. Ong, Vice Chairman) met on 29 January at the University Club. Our faculty speaker was Aslihan Yener, whose research in progress report elicited much interest—and many questions—from the committee members attending.

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MUSEUM / Karen Wilson

As of January 23, all construction work (including final cleaning and floor painting) has been completed in the new addition and in the renovated portions of the galleries and

basement. Ray Tindel has moved into his new office, and Conservation and Preparation are in the process of arranging furniture and equipment in their new spaces. Jean Grant has had to clear everything out of her office, dark rooms, and photo studio and place it in the new photo studio - so we will be unable to provide any in-house photo services for the next several months. Ray is setting up heavy object shelving in the east basement and is moving items like fragments of Khorsabad reliefs onto that shelving, and we are assembling regular shelving in the rest of the basement in preparation for moving the collections down from the former Egyptian Gallery into their new homes.

That move will begin on February 2 and is anticipated to take about 6 weeks. Once the move is completed, asbestos abatement of phase 2 areas (former Egyptian Gallery, Iranian Gallery, north basement, and metals and organic storage rooms) will take place. Then Turner will come in and complete phase 2 renovation work in those spaces, which is estimated to take 2-3 months. If everything goes according to plan, which we have learned it never does, that would mean the end of the renovation/construction project some time late in June.

Meanwhile, museum staff are working on the design for the new Egyptian Gallery, which will have its first opening event on December 5, 1998 - the 67th anniversary of the dedication of the Oriental Institute building. The exhibit design/architectural firm of Vinci/Hamp, Associates, are doing the design work, and Emily Teeter is the Curator for that new gallery. We are anticipating a reinstatement schedule that goes as follows:

- Egyptian Gallery (former Mesopotamian Gallery) - Dec. 5, 1998
- Mesopotamian and Assyrian Gallery (former Egyptian Gallery) - fall 1999
- Persian Gallery and Megiddo Gallery - spring 2000
- Special traveling exhibition - Treasures from the Royal Tombs at Ur, organized by the University of Pennsylvania Museum - to open in the former Assyrian gallery in October 2000 and run through January 2001.
- Nubian Gallery plus Amuq and Anatolia (former Assyrian Gallery) - spring 2001.

Education

The Museum has been collaborating with several Chicago Public School 6th and 7th grade teachers for the past 4 years to develop curriculum materials and school programs about ancient civilizations. We now have a rich array of resources, materials, and services that are available to these teachers. One component of the program is the Visits by Scholars to the Classroom. These visits are made by Oriental Institute graduate students, who offer slide presentations and lead question-and-answer sessions with students.

This January, Nicole Hansen did slide show presentations for 6th grade students at Fuller School, 4214 S. St. Lawrence, and at Ray School, 5631 S. Kimbark. Alex O'Brien gave slide talks to 7th graders at Sawyer School, 5248 S. Sawyer, and at Field School, 7019 N. Ashland.

Justine Way, who is now in Egypt, is excited to be hosting an email dialogue called "Ask an Archaeologist" with 6th grade students at Ray School. They are asking her questions regarding the dig at Giza and she is sending back answers from the site. When she returns in a few months, she, too, will visit Ray School and show students slides from the trip.

January saw the beginning of new adult education courses for the winter quarter, and a new collaborative venture between the Museum Education Department and the Graham School for General Studies. For the very first time, the Graham School and Museum Education are co-sponsoring a course that is being presented off-campus— at the Gleacher Center, the University's downtown location. This eight-session course—The Art of Ancient Egypt: Style, Technique, and Function—is being taught by Emily Teeter. Due to

the convenience of the downtown location, Emily will hold a special course session in the Galleries of Ancient Art at the Art Institute of Chicago.

The Education Department has "gone west" with another off-site course—Judaism in the Time of Jesus is being offered in DeKalb, Illinois, by Tony Tomasino, an adult education instructor of long-standing who now lives and works in DeKalb. Off-site classes such as this are allowing us to provide programming for Oriental Institute members throughout the metropolitan area.

Students from across the nation and around the world are also able to take Museum Education courses. Frank Yurco is teaching "Pyramids-By-Mail," a correspondence course that is sold out and has a waiting list. And people from around the world have enrolled in "An On-Line Introduction to Ancient Egypt." As far as we know, this is the world's only course on ancient Egypt offered entirely over the Internet, and it never would have happened without the advice of Chuck Jones, the expertise of John Sanders, and the countless hours of work put in by Peter Piccione, the course developer and instructor, who has produced all of the on-line lectures, text translations, graphics, and interactives. He also moderates the on-line discussion group, which is no mean feat with participants that range from college freshmen to senior citizens and from truck drivers to judges to university professors. Registrants for this class come from more than twenty states and nine different nations—Argentina, Belgium, Germany, Great Britain, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Spain, and South Africa.

Volunteers

Faculty, staff, and volunteers gathered at the President's Home on Tuesday, January 20th, to enjoy a Tea Reception hosted by Elizabeth Sonnenschein. Emily Teeter presented an update on the design and installation of the new Egyptian Gallery. Emily showed the new configuration of the Egyptian Hall, pointed out many of its user-friendly features, and discussed some of the objects that will be on display.

The Volunteer Coordinators would like to express their appreciation to the many individuals who helped to make January Docent Day a memorable event: Masako Matsumoto, for her beautiful centerpiece, and the many volunteers who shared their culinary specialties to help make this year's tea a feast for the palette. A special note of thanks to Harry Hamilton of Mrs. Sonnenschein's household staff for his assistance throughout the day.

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PUBLICATIONS / Tom Urban

We are preparing to send Markus Hilgert's Dreheim Administrative Documents from the Reign of Shulgi (OIP 115) to press, in which 499 cuneiform tablets from the Oriental Institute Tablet Collection are published. We are also preparing to have three volumes of the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary reprinted (A/1, B, and Z). Two other volumes in preparation are the Epigraphic Survey's Reliefs and Inscriptions from Luxor Temple, Volume 2 (OIP 116) and Mark Garrison and Margaret Cool Root's Seal Impressions on the Persepolis Fortification Tablets, Volume 1: Images of Heroic Encounter (OIP 117). A list of other forthcoming titles is printed on the back cover of our new catalog (which is now also available on the Web at <<http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/DEPT/PUB/CATALOG/Catalog.html>>).

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RESEARCH ARCHIVES/ Chuck Jones

The book-stack room in the new wing was delivered to the Research Archives in January. Once finishing details are complete and the shelving installed we will begin to move components of the collection. We do not anticipate that the library will be closed while classes are in session, nor do we expect that parts of the collection will be inaccessible.

This Winter John Sanders installed one of the X-Window terminals with a connection to one of the Lab's UNIX machines as a dedicated internet access terminal in the Research Archives. This gives us four public terminals in the Archives: The X-Windows, the two Macs and the DOS machine acting as a dedicated server for Miguel Civil's Sumerian database.

The on-line catalogue continues to grow. It currently holds just over eighty thousand records. We have about twenty thousand additional records nearly ready to be loaded into the database. We continue to seek ways to make this catalogue globally accessible. The software vendor which produces the database we currently use seems nearly ready to provide a Web interface. In the meantime, if anyone needs a tutorial on how to access the catalogue from an office they should come talk to me.

We have had number of visitors during the past month. Cynthia Miller from UW Madison spent a week with us; Gene Cruz visited for intensive reference checking; Mark Garrison worked in the Archives as well as on drawings for the next volume of the Persepolis Fortification Sealings volume. In addition we had the usual stream of short-term visitors during the Winter break.

Some of you have spoken to me about reviving the old Acquisitions Lists which ceased publication in the middle of 1994. It seems that it might be worthwhile reviving the old informal monthly or bi-monthly list of books received. If you have comments about this, please let me know. 177 items have been processed into the collections since the beginning of December.

The Research Archives currently produces only electronic publications. Links to all of them are available at the Research Archives Web page. Several dozen entries were added to Abzu in recent weeks, and our most recent publication is a selection of basic Introductory Readings on the Ancient Near Eastern World, produced collaboratively with Emily Teeter and Carole Krucoff. The ANE list currently has 1293 subscribers to its four options, and averages about twenty messages per day.

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TABLET COLLECTION / John A. Brinkman

Steve Tinney (Univ. of Pennsylvania) was here from Jan. 8 to Jan. 11 to do research in the tablet collection.

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PROJECTS
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DEMOTIC DICTIONARY / Jan Johnson

The DDP will have two visitors in early April. Professors John Tait (University College, London) and Heinz-Josef Thissen (Cologne) will be in Chicago to participate in the 4th Chicago-Stanford Symposium on Hellenistic Egypt. Each will spend several days working with Dictionary staff, discussing words whose reading or meaning remains especially problematic.

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YEMEN DHAMAR SURVEY / Tony Wilkinson

The fourth field season of the Yemen Dhamar Survey will commence in early February. T.J. Wilkinson and Mac Gibson will arrive February 5th and will return to Chicago in late March (Wilkinson on 31 March). We hope to get more survey, excavation and environmental studies complete, but in addition our season will include a special conference on the archaeology of Yemen, to be held in San'a 9-12 March 1998.

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INDIVIDUALS
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Fred Donner

In early November, I went to Beirut for the first time in 14 years to participate in a conference on "The Writing of Islamic History: Ambiguities and Methods," sponsored by the Islamic University in Lebanon. Shortly thereafter, I attended the 31st annual Middle East Studies Association meeting in San Francisco (Nov. 22-24), where I read a paper entitled "Sayf ibn Umar on Early Islamic Syria" as part of a panel on "Biography and History in Early Islamic Syria." (FYI, Sayf was the great chronicler al-Tabari's preferred informant for the events of the Islamic conquests in Syria, despite the fact that Sayf was an Iraqi, that his accounts have some suspect qualities, and that many Syrian authorities for these events were not used by al-Tabari.)

I am glad to say that I have recently made the last corrections to the index of my book Narratives of Islamic Origins. The Beginnings of Islamic Historical Writing, which will be published by the Darwin Press, Princeton, in March or April; it is part of Darwin's series "Late Antiquity and Early Islam."

In late February I will present a talk at Notre Dame's Medieval Institute, with the title "Was Early Islam an Apocalyptic Movement?" I will present condensed version of the same talk at the Humanities Institute's regular Wednesday lunch series on March 4.

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Jan Johnson relays the following (paraphrased from a notice in the upcoming News and Notes):

A group of distinguished language-teachers and scholars of foreign languages at four universities--the University of Michigan, the University of Chicago, Northwestern University, and the University of Wisconsin--have been awarded a four year, \$950,000 grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to adapt the most recent developments in computer technology to new modes of instruction for the teaching of three less commonly taught languages (Swahili, Hindi and Egyptian).

The Egyptological component of this project, (Jan Johnson, working in collaboration with Terry Wilfong and Janet Richards of the University of Michigan) will develop an entirely new type of reader in Middle Egyptian which will be offered to students at the University of Chicago and the University of Michigan, and later to students at all four participating institutions. Working in conjunction with the Oriental Institute Computer Laboratory, the project will create an interactive, platform-independent Web-based unified grammar and reader built on a database of approximately 30 representative Middle Egyptian texts (literary, religious, autobiographical, legal) involving thousands of lines of hieroglyphs. Each text will be identified by date, type of text, place of origin of the text, current provenience of the original text, and basic bibliography about the text; cultural and background material (textual and visual) will be provided wherever possible. There will

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Emily Teeter is teaching a non-credit class; "The Art of Ancient Egypt: Style, Technique and Function" co-sponsored by the Museum Education Department and the Graham School of General Studies at the Gleacher Center. This course is the first time such a collaboration has been undertaken, and it is hoped that the success of the program will lead to increased use of the downtown facility for Oriental Institute education programs.

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Having returned from a Mellon research fellowship in the Linguistics Department at the University of Pennsylvania, David Testen is now working as a Research Associate with the CAD. He is currently involved in completing a manuscript (based on his 1995 Linguistics/NELC dissertation) which is due to be published by E. J. Brill, and continuing his research into the linguistic prehistory of Semitic and of the Iranian languages. He is scheduled to deliver a paper on the development of Arabic subordinating conjunctions at the upcoming Arabic Linguistic Symposium (March, Champaign/Urbana) and another on Achaemenid-period philology at the AOS in New Orleans.

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Karen Wilson presented a paper to the Classical Arts Society of The Art Institute of Chicago on January 13. Titled "Palaces Without Rival: Assyrian Kingship Immortalized in Stone," the talk focused on how Assyrian palace decoration provided a pictorial representation of the institution of kingship and the ideal of the Neo-Assyrian state and how details of that decoration and representation changed between the reign of Ashurnasirpal II and that of Ashurbanipal. At the request of Jim Sopranos, Cynthia Echols arranged for Karen to make a lunch-time presentation on the history of the Oriental Institute and Museum to the president and other staff members at the downtown corporate headquarters of Amsted Industries, where Jim is Vice President.