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OI NEWSLETTER - FIRST MONDAY - FEBRUARY 2001

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UNITS

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COMPUTER LAB . John Sanders

Two new items for the OI website went up in January:

1. The 1999-2000 Annual Report
 2. A new addition for the Archaeology section -
CAMEL - the Center for Ancient Middle Eastern Landscapes
- A set of pages tying together Tony Wilkinson's various landscape studies in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen.

Thanks to Katherine Strange and several volunteers, scanning continued on the Breasted 1905-7 Egypt and Sudan photographs. We are now almost halfway thru scanning the 1100+ images.

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DEVELOPMENT / Tim Cashion

All Faculty, staff, and students are invited to attend an Associates Event featuring McGuire Gibson, speaking on Iraq since the end of the Gulf War. This talk will take place on Wednesday, 14 February at 8:00 PM in Breasted Hall.

The generosity of members and friends brought the 2000 year-end appeal total to \$390,752.59. \$200,917.47 was designated for reinstallation and other building efforts, while \$189,835.12 was designated to research projects and museum programs. Generous grants were received from The Joe W. & Dorothy Dorsett Brown Foundation, The Coleman Foundation, Inc., and the Elizabeth Morse Genius Trust. Major new gifts from individuals included a gift from Lois M. Schwartz for the Albert and Cissy Haas Megiddo Gallery, a gift from Susan Lynch (in memory of her husband Francis J. Lynch) to improve Breasted Hall's facilities, gifts from Elizabeth Baum and Howard Hallengren for the Hamoukar excavations, from the John Mark Rudkin Charitable Foundation, Barbara Mertz, and Daniel and Lucia Woods Lindley for the Epigraphic Survey, and Robert and Mary Schloerb to furnish a new, state-of-the-art inventory management and cash register system for the Suq.

Membership gifts are never included in the year-end appeal totals--the bulk of those who joined the Institute in our late-1999 membership drive will come up for renewal soon. 438 memberships expire on 28 February 2001, and renewal letters have already gone out (a normal February has about 75 memberships expiring). We will report on progress in subsequent newsletters.

The Visiting Committee to the Oriental Institute will hold its second meeting of the academic year on February 14 at the Institute. Committee members will have a short business meeting, followed by a choice of presentations: Jason Ur on Satellite Imagery and Landscape Reconstruction at Hamoukar, Laura D'Alessandro on reinstalling our Assyrian Reliefs, and Theo van den Hout on the love story of Kandaules and the importance of Lydian. The final Visiting Committee meeting of the year will be at the LaSalle Bank Dining Room on May 17; Jan Johnson will present updates on her work, and President Randel will be in attendance.

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PUBLICATIONS / Tom Urban

Dennis Campbell, Thomas Dousa, and Leslie Schramer were hired as part-time help to assist with manuscript production.

Final page proofs were sent to the authors of OIP 117, and some pages are beginning to be returned. Little remains to be done.

We still await the return of final page proofs for the Tjauti section of OIP 119.

In-house work continues on OIP 118 and OIP 120. The text for OIP 121 is being converted from Tek to MSWord.

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RESEARCH ARCHIVES / Chuck Jones

At some point in the near future I will travel to St. Louis to inspect the work on the new lights for the Reading Room restoration project.

The Acquisitions List covering November and December 2000 was unavoidably delayed. It will appear this afternoon on the RABooks List and on the Web:

<http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/DEPT/RA/RABooks.html>

John Sanders and I were the subjects of an extensive interview in January as a part of a British study surveying best practices in digital on-line publication projects. We're told the publication of the study will appear later this year.

The on-line catalogue served nearly twenty-six thousand documents in 3,836 user sessions during January 2001. This works out to about 123 users per day for the past month. We have averaged seventy-five users per day over the past year:

<http://oilib.uchicago.edu/oilibcat.html>

Statistics are not quite as clear for the main OI Web site, but it is evident that the web site draws increasingly large numbers of users. During the four weeks ending February 4, we served 1,212,025 documents in nearly seventy-four thousand user sessions. Of these, more than twenty-five thousand user sessions (about a third) were viewing on-line publications of the Research Archives:

http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/DEPT/RA/Research_Arch.html

EARLY WARNING: When work resumes later this Spring on the Oriental Institute roof, there will be a disruption in the hours of the Research Archives. As you remember, we are not permitted to inhabit the space below the roof while they are lifting the old concrete beams. Since the reading room does not have a third floor to insulate us from potential damage, that space will have to be closed while work is in progress. We hope to organize additional evening hours to replace lost time, but much of this depends on how much advance notice we get from the contractor. I will announce arrangements as soon as I know about them.

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PROJECTS
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DIYALA PROJECT / Clemens Reichel

Since I keep on missing the deadline for the Newsletter, here is a quick summary of the last few months:

Thanks to our volunteers we have been making good progress in our work leading towards the publication of the 15,000 unpublished objects from the Diyala excavations. After having returned from Hamoukar last November, where she worked as object photographer, Betsy Kremers resumed her task of taking photographs of the unpublished Diyala objects in the OI basement. The objects are photographed on black-and-white film, the images are subsequently scanned by a professional lab, returned to us on CD's and linked into our database setup by me. So far we have created some 3,400 new object photos of about 900 objects, including 400 tablets, in the last two years. Adding them to our collection of 2,900 previously existing object photographs (both field object photographs and pictures taken by me between 1997 and 1999) we now have images of about 5,000 objects to work with. About half of the unpublished 15,000 Diyala objects are here in Chicago, so – while we clearly are not done with photography – we are moving closer towards the end, at least as far as the Chicago material is concerned. At this point I also want to thank Ray Tindel for accommodating us in the basement for photography and for being exceptionally helpful in making these objects available to us.

When we started this project in 1995 we emphasized that we didn't simply want to compile catalogues of various object types but to

make these objects available as archaeological assemblages as they were found in the field. This meant that in the past few years we had to devote considerable time on re-examinations of the archaeological field records such as plans and field notes. A major obstacle in this work, however, was the fact that so few of the excavation photographs mentioned in field notebooks and on locus cards had ever been published or even been printed, making many descriptions very difficult if not impossible to understand. In August 1999 Joyce Weil started to undertake the monumental task of scanning the negatives of all the excavation photographs from the Diyala expeditions at the large-scale negative scanner in the Digital Media Lab, where she has already scanned a number of object photo negatives since January 1998. As of today, she has scanned 1,650 images of excavation photos, with less than 100 remaining to be processed. After some major headaches and a few sleepless nights of code-writing we are now able to call up excavation photos by simply clicking on plans in our database screens – a great help in my daily analytical work and, needless to say, a gigantic mountain of undigested information yet to be processed.....

I have been mostly busy with processing all this incoming data. In addition, we have started to look past our present scope of the project into the future, including the prospect of publishing this material over the Internet. Inevitably, this means a conversion from our current database program (FoxPro – a dearly beloved research tool but an extinct species otherwise by now) to a more advanced program such as Oracle 8i, which has a much greater flexibility and tech support and which the University is currently considering to buy. In this respect we are fortunate to have attracted the interest of George Sundell into our work. George has recently retired from Ameritech and is now lending his great expertise in database work – especially with Oracle – to us. A model of how a web-based and publicly accessible Diyala Project could look like is in an advanced stage of preparation.

Between linking up text and images, identifying excavation pictures, writing FoxPro code, etc., I somehow kept on working on my Ph.D. dissertation on the Palace of the Rulers at Tell Asmar. I have just finished a new set of vector-based plans of this building with numerous changes and modifications. I have also reworked the relative chronology of Eshnunna from the Ur III to the Early Old Babylonian period, leaving some rather significant changes to be suggested – actually pretty much everything has to be shifted. But

more about that, about family lines of palace officials and some interesting observations on the socio-economic role of women in Early Old Babylonian Eshnunna either in print or in my defense, hopefully sometimes in the near future...

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EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY / Ray Johnson

The month of December was so action-packed this year there was no time to report about it last month, so December's report appears here with January's, with apologies for the delay.

Most of December was taken up with the holy month of Ramadan, the Islamic month of fasting (during the daylight hours), which can often affect the work schedule. While the house staff worked reduced hours, we were lucky at the Medinet Habu temple site; like the last few years, our workmen volunteered to work their usual schedule (for which they receive overtime), so our temple schedule was not set back at all. As a result we got a tremendous amount of work accomplished during a time when one fully expects to get less. This season, in keeping with the Ramadan spirit of sharing, Chicago House hosted two 'iftar' or sunset breakfast / dinners. The first was for the 38 Chicago House local staff, in appreciation of their hard work in the house and at the temple sites, which allows us to get OUR work done. The next one was for our Supreme Council of Antiquities friends and colleagues based in Luxor, all the Directors, Chief Inspectors, and heads of the museums, with whom we work on a daily basis, and who have facilitated our documentation and conservation work for many years. Both 'iftars' were held in the residence courtyard, buffet style around a huge table laden down with delicacies produced by our amazing kitchen staff, and both were very well received.

As he reported in last month's OI Newsletter, Peter Dorman paid us a brief visit in December to study a Ptolemaic private statue found during our cleaning work at Medinet Habu several years ago, now housed in the SCA Gurna magazine. Structural Engineer Conor Power and wife Marcia finished up their condition study of Luxor Temple in mid-month, sponsored by Chicago House and the SCA, and are writing up the report now. Preliminary results indicate that for the time being, the Colonnade Hall is fairly stable, which is very good news. The bad news is that the Luxor Temple pylons of Ramesses II

are not in good shape and will require stabilization work very soon. Colleague Melinda Hartwig from the University of Memphis stayed with us from December 18 to January 10 and continued her work with Theben tomb decorative programs from the reigns of Thutmosis IV and Amenhotep III.

Christmas was made even more festive this year by the presence of our dear friends Barbara Mertz, Dennis Forbes, and Joel Cole who joined us for Christmas and New Years dinners. Other guests included Chicago's Penny Pritzger and family; Ros and Jac Janssen; Boyo and Susanna Ockinga; and Nozumu Kawai. Sue Osgood's husband Mark Chickering and Will Schenck's friend Jamie also joined us for the holidays.

The end of Ramadan, the three-day Eid El-Fitr festival, came two days after Christmas, and only a few days before western New Year's. This year we celebrated the REAL turn of the century and new millennium with a dressy dinner, movie-watching, and much pleasant conversation; additional guests included Charlie and Adrienne Herzer, and Jay Heidel. After New Year's came Coptic and eastern Christmas on January 7th, completing the round of holidays. I will admit to breathing a huge sigh of relief when they were all over!

During the months of December and January the epigraphic and conservation work intensified noticeably at the Medinet Habu small Amun temple. Both new epigrapher Harold Hays and new artist Will Schenck finished their "basic training" and have been producing real work for some time now. With the return of epigrapher Brett McClain in mid-January we are now a full complement of trained epigraphers and artists, and it shows; the place is buzzing with activity. On January 24 we had a fruitfull onsite meeting of all the epigraphers and artists during which we discussed the small Amun temple project in detail: long- and short-term goals, what we've accomplished, where we are now, and what we still need to do. During the meeting we discussed the different ways we would be documenting the temple and its additions in the four volumes in the series (Vol. 1: 18th Dyn. sanctuary; vol. 2: 18th Dyn. bark sanctuary and ambulatory; vol. 3: 25th Dyn/Kushite additions; vol. 4: Ptolemaic and Roman additions), some of the problems we have encountered representing certain carved and architectural anomalies, and the conventions we have created or modified to address those problems.

This meeting led to several other meetings back at the house and will be a regular part of our program from now on.

I am pleased to report that the artists have made excellent progress and are now working on the final drawing enlargements for volume 2, from the 18th Dynasty bark sanctuary and ambulatory. Artist Bernice Williams is currently penciling the facade of the 18th Dynasty temple, while Will Schenck, Sue Osgood, and Margaret De Jong have temporarily moved on to volume 3 drawings in the eastern "porch" of the Kushite pylon. They have some drawing left to do in the bark sanctuary, but last week were obliged to move out of that sanctuary, where I have been working piecing together fragments of the colossal granodiorite statue of Amun and Thutmosis III found in the floor debris of the two central chambers of the sanctuary. Dany has erected an i-beam scaffolding and winch emplacement there which will be used in the restoration of the statue, beginning next week, insha'allah.

In preparation for the dyad's restoration in its original location in the first sanctuary chamber, last season Dany laid a reinforced concrete, damp-coursed foundation for the statue in the center of the room. This week he finished laying a new stone floor over that foundation made of new sandstone blocks cut and shaped by him for this purpose; the far chamber is already finished. He left the four corners of the front chamber unpaved, where the scaffolding for re-erecting the dyad will be set up when we get to that stage. While conservator Lotfi Hassan cleans and consolidates the larger fragments prior to their re-joining, Dany is cutting and preparing the corner floor stones for later insertion.

Conservator Lotfi assisted by Adel Azziz and Nahed Samir Youssef continued to systematically clean and gap-fill the painted reliefs of Hatshepsut and Thutmosis III in the two southern sanctuaries. This month the eastern of the two rooms was completed, as well as one and a half walls in the western room. When sections are finished, Yarko carefully photographs them with color and color transparency film, which he and recently returned photo archives assistant Ellie Smith did this week.

On the Luxor Temple front, conservator Hiroko Kariya and assistant Nan Ray arrived in January and have resumed the Luxor Temple fragment consolidation project. Currently Nan is tracking and numbering fragments while Hiroko does a condition survey of the

deteriorating fragments which require consolidation. Conservator John Stewart will arrive later this month to assist in the process.

This past month we were very pleased to welcome Jim and Angie Sopranos (Angie's first visit to Luxor) to Chicago House, as well as Arthur and Lee Herbst (VC), Jim and Louise Glasser (UC Trustee), and a contingent from BP Egypt (formerly Amoco, long-time CH corporate supporter) who have promised to continue that support, despite some big changes in their organization lately! Up next: the OI tour; a visit from US Ambassador Daniel Kurtzer; and a congressional delegation at the end of the month. Details next time!

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INDIVIDUALS
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HARRY HOFFNER

Hello, everyone!

When two days ago I sent off to Europe my contribution to the fifth festschrift in three months, it was with great relief to have it behind me. This article was on the manner in which the Hittites expressed time relations in terms of spatial orientation, something akin to our use of "before" and "after", but with speculations about the relationship of this orientation to what is knowable and not yet known. It gave me the opportunity to build on some of the huge amount of data we used in the CHD article *peran* ("before") and to look at some of the more interesting uses of *appa* and *appan* which we will not be publishing for many years yet. My next responsibility will be to deliver the outgoing president's lecture at the annual meeting of the Midwest Branch of the American Oriental Society at Notre Dame on February 10th. My talk (on Hittite Lexicography) will be on Saturday evening in conjunction with the banquet, as is customary. But there will be other talks on the lexicography of Hebrew, Aramaic, Egyptian, and Sumerian on Friday evening as part of a plenary session. It all promises to be very interesting. That will round out my work for January. I'll save the news on my next project for next month's report.

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CHUCK JONES

I'm working on correcting the proofs of my contributions for Garrion and Root's "Seals on the Persepolis Fortification Tablets" (OIP 117).

The ETANA project is in the final stages of grant proposal preparation. Drafts of several documents are available at: <http://staffweb.library.vanderbilt.edu/etana>
I'll be happy to discuss the project with anyone who is interested.

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WALTER KAEGI

Cambridge University Press accepted his book manuscript *Heraclius*. A contract is being worked out. A Turkish version of his 1995 book *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests* was published by *Kaknüs Tarih*, Istanbul late in 2000. He wrote a Foreword for the Arabic translation of the same, which *Kadmus Press*, Beirut/Damascus, will soon publish. The Italian journal *Bizantinistica* has accepted his article "Byzantine Sardinia and Africa Face the Muslims: A Rereading of Some Seventh-Century Evidence". *Encyclopedia of Greece and the Hellenic Tradition*. Ed. by Graham Speake. Fitzroy-Dearborn, 2000., just published four entries by him: "Africa, North," "Herakleios," "Warfare, Byzantine," "Yarmuk."

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MARK LEHNER

GATES

In this dispatch from our excavations and mapping project at the Giza Pyramids I report on the following:

- Expansion: We have cleared the overburden as far northwest as the gate in the Wall of the Crow.
- Excavations: we are excavating in various places across the site.
- Gate Houses: There may be large fieldstone buildings, possibly houses, at the ends of the streets through the gallery system.
- Broadway: Fieldstone walls running south from the Wall of the Crow may form a broad north-south avenue that connects to the streets through the gallery system.

- Operation WCE: We are excavating deep sand layers at the East end of the wall of the Crow.
- Faience Factory: We found a facility for making faience (blue-green glazed ware) that a backhoe had mostly demolished before our project began.

Expansion

Just yesterday, our overburden clearing arrived at the gate of the Wall of the Crow. As we drew near the gate, the overburden consisted of some of the most recent and unpleasant material mixed with stable dumping. We have to halt along a line southwards from the East side of the gate, because to cross it and clear under the gate itself would cut the way again, the way used by horse and camel riders throughout the day. We will be able to do that before the end of the season, but it might be wise to quickly refill and reestablish the way after we retrieve whatever information might be contained in the deposits under the gate.

At the end of the yesterday Mohammed Musilhi, the SCA loader operator, dozed a protective berm or linear pile around the next zone of clearing which will take us just to the gate of the Coptic Cemetery lying southwest of the Wall of Crow gate.

Excavations

We have not done an exact count, but David Goodman estimates we have around 750 5 x 5 meter squares staked at this time. This makes just under two hectares (10,000 square meters). The total area cleared of overburden exceeds two hectares.

Excavations are in progress under Ashraf Abd al-Aziz at the East end of Main Street. Along the North side of Main Street east there appear to be rows of bakeries (continuing the series of two east of the Manor in the latest version of our map).

Justine Gesell, of the University of Heidelberg, joined Justine Way in the excavations in the area of the southernmost (so-called) Workers Houses along the West side of the Hypostyle Hall. Clear and complex structural relations in this area are illustrative of several major phases of the site, including two periods of the Hypostyle Hall. Such phases are a focus of Justine Way's dissertation at the University of Chicago. Justine Gesell is excavating a pit in the floor of one of the

"Workers Houses." Lined tub-like with marl clay (tafla), it seems to be another mixing pit for plastering walls, a smaller version of the one we found under Main Street in square 4.K9 last year.

Justine Way is "juggling plates" in that she is also overseeing several operations westward down the line of the southern wall of Gallery Set III. Her specific interest is in the structural relations at the junctures between the north-running walls of Gallery Set III, the south-running walls of Gallery Set IV, and the east-west running wall that divided the two sets. Again, we find that what looks like a simple preconceived plan at one level, turns out to be a complex composite of wall segments of varying thickness, and modifications over what must have been a fair stretch of time.

Cordula Werschkun, University of Tübingen, has come down from her work with lithics in the storeroom to begin excavating one of the larger magazines that form a block of magazines facing southwards onto open courts in the southern part of the fieldstone structures west of the galleries.

Gate Houses

Mohsen Kamal, of UCLA, meanwhile, has taken on excavations around the West end of North Street, between Gallery Sets I and II. In square 4. (that's grid 4) S6, he is attempting to find the gate of North Street, the counterpart to the western gate of Main Street that Ashraf Abd al-Aziz excavated last season. Mohsen's way is blocked by many Late Period burials -- so many he is running out of room to find street level. Two days ago one of Mohsen's skilled excavators cleared the face of an anthropoid mud coffin. The molded headdress has the typical nemes scarf (such as on the Sphinx and Tutankhamen's golden mask). The lappets of the scarf, the eyes and nose, are rather nicely molded in the very sandy mud that filled North Street from the collapsed Old Kingdom walls. There must have been funerary specialists who had the ability to form such a coffin right on the grave spot, in the ground. It had been thinly plastered it and painted, but only traces of yellow remain.

I am beginning to wonder if we do not have a long span of "Late Period" burials across the Northwest part of our site. Mohsen has found burials sunk into earlier burials in square S6. Near some of the burials elsewhere there are pieces of ribbed amphorae necks characteristic of Roman or Coptic times. If some graves are as early

as the Saite Period (664-525 BC), we could nearly a millennium of burials sunk into the Old Kingdom ruins, a millennium that begins two millennia after our site was abandoned.

Just to the southwest of square S6 and the opening of North Street into the galleries, in squares Q4-6 and R 4-6 (Grid 4), Mohsen has been excavating a building composed of fieldstone walls. It covers about 125 square meters. This may be the counterpart to the Gate House located just southwest of Main Street that we excavated last year and that I wrote about in previous dispatches. It is also possible that a fieldstone building of similar size exists just off the South side of the East end of Main Street. This requires more clearing to be sure, but we may have a pattern of relatively large fieldstone buildings (houses?) at the ends of the streets through the galleries.

Broadway?

During the last three weeks, Mohammed Musilhi cleared a 20-meter swath along the South side of the Wall of the Crow. A spine of overburden was left for a couple weeks as a reference for Karl Butzer's study of the sandy layers this far west. It turned out that this overburden had very little that was not turned over or dumped in recent times. The spine is now gone and we have a view over an open field to the Wall of the Crow from its sloping east end to the Gate near the Coptic Cemetery. When Reis Shehat's men cleared the last sand and cleaned the ancient surface, two thick, collapsed, field stone walls appeared running southwards from close to the Crow Wall about 50 and 65 meters west of the East end of the Wall (in the 41 and 45 ranges of Grid 1). A trench (called A8a) that we sunk up against the Wall in 1991 turns out to be nearly centered within the corridor formed by these two walls.

We had this trench, A8a, cleared out when Karl Butzer was here to look at the deep deposits under and up against the base of the Wall of the Crow. The foundation blocks are a meter to 1.5 meters deeper than the top of the ancient surface. Most of the deposits that make up the rough meter of buildup are masons' chips with sloping lines that reflect the rough dressing of the successive courses of masonry of the Wall of the Crow. Underneath these layers, which indicate that work on the Wall may not have been finished, a thick layer of dense black and lumpy alluvial mud runs just to the top of the foundation block that juts out from the line of the Wall. Just under the alluvial mud layer, there appears to be a thinner paving of desert marl clay

(tafla), just like the floors on the well-maintained rooms within the gallery system.

We have to wonder why the marl plaster (floor?) and thick alluvial mud -- which had to have been transported from the Nile flood plain -- are down there under the masons' debris which was never cleaned up. I am considering the hypothesis that these layers are the pavement of an early street, like the paving of Main Street that we discovered last year. Is it possible that the two thick fieldstone walls descend as deep as the mud and marl layers and define a broad avenue to which our Main Street and North Street connect farther south?

Nothing apparently stops me from building one hypothesis on another, so, if the fieldstone walls, mud, and marl layers do belong to a Broadway, it could be that Broadway turns near the Wall of the Crow into a corridor that leads to the big Gate? This appears possible because the thick fieldstone walls that run south do not attach to the Crow Wall. To put it differently, I am wondering if, after one came through the big gate in the Crow Wall, the way into our whole complex was via a 90 degree left turn, down a corridor along the Wall to a right turn which opened into Broadway, which led south to connect to North Street and Main Street. Such an off-axis, turning, approach would have parallels in other ancient Egyptian architecture. The North-South Way suggested by the yawning Crow Wall gate may be closer to the galleries than we thought.

The great thing about these hypotheses is that they are eminently testable, and they will be tested in the next several weeks. Following on Mohammed Musilhi's recent clearing, the rest of us - Reis Shehat, the workers, and we mappers -- now have a tremendous amount of work in the opened-up west and northwest field of our concession area.

Operation WCE

Tobias Tonner of Tübingen continues to excavate a tall section through the sand banked up against the sloping east end of the Wall of the Crow. The slope -- which is either due to the fact that the Wall was never finished or because it was robbed, gives a good view of the internal structure of the Wall. Tobias is being very careful to excavate stratigraphically -- keeping each layer separate. This is difficult when the various layers are all sand of varying qualities.

After two weeks of three dimensional mapping of each layer and pit line, it turns out that most of the deposits, while containing ancient things like Graeco-Roman pot sherds and beads, are redeposited after recent excavations (the last, maybe, in the early 1970s). But the operation is approaching the Old Kingdom ground level. We should know what it is like by the end of next week.

Faience Factory

We first got on to this enormous production complex in 1991 when Inspector Mansour Bureik pointed out the large backhoe trench that just missed the two intact bakeries we excavated later that year in the Southeast corner of our site. We never completely cleaned the North bottom end of this backhoe trench until a few weeks ago. Justine Way was interested in the section that the backhoe cut through the main eastern wall of the Hypostyle Hall, because it showed that the Hypostyle wall was built over earlier walls of a different arrangement.

These earlier walls contained a small production facility for making faience, the typically Egyptian material of whitish paste and bluish-green glaze-like surface, used for making amulets, vases, bowls, and figurines. The evidence consists of several pieces of faience laying upon a floor covered with powdery white material that, on close inspection, seems to be crushed quartz. Tiny pieces of copper can be seen scattered within this material. The faience pieces look like inlays -- one is rectangular, another a semicircle. Only a narrow band of the "faience floor despot" was spared by two deep backhoe gashes north and south of it. Lying within one of the gashes were the broken bits of a little faience vase -- including rim and pointed base fragments. The layered section of the East side of the long backhoe trench contains a peculiar pinkish-green slag-like material. I once saw Matthew Adams of the University of Pennsylvania show slides of a faience production facility that he found at Abydos, and it seems from my memory that he had waste material very similar to our pinkish-green slag-like stuff. We plan to have Angela Millward Jones, who has studied faience, examine these deposits in detail. It is a pity that so much of the facility seems to have been eaten away by the backhoe. But more of it might lie under the thick layers of bread mold sherds thrown up out of the bakeries from the main time-period of our galleries. MORE

We are told that this may be the oldest faience production facility known from ancient Egypt. If so we can add it to the category of oldest-knowns from our site: including the oldest known Hypostyle Hall and oldest known copper working facility.

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CAROL MEYER

BUF has belatedly launched itself into the Web age. Last month I learned HTML4, bought a scanner, started up PhotoShop, marked some text, and inserted .gifs and .jpps. Pending editorial changes by Chuck Jones, the all-new Bir Umm Fawakhir page should be up soon under Oriental Institute Projects. I'm about halfway through Java2, so dancing lizards and singing camels may be close behind.

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CLEMENS REICHEL

Between linking up text and images, identifying excavation pictures, writing FoxPro code, etc., I somehow kept on working on my Ph.D. dissertation on the Palace of the Rulers at Tell Asmar. I have just finished a new set of vector-based plans of this building with numerous changes and modifications. I have also reworked the relative chronology of Eshnunna from the Ur III to the Early Old Babylonian period, leaving some rather significant changes to be suggested – actually pretty much everything has to be shifted. But more about that, about family lines of palace officials and some interesting observations on the socio-economic role of women in Early Old Babylonian Eshnunna either in print or in my defense, hopefully sometimes in the near future.

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THEO VAN DEN HOUT

In preparation for the next CHD-fascicle we are making good progress and the end of going through the final drafts is near. In January I started my Lydian class. There are seven people in the class including myself. We have gone over the grammar and are reading the better-understood funerary inscriptions right now. The less accessible ones, including the so-called 'poetic' texts, are still

awaiting us. Since the Lydian texts stem from a heavily Greek influenced part of the Near East but were written in the days when Aramaic was the lingua franca it is very stimulating to have a Semiticist (and linguist, David Testen) and a Classicist (John Hyland) in the group. For the Festschrift of our Polish colleague and expert on Hittite religion Maciej Popko I sent in a contribution on "Soul, Self, and Portrait in Hieroglyphic Luwian.

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