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OI NEWSLETTER - SECOND MONDAY - JANUARY 2000

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UNITS

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FRONT OFFICE / Joan Curry

I will be on vacation starting tomorrow, Jan 11 through Jan 19. I plan to be back on Thursday and Friday of next week, Jan 20 & 21. If you need any assistance where I would ordinarily be of help you may consult any of the administrative staff and they will be able to assist

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COMPUTER LAB / John Sanders

December just didn't happen in my book, or perhaps it was that blur I occasionally caught a glimpse of out of the corner of my eye. Hard to tell, looking back!!!

Having just completed the move into the new Lab space (202), my new office (205), and the new server room, I spent the entire month

of December messing these spaces up as we setup 7 new computers, refurbished 8 older LocalTalk-based Macintosh computers into upgraded ethernet-based machines, distributed these computers to their new owners, and then moved all the owner's existing data from their old to their new computers. We finished the job with a day to spare - Dec. 31, at midnight, being the time when the university was to turn off LocalTalk as a network protocol (hence no network connections after that time for those computers still using LocalTalk and not ethernet).

The other job for the month of December was to complete the Y2K upgrades to our Windows (DOS) computers as well as our four Unix-based servers. With much help from Christopher Barnard, the web server and the email server were upgraded to the latest Sun operating system software (Solaris 7) with only minor problems that were corrected in a couple of days. Several others annoying issues remain with the unix boxes, but for the most part we made the changes without a major problem arising.

We still have several more hardware changes to make to the web server (tripling its disk capacity for one, and mirroring its stored data onto a second harddisk for additional backup capability) during January, as well as tweaking a few other systems that are coughing their way into the new year.

Maybe by February or so life will return back to the relative calm of the pre-Y2K world.

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MEMBERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT / Emily Napolitano

January Member's Lecture:

Ras Shamra-Ugarit: Past Glories, Present Prospects

Dennis Pardee

Wednesday 19 January

8:00 pm, Breasted Hall (Reception following)

Dennis Pardee will present an illustrated overview of the excavations at Ras Shamra-Ugarit, a late Bronze Age site (ca. 1400-1185 bc). Discoveries at this former kingdom on Syria's Mediterranean coast, where a French team has been digging since 1929, have included

architectural remains, objects, and documents written in Akkadian, Ugaritic, and several other scripts and languages.

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MUSEUM / Karen Wilson

This past fall, Oriental Institute members and friends enjoyed a variety of new programs presented by the Museum Education Office. A theater trip to see Antony and Cleopatra, the inaugural production at Chicago Shakespeare Theater's new home on Navy Pier, was sold-out within weeks of its announcement in News and Notes. Y2K B.C: The World 2,000 Year Ago, a millennium symposium with a unique point of view, drew participants from the city, the suburbs, and neighboring states. Special thanks to Peter Dorman, McGuire Gibson, David Schloen, and special guest Jonathan Mark Kenoyer, of the University of Wisconsin, Madison, for their excellent lectures. Rockin' Ancient Egypt, a concert by the pop group The Goblins (rumored to be made up of some U of C alumni and the son of one faculty member) filled Breasted Hall with U of C students who had never before visited us. Most visited the Egyptian Gallery, shopped at the Suq, and promised to return for the Ur show. Docents led close to 3,000 schoolchildren on tours of the new Egyptian Gallery, and Chicago Public School teachers were served by a special Teachers Seminar that brought more than 100 educators from throughout the city to take part in a program that included a lecture on conservation of artifacts for the Egyptian Gallery by Laura D'Alessandro; tours of the Gallery by museum docents; and a 'marketplace' of teaching ideas presented by the panel of Chicago Public School educators who have been working with us to develop accurate and effective classroom curriculum materials on the ancient Near East. All the teachers at the seminar received a copy of Life in Ancient Egypt, one of the three award-winning curriculum guides produced by Museum Education and our partner teachers. This program was funded by the Polk Bros. Foundation, which has just awarded the Oriental Institute a major, two-year grant to support development of educational programs for children and their families in the museum's reopening galleries.

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PUBLICATIONS / Tom Urban

There are only a few last details to work out on one last contribution to the Wente festschrift (SAOC 58). Emily Teeter has gone through a proof copy of the manuscript and highlighted words and such for an index.

Work resumed in earnest on Garrison/Root's _Persepolis Seals_ (OIP 117) now that the proofs have been returned.

Carol Meyer returned proofs for _Bir Umm Fawakhir: 1993 Season_ (OIC 28).

CAD R and S are prepared for printing; we are merely waiting for a purchase order from Central Procurement.

We were pleased with the last issue of News & Notes; some of the illustrations were both prepared and sent electronically; they printed very well.

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RESEARCH ARCHIVES / Chuck Jones

The Research Archives closed at 5 PM on Friday December 10th. Since then the project has proceeded (mostly) smoothly. The electrical work is complete, conduit to each of the tables in the reading room are installed and the floor has been replaced, matching the pattern and materials of the original floor. As I write, the workers are putting the finishing sealer in the floor and painting areas damaged by the electrical work. Tomorrow we expect to begin moving in the tables, and wiring them with the new power and networking cables. Those tasks, some additional painting and the installation of the emergency exit signs are the final component of this phase of the project. Work is underway on the replication of the lighting fixtures which we expect to install later in the year.

At this moment we still plan to open our doors as planned by the deadline of Monday January 17th 9AM. If it develops that we will not make this deadline, I will send out announcements. Thanks for your patience with respect to the furniture we've been storing in the halls for the past month.

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PROJECTS

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CAD / Martha T. Roth

The Chicago Assyrian Dictionary is pleased to report that all five of the unpublished volumes of the CAD are being printed, edited, or written. We mailed the 3,338 manuscript pages of the P Volume (as well as a copy on diskettes) to our printer Eisenbrauns in Winona Lake, Indiana. They will start mailing first galleys to us in February. We hope to have the purchase order in hand for the printing of the R volume this week, and then printing can begin at Chicago Press in the very near future. The T Volume will be mailed to Eisenbrauns in late January; it will be typeset when they finish typesetting the first galleys of P.

The T [tet] Volume is completely written, and Martha Roth and David Testen began editing it during the summer. They have spent the last two weeks hard at work on the 85-page tuppū "tablet" article. David Testen and Tim Collins have starting writing draft articles for the U/W Volume. Visiting scholars Hermann Hunger and Remko Jas had also written draft articles for U/W during earlier visits to the Oriental Institute.

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EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY / W. Raymond Johnson

December saw the continuation of drawing and collating in the Medinet Habu Eighteenth Dynasty temple bark sanctuary and ambulatory, and the training of epigrapher and librarian Briant Bohleke 'at the wall.' The month also saw the final documentation and filling-in of the floor in the first chamber, supervised by Tina Di Cerbo, and the resumption of the roof-sealing work up above by stone cutter Dany Roy, who worked on the mortar infill between the new roof blocks. Conservators Lotfi Hassan, Veronica Paglione, and Adel Andraus continued cleaning and consolidating the painted wall reliefs of the two southernmost sanctuary chambers, and revealed for the first time since antiquity some of the painted stars on the ceiling.

The fragments of the granodiorite dyad of Thutmosis III and Amun which were recovered from the first chamber floor debris are now stored in the bark sanctuary which have been fitted with slatted,

wooden, lockable gates for security. The fragments have all been cleaned, and will be documented, consolidated, and stored in the bark sanctuary until their reassembly next season. Before the floor was completely filled in, Dany constructed a concrete footing roughly in the center of the chamber to act as a foundation for the restored group.

At Luxor Temple the blockyard storage and treatment area expansion was resumed, and as of this writing, the greater east area is now finished. Sixteen new damp-coursed brick mastaba storage platforms were constructed, eight of them up to fifteen meters long, and several more are planned for the south area. Chief Engineer Saleh Shahat supervised the construction of a steel framework which will be built around one of the new treatment mastabas which will then be covered with a canvas tarpaulin to protect treated fragments from the elements. Conservators John Stewart and Hiroko Kariya are due to arrive next week to resume coordination of the fragment consolidation project.

Early in the month the new DCM of the US Embassy Reno Harnish and his wife Leslie paid Luxor and CH a visit with a USAID review team, and it was my pleasure to show them our documentation and conservation work at Medinet Habu and Luxor Temples. Later Dr. Per-Olof Johansson, SWECO geology and groundwater engineer, and Eng. Maher Abd El Halim El Shiwy, Research Assistant, Head of Greater Cairo Research Unit, Research Institute for Ground Water come by to discuss the groundwater drainage initiative currently underway in Luxor, partly sponsored and funded by the Swedish government. They will return this month with a larger team to study the best ways to implement proper drainage of groundwater away from the east bank temple sites. Artist Sue Osgood returned at that time, as well as architect and former artist Jay Heidel for a visit, and other visitors to CH include the Italian Ambassador to Egypt Francesco Aloisi de Larderel and wife Vittoria Buffe (an archaeologist herself), a group of Egyptology students from the Netherlands and Flemish Institute in Cairo (with whom Ted Castle discussed our work), Barbara Adams on her way back to London from Hierakonpolis, and Catherine Eaton from NYU. More recent visitors include Mary-Louise Mahdi; Senators Richard Shelby (R - Alabama) and Bryan (D - Nevada), their wives and entourage, with whom I spent a full day showing them CH, our projects, and the sights of Luxor; Jiro Kondo and Nozamu Kawai with the Waseda University, Tokyo, mission; and Amina Al Sabah from Kuwait.

It was a month of festivals. The holy month of Ramadan began on the 9th and ended last week with a three-day Eid, while Christmas and New Years made the end of the month quite lively for everyone. Christmas at CH was warm and full of cheer as always, with our in-house Christmas dinner (turkey and goose). We rang in the New Year 2000 with our beloved Carlotta and David Maher, who flew in just for the occasion; friends Bob Hamada (Dean of the UofC GSB) and his wife Anne; Nigel and Helen Strudwick; Francesco Tiradritti; and Donald Oster. And although we were prepared for any kind of Y2K problems (and were in close touch with the US Embassy about it), like most places in the world we luckily encountered no problems at all. An excellent beginning!

Best wishes to all our friends at home for a most joyous and productive New Year 2000!

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TABLET ROOM / John A. Brinkman

Markus Hilgert continued his editing work on Ur III tablets from December 17 to January 5.

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INDIVIDUALS
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MARK LEHNER

Most of our team members are back home or on their way as we break for the holiday season. I will be in Boston until my return to Egypt on January 15. Before we shut down operations, Mohammed Musilhi, our loader driver, dozed a wall of sand piles all around our clearance in Zone C. We posted guards around the site. They will remain on duty until our return, and through the night of the Millennium Celebration. Preparations, including those for security, were building in intensity when we left the Giza Plateau.

We certainly accomplished a great deal in our brief pilot season. I have no doubt that there is a huge prize to be won through our program. Our method works. We do indeed find the walls by

scraping the surface or with a shallow excavation of the upper layer. As I indicated in previous dispatches, what we are discovering is a very large and systemic architectural layout south of the Wall of the Crow. It will be a major addition to the map of Giza and our knowledge of the 4th dynasty pyramid builders. And we still have the central part of Zone C to map!

I think the most significant large-scale discovery is the broad street or road running east-west between the two sets of galleries. I believe this feature will turn out to be the major clue to the overall nature of this ancient complex. Already we can see that it will lead us to other parts of the site that are different from the structures we have found in Zone C.

On the last two days of work I had the workmen clear the sand over square E6, the farthest west we have managed to go (into Zone W). Here we found a fieldstone wall running north-south. It is collapsed, but it appears to be thicker even than the 3-cubit (1.57 meter) thick, north-south, main walls of the long galleries. We were able to push this far west because Mohammed Musilhi, the loader driver, made a good start on clearing the overburden at the southwest corner of Zone C, moving 10 meters into Zone W. If this thick stone wall forms the western boundary to the long galleries in Zone C, we expect to find a gate precisely in squares J6-K6-L6 (the street runs through rows J,K,L). These squares lie only 15 to 20 feet 'inside' the wall of overburden on top of Zone W that Mohammed Musilhi has begun to move.

Based on our results this pilot season, I have the feeling, only a hunch, that if there is some central building, institution, or royal residence, it does not lie to the west. In Zone W, I think we will find walls bounding the "way" (our street) which may turn 90 degrees to run north-south to the entrance in the gigantic stone Wall of the Crow. I believe that the core building lies to the north and northwest (Zones N and NW). I cannot imagine it would be south which would put it downwind from our many, many, bakeries and other hearth facilities.

Also in the last few days of our work, we found a wide depression in the central area of Zone C between TBLF and the MN20 area. Along the path of the street, we did indeed find several more bakeries. But north of these, there is what appears to be an open area (courtyard?). Just before this open area, approaching from the south,

Mohsen Kamal found an extra thick wall of mudbrick lining a stone-rubble core. - perhaps an entrance to whatever the open area was. This open area passes under the 6 meter-high wall of overburden along the north of Zone C.

We hope to be able to push on to the west and north after four weeks, in the calm after Millennium madness storms the Giza Plateau. My goal is to move all the way to the Wall of the Crow.

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DAVID TESTEN

At the annual meeting of the Linguistic Society of America, held January 6-9 in Chicago, David Testen presented a talk entitled "Excrescent Obstruents in the Development of Semitic Stems."

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TONY WILKINSON

Climate and Human activities are again receiving publicity, and on Thursday 6th January I participated in the WBEZ "Odyssey" program (11.00 am to 12 noon). Sharing the mic with Ray Pierrehumbert of U of C Geophysics department and William Stephens of the New York Times, we had a decent discussion about snowball earth, the Khabur, Anasazi collapses, carbon dioxide, global warming, and the advantages of following. The OI's name was mentioned four or five times, I am glad to say.