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RESEARCH ARCHIVES - HENRIETTA'S MUSEUM
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OI NEWSLETTER - FIRST MONDAY - NOVEMBER 1998

UNITS

- COMPUTER LAB / John Sanders
- MEMBERSHIP OFFICE / Tim Cashion
- PUBLICATIONS / Tom Urban
- RESEARCH ARCHIVES / Chuck Jones
- TABLET COLLECTION / J. A. Brinkman

PROJECTS

- BIR UMM FAWAKHIR PROJECT / Carol Meyer
- EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY / W. Raymond Johnson
- EXCAVATIONS AT TELL KURDU / Aslihan Yener

- TECHNOLOGY DISCUSSION GROUP / Chuck Jones
- ARABIC MANUSCRIPTS PROJECT / Chuck Jones

INDIVIDUALS

- ROBERT BIGGS
- HRIPSIME HAROUTUNIAN

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UNITS

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COMPUTER LAB / John Sanders

During October most of my time has been spent doing last minute changes to the new OI mail server, and starting to switch everyone's account over from QuickMail to their new mailbox on our babylon orinst unix computer. As of today, November 2, about 1/3 of the building has been switched. Three guesses what I'll be doing in the first half of November?

Now that the Museum Education Office has been moved we are starting to deal with the electrical, networking, and fixing up of their old office in preparation of moving the Computer Laboratory into its new facilities -- hopefully by Christmas, or early in 1999.

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MEMBERSHIP OFFICE / Tim Cashion

The Membership Office sponsored "A celebration of Hans G. Guterbock in Honor of His 90th Birthday," which was held in Breasted Hall on October 21, 1998. Harry Hoffner served as Master of Ceremonies, and Erica Reiner gave the primary address. After Erica's remarks, Hans was presented with several awards and honors, including the table of contents of a book of

conference proceedings to be dedicated to him (presented by Aslihan Yener), the latest number of the Journal of Cuneiform Studies (of which he was the Hittite editor for many years) also dedicated to him (presented by Piotr Michalowski and Gary Beckman, who came in from Michigan for the evening), and finally the honorary degree which he had been awarded by the Free University of Berlin. Hans Nissen came all the way from Berlin to present the degree in person.

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PUBLICATIONS / Tom Urban

Publications Office Work continues on Seal Impressions from Persepolis Fortifications Tablets (OIP 117) by Garrison/Root; editing of the text volume is more or less complete (charts in the appendices and the indices require much more work) and about 20 of the estimated 240 plates for the plate volume have been put together. Work on the Wente Festschrift began and the first chapter (by James Allen) of 43 was prepared for reading. The Annual Report was read and formatted in preparation for printing. An updated Publications Catalog was prepared and is being printed using the booklet feature on our new Xerox photocopier, saving the Publications Office expense and allowing us to update the catalog more frequently. Several copies of Luxor Temple 2 (OIP 116) by the Epigraphic Survey were received in time to travel to Egypt with the Survey; the volume will go on sale in November. About 800 copies of various volumes of the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary were received from Augustin; with these volumes, we can now sell complete sets of the CAD.

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RESEARCH ARCHIVES / Chuck Jones

The Research Archives has (aside from me) an entirely new staff this Autumn:

Aaron Burke - 3rd-year archaeology Student

Tamara Siuda - 1st-year Egyptology student

Katherine Strange - 1st-year archaeology student

They will be covering most of the weekend and Wednesday evening hours, as well as working during the week on more flexible schedules. In addition, they will be covering all the hours during my absence from Nov. 5th to 15th.

During October we successfully replaced the computers in the Archives office, and we're now adjusting (as is everyone) to the new mail server.

We still expect to have a book sale this fall. Watch for signs giving times and dates.

We're working closely with the Museum staff to monitor the effectiveness of the climate control system as the weather cools and the air handlers

adjust to these new phenomena. If you experience uncomfortable changes in the temperature or humidity in the Reading Room or the new stacks, please let me know.

The banquet scheduled to be held in the Research Archives in celebration of the completion of the Legacy Campaign has been postponed to remain coincident with the opening of the Museum's Egyptian Gallery at a yet to be determined date next year.

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TABLET COLLECTION / J. A. Brinkman

This month, two visitors have worked mostly on Old Babylonian scholarly materials: Eleanor Robson (Sept. 28- Oct. 10), Niek Veldhuis (Oct. 26-30).

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PROJECTS

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BIR UMM FAWAKHIR PROJECT / Carol Meyer

The good news is that the National Geographic grant did come through, which completes the funding for the 1999 season at Bir Umm Fawakhir. This will be our first chance to excavate in the ancient settlement and hence to answer a new set of questions about the town and its inhabitants.

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EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY / W. Raymond Johnson

On October 1st Egyptologist and artist Tina Di Cerbo supervised the annual reopening and cleaning of Chicago House after its hot summer siesta. The rest of us arrived Cairo the week of October 11 and proceeded to buy supplies and prepare for the coming season. I signed the season contract at the Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA) headquarters at Abbassiya, met with the SCA Chairman Dr. Gaballa and was very pleased to present him with an advance copy of the Epigraphic Survey's latest volume 'Reliefs and Inscriptions at Luxor Temple, Volume 2: The Facade, Portals, Upper Register Scenes, Columns, Marginalia, and Statuary in the Colonnade Hall,' which was released just as I was leaving Chicago. Before we left for Luxor we were invited to join American Ambassador Daniel Charles Kurtzer and his wife Sheila for coffee at the Embassy residence, where we discussed the season to come and a future Embassy visit.

Thanks in large part to Tina's efforts, Chicago House reopened its doors on October 15th. We found Luxor still languishing in

ninety-degree-Fahrenheit-plus temperatures, but those have begun to drop to more comfortable levels lately. That first weekend I met with the Luxor SCA inspectors, after which we opened the small Amun temple of Hatshepsut and Thutmosis III at Medinet Habu on the west bank; transferred our ladders, scaffolding, lighting, and other equipment there by truck; and began work on site immediately. Paintings conservator Lotfi Hassan, who worked with the Getty Conservation Institute crew cleaning the tomb of Nefertari, has joined our team and will spend four months this season cleaning of the painted reliefs in the small Amun temple, a process begun long ago but never finished. This work is part of a five-year grant from the Egyptian Antiquities Project (EAP) administered through the American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE) for the conservation of the small Amun temple and marks the third year of that project. We are sharing Lotfi; he will work two months of the season, January and February, with Dr. Kent Weeks of the American University in Cairo (he is also a former Chicago House Field Director) in KV 5, the newly identified tomb of Ramesses II's sons in the Valley of the Kings. On the east bank I began planning the expansion of the Epigraphic Survey blockyard at Luxor temple with the local SCA office, and we are preparing to erect a new conservation lab there within the next couple of weeks in this fourth year of our second EAP conservation project, the Luxor Fragment Conservation Project. The five-year grant funds the consolidation and preservation of deteriorating decorated sandstone block fragments quarried from the side walls of the Luxor Temple Colonnade Hall and Amenhotep III Solar Court which the Epigraphic Survey has collected over the years and incorporated into its publication program. The fruits of some of that labor can be seen in RILT 1, where joined fragment groups from the half-destroyed first register of the Colonnade Hall are published floated into place over drawings of the existing wall remains, and our new volume RILT 2, where reassembled fragments from the facade of the hall are presented in their original context as well.

Senior Epigrapher Ted Castle, artist Margaret De Jong, and I have been training new epigrapher Hrach Papazian and new artist Bernice Williams the discipline of epigraphic documentation, and all parties seem to be enjoying the process. Photographer Yarko Kobylecky reopened the photo lab and spent several days taking reference photographs and slides of the Medinet Habu precinct which is displaying increased groundwater activity. In fact the water table in all of Egypt is higher than usual this autumn due to heavy rains to the south and an overabundance of water behind the Aswan Dam, which apparently has reached record levels.

Once the temples were operational and the epigraphic work was resumed, I had to turn my attention to some major house repairs. Slow leaks in the southwest corner of the house required the replacement of all of the plumbing in five suites of rooms over the summer after we left. This was successfully accomplished, and as I write this the eastern dining room wall, severely damaged by the leak, is being repaired and painted.

While these repairs are underway we are utilizing the ping pong table in the screened-in porch as a temporary dining table, and in the warm evenings we have found this to be a very pleasant dining alternative. Another major project requiring immediate attention was the residence courtyard; we returned to find the tiles completely heaved and buckled due to improper foundations, and unusable. Last week the tiles were all carefully pulled up, a proper concrete underpinning was laid, and the tilers are arriving tomorrow to re-lay the tiles.

Although it's still relatively early in our season, we already have had several guests: Susan Allen from the Metropolitan Museum of Art stayed several nights with us after her season at Dashur with Dieter Arnold and reminisced about her earlier years here with husband and former CH epigrapher Jim Allen. Bill Harms, Senior News Writer with the University of Chicago and well known to the OI, is here for a few days to see our work, after spending last week with Don Whitcomb in Jordan. Friend and colleague Dr. Marjorie Fisher has just arrived for a two-day stay. Peter Piccione is working with his Theban Tomb Project crew (including wife Myrna and former CH photographer Danny Lanka) on the west bank, FOCH tour veteran Tom Granger is in town doing research on his Masters thesis for Yale University, and Dick Cook from the Virginia Museum of Art in Richmond is here doing research in preparation for the Hildesheim show of Egyptian art, which will be presented at the museum next year. Former Director Chuck Van Siclen is also in town for a few days and very kindly presented Chicago House with a copy of 'Studies in Honour of Martha Rhoads Bell,' which he has recently published. Tomorrow evening, October 31, Chicago House is hosting its annual Halloween costume party for all of the expeditions in the area, always a popular event.

I am pleased to report that from what I have seen so far, security is excellent, both in Cairo and Luxor, and the tour groups are definitely back in force. Everywhere there are signs of recovery and good will, and we are hopeful for a prosperous and peaceful winter. Best wishes from all of us out here, to all of you back home!

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EXCAVATIONS AT TELL KURDU / Aslihan Yener

Excavation at Tell Kurdu. Tell Kurdu, an 18 hectare site, is situated close to the eastern edge of the former Amuq lake and has yielded data for Early and Middle Chalcolithic Phases C-E (6-5th millennium B.C.). Previously excavated by OI teams in a rapid 2 week season in 1938, operations were resumed in 1996 with a small test pit and extensively excavated this year from 22 August to 12 October 1998. The Amuq Valley Regional Projects (AURP) are directed by Yener with Edens as field director at Kurdu. Ten trenches were exposed, supervised by Alizadeh, Casana, Diebold, Yukmen, and Ensert. Trench 1 on the summit of the Southern Mound yielded a large multi-roomed public building made of

pise. The building is characterized by long, narrow grill-like storage rooms flanked by a rectilinear corridor and subsidiary rooms. A platform of alternating packed mud and reeds (constructed like a baklava) provided a large open space adjacent to the building in the west. A curious and difficult to understand architectural idiom of undulating reeds laid horizontally like beams was found partly covering the base of the storage rooms much like the public building at Tell Queilli in southern Mesopotamia. Devices such as tokens, stamp seals, bailing tags, and other clay sealings with string impressions suggest an administrative function for the building. Ubaid style figurines with coffee-bean eyes and beautiful examples of painted ceramics date the level to transitional Halaf-Ubaid (Phase D to E). Trench 2 yielded a later phase building with an array of pise storage bins constructed like pigeon-holes, which contextualizes the kilos of burnt grain found in 1996. Analysis of the botanical materials was achieved by Ekstrom with a flotation tank. An earlier phase, which was only partially exposed, yielded a large pise tholos building (7 m in dia) with triangular internal buttresses. Normally tholoi are associated with the Halaf period, however, the pottery retrieved from the floor was consistent with Phase E Ubaid traditions.

Trenches 4 and 7 were operations placed in the older Northern Mound where an Ubaid cemetery with several flexed burials and grave goods were found in situ. These graves were cut into a complicated sequence of middens deposits in Trench 4 chock-a-block with charred grain and burnt pise lumps. Huge catfish bones, baby elephant, lion, and other wild fauna were dumped into the trash pits tentatively dated to Phase D. Loyet and Reese's analysis of the faunal remains of Kurdu suggested a three way split of 30% domestic sheep/goat, pig, and cattle with the rest wild. Trench 7 exposed multi-roomed architecture with a cremation burial placed some time after the use of the building. Associated pottery resembles Halaf Phases C-D periods.

Prestige-laden commodities such as metal artifacts, ores, and exotic stones found at Kurdu in varying degrees of manufacture should offer clues as to the context of production (household, workshop, industrial), technological activities (e.g., stone tool and metal/ceramic [furnace] manufacture), and trade. The distribution of debris, such as bone, ceramics, and middens, will provide information on the range and location of activities performed. Conservation of materials was spearheaded by Collas and Sease.

Remote sensing utilizing a Magnetic Field Gradiometer under the direction of Somers covered several large areas of both mounds. Having delineated burnt areas for possible identification of pyrotechnological installations, the results also had a value added aspect in identifying a large, possible tripartite building in the older Northern Mound. In addition to this feature, previous surface surveys had found vitrified wasters suggesting the location of ceramic kilns, which were also

corroborated by the magnetometer when two large circular structures appeared as magnetic anomalies. Both subsurface features will be targeted areas for excavation in 1999.

Topographical maps of endangered sites Tell `Imar al-Jadid al-Sharqi and Tell Dhahab near Judaidah were made by Zimmerman with the Total Station. Tell Imar, located 2 km south of Tell Kurdu, now measures 24 hectares and appears to have been occupied at the same time as the later stages of that site. It then became the successor during Amuq Phases F and G. Wilkinson reports that although the route of the ancient Afrin River has not been demonstrated for this period, the most likely course would have been between Tells Kurdu and `Imar, therefore these two sites may have been twin towns on opposite sides of the Afrin River during much of the Chalcolithic. Kurdu/`Imar, with an aggregate area of around 42 ha, formed a pair and were either on both sides of a major east-west route which followed the southern edge of the plain, or on both sides of the Orontes River if it had ever shifted its course. Both Imar and Dhahab will be targeted for salvage excavations in 2000.

The 1999 excavation season at Tell Kurdu will be August 1-October 1.

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TECHNOLOGY DISCUSSION GROUP / Chuck Jones

A small group met at noon on October 30th to begin a regular informal discussion of issues relating to the use of technology in projects at the OI. While there was no formal agenda, members of the group reported on the status and future of some projects now in the works:

Jan Johnson reported on the Mellon Foundation "Less Commonly Taught Languages Project."

David Schloen reported on an upcoming conference on standards for electronic publication of archaeological data to be held at UCLA this winter. He also reported on the plans for a conference here in Chicago next autumn on standards for the markup of ancient Near Eastern texts in XML, and the convening of "Working Group on Cuneiform Markup."

Chuck Jones reported on the Arabic Manuscripts Project.

Discussion was open and informal. All interested faculty, staff, and students are invited to attend future meetings of the group. The next session is expected to be on Friday December 4th. Interested persons should contact Jones at: cjones@babylon-orinst.uchicago.edu

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ARABIC MANUSCRIPTS PROJECT / Chuck Jones

In late October we were informed by The Regional Information and Technology Software Engineering Center (RITSEC) in Cairo that they had funded the Arabic Manuscripts Project.

The project aims at supporting the research on the Arabic manuscripts available at the OI and helping to make such documents accessible to users and researchers around the world via the internet and through the use of multimedia products. The project will focus on the published components of the collection as represented in the works of Nabia Abbott, with a particular focus on the Arabic papyri in the OI collections.

The project includes the development of a manuscript information system tailored to the OI's needs, including a database of the holdings of the OI's Arabic manuscripts, along with a CD-ROM for a selected collection and a web site.

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INDIVIDUALS
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ROBERT BIGGS

Robert Biggs spent part of the summer studying cuneiform texts, particularly Babylonian prophecy texts, in the British Museum.

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HRIPSIME HAROUTUNIAN

In September-October Dr. Hripsime Haroutunian continued her work at the Hittite Dictionary Project. Besides her involvement in the transliteration of texts from volume KBo 38, she also picked up a new task: writing articles for the CHD. She has already finished an article on the cultic term dahanga-, and currently is working on another word, LUtahiyala-. Aside from this, she managed to release the new issue of the Newsletter for Anatolian Studies - Vol. 14/1, 1998, which contains the latest bibliography (408 titles) on ancient Anatolia and adjacent regions. It also includes brief information on the recent or upcoming conferences in the field, computer resources, as well as announcements and indices.

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