

# INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH

---

During this academic year, **ROBERT BIGGS** published an article dealing with the Third Dynasty of Ur and also completed an article on Nippur in the mid-third millennium.


---

This year, **JOHN BRINKMAN**'s research concentrated primarily on legal practices and the activities of government officials in northern and northeastern Babylonia during the final century of the Kassite dynasty (1255–1155 BC). He has been studying and commenting on a series of unpublished documents from family archives excavated at Babylon by German archaeologists before World War I. He has also been preparing for publication two other texts: (1) a royal edict laying down rules for senior administrators of Ezida, the temple of the god Nabu; and (2) an inscription of a royal official on a large stone weight (ca. 60 pounds) found in central western Iran. The latter text takes on special significance because it offers the first contemporary evidence for the parentage of the reigning king, Shagarakti-Shuriash (1245–1233 BC).

---

**FRED M. DONNER** spent much of 2023–24 working slowly on editing projects, above all putting in order the papers from the conference “Industry and Industrialism in the Late Antique and Early Islamic Near East,” held just before the COVID-19 pandemic. He hopes to return to studying medieval Arabic papyrus documents when these tasks are completed. At the annual meeting of the International Qur’anic Studies Association in San Antonio in November, he delivered the presidential address, “A Historian’s View of Qur’anic Studies.” His article “Was Muhammad an Orphan?” appeared in a volume honoring the career of the French maritime historian Christophe Picard, and with Prof. Daniel Morgan of Santa Clara University he submitted to a journal for publication a jointly written article titled “The Development of the Concepts of *Dār al-Ḥarb* and *Dār al-Islām*,” dealing with the conceptualization of the world into two antagonistic realms, the “Domain of Islam” and “Domain of War,” in classical Islamic law.

---

**FRANÇOIS GAUDARD** completed his thirtieth year as a member of the ISAC scholarly community. Gaudard’s third article in his series dedicated to little-known aspects of the god Seth, in a Festschrift in honor of Robert Ritner, entered production with a scheduled publication date in the summer (see below). In this article dealing with Seth the Gleaming One, hitherto known only from a single attestation listed as  *Sth-ṯḥn* “der glänzende Seth” in Christian Leitz’s *Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen*, Gaudard identified four new occurrences of this obscure deity from sources as varied as Pap. Berlin P. 8278, the Edfu Temple, the small Amun temple at Medinet Habu, and the mammisi of the Roman temple of Tutu at Kellis in Dakhleh Oasis. Among other things, this study shows that Seth the Gleaming One, in most cases depicted as a member of the Lesser Ennead, is a fighter, as indicated by his epithets “strong of arm, violent in the House of Fighting,” who, unlike the evil Seth, is perceived positively. Thus, the ancient

## INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH

Egyptians apparently found a way to deal with Seth's ambiguous nature by splitting him into a good and an evil god.

Gaudard also continued to work on his various text edition projects, such as the publication of the ISAC Museum's Egyptian funerary shrouds. Some of the articles on which he has been working include:

- "Seth the Gleaming One." In *A Master of Secrets in the Chamber of Darkness: Egyptological Studies in Honor of Robert K. Ritner Presented on the Occasion of His Sixty-Eighth Birthday*, edited by Foy D. Scalf and Brian P. Muhs, 73–85. Studies in Ancient Cultures 3. Chicago: Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures, 2024.
- "Funerary Shrouds from Dendera in the Oriental Institute Museum of the University of Chicago. Part III: Shroud OIM E4787." To be published in a Festschrift in honor of a colleague.
- "Funerary Shrouds from Dendera in the Oriental Institute Museum of the University of Chicago. Part IV: Shroud OIM E4788 (= OIM E42046)." In preparation.
- "A Demotic Accounting Text from the Ptolemaic Period." In preparation.

---

**MARGARET GEOGA** joined the University of Chicago in July 2023 as assistant professor of Egyptology. Along with teaching and serving on several ISAC committees, her main focus this year was on writing a monograph exploring the transmission and reception of a popular ancient Egyptian poem, *The Teaching of Amenemhat*, unique for its depiction of the murder of a king. Geoga argues that through close examination of textual variation within the more than 250 surviving manuscript copies of this poem, and by resituating those manuscripts within their material and social contexts, it is possible to identify shifts in the poem's reception throughout its 1,000 years of circulation. These shifts allowed *Amenemhat's* diverse array of readers to interpret the poem so that it spoke to their particular contexts and concerns. This project was the basis of several publications and presentations in 2023–24: Geoga's article "Between Literature and History: Receptions of Poetry in Ancient Egypt" (*Middle Eastern Literatures* 25, nos. 2–3: 69–96) introduces *Amenemhat* and new approaches to studying ancient reception history to a broader literary-studies audience, while "New Kingdom Hieratic Documents in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston" (in *New Kingdom Hieratic Collections from around the World*, edited by Crossing Boundaries, 1:333–36 [Liège: Presses Universitaires de Liège, 2024]) examines an unpublished copy of *Amenemhat* within the context of the Museum of Fine Arts' excavation and collection practices. In addition, Geoga delivered four invited lectures and one conference paper on this project in 2023–24.

Geoga's other research activities explored ancient Egyptian literature and scribal culture. In the fall and winter, she edited papers for *Looking Beyond the Text: New Approaches to Scribal Culture and Practices in Ancient Egypt* (coedited with Aurore Motte and Judith Jurjens). The volume, which builds on a conference the editors organized in May 2023, was submitted to Brill in March 2024 (and accepted for publication in August). Geoga has also begun to explore a new project on the connections between poetry, scribal culture, and kingship—a topic she has developed in an invited lecture and a conference paper. This project is being undertaken in collaboration with a group of Egyptologists seeking to reevaluate approaches to kingship and is expected to lead to a workshop and multiple publications over the next few years.

This year was the first of Geoga's two-year junior fellowship with the Andrew W. Mellon Society of Fellows in Critical Bibliography. As part of this fellowship, Geoga took two classes at the Rare Book School of the University of Virginia in 2023–24, one on the theory and practice of scholarly editing, and one on connected histories of texts that move across space and time.

---

**McGUIRE GIBSON** continues to work on excavation reports, some detailing investigations done forty years ago. In addition, this year he has been reworking the final two reports that he and Mark Altaweel translated and edited for Iraqi colleagues whose manuscripts were lost or damaged in the looting of the Iraq Museum in 2003. One of these final reports is by Hussein Ali Hamzi on a site called Muqdadayah, located in the Diyala region on the key road from Baghdad to Iran. The site was, in ancient times, within the orbit of the city of Eshnunna, a large mound that was excavated extensively by the University of Chicago in the 1930s. A much larger report on Iraqi excavations at Eshnunna (modern Tell Asmar), which adds substantially to the information on the site, still needs a bit of final checking before the ISAC publications office can begin production on it. Gibson remains active on the boards of The Academic Research Institute in Iraq (TARII) and the American Institute for Yemeni Studies. Both organizations continue to provide fellowship and other assistance to scholars. Recently, TARII officially established a center in Baghdad, an accomplishment that has been many years in coming to fruition.

---

**PETRA GOEDEGEBUURE**'s research this year was split between Luwian and Hittite. Her Luwian articles continued to move slowly through the publication process (“The One and Only Great King Hartapu and the Western Muška” for the journal *Ancient Near Eastern Studies*, “Poldering’ in ‘Beyond-the-River’: Revisiting the End of the Çineköy Inscription” for a Festschrift, and “The Luwian Word for ‘city, town’” for the journal *Anatolian Studies*; for descriptions of these articles, see last year’s annual report). Goedegebuure presented “The Phonetic Values of the Signs L.175 <la>, L.319 <la/i>, L.172 <lá/i> in Iron Age Luwian” on September 6, 2023, at the 12th International Congress of Hittitology in Istanbul and talked about the (in)famous Türkmen-Karahöyük inscription at a Breasted Salon in Chicago on December 13, 2023 (“Controversy and the Path to Academic Consensus: The Türkmenkarahöyük 1 Inscription”) and in an Ancient Anatolia Day roundtable panel discussion in Oxford on June 17, 2024 (“Türkmen-Karahöyük and Its Implications”).

Goedegebuure’s Hittite research covered three areas of her very different interests: philology, linguistics, and religion. She submitted a purely philological article to a volume on ancient Near Eastern studies (“Don’t marry a girl at a party!”); presented “Hittite Elliptic Genitives,” a linguistic investigation, at a special panel on “New Linguistic Approaches to Texts in Ancient Indo-European Languages” at the annual meeting of the American Oriental Society (AOS) in Chicago in March 2024; and proposed a new understanding of the Hittite dragon-slaying myth as a ritual of reversal, arguing that the myth is partly a comedy that functions in a carnival setting, in “The Illuyanka Myth: A Hittite Saturnalia?” at the East Coast Indo-European Conference at the University of Georgia in Athens on July 1, 2024.

Goedegebuure chaired the search committee for a postdoctoral researcher at the rank of instructor in Hittite, a two-year position, to assist with the teaching load of the Anatolian studies program after Theo van den Hout’s retirement. ISAC was very fortunate to hire Timothy Leonard, a recent graduate of the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

In February 2024, Goedegebuure was appointed coeditor of the peer-reviewed *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* together with Seth Richardson (University of Chicago) and Paul Delnero (Johns Hopkins University). Other service to the field included peer-reviewing several articles and book manuscripts and organizing the ancient Near East program of the annual meeting of the AOS, held on March 22–25, 2024, in Chicago. This year was her last as section chair for the ancient Near East, having fulfilled this function for six years.

Goedegebuure’s work for the Chicago Hittite Dictionary is described in the Project Reports section of this annual report.

## INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH

This academic year, **REBECCA HASSELBACH-ANDEE** was on research leave, which gave her the opportunity to work on various projects. The main project was an article on the development of feminine grammatical gender in Semitic. The article looks at how seemingly contradictory functions of the Semitic feminine marker might be derived from one another and how the morpheme became associated with feminine gender. A very similar development also happened in Indo-European, so the article attempts to find common pathways in the two language families. Now completed, the article is currently under review by colleagues working on Indo-European. Another project that ties in with Hasselbach-Andee's larger research project on third-millennium BCE Ebla is an article on language contact in the second-millennium BCE Levant. In particular, Hasselbach-Andee tries to find a linguistic model that can explain the features of local languages found in the Akkadian written in the Levant during this period. She argues that the best approach to analyzing these types of local features is understanding them as the product of second-language acquisition. That is, local scribes learned Akkadian as a second language, although not perfectly, and local influences are the result of imperfect learning rather than of direct or intense contact between Akkadian and local Levantine languages. This article has been submitted and accepted for publication in the journal *Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel*. The methodology and evidence worked out and collected in this article will provide the basis for the analysis of third-millennium BCE Eblaite. Lastly, Hasselbach-Andee continued working on an almost-finished, article-length project that investigates the alignment system of Neo-Aramaic (the Aramaic currently spoken in Turkey, Iran, and Iraq). The alignment of several Neo-Aramaic dialects is commonly described as "ergative." Hasselbach-Andee argues that Neo-Aramaic has no synchronic or diachronic traces of ergativity and that it is, instead, semantically aligned.

In addition to these projects, Hasselbach-Andee gave several lectures. She presented a first draft of the project on feminine gender at the International Conference on Historical Linguistics in Heidelberg (Germany) in September 2023, for which she had been invited to participate in a workshop on classifiers. A revised version of the talk was presented at the meeting of the American Oriental Society in Chicago in March 2024. Lastly, she was invited to give the Ullendorff Lecture in Semitic Philology at the University of Cambridge (United Kingdom) in May 2024.

---

Former Epigraphic Survey director **W. RAYMOND JOHNSON** has been making the most of retirement and total immersion in his Amarna *talatat* research. This past year, he was invited to be a visiting scholar at the Museo Egizio in Turin, where he spent three months in the fall and three months in the spring studying the Museo's Akhenaten *talatat* blocks and related objects from Karnak and Amarna in preparation for a comprehensive catalog of the material. On June 13, in the Museo Egizio's 2024 lecture series, he presented a lecture on his research at the museum titled "Windows into the Vanished World of Akhenaten, Nefertiti, and Tutankhamun: Amarna-Period *Talatat* Blocks in the Collection of the Museo Egizio" (<https://www.youtube.com/live/gZLoS-UxdBw>).

While in Turin, Johnson was able to travel to Great Britain for research in London and to Egypt for additional research in Alexandria and Cairo. He spent January and February in Cairo, Luxor, and Nubia with Jay Heidel and Margie Fisher doing more research. In November, Johnson joined the Memphis Hathor Temple Joint American-Egyptian Mission of the Houston Museum of Natural Science. In June, the Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA) invited him to join the SCA-sponsored Al-Ashmunein *Talatat* Project.

Also during this report year, Johnson saw the publication of "The Akhenaten and Kiya Duck-Throttling Scene" in *Amarna—City of the Sun God*, an exhibition catalog of the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, 57–63 (Glyptoteket, 2023). He also published "An Enigmatic and Suggestive Amarna *Talatat* from Heropolis" in *Wonderful Things: Essays in Honor of C. Nicholas Reeves*, edited by Peter Lacovara, 75–81

(Lockwood, 2023). With Christian Bayer he coauthored “Attacking Amun: The Soleb Ram Case” for *Altering Images—Iconoclasm in Egypt*, edited by Vera E. Allen and Simon Connor (Aegyptiaca Leodiensia 14; Presses Universitaires de Liège, 2024). He also submitted “Helene J. Kantor and Fragmentary Wall-Relief Reconstruction: An Assessment of Certain Limestone *Talatat* Stored in the ‘Pennsylvania’ *Talatat* Magazine, Karnak” for publication in the forthcoming *Centennial Studies in Memory of Helene J. Kantor*, edited by Peter Lacovara. This spring also saw the long-awaited publication of the Epigraphic Survey’s *Medinet Habu X—The Eighteenth Dynasty Temple, Part 2: The Façade, Pillars, and Architrave Inscriptions of the Thutmosid Peripteros* (ISAC Publications 1; Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures, 2024)—the happy culmination of many years of collaborative work in Luxor.

---

**KEA JOHNSTON** is a postdoctoral scholar working jointly with the ISAC Museum and the Field Museum to develop new ways to use technology to reach scholars and museum visitors. Her PhD is in Egyptian art and archaeology, and as part of her own research she has been working on projects dealing with the craftsmanship of and use of text on ancient Egyptian coffins in the first millennium BCE.

First among these projects is a monograph based on her 2022 doctoral dissertation on coffin workshops at the Egyptian site of Akhmim. Akhmim was heavily looted in the 1880s, and its cemeteries have never been scientifically excavated. Everything from the site came from the antiquities market. Some pieces purchased by museums have owners with titles specific to Akhmim. Many of them seem to have been made by the same artists and scribes. Johnston has proposed that not only are these coffins from Akhmim, but their owners and the artists who painted them also had similar and distinctive ideas about how the coffin helped the deceased be successfully reborn. These ideas translated into art and text that make Akhmim coffins distinguishable from the better-studied Theban coffins. Johnston’s monograph will provide a new typology for coffins from Akhmim from the end of the New Kingdom to the Ptolemaic period.

In studying the texts on Akhmim coffins, it became apparent that retrograde text (where the characters face the end rather than the beginning of the text) was increasingly common on Akhmim coffins starting in the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty. In a paper titled “Reading and Writing in Retrograde on Late Period Coffins from Akhmim,” submitted to the proceedings of Current Research in Egyptology for 2023, Johnston discusses the possible reasons for the use of retrograde text on coffins.

She is also working on a new version of the Book of the Dead in 3D website (<https://3dcoffins.berkeley.edu>), a project overseen by Rita Lucarelli at the University of California, Berkeley. The Book of the Dead in 3D aims to provide three-dimensional models of Egyptian coffins in smaller collections in the western United States that are annotated with translations and transliterations of the texts on the coffin. The new version of the site will focus on extensibility and a modern user interface so that users without programming knowledge can annotate coffins with translations. The goal is also to make it easier to translate all text into Arabic and to provide a more seamless experience for Arabic-speaking users.

---

Together with ISAC associate Austin “Chad” Hill and Jordanian Department of Antiquities representative Mohammad al-Zahrán, **MORAG KERSEL** carried out a field season of “Landscapes of the Dead,” a proposed research project whose primary objective is to assess (through drone photography and pedestrian survey) archaeological landscapes of the Early Bronze Age (ca. 3600–2000 BCE) at Bâb adh-Dhrâ‘ and Fifa, Jordan, to better understand landscape modification and change during the recent pandemic. Country-wide, COVID-19 mandates and procedures left sites vulnerable to illegal excavation. Drone data generated in the 2023 field season was compared with 2020–22 satellite data to provide a chronological assessment of

## INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH

landscape modification. Ground truthing of the site during the drone flights confirmed new looting at the site of Fifa (figs. 1 and 2). From the systematic excavations carried out by R. Thomas Schaub and Walter Rast in 1989 and Mohammad Najjar in 2001, we know that each tomb has between 6 and 30 associated pots. Recent antiquities-market analysis establishes that each pot might sell for between \$30 and \$150 (on average) on the US market. We identified 119 new holes between 2020 and 2023, whose 714–3,570 vendible pots thus have the potential to realize a total financial gain from end-market sales in the United States in the range of \$21,420 to \$535,500. Using these findings, Kersel provided expert testimony before the US Department of State’s Cultural Property Advisory Committee in support of the extension of the memorandum of understanding between the United States and Jordan to protect against the illegal import and export of archaeological materials.



Figure 1. Digital elevation model of looting at Fifa.



Figure 2. Digital elevation model of looting at Fifa.



Figure 3. James Osborne at the now-empty Christopher Columbus statue plinth on the ASOR walking-tour workshop. A target of social-justice protests, the statue was removed and put in storage in 2020.

This year saw the publication of Kersel’s guest-edited issue of the journal *Levant*. The special issue focused on archaeological ethics. With Matthew D. Howland, James F. Osborne, and Yorke M. Rowan, Kersel created a StoryMap based on a walking-tour workshop in Chicago at the November meeting of the American Society of Overseas Research (ASOR): “(Re)visiting the Past in the Present: The Power of Place and the Malleability of Monuments” (fig. 3).

This year was **JANA MATUSZAK**’s first full academic year at the University of Chicago. Unlike the previous year, when she carried a full teaching load during her two quarters in residence, this year she could again devote time to research. Resulting publications on such diverse topics as pre-Sargonic mythology, women’s mobility, and the legal framework of Sumerian morality tales will start appearing in the coming months. In the meantime, the following studies were published this year:

- “Notes on CUSAS 23, 205: Ama’ušumgal’s death and return, with an excursus on ug<sub>5</sub> ‘to kill someone (sg.)’ and /u<sub>3</sub>/- + imperfective in the 3rd millennium BCE” (coauthored with Pascal Attinger). *Nouvelles assyriologiques brèves et utilitaires* 2024/1: 5–8.
- “What Did They Learn about Women?” In *Back to School in Babylonia*, edited by Susanne Paulus, 191–98. ISAC Museum Publications 1. Chicago: Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures, 2023.
- “Dialogue 1.” In *Back to School in Babylonia*, edited by Susanne Paulus, 408–11. ISAC Museum Publications 1. Chicago: Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures, 2023.

In addition to pursuing her own projects, Matuszak did a substantial amount of editorial work. She continued to serve as coeditor of the journal *Altorientalische Forschungen* (De Gruyter) and is serving as guest editor for volume 86 of *Iraq* (Cambridge University Press), in which she and Prof. Mark Weeden (University College London) will publish the proceedings of the conference “Approaches to Cuneiform Literature,” which they organized in London last spring. Moreover, Matuszak was recently invited to join the editorial board of the journal *Isin: For Archaeology, History and Ancient Languages*, published by the University of Al-Qadisiyah, Iraq.

Matuszak gave six papers at conferences in the United States (the annual meetings of the American Society of Overseas Research and the American Oriental Society), France (“Deviant Readings: Local and Communal Variation in the Sumerian Reading Tradition”), Italy (“The Female Voice in Philosophical Dialogues through the Ages”), and Iraq (the 5th International Scientific Conference of Mesopotamian Archaeology [online]), as well as four invited lectures, among them an ISAC members’ lecture titled “Law and Morality in Sumerian Satirical Tales” (available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Mm53Q4Wydo>).

Most importantly, perhaps, Matuszak received a Faculty Residential Fellowship at the University of Chicago’s Franke Institute for the Humanities for the academic year 2024–25. This fellowship will enable her to spend the 2024–25 academic year working on her second book project, provisionally titled *Sumerian Mock Hymns: Parodying Songs of Praise*.

**AUGUSTA McMAHON**’s research focuses on ancient Mesopotamian urbanism, based in her current research project at Nippur in southern Iraq (see Nippur project report) and her previous excavations at Tell Brak in northeastern Syria. During the past year, two publications on northern Mesopotamian cities appeared: “Urban Heterogeneity in the Early Cities of Northern Mesopotamia” in the *Journal of Urban Archaeology* (open access: <https://doi.org/10.1484/J.JUA.5.135658>) and “Tell Brak and Northern

## INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH

Mesopotamian Cities” in *The “City” across Time: Emergence, Developments, and Social, Economic, Political, Cultural and Health Impact*, edited by Marcella Frangipane, 161–78 (Atti dei Convegni Lincei 354; Rome: Bardi, 2023). Both publications derive from conference presentations in 2022 (in Copenhagen and Rome, respectively) and argue for the diversity of ancient cities and the contemporary but contrasting trajectories to urbanism in northern and southern Mesopotamia during the fourth millennium BCE.

Three additional publications returned to southern Mesopotamian cities: “Spacious or Empty? Making Courtyards in Mesopotamia,” in *Pomp, Circumstance, and the Performance of Politics: Acting Politically Correct in the Ancient World*, edited by Kathryn R. Morgan, 161–78 (ISAC Seminars 16; Chicago: Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures, 2024) examines open spaces in late third-millennium BCE temples in terms of ritual activities’ visibility and audibility for audiences of varying sizes, arguing that these buildings deliberately captured extra space to generate a sense of awe in visitors and participants. Another conference paper that appeared in print this year celebrated a century since British archaeologist Sir Leonard Woolley commenced excavations at the important site of Ur. This study examined Woolley’s less well known excavations in the sixth- to fifth-millennium BCE levels at Ur and the nearby site of Tell al-Ubaid: “Tell al-Ubaid and the Ubaid Period at Ur,” in *Ur 1922–2022, Papers Marking the Centenary of Sir Leonard Woolley’s First Season of Excavations at Ur*, edited by J. Nicholas Postgate and David C. Thomas, 85–94 (London: British Institute for the Study of Iraq, 2024). Finally, McMahon contributed “The Archaeology of Nippur’s House F and Its Neighborhood” to the ISAC Museum’s catalog for the *Back to School in Babylonia* special exhibition curated by Susanne Paulus (ISAC Museum Publications 1; Chicago: Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures, 2023).

In May, McMahon returned briefly to the United Kingdom to deliver “Third Places and Happiness: 15-Minute Cities in Ancient Mesopotamia” as the year’s Henry Sidgwick Memorial Lecture at Newnham College, University of Cambridge. She remains the coeditor of the journal *Iraq* and vice president of The Academic Research Institute in Iraq.

**CAROL MEYER** worked on two long-term publication projects this year. She finalized her chapter on gold-ore processing at Hosh el-Geruf at the Fourth Cataract of the Nile, in collaboration with James Harrell’s chapter on the local geology, for ISAC’s forthcoming publication of this site. Most of her time, however, was spent on the manuscript of *Islamic Glass from Aqaba*. Three chapters are now drafted: “Introduction and Background,” “Umayyad Glass,” and “Lamps,” including many maps, photographs, and figures (fig. 1). Meyer regrets the loss this year of Donald Whitcomb, a colleague, friend, and, as one of the principal excavators of Aqaba, someone who could have written the volume on the landscape, history, excavations, stratigraphy, and architecture of the site.

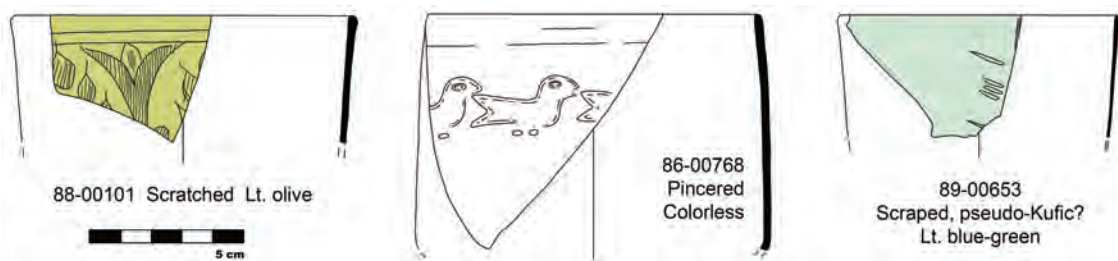


Figure 1. Abbasid bowls excavated at Aqaba. From chapter 4, on Abbasid glass, of *Islamic Glass from Aqaba* (forthcoming).



Nevertheless, the final typology of the Abbasid (ca. 750–969), Abbasid/Fatimid, and Fatimid (ca. 969–1125 and later) glass is in progress. The Abbasid material is particularly challenging. Umayyad glass is basically a continuation of Byzantine traditions, and Fatimid glass is well represented in the extensive though often shallow excavations at Aqaba, but good Abbasid loci are few and deeply buried, nor are there many good, dated parallels from other sites. That said, we can now begin to identify some distinctive forms and types of decoration. Gone are the stemmed Byzantine/Umayyad wine goblets, new are a series of deep bowls or beakers. Gone is the fine thread decoration, new are the elaborately scratched or engraved dishes and bowls. New are the entirely new pincer decorations made by squeezing the hot glass with patterned tongs, as well as a whole new kind of “scraped” decoration on vessels too thin to take deep cutting. We can even begin to track their distribution throughout the Near East and even into Spain. The Abbasid chapter, then, should be of especial value to excavators who need to identify and date their material.

---

Several of **BRIAN MUHS**’s publications appeared in 2023–24. They include “Patronage and Protection in Late Pharaonic and Ptolemaic Egypt,” in *Compulsion and Control in Ancient Egypt: Proceedings of the Third Lady Wallis Budge Symposium*, edited by Alexandre Loktionov, 196–204 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2023); “The Late Period: Introduction / The Egyptian Sources” and “Ptolemaic Egypt: The Egyptian Sources,” in *Slavery and Dependence in Ancient Egypt: Sources in Translation*, edited by Jane L. Rowlandson, Roger S. Bagnall, and Dorothy J. Thompson, 119–43 and 268–73 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2024); “New Kingdom Hieratic Manuscripts in the Oriental Institute Museum (Chicago)” (coauthored with Foy D. Scaf), in *New Kingdom Hieratic Collections from Around the World*, edited by Crossing Boundaries, 1:337–51 (Liège: Presses Universitaires de Liège, 2024); and a review of *The Origins of Money in the Iron Age Mediterranean World* by Elon D. Heymans, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 82, no. 2 (October 2023): 368–71.

Muhs completed and submitted for publication a sole-authored book manuscript, *Lending in Ptolemaic Egypt: The Demotic Loan-Account Papyri of Panas, Son of Espmetis*, as well as an article coauthored with Tasha Vorderstrasse for a Festschrift. He also presented three academic papers: “Late Pharaonic Wine from the Egyptian Oases” in November 2023 at the annual meeting of the American Society of Overseas Research, held in Chicago; “Demotic Ostraca from the Kaufmann Collection” in April 2024 at the seventy-fifth annual meeting of the American Research Center in Egypt, held in Pittsburgh; and “Institution and Individual in Ancient Egyptian Temple Economy” in May 2024 at the third Workshop on Temple Economy, held in Copenhagen.

---

**KIERSTEN NEUMANN** complemented her responsibilities as ISAC Museum curator with several pieces of original writing, invited talks, conference and committee participation, and collaborations related to her work on ancient West Asian material culture, museum practice, and cultural heritage preservation.

Included in *Dieux, rois et capitales dans le Proche-Orient ancien: Compte rendu de la LXV<sup>e</sup> Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale (Paris, 8–12 juillet 2019)* (Peeters, 2023) is a chapter by Neumann titled “From Khorsabad to Chicago: (Re)telling the Story of the Assyrian Reliefs at the Oriental Institute.” This study traces the history of these reliefs from their excavation in 1929–30 to their present-day display, with both archival records and photographs figuring heavily into the discussion and represented by no fewer than fifteen figures. Neumann’s chapter “‘I Burn as Incense for You’: Censers in Assyria and Beyond” appeared in the edited volume *Holy Smoke: Censers across Cultures* (Hirmer, 2023), whose beautiful design (including its carbon-paper wrapping intended to evoke some of the sensorial aspects of this discrete object

## INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH

type in antiquity) earned it recognition by Stiftung Buchkunst as one of the most beautiful German books of 2024. While focusing on first-millennium BCE Assyrian censers, Neumann draws on earlier and later Assyrian iterations and contemporaneous examples from neighboring regions, ultimately arguing—with the support of an abundance of figures—for a tripartite classification system for Assyrian censers: tall circular censers, short circular censers, and cubic censers (figs. 1 and 2).

Neumann also contributed articles to the spring/summer 2023 issue of ISAC's member magazine, *News & Notes*: "Artifacts Also Die: An Exhibition of Ruins and Renewal," a spotlight on this special exhibition that featured the work of Iraqi-British artist and academic Hanaa Malallah and was curated by Neumann; and "The Lotus in West Asia and North Africa," related to ISAC's new logo.

At the annual meeting of the American Society of Overseas Research (ASOR) in Chicago in November 2023, Neumann presented "Not All Questions Have Answers: ISAC's Roman Sculpture Collection and the Opportunities It Presented as Exhibition." She also continued to serve as ASOR program committee cochair, chair of the ASOR standing session "Cultural Heritage: Preservation, Presentation, and Management," and co-organizer of the Museum Professionals Working Group meeting. In January 2024, she was honored to join ASOR's board of trustees and concurrently its development committee. During the same month, Neumann presented a virtual talk, "Un(broken) Continuity: Counter-narratives of a Mesopotamian Past," for the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, New York University, in connection with its exhibition *Through the Lens: Latif Al Ani's Visions of Ancient Iraq*, with thanks for the invitation to Roberta Casagrande-Kim, Bernard and Lisa Selz Director of Exhibitions and Gallery Curator. The following month she gave a Friends of ASOR webinar, "Contemporary Interventions: The Case for Contemporary



Figure 1. Stone censer from Nineveh. British Museum (BM 1930-5-8, 218). © The Trustees of the British Museum.

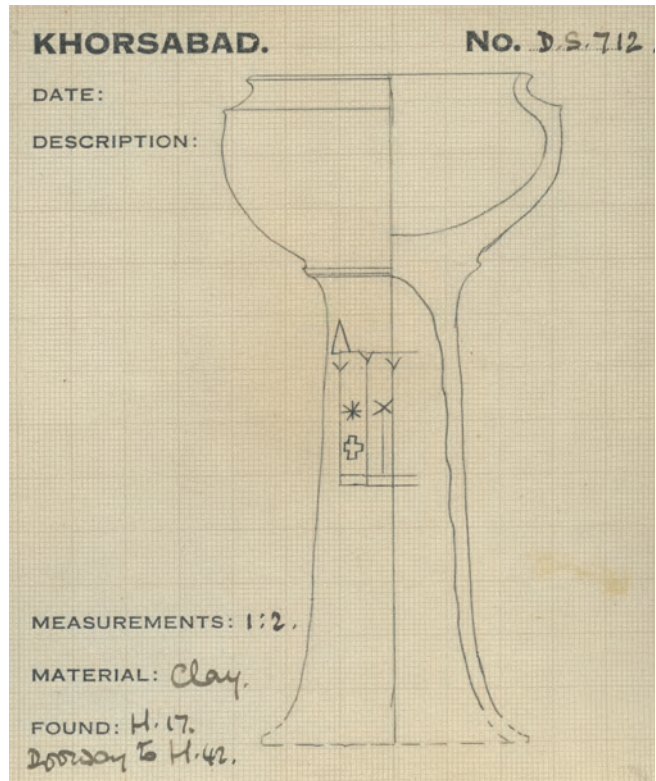


Figure 2. Ceramic censer from Dur-Šarrukin. Khorsabad Expedition catalog card DS 712, ISAC Museum Archives.

Art in Archaeological Museums.” In April 2024, Neumann presented “‘Sexless’ in the Middle East: The Reception and Legacy of Gertrude Bell” at the sixth Gender, Methodology, and the Near East workshop at the University of Malta. Finally, having become an American citizen in 2024, Neumann was able to accept an invitation to join the US Speaker Program, Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs, US Department of State, and she continues to collaborate on international museum and art projects and exhibitions.

In winter 2024 Neumann taught a new undergraduate/graduate course, “Collecting the Ancient World: Museum Practice and Politics,” in the University of Chicago’s Department of Art History. She advised several students on their theses: as primary advisor for Xilin Liu (master’s thesis, “The Impact of University Legislation on Immunity from Seizure of Artworks: A Study of Museum-Loaned Artworks and Legal Dynamics”); as second reader for Natalie Rudin (master’s thesis, “Betwixt and Between: Cultic Personnel of Inana-Ištar”); and as coadvisor for Anna Seldon (bachelor’s thesis, “Dress to Transgress: Body, Dress, and Gender in the Material Culture of Lydia from the 7th to 5th Centuries BCE”). Seldon received both special honors from the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations and the department’s Justin Palmer Prize for most outstanding undergraduate research project.

---

For **JAMES OSBORNE**, the 2023–24 academic year was highly rewarding in several respects. He was fortunate to have two writing projects appear in print, both of which had been in gestation for a long time. The first was an article in a volume by former ISAC postdoctoral fellow, and good friend and colleague, Kathryn Morgan. In 2019 Morgan organized a conference titled “Pomp, Circumstance, and the Performance of Politics,” with participants working on cross-cultural contexts around the world. Osborne was honored to participate in the conference—the first time he gave a paper in ISAC’s famous annual conference series. The subsequent edited volume of the same name, published in February 2024, promises to be a highly useful archaeological exploration of ancient politics, not just as presented by elites but as actually experienced by people in their daily lives. Osborne’s own paper addressed this topic in the Syro-Anatolian Culture Complex, an Iron Age culture of southeastern Anatolia, and questioned whether regular Iron Age people felt the effect of political activity in their lives at all. Osborne’s second publication, coauthored with Michele Massa (Bilkent University) and titled “Kızıldağ, Karadağ, and Sacred Peak Sites in Central Anatolia during the Late Bronze and Iron Ages,” appeared in the prestigious *American Journal of Archaeology* (128, no. 1 [January 2024]: 33–58). This article ties together their recent survey results from the spectacular Bronze–Iron Age mound of Türkmen-Karahöyük with the nearby stunning landscape monuments of Kızıldağ and Karadağ, arguing that Iron Age rulers who lived at the settlement mound incorporated those mountain peaks into an integrated sacred landscape, in emulation of their Late Bronze Age Hittite predecessors. The early 2024 publication was fortuitously timed given that, in spring 2024, the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism formally notified them that their excavation permit for Türkmen-Karahöyük was granted and that, after years of planning, they would finally be able to start their excavation at the site in summer 2024. Finally, Osborne is highly grateful and honored to report that his 2021 monograph *The Syro-Anatolian City-States: An Iron Age Culture*, published by Oxford University Press, received the 2023 G. Ernest Wright Award of the American Society of Overseas Research for “most substantial book in the archaeology of the Near East and eastern Mediterranean.”

---

In 2023–24, **SUSANNE PAULUS** made scholarly contributions across various domains related to her expertise in Babylonian studies. In her multifaceted role as ISAC Tablet Collection curator and director of

## INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH

the Nippur Tablet Project, she undertook significant activities culminating in the *Back to School in Babylonia* exhibition.

The exhibition was a pivotal and time-consuming project, with Paulus overseeing its curation with the team of the Tablet Collection and editing an accompanying catalog. This catalog featured two of her scholarly contributions: one reflecting on the “Aims of Babylonian Education,” a topic she also illuminated during a talk at the American Society of Overseas Research annual meeting in Chicago, a session co-organized with Jana Matuszak, and the second focused on “Practicing Law,” highlighting legal education.

Following the completion of exhibition-related tasks in the spring, Paulus used her leave to concentrate on her research into Kassite social, legal, and economic history. Her primary project during this period was preparing a monograph titled *Banking with Barley*, which explores how this essential staple influenced Babylonian economy and society. Additionally, she completed an extensive chapter on “Loans and Debts in Kassite Rural Babylonia,” set to be published in the *Gedenkschrift for Wilfred van Soldt*. Her ongoing research into Kassite archives from Babylon led to the presentation “A Broader View of the Kassite Archives of Babylon” at the *Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale* in Leiden and a concise article titled “Hauskauf in Babylon im 13. Jahrhundert v. Chr.”

Beyond her primary research, Paulus engaged in two notable side projects. The first, in collaboration with Edward C. Williams, G. Sue, and others, resulted in an article on artificial intelligence and cuneiform sign recognition: “DeepScribe: Localization and Classification of Elamite Cuneiform Signs via Deep Learning.” The second project was a contribution to an upcoming exhibition in Budapest, *Mesopotamia: Kingdom of Gods and Demons*, for which she authored a piece titled “Babylonian Kudurrus: Gods, Their Symbols, and Divine Justice,” to be published in Hungarian and English.

---

**HERVÉ RECULEAU** published three new chapters/articles in 2023–24: “Old Babylonian Nippur in Its Environmental and Historical Settings,” in *Back to School in Babylonia*, edited by Susanne Paulus, 19–29 (ISAC Museum Publications 1; Chicago: Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures, 2023); “De l’influence des conditions météorologiques sur les communications en Haute Mésopotamie,” in *Entre les fleuves—III: On the Way in Upper Mesopotamia. Travels, Routes and Environment as a Basis for the Reconstruction of Historical Geography*, edited by Adelheid Otto and Nele Ziegler, 35–49 (Berliner Beiträge zum Vorderen Orient 30; Gladbeck: Peter Werner, 2023); and “Entre mythe et histoire: écrire (sur) les origines en Mésopotamie ancienne,” in *La fabrique des sociétés*, edited by Catherine Courtet, Mireille Besson, Françoise Lavocat, and François Lecercle, 97–121 (Rencontres Recherches et Création 10; Paris: CNRS Editions, 2024).

In parallel, Reculeau started a project of publishing the Old Babylonian archival documents that are currently hosted in various North American museums, including ISAC’s own, as part of his long-standing collaboration with the French digital Assyriology project Archibab (<https://www.archibab.fr/>). The end goal is to make available, both in books and online, the hundreds of unpublished documents from the early second millennium BCE that were acquired from antiquities dealers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and to regroup them into coherent archives via the Archibab database.

Reculeau also wrote documentary resources and gave a filmed interview for a forthcoming French television documentary on the Flood, to appear in the documentary series *Quand l’histoire fait dates* written, produced, and hosted by Patrick Boucheron (Collège de France), which will be broadcast in 2025 on the Franco-German television channel Arte. These materials will be expanded and presented to a general audience in a forthcoming book, expected to be published in 2025 in both French and English.

In addition to his usual teaching, mentoring, and academic service, Reculeau was instrumental in the spring 2024 campus visit of French Assyriologists Dominique Charpin (Collège de France) and Nele Ziegler (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique). Cosponsored by ISAC, the Collège de France, and

the France Chicago Center, this visit was initially planned to happen in 2020, the year Prof. Charpin was awarded an honorary degree from the University (which he received at the virtual convocation of 2021; see <https://news.uchicago.edu/story/university-chicago-award-six-honorary-degrees-2021-convocation>), but had to be postponed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. We were delighted to have the two French scholars join our campus community, give lectures in Breasted Hall, and teach our students for two weeks.

---

**SETH RICHARDSON** spent much of his year completing nine new article manuscripts. These papers focused on difficult questions about Mesopotamian culture and literature. To give some examples, one new piece argues that Babylonian date-lists should be understood as literary-historical “annals” rather than mere chronographic tools. Another recontextualizes Sumerian proverbs as elements for structuring dialogue and debate rather than single, one-off bits of “wisdom.” A third (coauthored with Steven Garfinkle) questions the prevalence of violence in state and community contexts, advocating for an antiquity less steeped in blood than is often imagined. A fourth documents the high incidence of residential mobility in the Old Babylonian period, arguing against modern demographic models that assume fixed and traditional residence as the norm for the ancient world. In all, Richardson had eleven articles accepted and in press, including at the *American Historical Review*, the *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, the Cambridge History of Rights series, and in various edited volumes and Festschriften.

Richardson had one essay, one article, and one note published during the past year. The essay was a response paper for Kathryn R. Morgan’s postdoctoral seminar proceedings volume *Pomp, Circumstance, and the Performance of Politics: Acting Politically Correct in the Ancient World*, published by ISAC in February 2024. The article, coauthored with Tracy Lemos and appearing in the *Cambridge World History of Genocide*, studied the topic of mass violence in Mesopotamia. The note, published in *Nouvelles assyriologiques brèves et utilitaires*, clarified that a sometimes-supposed etymological relationship between the Akkadian words *ardu* “slave” and *ārīttu* “downstream” or “brought down” is spurious; the words are unrelated, with revisionist consequences for understanding slaving as primarily an import market.

The balance of Richardson’s year was devoted to travel and workshops. He gave five different invited talks in Leiden, Würzburg, Munich, Prague, and Turin, and two more conference talks, one in Chicago at the annual meeting of the American Society of Overseas Research and the other at Harvard University for the 50th annual meeting of the Association of Ancient Historians. A different sort of talk was his podcast interview for the *Journal of the History of International Law’s* “Voices of JHIL” hosted by the Max Planck Institute. He also gave a keynote address at the 69th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale in Helsinki in July 2024 on its theme “Politics, Peoples, and Politics in the Ancient Near East.”

Finally, Richardson took on the coeditorship of the *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* together with Paul Delnero and Petra Goedegebuure, an adventure only at its beginning. He also continues in his role as managing editor for the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*.

---

In addition to publications from the Kites in Context project, **YORKE ROWAN** and colleagues published an article from the Eastern Badia Archaeological Project titled “Not a Place for Respectable People, but the Ends of the Earth Converge There: Insights from Wisad Pools into the Nature and Context of Jordan’s Black Desert Neolithic” (*Levant* 56 [June 2024]: 1–32). Rowan coedited the volume *Shiqmim II: The Phase II Excavations at a Chalcolithic Settlement Center in the Northern Negev Desert, Israel (1987–1989, 1993)* with Thomas E. Levy and Marjorie M. Burton (BAR International Series 3134; Oxford: BAR Publishing, 2023). In that volume, he coauthored chapter 2, “The Settlement Center: Phase II Excavations in

## INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH

the Shiqmim Village—Stratigraphy, Architecture, and Social Change.” He published “Canaanite Blades of the Chalcolithic” in *Through the Ages: Festschrift for Dieter Vieweger* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2023), as well as “Interpreting the Chalcolithic Steles of the Southern Levant” with David Ilan, in *“And in the length of days understanding” (Job 12:12): Essays on Archaeology in the Eastern Mediterranean and Beyond in Honor of Thomas E. Levy*, edited by Erez Ben-Yosef and Ian W. N. Jones, 191–204 (Cham: Springer, 2023).

With Marie-Laure Chambrade, a Marie Skłodowska-Curie postdoctoral fellow, Rowan presented “A 7th Millennium BCE Pioneer Front? Revisiting the Neolithic ‘Conquest’ of Near Eastern Arid Margins” at the colloquium “Frentes Pioneros: Conquista de territorios a través de los siglos,” in Veracruz Puerto, Mexico. In addition, he participated in “Visiting the Past in the Present: Monuments in Place,” an American Society of Overseas Research (ASOR) workshop organized by ISAC research associate Morag M. Kersel that also included James Osborne. In Chicago, at ASOR’s annual meeting, Rowan, Kersel, and Austin “Chad” Hill presented “When the Margins Weren’t Marginal: Remote Sensing and Ground Truthing in the Black Desert, Jordan,” and in support of ASOR funding, Rowan presented a webinar, “The Neolithic Renaissance in the Black Desert of Jordan.” At the 2024 annual meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America (AIA), also in Chicago, Rowan presented “Movement and Mobility of Late Neolithic Colonizers: Occupying the Black Desert of Jordan.” Finally, he presented “The Late Neolithic Presence in the Black Desert, Jordan” (with Hill, Kersel, Gary Rollefson, and Alex Wasse) at the 2024 annual meeting of the Society for American Archaeology in New Orleans.

In connection with the ISAC special exhibition *Pioneers of the Sky: Aerial Archaeology and the Black Desert*, curated by Chambrade, Rowan presented a lecture titled “Beyond the Fertile Crescent: Late Prehistoric People of the Black Desert.” During the 2023–24 academic year, he was the AIA Kershaw speaker, delivering lectures to the Central Indiana Society at Butler University (Indianapolis), the University of Alberta (Edmonton), the Western Illinois Society at Monmouth College, Augustana College in Rock Island, the Central Illinois Society at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and the Vancouver AIA Society at the University of British Columbia. He also delivered the lectures “Prehistoric Infrastructure? Kites and Neolithic Villages” at the University of Copenhagen and “Landscape Archaeology and the Black Desert of Jordan” to the Chicago Archaeological Society.

---

**FOY SCALF** had a busy and productive 2023–24 as he continued to press ahead with publications, conferences, lectures, classes, and media requests, in addition to his responsibilities managing the Research Archives library and ISAC Integrated Database. His conference paper mentioned in last year’s annual report was published as “Assemblage Theory and Remix Culture in the Book of the Dead: A Case Study of Repeated Spells” in *Birmingham Egyptology Journal* 10 (2023–24): 1–21. He coauthored overviews of hieratic collections in Chicago and Los Angeles: “New Kingdom Hieratic Manuscripts in the Oriental Institute Museum (Chicago),” with Brian Muhs, and “Two New Kingdom Hieratic Manuscripts from the Collection of the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles,” with Sara Cole and Judith Barr, both published in *New Kingdom Hieratic Collections from around the World*, edited by Andrea Fanciulli et al., 1:337–61 (Aegyptiaca Leodiensia 13.1; Liège: Presses Universitaires de Liège, 2024). By the time this annual report appears, the Festschrift for Robert K. Ritner, coedited by Scalf with Brian Muhs, will have been published; titled *A Master of Secrets in the Chamber of Darkness: Egyptological Studies in Honor of Robert K. Ritner Presented on the Occasion of His Sixty-Eighth Birthday* (Studies in Ancient Cultures 3; Chicago: Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures, 2024), the Festschrift includes two contributions by Scalf: “Three Demotic Silver Accounts from the Oriental Institute Museum Collection,” coauthored with Jacqueline Jay, and “The Transmission of Magical Texts at Deir el-Medina: A Hieratic Copy of a Horus Cippi Text on

Ostrakon ISACM E17008,” coauthored with Muhs. Several additional articles by Scaif were submitted to or accepted for publication in the *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists*, *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale*, and *Revue d'égyptologie*, to appear in the coming year.

Scaif gave four conference papers this year: “The Village Voice: Contexts for Ritual Recitations in Ancient Egypt from Households to Priesthoods” at the fifteenth Conference on Orality and Literacy in the Ancient World, Ada, Ohio, June 26, 2024; “Book of the Dead, Book of Magic: A New Hieratic Papyrus from the Third Intermediate Period” at the annual meeting of the American Research Center in Egypt, Pittsburgh, April 20, 2024; “Intertextuality between Compilation and Application: A Demotic Spell for Compulsion and the So-Called Greco-Egyptian Magical Formularies” at the annual meeting of the Society of Classical Studies, January 5, 2024; and “New Papyri from the Bab el Gasus: Identifying Provenience and Prosopography of HM 84123” at the annual meeting of the American Society of Overseas Research, Chicago, November 17, 2023.

On November 4, 2023, he gave the keynote lecture for the opening symposium of the Book of the Dead exhibit at the J. Paul Getty Museum: “The Getty Book of the Dead.” The entire symposium can now be viewed on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/0FoYR16C7yk>. On April 23, 2024, he gave a presentation at Chapin Library of Williams College, “All Around the World from London to MA: Repurposing the Oldest Books in Chapin Library at Williams College,” during a visit to conduct further research on the Egyptian manuscripts in the library’s collection.

Scaif gave six ISAC Community Scholars lectures, including “Revival Architecture and Its Ancient Derivations” for the Glencoe Public Library (June 20, 2024), the Egypt Exploration Organization of Southern California (May 11, 2024), and the Jewish Community Centers of Chicago (September 5, 2023); “*The Mummy* as Monster: Unraveling a Pop Culture Icon” for The Clare (October 24, 2023); “Printing God’s Words with the Devil’s Infernal Machine: The Hieroglyphic Printing Font in the Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures” for The Clare (September 26, 2023); and “Building the Pyramids: New Evidence from the Earliest Papyri and Scans of Secret Corridors” for The Clare (July 18, 2023).

---

**MEHRNOUSH SOROUGH** spent her second year at ISAC on pedagogical development, research, and management of the Center for Ancient Middle Eastern Landscapes (CAMEL) laboratory (see more details in the CAMEL annual report). She continued to revise the two-quarter course on ancient landscapes. The course attracts a diverse range of undergraduate and graduate students who are interested in learning geospatial skills for archaeological and environmental research. She was accepted into this year’s cohort of University of Chicago Center for Teaching and Learning pedagogy fellows to revise this course’s syllabus systematically while receiving intensive pedagogical mentorship and development.

Soroush submitted an article titled “Hydraulic Landscapes and the Imperial Paradigm in The West Asian Water History” for a handbook of rural and landscape archaeology in Western Asia to be published by Routledge. The article argues against the common view in Near Eastern studies that ancient states’ increasing involvement in the construction and management of irrigation canals led to the increasing extent and complexity of canal systems. In particular, it argues against the dominant narrative that the Sasanian Empire was more engaged in irrigation projects than preceding polities were. Soroush also submitted the proposal for her first book project, *The Long Life of Water: A History of the Shushtar Historic Hydraulic System*, planned for publication by the University of California at Los Angeles.

Soroush led two projects in her 2023 field research in Erbil, in the Kurdistan Regional Governorate of Iraq, under the umbrella of the Erbil Plain Archaeological Survey. The first project is a multi-institutional geophysical survey to test the application of seismic tomography—a way of 3D-scanning the earth’s inner structure through the recording of vibrations—to map deeply buried hydraulic remains, known as qanats.

## INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH

The aim of the second project, sponsored by the University of Chicago Women's Board, is the systematic analysis of understudied medieval-period pottery while creating career development opportunities for women who face cultural barriers that prevent them from participating in field research.

---

In 2023–24, **GIL STEIN** presented two conference papers and participated in one panel discussion deriving from his cultural heritage projects in Afghanistan and Central Asia:

- “University of Chicago Cultural Heritage Preservation Projects in Afghanistan, 2012–2021: Culture, Conflict, and Politics.” Paper presented at the conference “Politics and Archaeological Missions in Afghanistan: Japanese and International Research in Afghanistan and the Iranian Plateau,” University of Delaware, February 20–21, 2024.
- “The NMA-ISAC Hadda Project: Restoring Early Buddhist Stucco Art in the National Museum of Afghanistan” (with Alejandro Gallego Lopez). Paper presented at the international conference “Gandhāran Artists and Artisans: Representations of an Era of Religious Images,” University of Strasbourg (France), May 22–23, 2024.
- “Protecting Cultural Heritage under Siege.” Discussion panel at the workshop “Protecting International Cultural Heritage and Personnel under Siege: Problems and Prospects for US Organizations,” convened at the Smithsonian Institution National Museum of Asian Art, Washington, DC, April 24–26, 2024.

As the principal investigator for two US State Department–sponsored cultural heritage grants, Stein continued his work in Uzbekistan on three ongoing projects. The first is a two-year grant from the US State Department’s Ambassador’s Fund for Cultural Preservation for the project “Conservation and Restoration of the Langar Ota Timurid Mosque, Qashqadaryo Province, Uzbekistan.” As part of the second ongoing project, in 2023 Stein organized and implemented the second of two workshops for cultural heritage specialists from all five Central Asian republics in the multiyear training program grant in Uzbekistan called “CHED” (Cultural Heritage and Economic Development). Held in the southern city of Termez, the workshops focused on two key strategies for site preservation—their inscription as UNESCO World Heritage sites or their development as national archaeological parks. The CHED grant also supported the foundation of the Council of Central Asian National Museums, an international consortium of the National Museums of the Central Asian republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. At the consortium’s second organizational meeting in Tashkent on December 14–15, 2023, the member museums signed the formal document establishing the council. It is hoped the national museum of Turkmenistan will join as the fifth member in the coming year.

In November 2023, Stein was awarded a third grant for work in Uzbekistan as the principal investigator on behalf of ISAC and the Chicago Center for Cultural Heritage Preservation (C3HP): US State Department, US Embassy–Tashkent grant SUZ80023CA0081: “C5 Capstone Training Program for Central Asian Conservators” (CTPAC) (\$357,240). This two-year grant supports the completion of an earlier four-year C5 CTPAC grant by training conservators from all five Central Asian republics in eight essential areas of museum conservation science. The first of the two-week workshops will take place in October 2024 in Tashkent at the State Museum for the History of Uzbekistan.

In addition to this work, in September 2023 Stein continued his archaeological excavations at the prehistoric sixth- to fourth-millennium BCE site of Surezha in the Kurdistan region of northeastern Iraq. This excavation has been ongoing since 2013. He is also continuing his research and publication work on the manuscript of a forthcoming book, *Catalog of the Hadda Collections at the National Museum of Afghanistan*, coauthored with Alejandro Gallego Lopez and scheduled for completion in December 2024.



In tandem with his cultural heritage work, Stein published two preliminary reports in 2023–24:

- “Surezha Excavations” (with Michael T. Fisher and Nader Babakr). In *ISAC Annual Report 2022–2023*, edited by Theo van den Hout, 71–86 (Chicago: Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures, 2023).
- “Cultural Heritage Preservation Projects in Afghanistan and Central Asia.” In *ISAC Annual Report 2022–2023*, edited by Theo van den Hout, 17–25 (Chicago: Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures, 2023).

Finally, and most fun, in June 2024 Stein led a group of fifteen ISAC supporters on a seventeen-day tour of Central Asia (Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) focused on the ancient and modern monuments, cities, and thriving traditional crafts of these countries along the Silk Road.

---

In September, **EMILY TEETER** submitted the manuscript for *Chicago on the Nile: A Century of Work by the Epigraphic Survey of the University of Chicago*, to ISAC publications, and after months of editorial work and checking, it was passed to the watchful eye of managing editor Andrew Baumann. With Ashley Arico, assistant curator of ancient art at the Art Institute of Chicago, Teeter finalized the text for the online catalog of the Art Institute’s Egyptian collection; after several stops and starts, it should appear in early 2025. She also continues as the editor of the *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*.

In June, Teeter received a five-year appointment as a research associate of the Negaunee Integrative Research Center at the Field Museum, Chicago, in connection with the development of its new galleries of African and Egyptian art, scheduled to open in 2028. She accepted a position as content consultant for those galleries.

With Brett McClain and Catherine Witt, Teeter served as cocurator of the ISAC special exhibition on the centennial of the Epigraphic Survey, which opened in September 2024, and she worked with Denise Browning in the Museum Shop on merchandise for the show.

In addition to reviewing papers for the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, *Bulletin de l’Institut français d’archéologie orientale*, *Journal of Egyptian History*, and *Journal of the Union of Arab Archaeologists*, Teeter attended the International Conference of Egyptologists in Leiden in August, the Comité international pour l’égyptologie (CIPEG) conference of the International Council of Museums in Luxor in November, and the annual American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE) meeting in Pittsburgh in April. She continued to serve on the boards of the Society of Biblical Literature’s Writings of the Ancient World series and of CIPEG. After many years of service, she stepped down from ARCE’s finance committee, though she continues to be very involved with the local chapter of ARCE.

Teeter led the ISAC tour to Egypt in November and December 2023, and she enjoyed several weeks at Chicago House in Luxor finalizing the images for *Chicago on the Nile*.

---

In her last year as a faculty member of ISAC and the University of Chicago’s Departments of Classics and Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, **SOFÍA TORALLAS TOVAR** is transitioning to emerita status. During the 2023–24 academic year she continued working on the project “Transmission of Magical Knowledge” together with her colleague in the Classics department, Christopher Faraone. In 2023, the volume of essays they edited, *The Greco-Egyptian Magical Formularies: Libraries, Books and Individual Recipes* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2022), received the Charles J. Goodwin Award of Merit from the Society for Classical Studies.

## INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH

The continued work on this corpus will result this year in the publication of two more volumes: *Greek and Egyptian Magical Formularies: Text and Translation, Volume 2*, which continues the work begun eight years ago on a new edition of the formularies; and another volume of essays, this time focusing on the Great Magic Codex of Paris, coordinated by Torallas Tovar and Faraone.

---

After stepping down as ISAC interim director on September 1, 2023, and then retiring in October, **THEO VAN DEN HOUT** returned to the Chicago Hittite Dictionary (see separate report) and his personal research. The latter concentrated on hunting in Anatolia in the time of the Hittite Kingdom (1650–1200 BCE) in preparation for the three-day workshop “L’iconographie cynégétique dans les mondes anciens,” held in Paris in April 2024. There, van den Hout gave a paper, “Warlords or Hunters? Hunting and War Imagery in Hittite Iconography,” to be published in the future proceedings. In Chicago, he spoke on the same general theme at the 234th Meeting of the American Oriental Society on March 23 and at a Breasted Salon at ISAC on May 15.

From June 23 to June 27, van den Hout was invited to teach in the Summer School on Anatolian Languages and Linguistics at Oxford University organized by Michele Bianconi. His lectures focused on Hittite literature and visual culture.

In addition, van den Hout published two articles in the past year: “Another Storm God ‘Jumping’ on His Vehicle? Remarks on the Sketch on KUB 20.76” in *Chariots in Antiquity: Essays in Honour of Joost Crowwel*, edited by Peter Raulwing, Stefan Burmeister, Gail Brownrigg, and Katheryn M. Linduff, 89–101 (Oxford: BAR Publishing, 2024), and “Hittite Foodways: The King as the Provider of His People” in *Eating and Drinking in the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the 67th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Turin, July 12–16, 2021*, edited by Stefano de Martino, Elena Devecchi, and Maurizio Viano, 25–42 (Münster: Zaphon, 2024). An online review of *Brill’s Companion to Bodyguards in the Ancient Mediterranean*, by Mark Hebblewhite and Conor Whately, appeared in the *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* (<https://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2024/2024.02.52/>).

---

**TASHA VORDERSTRASSE**, manager of ISAC’s continuing education program, facilitated and taught multiple adult education classes and provided University of Chicago and Laboratory School tours (see Public Programming—Adult Education in this annual report). She cotaught an adult education class with Alison Whyte, senior conservator at ISAC, titled “Color in Ancient Art.” The class was featured in the *University of Chicago Magazine* as the spring 2024 issue’s cover article, “Color Unearthed.” The article is available in print and online at <https://mag.uchicago.edu/university-news/color-unearthed>.

In November 2023, Vorderstrasse cochaired the “Archaeology of Islamic Society” session at the American Society of Overseas Research (ASOR) annual meeting in Chicago. She also gave several presentations in 2023–24: “Studying Interpretations of Nubia and Egypt: From Edmonia Lewis to Drusilla Dunjee Houston,” a virtual talk for the Annual Missouri Egyptological Symposium (#MOEgypt5) on Saturday, October 21, 2023; the workshop presentation “Defining Aksum: Northern Ethiopia (Tigray) and Eritrea in the 1st Millennium CE” and the talk “Connecting East Africa to the Mediterranean,” both for ASOR in November; and “Meroitic Bronze Bowls Depicting Cattle from Karanog” at the annual meeting of the American Research Center in Egypt, held in Pittsburgh in April 2024. She also participated in the Early Career Scholars lunch at the ASOR annual meeting and is the University of Chicago representative for the American Research Institute of the South Caucasus.

Vorderstrasse conducted research at Princeton University, visiting there twice to work on the material from the Antioch excavations at the suburb of Daphne. At the ISAC Museum, she has been working on the Chinese and Ayla Aksum amphorae from the site of Aqaba and documenting the Mannheimer collection of some 5,000 coins, many of which remain unregistered.

Vorderstrasse submitted an article cowritten with Brian Muhs for a forthcoming Festschrift, and her article “The Art of Manuscript Illumination in Medieval Nubia” (in *Nubia Christiana II*, edited by Magdalena Łaptaś and Stefan Jakobielski, 81–118 [Warsaw: University of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, 2020]) was made open access at [https://wydawnictwo.uksw.edu.pl/img/cms/e-booki/Nubia%20ChristianiaII\\_lekka.pdf](https://wydawnictwo.uksw.edu.pl/img/cms/e-booki/Nubia%20ChristianiaII_lekka.pdf).

---

**KAREN L. WILSON** is currently reviewing proofs of *Nippur VI: The Inanna Temple*, which was accepted for publication by ISAC Publications and will appear in the Nippur series edited by emeritus professor of Mesopotamian archaeology McGuire Gibson. The volume—coauthored by Wilson, Richard L. Zettler, Jean M. Evans, and Robert D. Biggs, with contributions by R. C. Haines, Donald P. Hansen, and Walther Sallaberger—will be the final publication of ISAC’s excavation of the Inanna Temple at the site of Nippur during the late 1950s and early 1960s. The ISAC publications office is currently preparing the volume(s) for publication.

Wilson also continued to serve as the Kish project coordinator and research associate at Chicago’s Field Museum, conducting research on the work of the Field Museum–Oxford University Joint Expedition to Kish in 1923–32.

---