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With the assistance of Walther Sallaberger and Felix Rauchhaus of the University of Munich, **ROBERT BIGGS** worked on updating and finalizing his chapter on the mid-third-millennium cuneiform inscriptions from the Inanna Temple at Nippur for publication by ISAC—work he began at the Iraq Museum in Baghdad in 1972. In March 2025 he gave his draft manuscript on the cuneiform texts from the 1977 excavations at Umm al-Hafriyat, Iraq, to McGuire Gibson, who directed the excavations, so that cross-references could be added and locus numbers updated. In June 2025, his forty-page article on the Ur III texts in the W. H. Over Museum at the University of South Dakota, Vermillion, was accepted for publication by the Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative. A shorter article on two Ur III tablets in a private Detroit collection appeared in March 2025 in *Nouvelles assyriologiques brèves et utilitaires*.

JOHN BRINKMAN completed the text edition and historical discussion for the inscription of a Middle Babylonian royal official discovered in a village near Sar Pol-e Zahab in western Iran; the article, titled “An Inscribed Kassite Weight from Kermānshāh Province, Western Iran” and containing a description by archaeologists of the circumstances of the find, appeared in *Altorientalische Forschungen* 51, no. 2 (2024). Continuing his work on family archives from the late Kassite period excavated at Babylon, he provided extensive commentaries on a collection of legal texts (mercantile and real estate), now submitted for publication in the *Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft* series.

FRANÇOIS GAUDARD completed his thirty-first year as a member of the ISAC scholarly community. Among other projects, he continued to work on text editions of various mummy labels, of a Demotic accounting text from the Ptolemaic period, and of the ISAC Museum’s Egyptian funerary shrouds from the Greco-Roman period. After shrouds OIM (ISACM) E4786 and OIM (ISACM) E4789, the third shroud to be published is OIM (ISACM) E4787 (see below). To judge by its style and the panel of colors used, it is likely to have been created by an artist or to have originated from a funerary workshop different from that of the other shrouds in the same lot. This interpretation is corroborated by the fact that, in this case, the main text—which apparently consisted of two vertical columns in the center—was not written retrograde and that *w.r.t* “the great one,” an epithet of Isis, was written as  instead of . Although very little of this text has been preserved, Gaudard was able to restore a large portion of the second column.



Shroud OIM (ISACM) E4787.

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Some of the articles on which Gaudard has been working include:

- “Funerary Shrouds from Dendera in the Oriental Institute Museum of the University of Chicago. Part III: Shroud OIM (ISACM) 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 (ISACM) E4788 (= OIM [ISACM] E42046),” in preparation
- “A Demotic Accounting Text from the Ptolemaic Period,” in preparation

In addition, Gaudard attended the following Egyptological conferences and workshops: “Les pratiques oraculaires dans les temples abydéniens: 1. L’oracle d’Ahmosis, 2. Les révélations de la tête d’Osiris à Abydos et autres témoignages tardifs,” lectures delivered by Laurent Coulon at the University of Geneva, Switzerland (March 25–26, 2025); “Workshop on Pyramids,” organized by the International Association of Egyptologists and held at the Institut français d’archéologie orientale in Cairo (April 12, 2025); “Journée en Hommage à Jean-Luc Chappaz,” a day of lectures organized by the University of Geneva, the Société d’Égyptologie, and the Musée d’art et d’histoire and held at the Espace GamMAH in Geneva (May 3, 2025); and “Tagung über Athribis (Provinz Sohag): Der Pylon-Tempel im Zentrum der Kult- und Siedlungs-Topographie von Athribis,” organized by the Institut für die Kulturen des Alten Orients der Universität Tübingen and held at Schloss Hohentübingen in Tübingen, Germany (June 11–12, 2025).

MARGARET GEOGA taught various courses in ancient Egyptian language and literature and served on several ISAC and Department of Middle Eastern Studies committees during the 2024–25 report year in addition to pursuing her main research focus: wrapping up her first monograph, which explores the transmission and reception of an unusual, and unusually popular, ancient Egyptian poem. This poem, *The Teaching of Amenemhat*, is famous for its depiction of the murder of a king. Geoga’s monograph proposes a new approach to studying *Amenemhat*, one concentrating not on its unknown author (as is commonly done in studies of ancient Egyptian literature) but rather on the many readers who encountered the poem over the course of approximately 1,000 years (ca. 1550–500 BCE). The monograph asks how these readers’ interpretations of the poem changed in response to various social, historical, and cultural contexts. Geoga focused in part on two particular readers of *Amenemhat*: the Kushite kings Pi(ankh)y and Taharqo, whose quotations of the poem in their monuments in Nubia in the eighth and seventh centuries BCE suggest not only that the poem enjoyed a vibrant afterlife outside Egypt but also that interpretations regarding the most fundamental question of the poem—was the king actually murdered, or did he survive a failed assassination attempt?—varied significantly among individual readers.

Beyond the monograph, Geoga’s research on Taharqo’s quotation of *Amenemhat*—in which he, like the king in the poem, claims to have made his enemies “do the dog-walk”—also informed an essay, for a forthcoming special-exhibition catalog, exploring the significance of dogs in ancient Nubian texts, art, and material culture. In addition, she gave three invited lectures relating to the *Amenemhat* project for the Franke Institute for the Humanities, ISAC Breasted Society, and Harvard Museums of Science and Culture.

Geoga’s coedited volume *Looking Beyond the Text: New Approaches to Scribal Culture and Practices in Ancient Egypt* was published by Brill in February 2025. Her work in this area led her to co-organize a conference panel on scribal culture at the 2025 annual meeting of the American Research Center in Egypt, where she also gave a paper questioning Egyptology’s conventional approaches to assessing immersion, interruption, and their impacts on reading experiences.

PETRA GOEDEGEBUURE's research this year was split between Luwian philology and Hittite linguistics. Two articles on Luwian were published ("The One and Only Great King Hartapu and the Western Muška," *Ancient Near Eastern Studies* 61: 451–73; "The Luwian Word for 'city, town,'" *Anatolian Studies* 74: 47–73); another one went to press ("'Poldering' in Beyond-the-River: Revisiting the End of the ÇINEKÖY Inscription," for a Festschrift); and a fourth one was submitted ("The Phonetic Values of the Signs L.175 <la>, L.319 <la/i>, L.172 <lá/i> in Iron Age Luwian," for the *Proceedings of the 12th International Congress of Hittitology*).

Goedegebuure's Hittite work focused on linguistics. In "Zalpa Self-Destructs: A New Ending for Zalpa and the Zalpa Text" (accepted for the Gary Holland Gedenkschrift), Goedegebuure shows that Hittite has two types of extraclausal constituents—Hanging Topic and Left Dislocation—that are formally and functionally different. Applying this observation to the famous Zalpa text (in which a queen gives birth to thirty sons and thirty daughters), she was able to show that the destruction of Zalpa was at the hands of its own inhabitants, not the Hittites. As part of her work on contact linguistics, she presented papers titled "Bad Hittite, Good Hattian: Linguistic Interference in the Old Hittite Oracle KBo 18.151" (Thirty-Fifth Annual West Coast Indo-European Conference, Los Angeles, October 2024; to be published in the conference proceedings); "Hattian, Luwian, Palaic, and Hittite in Interaction: Contact-Linguistic Support for MBA–LBA Cultural Continuity in Anatolia" (American Society of Overseas Research, Boston, November 2024); and "The people of Hatti often speak about my match! Emic Evidence for Luwian as the Language of the Population in 13th Century BCE Anatolia" ("Interconnectivity and Communication: Cultural and Intellectual Transmission in Ancient Anatolia" conference, May 2025, Venice). She continued presenting her new understanding of the Hittite

Illuyanka Tale, a dragon-slaying myth, as a comedic ritual of reversal (Hebrew Bible and Early Jewish Reception Workshop, University of Chicago, and 235th Annual Meeting of the American Oriental Society, Boston, both April 2025).

Goedegebuure chaired the University of Chicago search committee for a Hittitologist, at the rank of assistant professor, to fill the position left by Theo van den Hout's retirement. ISAC was very fortunate to hire James Burgin, a stellar philologist and scholar of Hittite economy, religion, and historiography. In addition to her regular committee work, Goedegebuure served as the director of undergraduate studies for the Department of Middle Eastern Studies. Her service to the field consisted of serving as a coeditor of the *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*, on the boards of several book series and journals, and as a peer reviewer for several articles, book manuscripts, and project proposals. She also taught six courses.

For Goedegebuure's work for the Chicago Hittite Dictionary, see the Project Reports section.



The storm god slays the dragon. Malatya, Türkiye, twelfth to eleventh centuries BCE. Photo by Georges Jansoone, Wikimedia Commons, License CC BY-SA 3.0. <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=2123385>.

REBECCA HASSELBACH-ANDEE worked on several research projects during this academic year. She finished an article on alignment in Neo-Aramaic dialects (the Aramaic currently spoken in Türkiye, Iran, and Iraq), in which she argues that the traditional perception that these dialects reflect split-ergative alignment is incorrect and that the dialects should instead be analyzed as reflecting semantic alignment. She

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makes these arguments from a synchronic and diachronic perspective. The article was submitted to and accepted by the *Journal of Semitic Studies* and is currently in press.

Hasselbach-Andee also finished and submitted an article on the development of feminine gender in Semitic and Indo-European that is currently under review at the *Journal of Historical Linguistics*. Because the project on feminine gender turned out to be more complex than what can be covered in one article, she decided to continue her research on the topic and turn it into a new book project. For this purpose, she conducted research into other phenomena underlying the assignment of grammatical gender to inanimate nouns—that is, nouns not reflecting entities that have natural gender. She started this line of research based on Biblical Hebrew, which has numerous inanimate nouns that are grammatically construed as feminine but lack a grammatical feminine marker. She concluded that many of these nouns receive their grammatical gender from cultural concepts—for example, from the existence of female deities associated with certain natural phenomena or ideas. The Biblical Hebrew word *’es* “fire,” for instance, lacks a feminine marker but is construed as feminine not only in Hebrew but across Semitic. The concept of fire, which is not inherently feminine, is associated with a female deity called “Fire” that is attested as early as the second half of the third millennium BCE, in a lexical list found at Ebla. In this case, grammatical gender is thus clearly motivated by a religious concept. There are other examples of this kind in Biblical Hebrew; interestingly, the gender of some of these culturally motivated nouns changed from Biblical to Modern Hebrew. The second focus of Hasselbach-Andee’s research was thus to trace changes in gender assignment between different periods of Hebrew. Hasselbach-Andee presented the results of this research—which, as mentioned, is part of a larger project—at an invited lecture at the University of Cambridge in February 2025.

Former Epigraphic Survey director **W. RAYMOND JOHNSON** continued his personal research on Amarna and Karnak *talatat* blocks in Italy, Egypt, and Mississippi, where he and Jay Heidel now reside. Johnson spent three additional months (October to December 2024) as a visiting scholar at the Museo Egizio in Turin, researching its collection of Akhenaten *talatat* and related objects for a comprehensive catalog of the material. On December 17, 2024, Johnson presented a lecture titled “The Epigraphic Survey/Chicago House: Helping to Take Care of Luxor Temple and Medinet Habu in Collaboration with the SCA and Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities and Tourism” at the Museo Egizio’s “Memory Is Our Future” international symposium.

At the beginning of December, Johnson joined the team of the Memphis Hathor Temple Project, a joint mission of the Houston Museum of Natural Science and Egypt’s Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, on site at ancient Memphis, where he served as epigraphic consultant. He and Heidel spent February 2025 in Cairo and Abu Simbel as part of the Royal Women of Ramesses II Project of Marjorie Fisher (University of Michigan). That month, Johnson and Heidel also inaugurated the Karnak Third Pylon Digital Documentation Project, which they are codirecting in collaboration with the French-Egyptian Centre for the Study of the Temples of Karnak in Luxor.

This year Johnson saw the publication of his article “An Assessment of Certain Limestone *Talatat* Blocks Stored in the Pennsylvania *Talatat* Magazine, Karnak” in *A Legacy of Learning in Near Eastern Archaeology: Studies Dedicated to Helene J. Kantor*, edited by Peter Lacovara, 40–48 (Archaeopress, 2025). He has prepared and submitted several other Festschrift articles that have yet to be published, so he is obliged to refrain from providing bibliographic references at this time.

Also this year, Johnson was invited to take up the position of William Kelly Simpson Visiting Professor of Egyptology at the American University in Cairo from late August until December 20, 2025.

KEA JOHNSTON is a postdoctoral scholar working jointly with the Chicago Field Museum and ISAC. The ability to study objects at both institutions has enriched her personal research, which involves writing a new typology of coffins from the site of Akhmim on the east bank of the Nile River in Upper Egypt. Little archaeological work has been done at this ancient and important regional center since it was thoroughly plundered in the 1880s. The new typology will make sense of a large corpus of poorly provenanced pieces, grouping them by workshop and artist. Since Akhmim was not the only site where large amounts of first-millennium BCE funerary material were looted or unscientifically excavated in the nineteenth century, it is hoped that this typology will provide a useful reference and inspiration for future efforts to study regional traditions in funerary art during the first millennium BCE.

Johnston pursued several other, smaller projects this year as well. She continues to work on the University of California, Berkeley's Book of the Dead in 3D Project under Rita Lucarelli. This undertaking is evolving into a student-driven venture in which undergraduates and graduate students collaborate to publish and digitize Egyptian coffins in collections in the western United States. Johnston has also written a study on a group of Egyptian cartonnages with blue backgrounds, some of which may come from the late cemeteries at Beni Hasan in Middle Egypt. Based on a paper originally presented in February 2024 at the "Coffins in Context" conference held at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, England, the study will be published in the conference proceedings.

Finally, Johnston's translations of the inscriptions on the sarcophagi of the steward of the god's wife of Amun Pabasa, now in the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum in Glasgow, Scotland, will be published in a forthcoming volume by Egyptologist Aidan Dodson about the sarcophagi collected by Alexander Douglas Hamilton, 10th Duke of Hamilton. The volume will also include Johnston's translation of the Book of the Dead spells and glorification spells on the Ptolemaic sarcophagus of a woman named Irtyeru, now inaccessible because its nineteenth-century owner was buried in it.

DEREK KENNEDY completed his first academic year as a member of ISAC's faculty, having joined in January 2024 and begun teaching in the fall quarter. Adjusting to life in Chicago and at ISAC has been made extremely easy by supportive colleagues and an intellectually vibrant and convivial atmosphere.

Kennet published a new book in March 2025: *Southeast Arabia at the Dawn of the Second Millennium: The Bronze Age Collective Graves of Qarn al-Harf, Ras al-Khaimah (UAE)* (Oxford: Oxbow). This study is based on the rescue excavation of a Middle Bronze Age cemetery in the United Arab Emirates about ten years ago. The cemetery was used for some 200 years very early in the second millennium BCE. The architecture and grave goods of the eight large, monumental, collective tombs there reflect a social and cultural configuration that was struggling to hang on to traditional ways of life in the face of a regional decline in rainfall, possibly linked to the infamous 4.2 kiloyear event. The study throws interesting light on the nature of human resilience in the face of extremely difficult, hyperarid conditions. Much of the earlier part of Kennet's academic year was taken up with putting the final touches on this volume, copyediting it, and correcting the final proofs.

During January and February 2025, Kennet directed a second season of ISAC excavations at the early Islamic Indian Ocean port of Suhar on the Batinah Coast of Oman (see Suhar Project report). The excavations are throwing new light on the early development of the medieval maritime trading economy of the Indian Ocean, as ceramics uncovered during the excavations testify to routine contact with China, India, and East Africa.

In addition to the time-consuming tasks of organizing and running this large-scale excavation, completing the book described above, and sorting out new teaching, Kennet jointly authored three published papers—one each on Chinese ceramic production (in *World Archaeology*), Karstic aquifers and climate refugia in Arabia (in *Open Quaternary*), and the survey of a medieval town in Oman (in *Journal of Oman*).

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Studies). He is now working mainly toward the publication of two more papers, including a jointly authored one on Sasanian trade in the Indian Ocean (or the lack of it) with Rebecca Darley (University of Leeds), Seth Priestman (ISAC research associate), and Philip Wood (Aga Khan University); Kennet gave a well-attended invited presentation on this topic at the City University of New York's Circle for Late Antique and Medieval Studies forum in December 2024. The second paper underway summarizes the key results from the first two seasons of ISAC excavations at Suhar; Kennet gave presentations on the Suhar work at Pennsylvania's Shippensburg University in March 2025 and for the Chicago and St. Louis societies of the Archaeological Institute of America in October 2024 and May 2025.

MORAG KERSEL, together with fellow ISAC associate Austin Chad Hill and Jordanian Department of Antiquities representative Muntaha Aloshoosh, carried out another field season of Landscapes of the Dead, a project assessing landscape change in the Early Bronze Age (ca. 3600–2000 BCE) archaeological landscapes at the mortuary sites of Bāb adh-Dhrā' and Fifa, Jordan.

Comparisons of photogrammetry sets and oblique images obtained during the 2025 season with images taken during previous seasons allow for an assessment of change over time as a result of looting at the sites. Ground truthing of the site during drone flights indicated new looting at Fifa. Since the initial field season in 2011, they have been monitoring not only looting but also construction practices at the sites. Clearly, individuals are mining Fifa for the valuable cobbles and gravels for building works.

In the near future, they will undertake data analysis using deep-learning algorithms to analyze drone imagery for the purpose of identifying looting patterns and other cultural and natural interactions at the sites of Fifa and Bāb adh-Dhrā'. They will continue to work with local authorities, nongovernmental organizations, and community stakeholders to integrate drone data into broader conservation strategies. They hope that their work will result in improved site protection and monitoring. Their high-resolution data will contribute to a deeper understanding of looted landscapes and the dynamics of looting and construction activities.



Jordanian Department of Antiquities representative Muntaha Aloshoosh, military representative 1st Lt. Derar Bin Salem, and Austin Chad Hill preparing for the drone flyover at Fifa on April 9, 2025.



Mechanical digging at Fifa.

This information will be compiled into a report for the Jordanian Department of Antiquities in support of their request for renewal of the bilateral agreement with the United States to protect against the import of illegally exported Jordanian cultural materials. Data from drones, databases, and archaeologists are being used to prove that looting is an ongoing concern and that looted artifacts are destined for the United States.

This year saw the publication of Kersel's guest-edited issue of the journal *Advances in Archaeological Practice* (vol. 13, no. 1, "Caring for Culture in the Twenty-First Century"), as well as an article, coauthored with Patty Gerstenblith (DePaul University), titled "Cultural Heritage and Security Policy" in *The University of Chicago Legal Forum*. In May 2025, Kersel participated in the "Frontiers and Emerging Challenges in Cultural Heritage Preservation" conference at the University of Chicago's John W. Boyer Center in Paris. The conference was cosponsored by the Chicago Center for Cultural Heritage Preservation and the ISAC Museum.

JANA MATUSZAK spent the academic year 2024–25 as a residential fellow at the University of Chicago's Franke Institute for the Humanities, where she worked on her second book project, tentatively titled *Sumerian Mock Hymns and the Poetics of Subversion: Parody, Pedagogy, and Performance in The Evil Mouth*. Based on an edition, translation, and in-depth analysis of *The Evil Mouth*, a previously unknown mock hymn to the goddess Inanna, she studies how parody can help us reconstruct the unstated poetic principles of Sumerian literature written around 1800 BCE. She briefly interrupted her research to join the Nippur expedition as one of its epigraphers, thereby realizing her lifelong dream of participating in an excavation in Iraq.

Matuszak also published several peer-reviewed articles:

- "Doing Gender in Babylon: The Construction of Ideal Womanhood in Sumerian Literature from the Early 2nd Millennium BCE." *Old World: Journal of Ancient Africa and Eurasia* 5, no. 2 (2025): 1–40. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1163/26670755-00502002> (open access); this article earned the 2025 *Old World* prize for best article on women of the premodern world (see the announcement at <https://bnu-ucrchc.com/news/188.html>)
- "Of Captive Storm Gods and Cunning Foxes: New Insights into Early Sumerian Mythology, with an Edition of Ni 12501." *Iraq* 86 (2025): 79–10. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/irq.2024.19>; addenda et corrigenda: DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/irq.2025.4> (both open access; see media coverage at <https://phys.org/news/2025-07-fragmentary-ancient-sumrian-myth-years.html> and <https://news.uchicago.edu/story/uchicago-sumerologist-translates-forgotten-4400-year-old-myth>)
- "A Sargonic Exercise Tablet Listing 'Places of Inanna' and Personal Names," coauthored with Hanan A. Alessawe. *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 76 (2024): 27–52. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1086/730480>
- "Law, Morality, and Subversion in Sumerian Prose Miniatures." In *Wisdom between East and West: Mesopotamia, Greece and Beyond*, edited by Francesco Sironi and Maurizio Viano, 271–96 (Venice: Edizioni Ca'Foscari, 2024). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30687/978-88-6969-776-0/014> (open access)

Matuszak's other academic writings included:

- A contribution to the Forum discussion for Shana Zaia's 2025 article "Humor as Pedagogy: Cases from Mesopotamia in the First Millennium BCE." *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 84, no. 1: 149–50. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1086/735029>

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- “Enheduana.” In *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, digital edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199381135.013.9150>

Matuszak stepped down from her role as coeditor of the journal *Altorientalische Forschungen* with the publication of the January 2025 issue. For the publication of the proceedings of two workshops on “Approaches to Cuneiform Literature,” which she co-organized with Mark Weeden (University College London) in 2021 and 2023, she joined Weeden as guest editor for the December 2024 issue of the journal *Iraq*. Matuszak continues to serve as a member of the editorial board of the *Isin Journal for Archaeology, History and Ancient Languages*, published by the University of Al-Qadisiyah, Iraq.

Matuszak gave invited lectures on the construction of gender in Sumerian literature at Wheaton College (Illinois) and online for Beijing Normal University in China. She participated in three academic conferences: at the November 2024 annual meeting of the American Society of Overseas Research in Boston, she presented “Establishing Guilt in Sumerian Model Court Cases and Related Texts”; in March 2025, at the Sixth International Conference of Mesopotamian Archaeology at the University of Al-Qadisiyah, Iraq, she presented “Enlil and the Fox: Nippurite Tales of Ambition, Trickery, and Deceit”; and in April 2025, at the “Wissenschaft, Literatur und Technik im Alten Orient / Science, Literature and Technology in the Ancient Near East” conference held at the University of Tübingen, Germany, she gave a paper titled “From Parody to Paradigm? (De)familiarization and Its Relevance for Emic Genre Concepts in Sumerian Literature.”

AUGUSTA McMAHON’s research focus this year was directing the ISAC excavations at Nippur, Iraq, which concentrated on the urban edge zone of this important early Mesopotamian city (see Nippur Excavations project report). Her publications during the year comprised research and analysis derived from her previous fieldwork at Tell Brak in Syria. In 2024, a chapter titled “Going to Brak in a Handbasket: Container Sealings and Urban Production Modes in 4th Millennium BC Northern Mesopotamia” appeared in *Archaeology from Every Angle: Papers in Honor of Richard L. Zettler*, edited by Katherine Blanchard, Yelena Rakic, and Paul Zimmerman (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum, 2024). McMahon’s contribution to the volume is a companion piece to her chapter “Pieces of String: Cordage in Late Chalcolithic Northern Mesopotamia” in *From Sherds to Landscapes: Studies on the Ancient Near East in Honor of McGuire Gibson*, edited by Mark Altaweel and Carrie Hritz (Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization 71; Chicago: Oriental Institute, 2021). Both chapters examine the backs of clay container sealings from fourth-millennium BCE Tell Brak and focus on the negative impressions of the objects sealed (jars, bags, and baskets) rather than on the more traditional seal iconography. String, baskets, and other items of an organic nature are not preserved in Mesopotamian contexts, but impressions of these materials in clay preserve evidence for their structure and variety. McMahon’s chapters address the skill and complexity of basic craft production in an increasingly urbanized and industrialized context.

In November 2024, McMahon presented a summary of her 2006–11 excavations at fourth-millennium BCE Tell Brak at the annual meeting of the American Society of Overseas Research (ASOR) in Boston. And in February 2025, halfway through the excavation season at Nippur, she reported on the season’s preliminary results at the Sixth International Conference of Mesopotamian Archaeology at the University of Al-Qadisiyah in Diwaniyah, Iraq. She serves on ASOR’s Committee on Mesopotamian Civilization (Baghdad Committee) and Damascus Committee, the editorial board of the *Journal of Urban Archaeology*, and the scientific committee of *Paléorient*. She remains coeditor of the journal *Iraq*, published by the British Institute for the Study of Iraq, and is vice president of The Academic Research Institute in Iraq. Her service to the field this year also included multiple assessments and promotion/tenure

recommendations for junior colleagues at other institutions, a time-consuming but exceptionally rewarding contribution.

At the very beginning of July 2024, **CAROL MEYER** traveled to Romont, Switzerland, for the Ernst Herzfeld Society's annual colloquium. Its theme, Islamic glass, afforded her a fine opportunity to present her ongoing work on the Aqaba glass corpus, meet colleagues from Europe and the Middle East, and learn about exciting new research from sites ranging from Spain to Bongol, Indonesia. During the rest of the year, Meyer made a great deal of progress on her publication of the glass corpus from Aqaba, recovered during an important excavation project of ISAC under the direction of Donald Whitcomb between 1986 and 1995 and Kristoffer Damgaard between 2010 and 2014. Some books take a long time to produce!

Very recently, the Aqaba glass database was uploaded to ISAC's server, where it is at long last available to glass researchers here and abroad. Another exciting development was the possibility of testing some of the glass. Although physical tests are not new, this opportunity was, and it could help disentangle many outstanding problems with the corpus. It is sorted by type and period—Umayyad (ca. 650–750), Abbasid (ca. 750–969), and Fatimid (ca. 969–1125)—and physical testing could help refine the dating. A major shift from natron- or mineral-based glass formulae to plant ash-based ones started about 800 in the Syro-Palestinian region and about fifty years later in Egypt. Therefore, separating the two basic glass types could help separate Fatimid glass from earlier glasses. Physical testing can also be used to trace the place of manufacture of the original, raw glass—whether Egypt, the Levant, or farther east—and hence the source of some of the glass vessels. Finally, it might even be possible to trace the region of origin of some puzzling glass items at Aqaba, including some that may have been manufactured in Iran. One little face medallion has parallels only from Iran; was it in fact manufactured in Isfahan, Siraf, or elsewhere in Iran? After all, Aqaba was a Red Sea port.



Glass face medallion found at Aqaba but of possible Iranian origin.

ANNA-LATIFA MOURAD-CIZEK joined the University of Chicago as assistant professor of Egyptian archaeology in July 2024. She continued her research into Egyptian-Levantine connectivities, completing a monograph preliminarily titled *Egypt and the Levant: Networks and Negotiations in the Bronze Age* for the Ancient Egypt in Context Cambridge Elements series, published by Cambridge University Press. At the end of report year 2024–25, the manuscript was under review. It offers an overview of the transforming networks linking Old to early New Kingdom Egypt with Early Bronze III to Late Bronze I communities in the Levant. Mourad-Cizek also submitted two invited book chapters: “Egypt and the Southern Levant from the Old Kingdom to the Second Intermediate Period,” to appear in the *Routledge Handbook of Egypt and the Bible*, edited by Bernd U. Schipper, Robert Kade, and Joseph Cross; and “Networks, Transformations and the Enigma of the Hyksos,” for a special volume celebrating sixty years of excavations at Tell el-Dab'a, edited by Manfred Bietak and Silvia Prell. In addition, she published two articles: “A Transforming Ontology of Boundaries? What Is and What Is Not in the Early Middle Kingdom,” in

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Journal of Egyptian Archaeology 110, nos. 1–3: 237–52, and a review of *Ancient Egyptian Prisoner Statues: Fragments of the Late Old Kingdom*, by Tara Prakash, in *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 60, no. 1: 295–98.

Mourad-Cizek traveled to Egypt in January 2025, where she not only taught in the University of Chicago's undergraduate study-abroad program in Cairo but also worked on upcoming field projects. At the site of Beni Hassan and alongside other members of the Beni Hassan Project team, she preliminarily examined the architecture of tombs in the southern upper terrace and potential evidence of New Kingdom activity. These and other remains are planned for excavation and recording in January 2026. She also prepared for a new project that aims to record and reconstruct the Old Kingdom mastaba of Khentika at Saqqara. The Khentika project would be codirected with Egyptologist Naguib Kanawati (Macquarie University, Sydney).

Mourad-Cizek additionally presented five invited talks, including a lecture in March 2025 at ISAC related to the special exhibition *Chicago on the Nile* (www.youtube.com/watch?v=qzMKNL-P_8M); a paper in May 2025 for “The Future of Ancient Near Eastern Art History” symposium, organized by the University of Chicago’s Department of Art History and ISAC; and a lecture in June 2025 for the American Research Center in Egypt’s Chicago chapter. She had great fun offering a class on ancient Egypt in the ISAC Museum for the University of Chicago Laboratory School’s third-grade students and was quoted in online articles for *National Geographic* and *Live Science* on the discovery of a Second Intermediate Period royal tomb at Abydos, Egypt. Upon invitation, Mourad-Cizek also joined the advisory board of the Middle Kingdom Studies series of London’s Golden House Publications, a series edited by Egyptologist Gianluca Miniaci (University of Pisa).

Several publications by **BRIAN MUHS** appeared in 2024–25. They include a volume coedited with Foy Scalf 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; Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures, 2024) and, in it, a chapter coauthored with Scalf, “The Transmission of Magical Texts at Deir El Medina: A Hieratic Copy of a Horus Cippi Text on Ostracon ISACM E17008”; “A Pair of Wooden Stick Shabtis and Their Coffins” in *From Objects to Histories: Studies in Honour of John H. Taylor*, edited by Nigel Strudwick and David A. Aston (Abercromby Press, 2024); and “Wearing Wealth: Cloth and Clothing as Currency in Ancient Egypt” and “Perspectives on Clothing and Identity in the Ancient World,” both in *Outward Appearance versus Inward Significance: Addressing Identities through Attire in the Ancient World*, edited by Aleksandra Hallmann (ISAC Seminars 15; Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures, 2025). Muhs’s book manuscript “Lending in Ptolemaic Egypt: The Demotic Loan-Account Papyri of Panas, Son of Espmetis” went to press at the end of June 2025, with publication by Lockwood Press expected during the summer. He also completed an article titled “Demotic Literature, Scribes and Scholars in Ptolemaic Egypt,” which he submitted for publication in *Advances in Ancient Biblical and Near Eastern Research*.

Muhs also presented several academic papers: “Scribes and Literature in Hellenistic Egypt” in September 2024 at the workshop “Scribes in Late Period Egypt, Babylonia, and Yehud/Judea” organized by the European Research Council project DEMBIB (Demotic Egyptian Papyri and the Formation of the Hebrew Bible) in Berlin; “Epigraphy and Conflict in the Napatan, Meroitic, and Aksumite Empires,” with Tasha Vorderstrasse, in November 2024 at the annual meeting of the American Society of Overseas Research in Boston; “Imprisonment in Pharaonic and Ptolemaic Egypt” in April 2025 at the annual meeting of the American Research Center in Egypt in San Francisco; and “Incarceration in Ptolemaic Egypt” in May 2025 at the conference “The Archaeology of Incarceration: An Interdisciplinary Approach” at the Carlsberg

Academy in Copenhagen. He also gave a lecture, “Prisons and Police in Ancient Egypt, and the Chicago Demotic Dictionary,” in January 2025 for the ISAC Breasted Society Salon in Chicago.

KIERSTEN NEUMANN complemented her curatorial work at the ISAC Museum in 2024–25 with a broad range of original writing, invited talks, scholarly contributions, and professional service.

She was especially honored to contribute to the exhibition *Allspice: Michael Rakowitz & Ancient Cultures*—a collaboration between the Acropolis Museum and NEON, curated by Prof. Nikolaos Chr. Stampolidis, director general of the Acropolis Museum, and Elina Kountouri, director of NEON (May 13–October 31, 2025; <https://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/allspice-exhibition>). Celebrating her longstanding relationship with artist Michael Rakowitz and their ongoing collaborations, in May Neumann delivered a lecture titled “Of Gods and Kings: The Material Legacy of Mesopotamia, Eternal yet Fragile,” moderated by Paris-based journalist and public program advisor Rachel Donadio, in the Acropolis Museum’s “Dimitrios Pantermalis” auditorium as part of the exhibition programming. She also contributed the essay “Artefacts, Ghosts, and Guardians: The Vulnerable Legacy of Assyrian Cultural Heritage” to the exhibition publication and authored entries for objects loaned by the ISAC Museum, which were featured in both the exhibition labels and catalog. Relatedly, she contributed label text for the display of Rakowitz’s work in the Smart Museum of Art’s *The 50th: An Anniversary Exhibition* (September 2024–March 2025) at the University of Chicago.

Neumann’s scholarly writing in 2024–25 also included a review of Alexander Nagel’s *Color and Meaning in the Art of Achaemenid Persia* (Cambridge University Press, 2023) that appeared in the October 2024 issue of the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*. In addition, she submitted several original works for publication in peer-reviewed journals and edited volumes. These works included research on the inscribed bronze roundel from Tell Tayinat, the ISAC Museum’s collections from its Megiddo Expedition, representations of herpetofauna in Nubian material culture, and the classification and aesthetic appreciation of stones among cuneiform cultures.



Left: Kiersten Neumann delivering the lecture “Of Gods and Kings: The Material Legacy of Mesopotamia, Eternal yet Fragile.” Photography © Natalia Tsoukala. Courtesy of NEON, the Acropolis Museum, and M. Rakowitz. Right: Neumann, Michael Rakowitz, and Rachel Donadio at the opening reception of the exhibition *Allspice: Michael Rakowitz & Ancient Cultures*. Photo courtesy of K. Neumann.

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Neumann was active in a range of speaking engagements, both scholarly and public facing. As a 2024–25 National Kershaw Lecturer in Near Eastern Archaeology for the Archaeological Institute of America (AIA), she delivered lectures across the country: “Collecting the Ancient World: Early Explorations, Encyclopedic Museums, and World’s Exhibitions” for the AIA Society Bozeman (November 2024) and the AIA Society Central Missouri (March 2025); “Aššur accept! Aššur listen! Connecting Assyria and Arabia through Incense and Olfaction” for the AIA Society Dallas/Fort Worth (February 2025); and “From Ancient Quarries to New Inquiries: Exhibiting the ISAC Museum’s Roman Sculpture Collection in an Age of Greater Transparency” for the AIA Society Salem (February 2025). She was also invited to participate in the 2024 AlUla World Archaeology Symposium in Saudi Arabia hosted by the Royal Commission of AlUla at Maraya in October 2024. This year’s convening focused on the future of archaeology and the heritage of nomadic societies. In spring 2025 she co-organized the April symposium “Trees, Birds, and Funny Words: A Symposium in Honor of Professor Niek Veldhuis” at the University of California, Berkeley, where she presented the paper “What’s in a Name? Classification and the Aesthetic Values of Stones.” That same month, she took part in the panel “Curating Curiosity: Navigating Free Inquiry and Expression in Museum Exhibits,” organized by the student advisory board of the University of Chicago’s Forum for Free Inquiry and Expression, at the university’s Smart Museum of Art. In May 2025, also at the University of Chicago, she presented in the workshop “The Future of Ancient Near Eastern Art History,” held at the Franke Institute for the Humanities and the ISAC Museum.

At international and national scholarly conferences, Neumann presented papers that further explored her work on Assyrian material culture and museum interpretation. She spoke on “A Star of Reddish Gold Adorned with Precious Stones: Deciphering the Assyrian Roundel from Tell Tayinat” at the 23rd Workshop of the Melammu Project in Wrocław, Poland (September 2024). At the annual meeting of the American Society of Overseas Research (ASOR) in Boston, she presented both “The Awesome Original and the Uncanny-Valley Cast: A Case Study with Assyrian Art” and “Centennial Opportunities: The Past and Present at the ISAC Museum” (November 2024). At the 14th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East in Lyon, France, she delivered the paper “Something Old, Something New: Recontextualizing the Assyrian Roundel from Tell Tayinat” (June 2025). In addition to her scholarly contributions, Neumann played an active leadership role in ASOR: she continued to serve as cochair of the program committee, as a member of the board of trustees, and as organizer of the museum professionals working group. In January 2025, she was honored to join ASOR’s executive committee and assume the role of co-chair of the development committee.



Left to right: Prof. Nikolaos Chr. Stampolidis, director general of the Acropolis Museum; Elina Kountouri, director of NEON; Michael Rakowitz, artist. Standing male figure with clasped hands and inlaid eye (ISACM A12434) and standing female figure with clasped hands (ISACM A12412A-B). Michael Rakowitz, *The invisible enemy should not exist (Room H, Northwest Palace of Nimrud) H-21*, 2021. Middle Eastern food packaging and Arabic-English newspapers, with glue on panel. 229.9 × 187.6 × 10.3 cm. *Allspice | Michael Rakowitz & Ancient Cultures*, 2025. Installation view. Photography © Natalia Tsoukala. Courtesy of NEON, the Acropolis Museum, and the artist.



Participants and attendees of “Trees, Birds, and Funny Words”: A Symposium in Honor of Professor Niek Veldhuis” at the University of California, Berkeley, in April 2025.

At the University of Chicago, Neumann taught the winter quarter undergraduate/graduate course “Collecting the Ancient World: Museum Practice and Politics” in the Department of Art History. She also advised several students on their theses: as primary advisor for both Esha Patel (“Redefining Cultural Narratives: A Study on Art Repatriation and Museum Power Hierarchies,” master of arts, Committee on International Relations) and Brittney Coelho (“Death and Life They Did Establish, The Day of Death They Did Not Reveal: A Reconstruction and Analysis of Denied Funerary Rites in Southern Mesopotamia,” master of arts, Center for Middle Eastern Studies) and as second reader for Charlotte Gilmore (“Sculpting an Empire: Shifting Propagandic Priorities in Third-Century Sasanian Rock Reliefs at Naqsh-i Rustam,” bachelor of arts, Center for Middle Eastern Studies).

In 2024–25, **SUSANNE PAULUS** started a new chapter in her work as an epigraphist at Nippur: for the first time, she was able to participate in the excavations at the site. In addition to daily field participation, she studied more than fifty brick inscriptions from the site and prepared for publication the season’s most significant epigraphic find: a sherd of an inscribed vessel naming several gods. She also presented her research within the framework of the Nippur Tablet Project at the Sixth International Conference of Mesopotamian Archaeology at the University of Al-Qadisiyah in Iraq, thereby strengthening scholarly ties with Iraqi colleagues.

Her research on Kassite legal and economic history advanced with progress on two major book projects. The first one, *Banking with Barley: An Economic History of Late Bronze Age Babylonia*, reached new milestones through chapter drafts and invited lectures, including “Organizing Knowledge in Kassite Bookkeeping” (“Between Anarchy and Hierarchy” workshop, Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Helsinki) and “Fragments and Contexts—The Old and New(er) Excavations at Nippur” (Cuneiform Artefacts of Iraq in Context project, Munich). This work has also generated an article in preparation that reassesses archival and administrative materials from Nippur’s pre- and postwar excavations. The second book project,

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The Kassite Archives from Babylon, was further developed during research stays at the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin and showcased in Paulus's William Foxwell Albright Lecture at Johns Hopkins University titled "Trade in Late Bronze Age Babylonia."

Paulus also concluded several collaborative projects. With colleagues from the University of Chicago's Data Science Institute and Forum for Digital Culture, she coauthored "DeepScribe: Localization and Classification of Elamite Cuneiform Signs via Deep Learning" (*ACM Journal on Computing and Cultural Heritage* 18, no. 2: 1–32; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1145/3716850>). And she contributed to the exhibition *Mesopotamia: Kingdom of Gods and Demons* (Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest), which closed with a successful workshop that included her presentation "Living in a World of Curses: Gods, Justice, and Kudurrus."

For her work as Tablet Collection curator, see the Tablet Collection and Nippur Tablet Project report.

As part of their project on editing the correspondence of Benno Landsberger (1890–1961), described in the spring/summer 2023 issue of ISAC's member magazine *New & Notes*, **PETER RAULWING** and Luděk Vacín published in early 2025 thirty-four letters and postcards from the time of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and former Czechoslovakia. Their publication of the Landsberger correspondence used material from various archives, libraries, and private collections, including items held by the Landsberger family (Eva Kučerová-Landsbergrová in Frýdek-Místek, Czech Republic). Raulwing and Vacín's annotated edition also contains a letter—archived at ISAC—to Landsberger's former student Lubor Matouš (1908–84), who taught in Prague at the Charles University from 1952 until 1973. Their chapter "Zur Edition der Briefe Benno Landsbergers" appears in the now-published proceedings papers from a November 2021 workshop in Göttingen: "*Semitische Wissenschaften*"? *Ägyptologie und Altorientalistik im "Dritten Reich"*, edited by Heike Behlmer, Andreas Effland, Thomas L. Gertzen, Orell Witthuhn, and Anette Zgoll, 267–327 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2025).

In another chapter of the same volume ("Zum Lehrer-Schüler-Verhältnis zwischen Benno Landsberger und Wolfram von Soden," pp. 329–406), Raulwing and Vacín take a closer look at the teacher-student relationship between Landsberger and Wolfram von Soden (1908–96)—Landsberger's most talented student and, from the 1950s, the most influential Assyriologist in Germany—in the light of archival material: Landsberger's letters to and from Fritz Rudolf Kraus (housed in the Leiden University library), as well as documents from various archives (Göttingen University, Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv Hannover, and others). A main focus of this study is Landsberger's time at ISAC (the former Oriental Institute) from 1948 to 1968 and von Soden's efforts to rehabilitate himself, given his role in Nazi Germany.

Also in this proceedings volume, Raulwing, together with Olaf Matthes, published an English translation of an article they wrote—"On the Expulsion of Jewish Members from the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft in 1938" (pp. 135–82)—the German text of which had been read at a colloquium celebrating the 125th anniversary of the DOG in summer 2023. One of the condemning replies addressed to the board of the DOG was drafted by Egyptologist T. George Allen (1885–1969), long-term editorial secretary of the Oriental Institute and assistant curator at Chicago's Field Museum.

On academic leave for 2024–25, **HERVÉ RECULEAU** was asked to give a keynote lecture at the seventh annual Graduate Symposium in Ancient Near Eastern Studies, held in the spring at Yale University, and was an invited professor at the Collège de France (Paris), where he presented his work on environment and societies in ancient Mesopotamia in a monthlong series of lectures:

- “Making Clay Speak: In Search of the Ghost Landscapes of Mesopotamia” (<https://youtu.be/9iCOL01ksHU>)
- “Hydraulics and Societies: Water Control in Mesopotamia and Its Social Implications” (<https://youtu.be/GcfLJxZSzG0>)
- “The Mesopotamians and Climate: The Climate Paradigm and Its Critics” (<https://youtu.be/LSeqzL2CXUo>)
- “At the Sources of the Flood: Environmental Catastrophe as a Literary and Religious Motif in Mesopotamia” (<https://youtu.be/l5sSladHwXY>)

In addition, Reculeau wrote and submitted the proposal for his next book, which has been accepted for publication by Les Éditions du Seuil (Paris) and will be titled *Le Déluge: Écrire l'histoire d'un mythe*, with the initial French edition to be followed by an English version. Finally, he submitted the following articles, now published or in various phases of editing:

- “The Fluidity of Empire: Hydraulics of Neo-Assyrian Canal Systems in Relation to Their Possible Uses,” with Alexis Stampoultzidis, Daniele Morandi Bonacossi, Ronald P. Van Nooijen, and Maurits W. Ertsen. *Water History* 16 (2024): 165–85
- “Environmental Aspects of the Neo-Assyrian Forced Migrations.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Exile and Forced Migrations*, edited by Martien A. Halvorson-Taylor and Mark W. Hamilton (Oxford: Oxford University Press)
- “Assessing the Role of Climate Change in the Neo-Assyrian to Neo-Babylonian Transition.” In *Collapse from the Ground Floor: Approaching the Neo-Assyrian to Neo-Babylonian Transition from Below*, edited by Christopher W. Jones and Jonathan Gardner (Studia Chaburensia; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz)
- “A Hundred and Twenty Years since the Laws of Hammurabi: The Legacy of J.-V. Scheil in Old Babylonian Studies.” In *The Spirit of Scholarship: The Roman Catholic Background of Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical Studies and Its Legacy*, edited by Abraham Winitzer (Modern Catholicisms; Leiden: Brill)
- “Old Babylonian Sources and Historiography in the Early Years of Assyriology.” In *Archives paléo-babylonienes: 150 ans de publications et d'études (1872–2022)*, edited by Dominique Charpin and Antoine Jacquet (Archibab 6; Mémoires de NABU 24; Paris: SEPOA)

SETH RICHARDSON published ten articles this year. They include, in order of publication date (PR = peer-reviewed; OA = open access):

- “First Causes, Individual Focus: Displacement and Inequality, Babylon, 17th c. BCE.” In *Crossroads IV: Migration and Mobility in the Ancient Near East and Egypt*, edited by Jana Mynářová et al., 165–90 (Prague: Charles University Press, September 2024). <https://www.jstor.org/stable/jj.22730452.14>
- “‘The Plans of the Gods Are Destroyed’: Babylonian Doubts about the Gods and War.” In *Religion and War from Antiquity to Early Modernity*, edited by Irene Polinskaya et al., 21–39 (London: Bloomsbury, November 2024)
- “Sargonic Points and Vectors: The Geographically Imagined Empire.” In *Navigating the Worlds of History: Studies in Honor of Robert Rollinger on the Occasion of His 60th Birthday*, edited by Kai Ruffing et al., 2:773–802 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, November 2024)

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- “A *mīšarum* of Abi-ešuh: Relief, Abuse, and Petition for Redress.” *Revue d’assyriologie* 118 (December 2024): 81–89 (PR)
- “Community and State Violence in Middle Bronze Age Mesopotamia,” coauthored with Steven J. Garfinkle. *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 68, nos. 1–2 (February 2025): 161–99. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.1163/15685209-12341641> (PR, OA)
- “State Borders, Other Orders.” *Forum Kritische Archäologie* 14 (James C. Scott memorial issue) (April 2025): 43–49. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.17169/refubium-47049> (OA)
- “The Organization of Power in Babylonia: Problems and Prospects.” In *Monarchies and the Organization of Power: Ancient Egypt and Babylonia Compared* (2100–1750 BC), coauthored with Juan Carlos Moreno García, 2–40 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, May 2025) (PR)
- “To Sneer, Scoff, Scorn, and Cluck: An Onomatopoetic Verbal Complex in R1-n-s?” *Altorientalische Forschungen* 52, no. 1 (May 2025): 66–69. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.1515/aofo-2025-2004> (PR, OA)
- “The Sumerian Proverb-Game: Rhetoric, Play, and Political Performance.” *Rhetorica* 43, no. 2 (June 2025): 127–69 (PR)
- “Mesopotamian Words for ‘Slave’: Opacity and Mutability in Early Terms and Practice.” *American Historical Review* 130, no. 2 (June 2025): 574–99 (PR)

At the close of the report year, another seven articles were in press and forthcoming.

Richardson presented four academic papers on Mesopotamian history. Three were by invitation: a keynote address on political life at the *Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale* in Helsinki (July 2024), a roundtable paper on “archival silence” at the American Historical Association in New York City (January 2025), and a working paper on the early relationship between property and law in Tübingen (June 2025). He also presented a paper on toponyms in Old Akkadian royal inscriptions at the American Society of Overseas Research (ASOR) annual meeting in Boston (November 2024).

Richardson continued his position as coeditor of the *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* and as managing editor of the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*. He acted as an external reviewer for those journals as well as for the European Research Council, the University College London Press, the *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern History*, the *Bulletin of ASOR*, and ASOR’s Mesopotamian Fellowship. He also acted as an advisor for projects related to methodologies in early-period history writing (for the *American Historical Review*) and on peace and conflict studies (for the Ancient Peace Studies Network, University of St Andrews).

In 2024–25, **YORKE ROWAN** presented papers with colleagues in various venues. In November 2024, at the University of the Côte d’Azur, France, he and Austin Chad Hill (University of Pennsylvania) presented a research paper titled “Deep Learning in the Margins: Kites, Wheels, and Other Features in the Black Desert, Jordan” at the symposium “The Black Desert in Context: Insights into Cross-Regional Connections in the Levant during Prehistory.” And at the annual meeting of the American Society for Overseas Research in Boston, he and Hill, along with Emily Hammer, Kathleen Morrison, and Jordan Brown, presented “Contextualizing the Black Desert: Building a New Database from Old Imagery,” and he, Hill, Blair Heidkamp (University of Texas at Austin), Gary Rollefson (Whitman College and San Diego State University), and Morag Kersel (DePaul University) presented “Neolithic Buildings at Wadi al-Madath: The Kites in Context Excavations, 2023.”

At the first World Neolithic Congress held in Şanlıurfa, Türkiye, Rowan and Alexander Wasse (Yeditepe University, Istanbul) presented “Not a Place for Respectable People, but the Ends of the Earth

Converge There: Transregional Networks and the Steppe during the Seventh and Sixth Millennia BC.” Published in *Levant* 56, no. 1 (2024): 1–32, this study was awarded Best Paper by the Council for British Research in the Levant.

Rowan’s other publications focused on his research projects in Jordan. His most recent publication, coauthored with Rollefson, Wasse, Wael Abu-Azizeh (Université Lumière Lyon), and Hill, is titled “The Multifaceted Site of Wisad Pools, Black Desert” and appeared in *Reframing the “Desert Frontier”: Studies in the Ancient Near East and Northern Arabia in Honour of David Kennedy*, edited by Rebecca Repper, Robert Bewley, and Mike Bishop (Sydney University Press, 2025). Finally, in June 2025, the University of Chicago’s International Institute of Research in Paris notified Rowan that he was awarded \$5,000 in support of the project “Critical Margins: Neolithic Connections beyond the Fertile Crescent,” a conference co-organized with Marie-Laure Chambrade, former Marie-Curie Postdoctoral Fellow at ISAC, to be held in Nice, France.

FOY SCALF made significant progress on a range of milestones over the 2024–25 report year. In addition to being appointed interim director of the ISAC Data Research Center at the end of the year, continuing to serve as head of the Research Archives, managing ISAC’s integrated database, and leading the implementation team for the ISAC website redesign, he completed a substantial number of publications; presented numerous conference talks, lectures, and classes; and responded to several media requests.

In May 2025, Scalf submitted his manuscript “The Getty Book of the Dead: Ancient Egyptian Manuscripts in the J. Paul Getty Museum” for publication by the Getty. Clocking in at more than 700 pages, the volume brings together introductory essays by Scalf, Yekaterina Barbash, Judith Barr, Sara Cole, and Erin Jue contextualizing the Getty’s collection, its provenance, and its conservation treatments. The bulk of the book consists of complete editions of twenty-one manuscripts on papyrus and linen, including high-resolution photographs, hieroglyphic transcriptions, transliterations, translations, and commentaries. The volume will be available simultaneously as an open-access online publication and a printed book. It is scheduled for release in spring 2026.

Scalf’s article “New Papyri from the Bab el Gasus? The Prosopography and Provenience of Papyrus HM 84123” appeared in the *Bulletin de l’Institut français d’archéologie orientale* 125 (2025), 425–48. In the article, he hypothesized that the previously unrecognized owner of a papyrus in the Huntington Library (P. HM 84123) may have been the same woman who owned a papyrus in the Cairo Museum (S.R.VII.10242). An implication stemming from this argument required reassigning eight papyri to four individual ancient owners (whereas previous suggestions assigned them all to a single person). Two additional articles moved through the peer-review process and are slated to appear later in 2025, one in the *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* and the other in *The Special Grammar of Traditional Literature: Studies Building on Albert Lord’s “Special Grammar”* in Brill’s Mnemosyne Supplements / Orality and Literacy in the Ancient World series.

Scalf continued to make progress on several digital humanities projects, including two based on the University of Chicago’s OCHRE (Online Cultural and Historical Research Environment) database: ISAC Museum Demotic Ostraca and Critical Editions for Digital Analysis and Research: Book of the Dead. Likewise, he has been working closely with Rita Lucarelli (University of California, Berkeley) and Kasia Szpakiowska (formerly at Swansea University) to resurrect, revamp, and preserve the Demon Things: Ancient Egyptian Demonology project. Future annual reports will provide detailed updates on the substantial progress of bringing this project back to life.

Scalf gave presentations at a wide range of conferences and events. In August 2024, he presented “Archives and Sites: Integrating and Linking Data in EMu and Beyond” at Axiell Meetup Chicago, hosted

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by the Field Museum. On December 8, he gave the Barbara W. Herman Memorial Lecture for the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, on “Everyday Magic: The Spellbinding Life of the Book of the Dead.” On March 20, 2025, he participated with University of Chicago colleagues Adrian Johns (Department of History), Tamara Golan (Department of Art History), and Elizabeth Frengel (curator of rare books and director of the Kim-Park Program) for the inauguration of the Kim-Park Program for the Study of the Book at the University of Chicago’s Regenstein Library. He gave further public scholarship talks in and around Chicago for The Clare, The Admiral at the Lake, Glenside Public Library, and Glencoe Public Library.

Scalf taught five classes throughout the year, including “Introduction to Hieroglyphs” 1 and 2 (autumn 2024) and “Introduction to Coptic” 1 and 2 (winter and spring 2025) for ISAC and the eighth iteration of “History of the Text: Early Books and Manuscripts Up to the Age of the Printing Press” (spring 2025) for Dominican University. In spring 2025 he also guest lectured on “What Is, versus What Was, the Book of the Dead: Museum Exhibition as Critical Reflection” for the course “Religion of Ancient Egypt,” taught by Rita Lucarelli at the University of California, Berkeley.

MEHRNOUSH SOROUSH dedicated a substantial part of her research time in 2024–25 to advancing and fundraising for A3RD (AI-Assisted Archaeological Remains Detection), a project of the Center for Ancient Middle Eastern Landscapes (CAMEL), as well as planning and supervising other CAMEL projects (see more details in the CAMEL report). She also submitted several funding applications to secure a full sabbatical research leave and received a Franke Institute Fellowship (from the University of Chicago’s Franke Institute for the Humanities), which will allow her to dedicate the 2025–26 academic year to completing her monograph *The Long Life of Water: A History of the Shushtar Historic Hydraulic System*.

During the past year, Soroush continued her previous research on Near Eastern irrigation history and ventured into new topics. Her individual research and research collaborations resulted in one published study, “Dynamics of Agricultural Investment in al-Ahwaz in the Late Antique to Early Islamic Period,” in *Land and Trade in Early Islam: The Economy of the Islamic Middle East 750–1050 CE*, edited by Hugh Kennedy and Fanny Bessard (Oxford University Press, 2025); a chapter titled “A Remote-Sensing Perspective on the Sasanian Hydraulic Projects: Re-examining the Irrigation Discourse,” which has been accepted for publication in *The Sasanians in Context: Art, History, and Archaeology*, a forthcoming volume of the Smithsonian Institution; and two coauthored articles, “The Karez (Qanat) Landscape of the Erbil Plain” and “Site Suitability Analysis of Arsacid Period Sites in the Iranian Borderland Region of the Araxes River Valley,” the first submitted to the journal *Iraq* and the second to the *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory*. She also continued processing data from 2023 fieldwork in Erbil on new seismic methods for deep archaeological mapping, to be incorporated in two articles in progress.

In January 2025, Soroush joined the Suhar Project (see Suhar Project report), codirected by Derek Kennet (ISAC) and Seth Priestman (Durham University), to reinvestigate the archaeological landscape of subterranean irrigation (qanats, known locally as *aflāj*), which had been famously studied by CAMEL’s founding director, the late Tony Wilkinson, in the 1980s. Soroush prepared for her fieldwork by undertaking extensive remote-sensing investigations of the Suhar landscape (assisted by CAMEL staff Harrison Morin and Ruijie Yao), which resulted in a complete reassessment of the state of landscape preservation and mapping of promising areas for future fieldwork, to be pursued by the Suhar Project in the coming years.

In 2024–25, **GIL STEIN** presented three conference papers deriving from his archaeological excavations at Surezha and cultural heritage projects in Afghanistan and Central Asia:

- “Preserving the 15th–16th Century Timurid Period Sufi Mosque of Langar Ota, Uzbekistan: A Progress Report,” with Fabio Colombo, at the First International Scientific and Practical Symposium “Topical Issues in the Study and Preservation of Material Cultural Heritage of the Silk Road,” October 2–3, 2024, Samarkand, Uzbekistan
- “Tiptoeing across the Threshold: Early Copper Use and Inter-regional Interaction in Chalcolithic Greater Mesopotamia,” at the Society for American Archaeology annual meeting, April 24, 2025, Denver, Colorado
- “Databases and Cultural Heritage in Conflict Zones: Case Studies of Preservation through Documentation,” at the conference “Frontiers and Emerging Challenges in Cultural Heritage Preservation,” May 19, 2025, University of Chicago Boyer Center, Paris, France

As the principal investigator for two US Department of State–sponsored cultural heritage grants, Stein continued his work in Uzbekistan (see Cultural Heritage Preservation in Central Asia project report). He completed a two-year grant from the US Department of State’s Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation for the project “Conservation and Restoration of the Langar Ota Timurid Mosque, Qashqadaryo Province, Uzbekistan,” and in May 2025, he participated in the US Embassy Tashkent’s on-site ceremony marking the completion of the Chicago preservation work at the Langar Ota mosque. In October 2024, he implemented the first of two workshops as part of the grant-funded Cultural Training Partnership for Artifact Conservation (CTPAC) to provide advanced training for conservators from the national museums of the five Central Asian republics (C5). 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 workshop was held in Tashkent at the State Museum of the History of Uzbekistan.

In addition to this work, in September 2024 Stein continued his archaeological excavations at the prehistoric sixth- to fourth-millennium BCE site of Surezha in the Kurdistan region of northeastern Iraq (see Surezha Excavations project report). These excavations have been ongoing since 2013. He also continued his research and work on the manuscript of a forthcoming book, *Catalog of the Hadda Collections at the National Museum of Afghanistan*, coauthored with Alejandro Gallego López and rescheduled for completion in fall 2025.

In tandem with his cultural heritage work, Stein published two reports in 2024–25:

- “Surezha Excavations,” with Michael T. Fisher. In *ISAC Annual Report 2023–2024*, edited by Timothy P. Harrison, 71–84 (Chicago: Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures, 2024)
- “Cultural Heritage Preservation in Central Asia.” In *ISAC Annual Report 2023–2024*, edited by Timothy P. Harrison, 15–21 (Chicago: Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures, 2024)

EMILY TEETER continued to work with Chicago’s Field Museum as the content provider (cocurator) of the Egyptian and Nubian sections of the new Africa galleries slated to open in spring 2028.

Her monograph *Chicago on the Nile: A Century of Work by the Epigraphic Survey of the University of Chicago* (ISAC Museum Publications 2) appeared in September 2024. The publication was the focus of two ISAC book club meetings (with managing editor of ISAC publications Andrew Baumann) in January and also of a Breasted Society Salon in June.

A related exhibition—also titled *Chicago on the Nile* and curated by Teeter, J. Brett McClain, and Catherine Witt—opened at the ISAC Museum on September 16, 2024, and ran through March 23, 2025.

INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH

Teeter enjoyed working with Denise Browning, manager of the Museum Shop, to develop exhibition-related products, some of which will be sold in other museum shops.

Teeter's long-delayed *Ancient Egyptian Art at the Art Institute of Chicago*, coauthored with and edited by Ashley Arico, was finally released as an online catalog. This rich resource presents 110 objects with their cultural and technical contexts and is illustrated with open-access photography (<https://doi.org/10.53269/9780865593213>). It is the first extensive catalog of the Art Institute's collection since 1923, when *A Handbook of the Egyptian Collection*, by Oriental Institute Egyptologist T. G. Allen, appeared. Teeter also published a chapter titled "The Mummy and Coffin of Meresamun (Chicago OIM E10797)" in *From Objects to Histories: Studies in Honour of John H. Taylor*, edited by Nigel Strudwick and David A. Aston (Abercromby, 2024).

In July 2024, Teeter participated in a Study Day at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where she spoke on cult statues as the museum curators prepared the exhibition *Divine Egypt*, opening in October 2025. She also contributed an essay to the show's catalog, and she reviewed manuscripts for the *Egyptian Journal of Archaeological and Restoration Studies*.

In September 2024, Teeter attended the annual meeting of the Comité international pour l'égyptologie (CIPEG) in Madrid, where she gave a paper on the Field Museum project, and in April 2025 she traveled to San Francisco to attend the annual meeting of the American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE). In November and December 2024, she led two ISAC tours to Egypt in celebration of the centennial of the Epigraphic Survey, and another in February 2025 operated by the Smithsonian for "friends and family." She served on the lecture team for another Smithsonian voyage to the Gulf.

Teeter continues to serve on the boards of *Writings of the Ancient World*, CIPEG, and the Chicago chapter of ARCE.

In addition to continuing his work on the Chicago Hittite Dictionary project (see separate report), **THEO VAN DEN HOUT** submitted several articles for publication in 2024–25, including a contribution to an April 2024 conference on hunting in the ancient world—"L'iconographie cynégétique dans les mondes anciens," held in Paris—and two articles for edited volumes honoring colleagues in the field of cuneiform studies. Van den Hout was invited to give the annual Veenhof Lecture at Leiden University in the Netherlands on November 21, 2024, where he spoke on "The Compassionate Master, or the Limits of Hittite Political Rhetoric." In the winter, he was interviewed for a podcast by Cameron Clark, a graduating fourth-year University of Chicago student majoring in classics and economics. The topic of the podcast, which constituted Clark's senior thesis, was the prevailing theory in Hittitology that the cemetery immediately north of the capital, Hattusa, and known by its Turkish name, Osmankayası, was used only for the lower classes of Hittite society. Clark convincingly questioned this theory and raised the possibility that the Hittite elite may also have found their last resting place there. On March 28, 2025, and together with ISAC research associate Peter Raulwing, van den Hout gave an online presentation organized by *Cheiron: The International Journal of Equine and Equestrian History* titled "The Kikkuli Text (CTH 284): A Brief Interdisciplinary History." The presentation was part of a current project of van den Hout's and Raulwing's on the Kikkuli text, a detailed and overall well-preserved Hittite-language training manual for horses (Kikkuli being the name of a horse trainer from Mittani). Van den Hout concluded the year by teaching a course on Hittite literature for ISAC members.

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 Programs and Education: Adult Education in the Museum report). She taught the following classes: "Exhibiting the East: Chicago's 1893 World's Columbian Exposition and 1933 Century of Progress" (four weeks); "Medieval Christian Art: Coptic Egypt, Nubia, and Ethiopia/Eritrea" (five weeks); and "Envisioning Ancient Landscapes: Robert Duncanson's Paintings of Antiquity and Ruins" (Juneteenth free class).

In November 2024, Vorderstrasse cochaired the Archaeology of Islamic Society sessions at the annual meeting of the American Society of Overseas Research in Boston. At the same conference, she presented "Stupas from Space: Investigating the Landscape of the Jalalabad Region" and copresented, with Brian Muhs, "Epigraphy and Conflict in the Napatan, Meroitic, and Aksumite Empires." In April 2025, at the annual meeting of the American Research Center in Egypt, held in San Francisco, she presented "The Pyramid Tomb of Amanikhatašan of Meroe: Inscriptions and Material Culture." In June 2025, her article "Identity Based on Coptic Textile Terminology in Late Antique Egypt" appeared in *Outward Appearance versus Inward Significance: Addressing Identities through Attire in the Ancient World* (ISAC Seminars 15), edited by Aleksandra Hallmann, 457–82. She also submitted the article "Archaeology of Aksumite Coin Circulation in Ethiopia and Eritrea" for a Festschrift, as well as a copyedited version of her article "Imagining Balkh: The Chinese Perception of Central Asia during the Tang Dynasty," originally submitted in 2014, for the forthcoming volume *The City of Balkh: History and Culture of a Great Islamic Capital*, scheduled for publication by Bloomsbury Academic in 2026.

KAREN L. WILSON is currently reviewing the proofs of *Nippur VI: The Inanna Temple*, which was accepted for publication by ISAC and will appear in the Nippur series edited by McGuire Gibson. The volume—coauthored by Wilson, Richard L. Zettler, Jean M. Evans, and Robert D. Biggs, with the assistance of Felix Rauchhaus and Walther Sallaberger—will be the final publication of ISAC's excavation of the Inanna Temple at the site of Nippur in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The ISAC Publications office is currently editing and laying out the volume(s).

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