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Karen L. Wilson

During the past year, most of the museum staff's attention has been focused on the installation of the new Edgar and Deborah Jannotta Mesopotamian Gallery, including the Robert and Linda Braidwood Prehistory Exhibit and the Yelda Khorsabad Court. It has been exciting and deeply satisfying to see it all coming together into what promises to be a stunning whole, thanks to the creative energies of everyone involved.

At the very beginning of the year, Dianne Hanau-Strain of Hanau-Strain Associates was hired to be in charge of graphic design for the gallery. Dianne came to the Institute two afternoons a week to meet with the Mesopotamian Gallery Installation Committee — McGuire Gibson, myself, and Exhibit Designer Joe Scott, who was just recently replaced by Installation Coordinator Markus Dohner. Together we worked on case layouts, image selection, and graphic design. The completion of the Prehistory Exhibit proved to us that we had made the right choice in Dianne — her graphics really give both context and life to chipped stone tools 150,000 years old. As of this writing, that section of the gallery plus the entire Chronology section, Khorsabad Court, and Seals and Sealing Practices exhibit have been installed by Gallery Preparator Erik Lindahl and Mount Maker Beal Stafford. Work is about to get underway on constructing buildups and making mounts for the Daily Life section, the graphics for which are at the production house, and



Erik Lindahl, Beal Stafford, and Laura D'Alessandro installing a statue from Khorsabad in the Mesopotamian Gallery

Markus is embarking upon case layouts for Writing and Intellectual Life. McGuire Gibson and Tony Wilkinson have completed text and image selection for the Introduction to Mesopotamia section, Head of Museum Education Carole Krucoff is leading the team that is developing the Visitor Orientation Center, and my last writing task is to complete Cities, Palaces, and Temples. Clemens Reichel, Research Associate and Project Coordinator for the Diyala Project, and NELC graduate student Jonathan Tenney (who is also assistant curator of the tablet collection) contributed greatly to the content of the gallery. Clemens took on responsibility for the Daily Life section and Jonathan combed the tablet collection for items for Writing and Intellectual Life and wrote lively text copy. I wish to thank them both for their dedication to this work and willingness to be goaded by our deadlines.

Evelien Dewulf joined the museum staff in February as Administrative Assistant for Reinstallation. We have kept her busy with a broad range of reinstallation tasks including helping the conservators make cylinder seal

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Vicki Parry and Vanessa Muros filling in the gap between two Khorsabad reliefs

impressions, scheduling meetings, formatting, mounting, and cropping labels, and most importantly, scanning and touching up images for both the Mesopotamian Gallery and the East Wing Galleries for use in publicity, exhibition, and fund-raising presentations.

On March 17, the East Wing Installation Committee met for the first time to begin planning for the next phase of the installation. That committee now consists of Theo van den Hout, David Schloen, K. Aslıhan Yener, Gabrielle Novacek, Markus, Dianne, and myself.

We are grateful that our indefatigable colleague at the University News Office, William Harms, returned to Chicago after a year in Washington, D.C., with the National Science Foundation. Bill has again made sure that the Institute received prominent media coverage and used the events in Iraq to focus media attention, in part, on the opening of our new Mesopotamian Gallery. On Sunday, April 27, the Institute was featured on the front page of the Arts and Entertainment section of the *Chicago Tribune*, which also contained a full-page spread by art critic Alan Artner highlighting Mesopotamian treasures from the collection. In March, Bill arranged for a media availability day to spark initial interest in the new gallery, and he has been busily writing all the press materials for the gallery press kit and circulating them to the appropriate individuals for comment.

All this activity kept Senior Curator and Registrar Raymond D. Tindel extremely busy. Ray and the others in Registration handled nearly 19,000 objects over the course of the year. The transit area of storage, where items are brought to be considered as exhibition material, now has well over 6,000 objects on its shelves. These include some 2,600 items to be used in the Mesopotamian Gallery, over 1,100 in preparation for the Syrian-Anatolian exhibit, and 358 in preparation for the Megiddo exhibit.

Ray and his staff also have added more than 4,000 objects to the registered collections in the last year, including nearly 1,000 classical sherds, over 1,200 Nippur tablet casts, approximately

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500 Persepolis arrowheads, and over 500 sherds collected by Robert McCormick Adams on his Warka Survey in 1967. Ray also continues his transition to a new, more modern database system, which will be able to incorporate digital images that are being taken by a digital camera acquired with funds from an Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Conservation Project Support Grant.

Use of the collection for research was also heavy this past year. For her dissertation, Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations (NELC) graduate student Gabrielle Novacek is going through nearly 300 boxes of material from the site of Khirbet Kerak in Israel, excavated in the early 1950s by Pinhas Delougaz. Gabrielle is also working as a part-time Student Curator selecting objects for the Albert and Cissy Haas Megiddo Gallery. Other users of the collection included Ali Hussain of Loyola University, who looked at thirty-one Arabic manuscripts as part of his research into early Arabic epigraphy. John Landgraf came from Minneapolis to study pot-throwing techniques at Megiddo and handled 158 ceramic pieces. Tom Hefter spent several months in Registration cataloguing 165 Arabic manuscripts for a project called the American Committee for South Asian Manuscripts, and William Hafford of the University of Pennsylvania studied thirty-six Nippur weights. NELC graduate student Catherine Chou is currently studying 127 Nippur tablets and tablet casts for a reading course she is taking with Walter Farber, and Donald Whitcomb used 328 Islamic sherds from Bob Adams' excavations at Jundi Shapur for a class. Markus Hilgert visited from the University of Jena and examined 263 Ur III cuneiform tablets in preparation for his next publication. (You can see from these precise numbers what careful records Ray maintains about the movement of the objects in his care — a precision of which we are deeply appreciative).

Thanks to the efforts of Head of the Conservation Laboratory Laura D'Alessandro, the museum was again awarded an IMLS Conservation Project Support Grant (the museum's fourteenth since 1987). The funds were used to purchase twenty additional state-of-the-art storage cabinets — this time for some 1,500 Egyptian artifacts and pottery, mostly from the late periods. Thanks to this grant, those pieces have been unpacked and photographed and are once again accessible for study.

In December, Muriel Newman, a longtime friend of the Institute, donated twenty-four Near Eastern seals (stamp seals, cylinder seals, and scarabs) that she had purchased in Beirut in 1964. The museum lent six of its best Mesopotamian objects to the Metropolitan Museum of Art for its "Art of the First Cities: The Third Millennium B.C. from the Mediterranean to the Indus" exhibit, which opened in early May and will run until August. The pieces will be back in Chicago and in place in the gallery in time for our own first event related to the opening.

All of this was made possible by a wonderful group of assistants and volunteers, namely Aimee Drolet, Leon Drolet, Mary Grimshaw, Masako Matsumoto, Toni Smith, and Jim Sopranos. We say good-bye regretfully to Registrar's Assistant and NELC graduate student Joey Corbett, who has left for a year of research in Egypt and Jordan, but we welcome with great enthusiasm his successor, Dennis Campbell, also a NELC graduate student.

In February, Head of Security Margaret Schröder took part in this year's National Conference on Cultural Property Protection: "Best Practices For 2003 and Beyond," sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution. The Conference announced its intention to have a representative from a university museum appointed to its board, and Margaret — as well as all the other attendees from university museums — immediately applied. Several weeks later, Margaret was informed that she had been selected. She and her fellow appointee for this year, who is from the National Archives of Canada, are only the second and third women ever appointed to this board, which is about thirty years old. Congratulations to Margaret! It's not only a great step for her profession-

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ally, it's also wonderful to have the Oriental Institute represented on the board of the National Conference on Cultural Property Protection. Margaret attended the board meeting to plan the 2004 conference in Washington, D.C., in June. The working title for the conference is "People Are Security's Prime Concern." At that conference, Margaret will be heading two different sessions (and speaking at least a bit at each of these), and possibly speaking at a third session, which will focus on recent thefts and looting in Iraq.

With over 2,600 objects being installed in the new Mesopotamian Gallery, the conservators had their hands full over the year. In September, Contract Conservator Vicki Parry left to accept a position in the Greek and Roman conservation laboratory at the Metropolitan Museum in New York and was replaced by Getty Intern Alison Whyte when her fellowship year ended. Laura, Assistant Conservator Vanessa Muros, and Alison alternated their time between the Yelda Khorsabad Court and the lab. In the Court, they worked to make the display visually attractive by covering the steel frames with an acrylic modeling paste containing sand to imitate the texture and color of the original stone. They also conserved the faces of the reliefs, removing old, deteriorated patches of restoration and replacing them with more visually attractive and more conservationally sound materials. In the lab, they treated more than 500 pieces.

In July, the conservators held a half day workshop for area objects conservators (and one paper conservator) on the Assyrian relief conservation project. In March, Laura flew to Washington, D.C., to serve on the awards panel for IMLS Conservation Project Support grants. The same month, the conservators met with members of the Museum Education Department and representatives from the Chicago Board of Education to plan a series of science workshops for Chicago public school teachers. In April, the lab hosted a visit by Nancy Micklewright, a Program Officer of the Getty Grant Program, who



Vicki Parry, Laura D'Alessandro, and Alison Whyte reattaching a fragment of Khorsabad relief

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came to assess the first four years of the Institute's Getty-funded conservation internship program. Both Vanessa and Laura attended conferences in June. Vanessa traveled to Arlington, Virginia, for the American Institute for Conservation annual meeting, and Laura attended the Fifth World Archaeological Congress in Washington, D.C.

In May, Laura began preparing for the conservators' September/October activities, when the Assyrian relief project will begin its final phase and the remaining Assyrian reliefs will be installed in the East Wing of the Museum. This included scheduling the riggers and framers and ordering conservation supplies.

Museum Archivist John A. Larson hosted a number of visiting scholars over the year. They included Norma Franklin, from Tel Aviv University, who examined materials in the Megiddo Archive for her dissertation; Jeffrey Abt of Wayne State University, who continues to write on the career of James Henry Breasted; and Ann Gunter, curator at the Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, who is interested in the work of Ernst Herzfeld at Persepolis.

In June, John began pulling together the primary field records and secondary source materials on the sites of Khirbet Kerak (Beit Yerah) and Nahal Tabor in Israel for Gabrielle Novacek's dissertation research.

John is pleased to report that the Archives have received several new acquisitions. A. Dale Northrup of Douglas, Michigan, donated two original nineteenth-century photographs of Egypt. One is a picture of the obelisk of Senwesret I at Heliopolis, number 120 by Maison Bonfils; the other, by an unknown photographer, records a "Baptism of Pharaoh" scene at the Temple of Kom Ombo, in which Ptolemy XII, the father of Cleopatra the Great, is shown between the gods Thoth and Horus. We thank Mr. Northrup for his generosity. In April, Professor Robert D. Biggs presented the Archives with a copy of the program for "A Night in Egypt," the Oriental Institute benefit that took place on October 8, 1985. On May 13, he donated a copy of the program for the memorial service for Klaus Baer (May 16, 1987) and the newspaper obituary of Charles F. Nims from the *Chicago Tribune* of November 22, 1988. We thank Bob for his thoughtful support of the Archives.

Hazel Cramer, Peggy Grant, Patricia Hume, Sandra Jacobsohn, Lillian Schwartz, and Carole Yoshida continued working with John as Oriental Institute Archives Volunteers throughout fiscal year 2002/2003. In February, James P. Baughman joined as a new volunteer in the Archives; he has begun to research and write biographical sketches of selected former Oriental Institute personnel for a planned "Oriental Institute Biographies" section on our website. This year, Hazel continued working on materials from the Oriental Institute Publications Office. Peggy Grant has transcribed the handwritten letter/reports of Edgar James Banks from the University of Chicago's 1903-1905 expedition to the site of Bismaya in Iraq, and Hazel has begun the process of proofreading. Pat continues her long-term project based on the Papers of Helene Kantor. Sandy checked-in the Epigraphic Survey negatives and photographs from the past two field seasons and prepared them for long-term storage. Lillian is working on the metadata for the photographs from the microfiche publication of Carl Kraeling's work at Ptolemais in Libya, so that the images and their descriptions can be posted on the Oriental Institute website. Carole continues with the task of re-mounting and re-labeling the 35 mm transparencies in the Slide Library. We are grateful for the generous contributions of time by these volunteers in support of the ongoing functions of the Archives.

Museum Office Manager Carla Hosein took on a new position in the Oriental Institute administrative office in July 2002. Since then, John has been assisted by student assistants Carrie Hritz and Justine Warren, who have had the responsibility for preparing the necessary paperwork and handling all the other details that are involved in processing the requests that we re-

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The obelisk of Senwesret I at Heliopolis, number 120 by Maison Bonfils

ceive for photographic image materials and reproduction permissions — a total of 134 transactions during fiscal year 2002/2003.

Photographer Jean Grant has been kept busy photographing Mesopotamian objects to be used for publicity related to the new gallery or to be lent to the Metropolitan Museum and with printing for the photograph order program. She is bemoaning the fact that, with the advent of digital

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photography, many of the supplies she needs are becoming difficult, or impossible, to find. Good black and white photographic paper is difficult to find or non-existent and 5×7 sheets (preferred by those writing Ph.D. dissertations) have to be trimmed down from 8×10 inch paper. RC (resin-coated) papers are now more plentiful than fiber-based paper, which is archival in quality. All papers now contain less silver, which is necessary for obtaining rich black when printing.

Jean spent many weeks photographing Oriental Institute Egyptian treasures for Emily Teeter. She says it was like finding them all over again because of the attention given them by those in conservation. Jean is again grateful to have had Irene Glasner volunteer for the Photo Lab. She notes that Irene, whether spotting slides from the volunteer collections or printing, is game. Unfortunately, volunteer Pam Ames broke her ankle this year, but we are happy to report that she is slowly on the mend.

By the time you read this, the Mesopotamian Gallery will have opened, and we will have embarked on the East Wing Galleries in earnest. As we move into a busy and productive new year, I would like to thank the entire museum staff, as well as our many dedicated volunteers, for their continued support and good humor. Without their team work, none of our past or future accomplishments would have been or would be possible.
