



THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE MUSEUM

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To achieve its purposes, the Oriental Institute needs to communicate the results of its work to others. One of the ways it does this is to exhibit in its Museum objects and works of art representing the successive civilizations of the ancient Near East. The exhibits include a nucleus presented to the University of Chicago in 1896 by Mrs. Caroline F. Haskell in memory of her husband and originally housed in Haskell Hall. The field expeditions of the Institute eventually provided so much important new material that the new Institute building, constructed in 1930 as the gift of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., provided five halls for museum exhibits, as well as a lecture hall and extensive laboratories. By that time some of the spectacular finds of the Khorsabad expedition had been shipped to Chicago, so that the great Assyrian winged man-bull could be set on its own foundation, and the other relief sculptures could be mounted on the walls. A colossal statue of King Tutankamon, unearthed during the excavation of the temples at Medinet Habu, was restored and installed in the Egyptian Hall. The Persian expedition claimed a separate gallery for its objects, even though its work had only started. The Persepolis bull's head was not mounted until ten years later.

Other important items in the Museum are the decorative ivories found in the treasury of a ruler of Megiddo in Palestine; the votive statues and figurines, of gypsum and of copper, found in the ruins of Sumerian temples at Tell Asmar and Khafajah; the models from Egyptian tombs, which symbolize the extent of the services needed to provide adequately for the dead in



Restored statue of Assyrian guardian deity from Khorsabad

the afterlife; the cylinder seals that demonstrate so well the development of the glyptic art of Mesopotamia; figurines from Syria, the oldest cast copper known from that region; the articles of daily life from ancient Egypt; gold treasures of Syro-Hittite, Achaemenian, and Hellenistic times; Dead Sea Scroll fragments, cloth scroll wrappings, and a scroll jar. New items are constantly being added to the collections by field excavation and by purchase or gift.

Since the Museum acquires most of its objects from the Institute's excavations, its cavernous receiving rooms, laboratories, and storage vaults play an important part in its operation. Here the finds of the expeditions are organized for study, treated, classified, prepared for publication, and eventually stored for future reference. Certain classes of objects lending themselves to exhibition are mounted for Museum display. Other objects are assembled for purposes of instruction. Students and visiting scholars may obtain permission to use the study material.

To handle the many-sided work of the Museum, a large staff is needed. In addition to the Curator, who has general supervision over the exhibits, loans, and exchanges, the Museum has a Secretary with a staff of clerical and secretarial assistants, two preparators, and a photographer. Volunteer helpers from the Chicago community assist in the processing and repair of individual objects, and student research assistants work under the direction of professors upon classification and interpretation of materials from the field.

The collections of the Institute also provide an instrument without parallel in the Midwest for service to education at the precollege level. It is a part of the Institute's long-range planning to extend its services to the schools of Chicago, its suburbs, and the outlying communities by making its holdings available in connection with social studies and student course work in history, art, religion, and civics. To this end the Institute has added to its staff a docent, who is its special representative in its outreach to the high-school teachers and their students. Guided tours of the Museum are provided for groups of students from outside institutions.

The Museum is open to the public daily, except Monday, free of charge, from 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., and has an average annual visitor attendance of over forty thousand. A printed plan of the Museum, showing the organization of its halls and exhibits, is printed on the back cover of this booklet. Photographs of important objects on display, postcards, copies of Museum objects, and literature bearing upon the Institute and the Museum are available in the Museum offices.

