

To the Members and Friends of the Oriental Institute

The period of two academic years concluded in June saw further progress in a number of major activities which the individual sections of this report undertake to summarize. Some of them clearly reflect new emphasis or directions of research; others pursue an essentially unchanged course toward still-distant objectives; while a few, only a few, approach their apparent terminations. Do old projects never die but only fade away? Does the Institute expand and change only by adding new rings of growth around its static and senescent heartwood?

Although the answer to both questions is surely an emphatic *no*, such questions do call attention to the difficulties inherent in recording the changing structure and goals of a research enterprise in terms only of the specific projects it pursues. The thinking behind projects, the methods they employ, and the problems to which they are addressed are all more fluid than their titles and brief descriptions can indicate. Many of the research problems with which we are most urgently concerned, moreover, never have been clothed in the trappings of formal projects at all. Still a further consideration is that the trends of increasing significance for the work of the Institute as a whole may not be apparent in many separate statements of plans and activity related to isolated objectives.

What are some of the newly emergent themes which may not be apparent in the summaries of projects? Limitations of space forbid listing them all, and in any case it would be repetitious to do so since many of them reinforce and interlock with one another. But among them may be mentioned, first, a rapidly broadening conception of "fieldwork."

While the Epigraphic Survey in Luxor has always sturdily defied the rule, the archeological near-monopoly elsewhere is slowly but

surely giving way as philologists and historians turn their attention to the vast archives of ancient Near Eastern tablets still reposing unpublished and even unexamined in many of the world's museums. The last academic year alone has seen Professor Gelb conduct an extended study of ancient Mesopotamian land documents in Istanbul and several European centers of Oriental studies, Professor Oppenheim working in London and East Berlin on Old Babylonian economic texts, and Mr. Civil traversing much of the same terrain while engaged in Sumerological studies. As the year drew to an end, Dr. Pingree departed for a year's residence in Beirut to work on medieval Arabic manuscripts relevant to his interest in the history of astronomy. Clearly, this new pattern deserves further encouragement. Ours is one of the rare institutions with the staff and resources to maintain a comprehensive approach to problems, to control all the evidence—to span the whole range of social and cultural institutions of the past and thus to make a contribution at the general as well as the highly specialized level. Wider contacts with colleagues and collections abroad are an important means to that end.

Another theme, admittedly looming larger as yet in the promise than in the execution, concerns the development of ancient science and technology as vital parts of the great cultural tradition which later was reshaped by the Greeks and descended thence to us by way of later Classical and Arab thinkers. Professor Braidwood's very recent and important discoveries in the field of preceramic copper metallurgy (see pp. 6-7) perhaps anchor one terminus of this interest far back in prehistoric times, only shortly after the closing phases of the Ice Age. At least a part of Professor Landsberger's immensely wide-ranging lexical studies converges upon this subject also, for it

concerns the ancients' own classification of their craft procedures and the natural world around them. A more specialized approach is that of Professor Oppenheim in research on early Babylonian glass, which he is undertaking jointly with the Corning Museum of Glass, or the collaborative study of the transmission of Babylonian astronomy and astrology into Greek, Indian, and Arabic thought being pursued by Professors Oppenheim, Reiner, and Pingree. If a systematized, empirically derived body of theory and practice properly defines science and technology, then agriculture too falls within this rubric; if so, perhaps my own interests in ancient irrigation as an ecologically unstable system may be mentioned as still another specialized approach to the same problem. As these widely scattered, still essentially unrelated studies suggest, no more than small beginnings have been made on a vast and uncharted course. They deserve what further encouragement we can give them.

As the past season marks the conclusion of the Oriental Institute's four seasons of archeological fieldwork conducted on behalf of the UNESCO-sponsored Nubian salvage program (see p. 9), it is appropriate to call attention here to a response to the emergency created by the new High Dam at Aswan, a response of which we can all be proud. The Oriental Institute's massive and highly successful efforts in Nubia owe most to the driving will and energy of Professor Seele, but every Egyptologist willingly stepped forward to contribute to one phase or another of either the fieldwork or the organizational efforts behind it. Fortunately we have been able, with the aid of a grant from the Sears-Roebuck Foundation, to obtain a film record of the human aspects of our work in both Egyptian and Sudanese Nubia during this past, and final, season. With time and equipment gener-

ously donated by Cameras International, Mr. Charles Sharp is engaged in editing a half-hour motion picture for early release which will illustrate not only the Oriental Institute's contribution to the Nubian emergency salvage program but also our epigraphic staff at work in Luxor.

For several reasons, however, the Nubian Project should not be written off too quickly as an account that is closed. In the first place, in reality only the most urgent part of the job is finished—the data have been gotten out of the ground ahead of the rising waters. What remains, as can be inferred from Professor Seele's mention of almost a hundred *cases* of antiquities obtained during the last two seasons alone, is a very substantial job of study and publication, as well as a virtually permanent problem of somehow housing what has suddenly become one of the finest collections of Nubian antiquities available to scholars anywhere. Second, it must be admitted frankly that the intensive archeological work in Nubia by archeologists from many countries has generated a new situation there. What began by being regarded fairly generally as only a duty, involving the diversion of attention from the main centers of Egyptian civilization to one of its more remote and less important margins, has ended by creating an understanding of long-term continuities of human occupation, that previously were usually ignored, and an awareness that there are some crucial features of any civilization which may be more incisively studied along its frontiers than in its capitals.

Nubian projects will assuredly die and not fade away, in the sense that their basic raw materials soon will be irretrievably covered by the waters of the Nile; but in a larger sense it may be hoped that they will continue to flourish as a stimulus to Egyptology. In their

wake, for example, have come extensive, quantitative studies of cemeteries in which every social stratum is represented, like those excavated by Professor Seele at Ballana and Qustul, and the complementing of cemetery excavations with archeological clearance of the debris of ancient towns and villages. Both these new emphases deserve to be more widely employed downstream and not to be left behind on the Upper Nile in Nubia when the last archeologists leave.

As the foregoing mention of overwhelming new accessions of Nubian antiquities anticipates, space for the proper storage and display of objects brought back from the field has become a chronic and increasingly serious problem with us. The Institute's basement laboratory and storage-case facilities, seemingly capacious beyond all reasonable need when the building was constructed in 1931, now have been virtually filled with the products of a generation of digging. Some additional space, together with new storage cases, lighting and laboratory equipment, fortunately has been made available to the Oriental Institute through a grant received in June 1964 from the National Science Foundation. This will permit a considerable improvement in both the processing of our collections for publication and in their study by students and visiting scholars, but the problem of the limited volume of available storage space remains essentially unaltered. This problem has been a recurrent topic of discussion during the year, and such discussions undoubtedly will become more urgent and frequent. Sooner or later, we have no choice but to find the means radically to expand our present museum and office facilities. The need for space, in turn, is obviously and inescapably linked with the appeal of the museum's program to the wider Chicago community. To what audience are

our exhibits directed? In addressing that audience, is our primary function to be a repository for monuments or to be an informative and educational instrument? Unfortunately, the Nubian accessions have accelerated only the asking of these questions. The answers still elude us.

If the problem of the need for additional space is one which looms portentously on the horizon, the problem which confronts us most importantly and directly in virtually all our current field operations is one of providing an adequate reserve of trained personnel for expedition staffs. The opportunities for fieldwork have multiplied (and now involve many previously unengaged institutions, as well as our own), based upon a wide number of possible sources of governmental and foundation support, and we simply have not maintained an adequate flow of young people with the academic qualifications and excavation experience to meet them. Perhaps the major source of the difficulty is that *over the short run* the objective of training students appears antithetical to the demands of a particular field program. Given a fixed total budget for fieldwork, there is an understandable tendency to rely too heavily year after year on a small group of fully trained professionals, reducing the gross size of the staff as much as possible, both in order to reduce the field director's administrative burden and to conserve funds for labor and other direct field expenses.

Among the pernicious effects traceable to this conflict in short-run objectives is the choking-off of part of the supply of potential field investigators of the future. In addition, it leads to the maintenance of an artificial and unfortunate barrier between philologists, on the one hand, and field-oriented archeologists or anthropologists, on the other. A central feature of the Institute's pioneering work in the Near

East in the twenties and thirties was a spirit of fluid, unspecialized teamwork in which this division meant little; since then, I regret to report, the barrier has risen considerably. Still another negative effect of the presently small number of opportunities for field training involves the advance of archeology as a discipline. If there is to be a continuing tide of vitally needed innovations in methodology, as well as the expanded observation and recording of whole realms of potentially important data now consigned to the dump heaps, we require *larger* staffs with some of the ferment of youth, not smaller, highly professional ones. Before Near Eastern archeology can return to the position in the forefront of the field which it occupied a generation ago, it must find means to obtain a large infusion of new, young talent.

The obvious answer to this is to separate the provisions of a training program from those of excavations so that they are no longer competitive. Help in this effort seemed promised for a while through the award of blocked currencies abroad (established there through the sale of surplus United States agricultural commodities) to scholarly centers composed of contributing American universities (Chicago among them). It had been planned that such centers would award annual fellowships to graduate students as well as senior scholars across the whole spectrum of the social sciences and humanities. Now, however, the inclusion of funds for archeology (and probably philology and many historical studies as well) within these programs has been administratively determined to be contrary to the "intent of Congress." While the present decision ultimately may be altered, the processes by which the budget for foreign expenditures is drawn and approved in Washington at best would not lend a high level of confidence to government

grants as a solution to our problem. Among our most critical needs, in short, is a privately financed program of field fellowships to provide a firsthand introduction for students to Near Eastern societies, ancient and modern, on which they plan to specialize.

Both problems and opportunities are here in proliferation, and they interpenetrate every aspect of our work. Perhaps that is what keeps cambium and heartwood growing together.

Cordially,

ROBERT M. ADAMS
Director

Cover illustration: Ramses III offering silver, gold, and temple furniture before Amon-Re and Mut. From Treasury of Medinet Habu Temple. Printed through the generosity of Mr. Edward J. Chalifoux.