

TO MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE

The ebb and flow of daily events usually lacks perceptible pattern. Most of us follow it passively, as a chronicle of undigested occurrences and conflicting reports that impinges all too often on our personal lives but that lacks larger shape or meaning. News, all too typically, consists in the main of the violent and disastrous; we expect to hear or read almost instantaneously of the “body count,” but for mature analysis of the forces that gathered before a storm, as well as of its long-term outcome, we are content to await the leisurely, retrospective study of the historian. The changing context of events, in other words, generally is overshadowed by the dramatic incident.

If this Annual Report were meant only as a chronicle in the limited sense, it would be sufficient to record the Oriental Institute’s major activities as incidents—more or less dramatic—scattered over the past year’s span. Most of the individual contributions that follow do precisely that. But it seems appropriate to preface these accounts with an assessment of the changing context within which the Institute as a whole seems to be operating. Writing as a participant rather than a passive observer, and about trends still in progress rather than safely remote in time, I hope it will be understood that at best this can only be a subjective evaluation on many parts of which there may not be full agreement among my colleagues.

In terms of the Oriental Institute’s research interest in the antecedents and historical development of the great civilizations of the Near East, it seems to me that the major changes over the past generation or so interlock with one another to form a harmonious pattern, and one which affects our operations profoundly and at an accelerating pace. In brief, what was initially an effort

in splendid and sometimes dangerous isolation now has ceased to be so. To use our immense strength in academic staff and research facilities effectively under the new conditions, we need to recognize them and accommodate ourselves to their impact.

To begin with, the number of institutions that are seriously engaged in teaching and research in our field has grown mightily since World War II. In large part, this has been stimulated by interest in the contemporary Near East, encouraged either through language-training grants under the National Defense Education Act or through Ford Foundation support for the formation of specialized area research centers. But these programs have frequently broadened to include long-range historical and even archeological studies. Then, too, the availability of foundation support for field research, primarily in the social sciences, has led increasing numbers of scholars in those disciplines to come to grips personally with the languages and historical roots of the modern Near East. Finally, recent years have seen a prodigiously increased proportion of college students entering graduate studies of all kinds, at state universities as well as private ones, and if the impulse from Sputnik was felt initially in the natural sciences, the spreading waves from that shock now have reached into the most recondite fields of the humanities. It follows that particularly the younger scholars in our field often tend to be less strongly affiliated with any one institution than with the widening network of intercommunicating specialists at many institutions that constitutes their discipline. It is not easy to maintain our traditional sense of continuity or of organic unity of research design in the face of this rising spirit of personal independence and mobility, but we must learn to do so.

A second way in which growth is accompanied by a reduction in isolation concerns our relations with the University of which we are a part. As a research enterprise, the Institute probably will always have distinctive features that reflect the organizing genius of James Henry Breasted and the generous support he received from John D. Rockefeller, Jr. But all around us now, and at times even overlapping with us, are programs whose intellectual and administrative boundaries with our own are increasingly obscure and perhaps artificial. Archeological studies of the Classical world, focusing not only on mainland Greece but on "our" prov-

ince of Anatolia, are carried out by the Departments of Classics and Art. A young Byzantine historian dealing with the same area recently has been appointed by the Department of History. On our other flank, this University is fortunate in having one of the country's major programs in southern Asian studies, drawing strength from linguistics, history, art, anthropology, political science, and recently having begun to cultivate an archeological interest as well. Where does the line between us lie? Surely not with some geographic barrier or frontier which was repeatedly overcome or swept aside by historic movements and currents of influence. The line, if there need be one, can only shift with the spectrum of problems on which we choose to work and sources we can learn to control. David Pingree's interest in ancient astronomy, for example, causes him to brush the traditional areal distinctions away altogether and to divide his work between Arabic manuscripts and Sanskrit horoscopes.

It might be added that his geographic breadth in choice of problem seems to be a symptomatic one. Among colleagues from allied departments in the Oriental Institute who are engaged in a similar approach, mention might also be made of the joint work of Muhsin Mahdi and Herrlee Creel on Arab-Chinese seafaring interconnections during the Middle Ages. Perhaps it is not too wide of the mark to suggest that the intellectual tone of current Asian historical research is being set increasingly by William McNeill's *Rise of the West*, with its emphasis on the interrelatedness of developments across huge areas and deep cultural barriers, whereas the historical concerns of a generation or so ago found their fullest and most systematic expression in Arnold Toynbee's account of the rise and fall of individual civilizations as a repetitive, largely autochthonous process.

The related development within the University of Chicago which is of greatest importance for the Oriental Institute has been the formation of a strong Center for Middle Eastern Studies, in part with support from the Ford Foundation. Vigorously and imaginatively led by a historian specializing in the development of the Arab world over the last two centuries or so, William R. Polk, it brings together around a frame of common needs and interests scholars from the Oriental Institute and the Departments of Oriental Languages, History, Geography,

Anthropology, and Political Science. Again, our task is not to define a jurisdictional line with respect to the work of this Center, and then to defend our citadel against all comers, but instead actively to seek ways to facilitate its growth as well as our own. In this case as in the others mentioned above, the substantial convergence of our interests is an opportunity to be seized upon and not a threat. The only threat, in fact, lies in our failing to take full advantage of the breadth and depth of scholarship which have grown up around us in fields allied to our own.

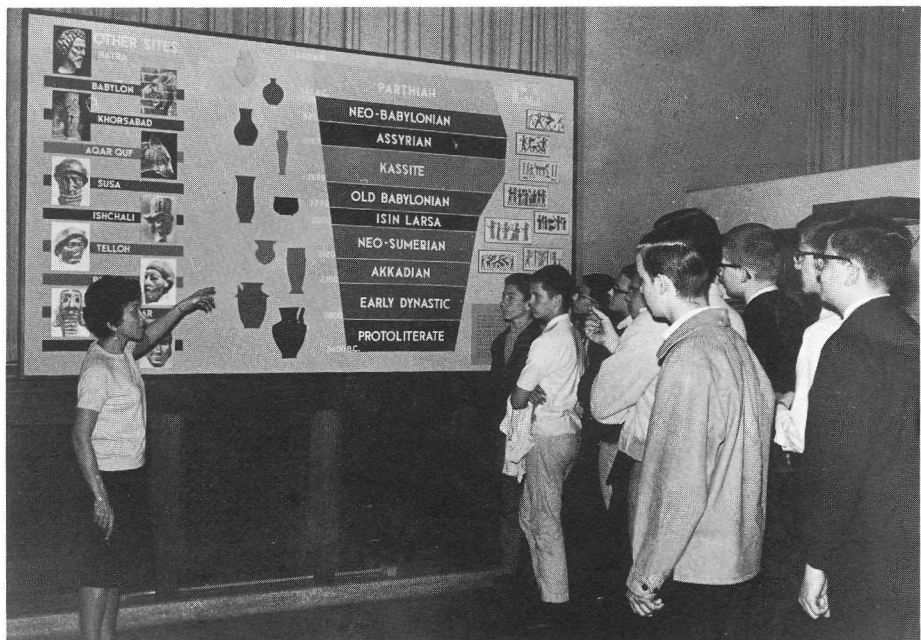
The third respect in which intercommunication is emerging as an increasingly important requirement involves the conduct of our own individual research. More and more frequently the urgent and important problems turn out to be ones on which progress can only come with a collaborative approach, involving the combined efforts of specialists in several disciplines. I. J. Gelb, recently appointed Frank P. Hixon Distinguished Service Professor, for example, finds it useful to consult with an institutional economist as a part of his long-term study of the agricultural economy of third millennium Mesopotamia. Hans Güterbock (recently awarded the honor of the Colvin Research Professorship for 1966-67) and Miguel Civil, working on translation and grammatical problems involving Hittite and Sumerian, respectively, begin to speak quite naturally with the new and specialized vocabulary of the computer programmers with whom they must deal. Pierre Delougaz and Maurits van Loon, on excavations in Iran and Syria, press down in time to the thresholds of the historic period with the contributions of specialized analysts from the natural sciences like those which Robert Braidwood has pioneered in the study of the beginnings of agriculture. Robert Braidwood himself, through the accident of the discovery of worked copper in his most recent early village excavations, turns to the metallurgist for an understanding of the annealing processes that may have been used on his specimens and of their contribution to the history of this vital industry. Leo Oppenheim's studies of ancient glass technology similarly involve him with specialists from the Corning Museum of Glass, who contribute their knowledge of the chemistry of glass manufacture in return for his of the ancient Mesopotamian texts describing the process in the somewhat magical terms in which it was known at the time. "To-

getherness," to be sure, doesn't solve all problems; in fact, it produces some new ones, particularly at the interpersonal level. But at least a selective substitution of a collaborative approach for work in isolation clearly represents a powerful key for opening doors which heretofore have been closed to us.

Paralleling these important changes in the scholarly and institutional context in which the Institute operates are others of comparable importance—but more recent vintage—affecting its relations with the public. The problem of isolation, in fact, is essentially the same whether we speak of research or of exhibits and programs for visitors and supporters. In both cases, the retreat into narrow specialization can destroy the senses of relevance and proportion. It is no surprise to find that Breasted, with his commanding vision of what the Institute ought to become, was not only the author of a basic high school text on ancient Egypt that still is in widespread use more than sixty years after it was written but was also insistent from the beginning that the Institute's research must go hand in hand with a public museum. Perhaps there was in this an element of moral responsibility to the countries which gave us permission to excavate, since at the very least a museum would provide a glass-cased, permanent storehouse for the objects we were allowed to bring home. But the more basic moral responsibility he felt was to the entire educative process which the University symbolized. That process is always a dialogue, an act of intercommunication: to teach is also to learn.

Well, what have we been doing about it? The last year has seen the inauguration of a three-year development program which points the way toward taking these responsibilities seriously. With the advice and encouragement of two members of our Visiting Committee, in particular Mr. Press Hodgkins and Mrs. Theodore Tieken, at least a beginning has been made on some of the more urgent and obvious improvements in our museum and educational programs that will help us more closely to approximate Breasted's vision and to bring it home to greater numbers of people.

One of the main problems with museum exhibits as large and specialized as those in the Oriental Institute has always been to make them intelligible to visitors. This need is filled only in part by labels, for the real problem is not to identify individual objects on which the eye happens to fall but to relate them one



Miss Leila Ibrahim, Senior Docent, conducting one of the many Museum tours.

to another and to explain the broader historical and cultural context from which they come. Particularly for visitors coming to the Oriental Institute in groups, of whom there were more than 10,000 during the last year, a forest of labels would neither explain what our exhibits mean nor communicate any sense of enthusiasm about them.

For this reason, a number of steps were taken during the last year under the initiative of Mrs. John Livingood, our new and very active Museum Secretary, to establish a long-needed program of volunteer guides. Starting in January, 1966, an eight-week course of training was instituted in which lectures by members of the Institute staff alternated with explanatory tours of the galleries under the guidance of the Institute's docent, Miss Leila Ibrahim. Nineteen volunteer guides now are doing yeoman service, and plans have been made to schedule a further training course for

additional volunteers in the fall. With the availability of guides, plans also are now being made by a tour committee under the chairmanship of Mrs. Edward Hutchens of Hinsdale to arrange with program chairmen of various groups throughout the Chicago area for conducted tours of the museum. Such programs will also include the showing of archeological films and luncheon at the nearby Quadrangle Club. Another step has been taken to meet the frequently expressed requests of our visitors for mementos of our exhibits which they can keep or use as gifts: an expanded sale area currently is under construction in the Institute foyer. Here we have always been limited in the past to a few casts of objects, postcards, and books. With a wider selection, including well-executed copies of unique objects and jewelry in our own collection, there is every reason to expect an appreciable increase not merely in good will but also in our present income from this source. Mrs. Theodore Tieken will be in charge of arrangements for this activity and, when the new sales desk is finished, it will be staffed with volunteers. As part of the same effort, discussions are underway with representatives of the Chicago Public Schools, looking toward a better co-ordination of our exhibits and guiding services with the needs of their curriculum.

Of course the problem of exhibits only begins with the availability of fine original collections and of qualified guides to explain them. Again in a sense, the crucial questions are those of context. What should exhibits be designed to show? To what audience are they addressed? In the sense not only of physical display but of intellectual and aesthetic content, what is their optimal setting? Such questions are not only difficult and expensive to answer, but take us into realms where it is difficult with present resources even to know what answers are feasible or to project means to arrive at them. Ultimately we may wish to consider a comprehensive re-designing of our exhibit galleries around an entirely different set of themes than the present regional subdivisions. In the meantime, however, a modest and experimental beginning has been made, both to explore possibilities in a tentative (and relatively inexpensive) way and to provide a more adequate public record of some of our current research projects. For this purpose an artist and an additional preparator now have been employed. A new exhibit of

our excavations at Nippur opened in December. By the fall of 1966 we anticipate that a more ambitious new exhibit, outlining the findings of the Braidwood Prehistoric Project from almost two decades of investigations of the beginnings of agriculture and village life, will be ready for its first public showing.

A further step toward explaining the program and purposes of the Oriental Institute to a wider audience was the completion of our documentary film, "The Egyptologists." Filmed at Chicago House in Luxor and at the Institute's excavations in Egyptian



Staff Members of the Oriental Institute who designed and executed the Nippur Exhibit, from left to right, Robert Hanson, Ursula Schneider, Richard C. Haines, Marilyn Buccellati, Catherine Brandel, Robert Ahlstrom.

and Sudanese Nubia by Charles Sharp and narrated by Charlton Heston, a preliminary version was screened for members and their guests in October, 1965. After substantial further cutting and editing, the first final prints were made available the following spring and so far have been seen only by a limited number of very appreciative alumni audiences. By fall we hope to have completed arrangements for the general release of the film (which now has been awarded a CINE "Golden Eagle," the equivalent of an Oscar in the documentary film field) both for club groups and for educational purposes.

We are fortunate, I would argue in summary, in that we deal in a rising market. Certain aspects of that situation, such as the increasing competition among universities for the still-scarce talents of Near Eastern scholars, from time to time will present challenges to us. But the opportunities—for greatly expanded horizons of research, for the educational and cultural enrichment of a wide audience—more than offset these challenges. This is a time, after all, when the Known World of the American traveler finally has moved eastward from Europe to include at least Egypt, Turkey, Israel, and Lebanon. In fact we are making a modest contribution to that expansion of frontiers ourselves, in the form of a trip to archeological and historic monuments of Turkey which the Institute is sponsoring for thirty or so of its supporters. Hence it is not a matter of pride or even complacency to note that the Institute's membership has increased something over 50 per cent in the past year. We have a long way to go. It will need our best ingenuity and all our efforts to get there. We hope we can count on your interest and support in this exciting enterprise.

ROBERT M. ADAMS, *Director*