

The Oriental Institute Museum

GUSTAVUS F. SWIFT, *Curator*

This has been an active year in the Museum. The grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, mentioned here last year, was generously matched by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The study of



Completing a general refurbishing of the Egyptian Hall, Mr. R. H. Hanson and Mr. H. R. Torres sponge away the accumulation of recent years from King Sargon II of Assyria's colossal human-headed bull. Photo by Ursula W. Schneider.

the feasibility of installing climate control and of improving security and storage in the museum, which is the purpose of the grant, has proceeded through the year and nears completion at the time of writing. The principal consultants have been Mr. Alfred Jakstas, Conservator, the Art Institute of Chicago, Howell Engineers, Inc., of Chicago, and Mr. Edward J. Walsh, Associate University Architect. Many others have been most helpful; I would like to mention particularly Mr. Bernard Duffy, of the Art Institute of Chicago, and Mr. William O. Park, of the University's Comptroller's Office. In its progress, the study has compelled the museum staff to think about changes in management and facilities over a long term; some of these, such as an air-conditioning system which may cover the whole building, are on a

grander scale, while some smaller matters, such as steps toward the reorganization of existing storage, may be put into effect more directly.

It has been possible to begin a demonstration of the way in which climate control might affect the exhibition areas of the museum. Building on the survey of our Egyptian art collection, by Dr. John D. Cooney of the Cleveland Museum of Art, as reported last year, plans have gone ahead for a newly installed exhibit. Remodeling was effected in the east end of the Egyptian Hall, to the extent of closing up two of the tall Gothic windows and removing the radiators beneath them, so that two large new cases could be installed to exhibit more effectively our reliefs and paintings and perhaps other pieces of our smaller sculpture. The installation of these pieces will take place in the coming months. This program led, in turn, to the cleaning and re-decorating of the entire hall.

It is a great pleasure to acknowledge, in connection with this revised Egyptian art exhibit, the generous long-term loan of three splen-



Mr. Thor Heyerdahl examines the evidence for Egyptian reed boats from a relief on exhibit, with the assistance of Professor George R. Hughes, left, and Director John A. Brinkman, right. Photo by Lloyd Eldon Saunders, Public Information Office, University of Chicago.

did pieces by the Robert H. Lowie Museum of Anthropology, of the University of California at Berkeley. These derive from the long-ago excavations of George A. Reisner at Giza and will make a magnificent addition to our resources for the Old Kingdom.

The Museum has continued to be active in assisting with research projects and with education at an advanced level, as the following few examples show. Professor Jack Harlan, of the University of Illinois, has brought his class to inspect our Schweinfurth Botanical Collection of modern and ancient Egyptian plants. In October, Miss Janine Bourriau came from the Metropolitan Museum for several weeks' study of our Egyptian Middle Kingdom pottery from Lisht. From the University of Rome, this April, came Professor Maurizio Tosi and Dr. R. Biscione, to examine the tool marks on the collection of lapis lazuli from Mesopotamia, and the flint tools with which the lapis was worked. At the same time, Mr. Phillip Kohl came from Harvard University to take samples of Mesopotamian steatite vessels for mineralogical analysis, as part of a study of trade patterns in the Near East and in India, in the third millennium B.C. Closer to home, Mr. Juris Zarins, an advanced student, and Professor Paul B. Moore, of our Department of Geophysical Sciences, have been collaborating to determine the identity and origin of the material of our early Mesopotamian stone vessels of all kinds. Likewise, archaeology student Robert G. Hassert is including our Megiddo pottery in his comprehensive study of all available Syro-Palestinian monochrome painted wares of the Late Bronze Age, an undertaking that will require computer assistance.

It is a special pleasure to announce the appointment, effective July 1, 1973, of two Assistant Curators, Miss Judith A. Franke and Mr. David W. Nasgowitz. Both have had several years' experience on the Museum staff.

Mr. Nasgowitz took leave of absence during the past winter to fulfill his own National Endowment for the Arts project. He examined the photograph collection at Chicago House, Luxor, with a view to improvement of the collection here, and was able, in addition, to travel extensively in Egypt and other Near Eastern countries. Mrs. Susan J. Allen assumed his supervisory duties in this period, and her place was temporarily filled by Mr. Richard Bensel.

Mrs. Ursula W. Schneider, Photographer, Mr. Robert H. Hanson, Preparator, and Mr. Honorio R. Torres, Assistant Preparator, contin-

ued to make their valuable contributions to the work of the Museum. On June 1, 1973, a party was held to honor Mr. Hanson's fortieth anniversary of working for the Museum; he began under the first Director, Professor Breasted, in 1933.

Mr. Raymond Tindel continued his work on the conservation of the cuneiform tablet collection, and gave assistance to Mr. Hanson in addition. At his own request, and in order to devote more time to his studies, Mr. David P. Silverman left the Museum staff during the year. He was very ably replaced by Mr. Edward J. Brovanski, a fellow-student in Egyptology. Mr. Albert Leonard, Jr., Mr. Peter Steinkeller, and Mr. Robert G. Hassert assisted Miss Franke through the year with the problems of storage and organization in the collection, particularly in connection with our project grant.

We shall all very much miss the help and cheerful presence of Mrs. Linda T. Kastan, Reference Secretary, when, as expected, her husband's graduation and career will take them away from Chicago this summer.

With the temporary help of students, advances in the organization of field photographs and excavation records were made during the winter and spring. The participants were Miss Wendy Keeney, Mrs. Elizabeth Lawder, Miss Debbie Mack, Mr. Richard Bensele, Mr. Mark Ciccarello, and Mr. Lawrence Smith.

As always, the Museum is indebted, almost beyond means of expression, to the devoted efforts of the volunteer museum guides and the staff of the shop, The Sq. Under the chairmanship of Mrs. John Livingood, they continue to bring a sense of liveliness that would otherwise be hardly conceivable.