

TO THE MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE

This year as the United States celebrates its two-hundredth anniversary and the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary project its fifty-fifth, the National Endowment for the Humanities is infusing new life into the Dictionary through a grant of \$350,000 to procure more scholars to work on the project over the next three years. At the same time, the National Endowment has offered a promise and a challenge: for every dollar the Institute can raise expressly for additional dictionary aid before the end of April 1978 (up to a total of \$160,540), the Endowment will give another dollar for the dictionary. This largesse, when university finances are still generally weak, gives the Institute not only an unexpected boon, but a decided incentive to raise additional money to take full advantage of the government support.

Nor is this grant the sole extent of government assistance this year. The Hittite Dictionary project, born and kept alive for over a decade through the private efforts of Harry Hoffner, has received a three-year National Endowment for the Humanities grant of almost \$220,000 to hire staff and prepare its initial volumes for publication; Hans Güterbock will serve as co-director of the project. I. J. Gelb has been awarded a grant of almost \$140,000 jointly from the National Science Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities to prepare a Source Book on the socioeconomic history of ancient Western Asia. Robert Whiting will soon begin another NEH-sponsored project to work on the Tell Asmar tablets from Iraq (\$45,000). The Institute's Museum has also received three new grants: (a) partial support for construction of a climate-controlled Metals Storage Room (\$3,400, supplemented by matching funds through private donors), (b) \$57,000 to assist with the implementation of the Tutankhamun Exhibit while it is in Chicago (including construction of a supplementary exhibition in our own galleries), and (c) \$8,600 for hiring additional staff for conservation work.

These grants represent a significant and very welcome supplement to our regular sources of income—especially with the prospect that government funding for the Epigraphic Survey in Egypt is likely to be cut drastically or even terminated in 1977. This money will enable our staff to carry out worthy projects that they could not have otherwise undertaken or to accelerate the progress of projects already under way. But the financial help is temporary and extends to only a few of

many research efforts. To carry on all the programs to which the Institute is committed, we count on the continued help of our members and friends—especially to assist our archeological fieldwork and to publish the results of our studies.

During 1975/76, Institute expeditions once more took to the field in Egypt (Luxor), Iran (Chogha Mish), and Iraq (Nippur). In addition, Messrs. Adams and Gibson participated in the inaugural season's work in what promises to be one of the more significant field operations now planned: the systematic survey of archeological sites throughout the vast Saudi Arabian peninsula.

On June 30, I. J. Gelb formally became professor emeritus after an unparalleled forty-seven years of service with the Institute; the "emeritus" part of his new title need not be taken too literally, since he will be continuing work here actively on his socioeconomic Source Book project. A new academic staff member added during the year was Howard Berman, Research Associate on the Hittite Dictionary project.

We were all shocked and saddened by the tragic death on June 5 of Kaspar K. Riemschneider (the James Henry Breasted Research Associate, visiting from Germany and working on the Assyrian Dictionary) and his daughter, Julia, in a one-car accident in Idaho, while the family was on vacation before returning to Europe. Mrs. Riemschneider, though seriously injured, is now recovering and should be able to return home in September. A private fund to assist her has been set up through the Institute's membership office; and contributions marked "Riemschneider Fund" may be sent to Mr. Lalor here.

The following pages will tell you of the Institute's activities over the past year. As you will see, your interest and support have done much to make most of this possible. On behalf of the faculty and staff, I would like to express our gratitude for your continuing help.

July 30, 1976

John A. Brinkman
Director

Postscript. As this year's report is in press, the sad news has come of the sudden death August 30th, in Hightstown, New Jersey, of John A. Wilson, former Director of the Oriental Institute (1936-1946, 1960-1961) and Andrew MacLeish Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus of Egyptology. As successor to James Henry Breasted, Mr. Wilson kept the Institute alive through the cutbacks occasioned by the diffi-

cult depression years and World War II. Mr. Wilson's historical writings (*The Culture of Ancient Egypt*, the Egyptian section of *Before Philosophy*), his translation of Egyptian texts (especially in Pritchard's *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*), and his activities on behalf of the Egyptian monuments threatened by the construction of the Assuan dam made him the best known and most revered of America's senior Egyptologists. He will be sorely missed by his many colleagues and students. We offer our heartfelt condolences to Mrs. Wilson and their children and grandchildren.

Further Postscript. After an illness of several months, Gustavus F. Swift, Curator of the Oriental Institute Museum, died on October 1. His devoted service to the Museum over the seven years of his curatorship saw many much-needed improvements and new programs: the renovation of the Egyptian and Babylonian Halls, the beginning of the Conservation Laboratory, the initial stages of the preparation of the printed guides to the antiquities collections here, and the acquisition of the major Neo-Assyrian sculptures from the British Museum—to mention just a few examples. It is particularly sad that he was taken from us at a relatively young age. We extend our sincere sympathy to Mrs. Swift and to their family.