



The Museum

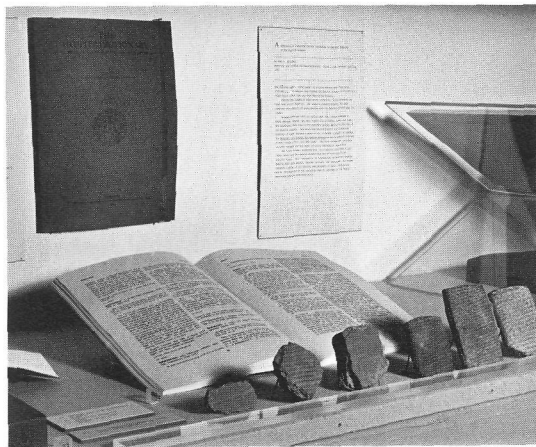
John Carswell

The past year has been an unusual, indeed exceptional, one for the Museum, faced with a greatly expanding public program and a severely limited budget, exacerbated by the fact that government support from the Institute for Museum Ser-

vices was not forthcoming. At the beginning of the year, a detailed analysis of past expenditure revealed how much money was needed for general operating support, and how much would be necessary for special projects, such as exhibitions. At the same time as drawing up long-range plans to alleviate the



*Archaeological Investigations,
Publishing The Past*



*Ancient Near Eastern Languages,
Publishing The Past*

Museum's financial situation, a solution had to be sought to the immediate problem, in order not to lose the momentum of steadily increasing public interest built up during the previous years. Museum attendance, for instance, continued to rise,

with 56,928 visitors in 1980–81—an increase of over 12% on the previous year. Here it should be stressed that the Museum is ultimately dependent on funds for general maintenance from the University; it makes no charge to the general public, and, apart from voluntary donations, has no direct revenue from visitors.

Thanks to Peggy Grant, our Volunteer Chairman, a remedy was at hand. She suggested we approach the Women's Board of the University, and what started as a request for funding our Education Program was expanded into a general appeal for the Museum as a whole. The Women's Board, under the Chairmanship of Mrs. Keith I. Parsons, responded swiftly and generously, and agreed to make the Oriental Institute Museum their major funding of University activities for the coming year. A grant of \$50,000 has allowed us to finance the Education Program for a further year, to mount a major exhibition, to improve the display of our permanent collection, and most important of all, to publish an illustrated guide to the

Museum collections. We are most grateful for this timely support.

The manuscript for a guide already existed, for the previous year Leon Marfoe had been commissioned to write just such a text, while waiting for permission to excavate in Turkey. The new guide is, incidentally, based on a little-known early work by the novelist E. M. Forster, his *Guide to Alexandria* published in 1922. In Forster's guide, each chapter is divided into two parts, the first being a historical narrative and the second a description of objects in the Alexandria Museum relating to his theme. This seemed an ideal format for our own guide, and each chapter focuses on one of the five galleries in the Museum, again with a historical background followed by a case-by-case description of the objects.

The Women's Board grant was made in January, and the target of May 17 was optimistically set for publication of the guide. This was the occasion of the annual meeting of the Board, and they had requested that it be held in the Museum. The production of the guide at

such short notice meant the necessity of a highly-organized effort on the part of all the Museum staff, and practically a minute-by-minute schedule in the Printing Department of the University. Photographs had to be specially taken, maps and charts compiled, plans drawn, and the copy checked many times. We made the deadline by exactly twenty minutes, the first two hundred copies arriving just before the Women's Board arrived. The May 17th meeting started with a lecture by the Curator in Breasted Hall, followed by refreshments in the garden (which was looking particularly resplendent), and lunch in the Museum. Afterwards the 120 or so members of the board had the opportunity to see how the Museum operates behind the scenes, watch a rerun of the 1932 Breasted movie, *The Human Adventure*, or simply try out the new guide on the spot. Mrs. Parsons wrote later that "many members of The Women's Board said the meeting at the Oriental Institute was the best they had ever attended." We were happy to be able to express our thanks so directly.

Our first exhibition of the year was *Publishing the Past*, a review of the past ten years of Oriental Institute scholarly publications. Apart from the books themselves, there were also on exhibit artifacts and materials concerned with the research leading to publication, so that some idea might be gained of the complex processes involved. The sense of reality was heightened by an automatic slide show, showing scholars hard at it in their respective offices. After that exhibition closed, we began to prepare for our major exhibit this year: tracing the continuity of man's development, from a million years or so ago to our own times, concentrating on the period immediately after the end of the last Ice Age, c. 10,000 B.C. This colossal theme draws heavily on the Oriental Institute's own contribution to the subject and particularly the pioneer surveys and excavations of Robert and Linda Braidwood. A secondary topic is the link between the University's scientific community and the archaeologists, through the development of the Carbon 14 process as a dating tool, itself a by-



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product of the first controlled nuclear reaction on campus in the 1940's.

Behind the scenes, a major step forward in the basement has been the creation of a new working space for archaeologists, made possible by the removal of a large quantity of cases and other material to storage. The vacuum created was quickly filled by scholars thirsty for space and the area is now fully operational.

Another major effort has been the reorganization of

the storage of Megiddo and related materials, under the supervision of Anita Ghaemi, Registrar, aided by Bruce Verhaaren and other volunteer helpers. Gifts were registered from James H. Breasted Jr. of a wooden Egyptian statuette, and a scarab from Mrs. Charles Potter and Mrs. James Honniwell. A special display of the statuette was arranged at the time of the annual Institute dinner. Loans were prepared for four outside institutions, and no less than 42



The new basement work space.

scholars accommodated, working on subjects as diverse as Arabic papyri, hieratic literary ostraca, and all kinds of pottery and other



Wooden Egyptian statuette, gift of James H. Breasted, Jr. (O.I. 1981.2)

material. An internship program was also established in which students from Grinnell College and the School of the Art Institute participated. Volunteers continued to make an impressive contribution to registration work. One volunteer—Lillian Cropsey—actually has three volunteers of her own, an impressive subdivision of labor!

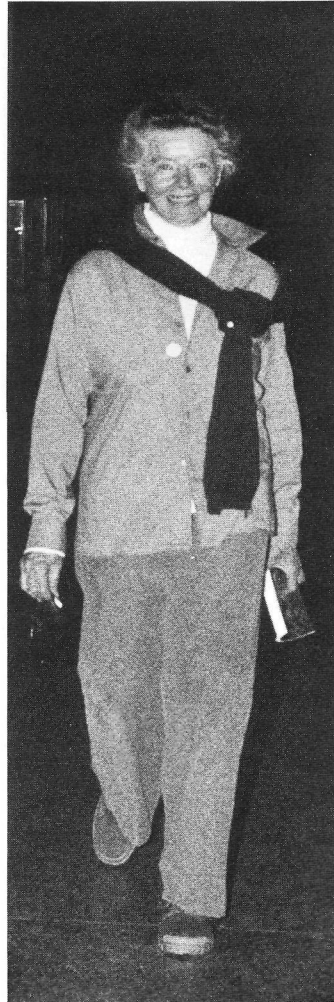
The preparatorial staff, Honorio Torres and Jim Richerson, helped by Calvin Gray, have worked very hard at a great variety of projects. Apart from exhibition preparation, they built the new workspace, a new Publications and Suq Office, new storage for OI Publications and Suq merchandise, and redecorated a number of offices. They also turned the Suq into a much more practical L-shaped area by eliminating the storeroom at the back and integrating the space into the whole. A great deal of painting and general tidying up was also carried out in the public galleries.

Jean Grant continued to cope with the enormous demands made on photographic services, and was aided by the invaluable Joseph Denov, who continues to help with his wide experience in all facets of photographic work. The photography of material for the new guidebook was highly successful, as witnessed by the handsome plates in that publication. Upstairs, the Archivist, John Larson, kept the delay in filling photographic orders down to less than six weeks, and answered innumerable

queries, accessioned new photographs, and continued refiling old negatives in acid-free containers. He was also assisted by willing volunteers. The two Museum Assistants, Joseph Greene and Samuel Wolff, at present share the same position, so both may have time for their own academic work. They have actively promoted the Museum's activities in the press and other media, supervised security and the student guards, and assisted in innumerable ways. Our Secretary, Myrna Simon, continues to perform a wide variety of tasks with humor and good sense. She has become specially skilled at fielding the unexpected, now almost a daily occurrence in the museum office.

We have had a number of distinguished visitors, of whom the most distinguished—and certainly most attractive—was Katharine Hepburn. On tour in Chicago with a new play, she was spotted walking around the Museum by Eleanor Swift. She told us she had learned about the Museum years ago, from Douglas Fairbanks, and always made a point of com-

ing to see it when in Chicago. She was particularly excited about the newly-revived Breasted film, *The Human Adventure*, which she saw no less than three times during her stay. On several visits,



Miss Katharine Hepburn, Spring, 1982

everyone was impressed by her charm, intelligence and friendly nature. Presented with a copy of the new guide, she came back next day and bought ten more! She also gave us the best publicity we have had in the press for a long while; after seeing *The Human Adventure*, she was quoted in the press as saying, "It was the experience of my life. It's a marvellous museum, and an incredible film." She ended up by bringing the entire cast of her play to see both.

Besides Miss Hepburn, we have had a number of other important visitors during the past year including Crown Prince Hassan of Jordan (particularly interested in our Bab edh-Dhra pottery); the Syrian Ambassador, H. H. Rafic Jouejati; Carlos Ponce Sangines, Director of the National Institute of Archaeology in Bolivia; Edmund Buchner, the President of the German Archaeological Institute, Berlin; and a delegation of scholars from the USSR Academy of Sciences, as well as many more visitors from far and wide.

In May, we held a four-day sale of craft goods from Morocco, *From a Moroccan*

Market, specially purchased for the occasion. This was a complete sell-out, most of it being bought on the opening night. This opening also coincided with a visit by the members of the Museum Stores Association, who were holding their annual meeting in Chicago, to see our own shop and museum. The past year also saw the publication of a new National Geographic publication, *Splendors of the Past*, to which many members of the Institute contributed. The Curator wrote the general introduction to the book, and many objects from the Museum collection were used to illustrate the work. The first printing was 350,000 and it should do much to publicize the Museum throughout the country. We also participated in *Art Chicago* on Navy Pier for the first time this year, in collaboration with Gretel Braidwood and the Membership office.

A continuing success has been our two Summer Lectures. Last summer, Lanny Bell talked about recent discoveries in Egypt, to a packed and enthralled audience, and Peter Daniels gave a fascinating and meticu-

lously researched lecture on the *other* Moritz collection—those objects purchased from Dr. Moritz in 1929 besides the more well-known bookbindings. This summer, William Mur-nane lectured on the work of the Epigraphic Survey, and Joseph Greene on his adventures surveying in Tunisia. All these lectures have been extremely well attended, demonstrating that there is an audience for this type of activity even in the heat of summer. Receptions held afterwards in the Museum garden helped to cool everyone down.

The major social event of the year was the Annual

Oriental Institute Dinner held this year in support of the Museum. Thanks to the impeccable and tasteful arrangements by Gretel Braidwood, the dinner was sold out long before the event. Mayor Jane Byrne honored the event by issuing a special proclamation declaring May 10, 1982 Oriental Institute Museum Day in Chicago. For all those who attended, it was a memorable occasion at which the spirit of our founder, James Henry Breasted, was evoked, and his great achievement in creating the present Museum just fifty years ago given the credit it justly deserves.

From a Moroccan Market.

