



The Museum

Barbara Hall

With John Carswell's decision to concentrate on his research this year and to excavate a medieval trading port in Sri Lanka this spring, I have been temporarily holding down the fort.

Although no major exhibitions have been mounted during this period, the Museum has not been quiet: the Museum staff have taken advantage of the hiatus to complete many projects and to begin new activities that were long postponed with the heavy exhibition schedule of the last few years. These have involved both the conservation, record keeping, and organization of the collection—objects, photographs and negatives, and field records—and the improvement of the facilities in the Museum and work areas.

In a building 55 years old, many of the systems need replacing or updating and broken or obsolete equipment must be replaced. Most of the basement work areas, housing the workshop, conservation laboratory, registrar's office, photographic dark-rooms and studio were never intended for uses they now serve and are badly designed and located for the functions of the modern museum. We have outgrown our space, and now must look carefully at each area to see if we can improve what we have. This has been the focus of our attention for the last year.

Fortunately, our grant application to the Institute of Museum Services was

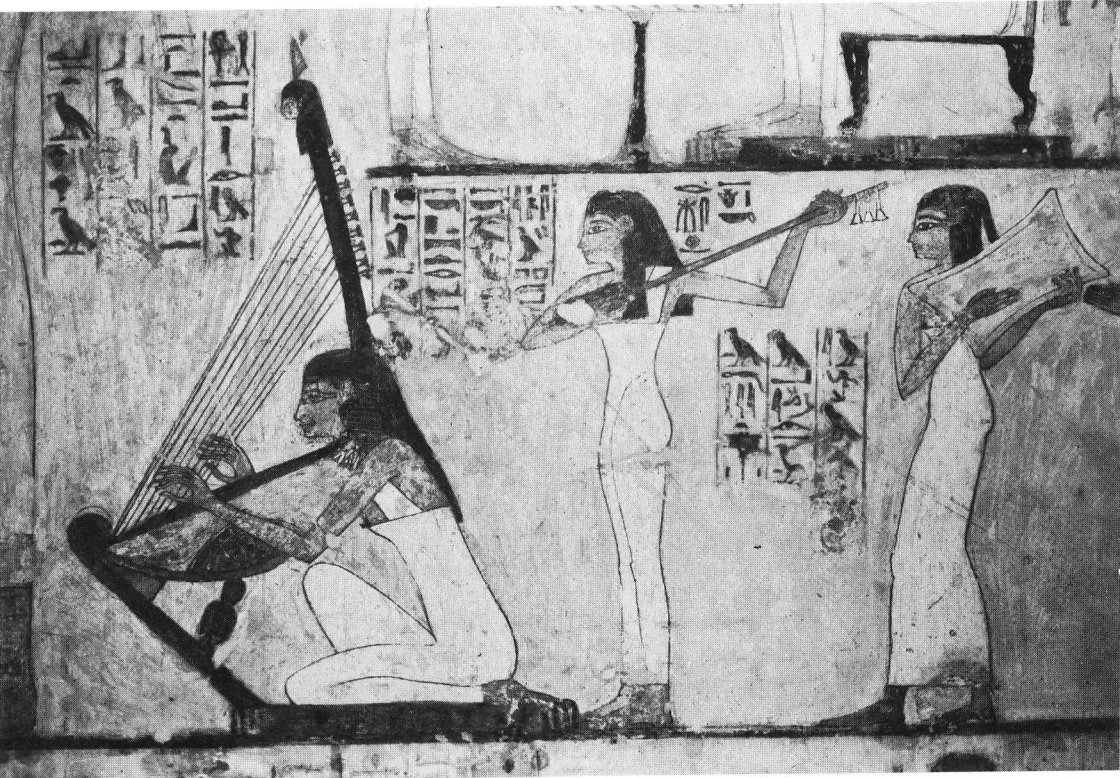
once again successful and we were awarded money for general operating support. Almost half of the IMS funds were budgeted for salaries, for extra hours for the Museum Assistant, for the employment of more Student Guards in the Museum, and for the hiring of graduate students to assist the Registrar and Archivist with their work. Other funds were allocated to buy badly needed equipment including electric typewriters, an air conditioner for the Photo archives where the heat and humidity sensitive negatives are stored, equipment for the photographic services and tools for the workshop.

In the Museum new units were added to the security system, and additional electric circuits were provided for some of the galleries where the demand for power had long exceeded the supply. Brittle and cracked wiring and old ballasts for display case lighting are being replaced by our Senior Preparator, Honorio Torres, who also built a new wheelchair ramp in the handicapped entrance after it was painted for the first time since 1930.

In the Registrar's area, desks and bookcases were added for the many visiting scholars who use our collection each year. Fluorescent lighting was installed in one section of storage completing a project begun five years ago to replace—as funds became available—the inadequate tungsten lighting in the basement work areas with better, brighter illumination. One of the

photographic darkrooms was refurbished; walls were painted, rust removed from pipes and fixtures, and new shelves and countertops were built by our Preparator, Jim Richerson. The Archaeology lab has been partially repainted and the small drawing room also refurbished. The Conservation Lab came in for its share of reorganization with additional storage cabinets being added.

This year considerable efforts have been made by John Larson towards the improvement of the Archives. The chronic lack of space has necessitated the reorganization of two storage areas, one in the Museum Office for photographs and one in the balcony above the Research archives for the archaeological field records. Larger file cabinets have been added for photographs, but since the only way to



Wall painting showing female musicians at a banquet from the 18th Dynasty Theban tomb of Vizier Rekh-mi-Re'. This photo is reproduced from a 3¼" x 4¼" color transparency original taken by Charles R. Nims in 1950 and is part of the group of 400 glass-mounted lantern slides currently being duplicated by the Museum.

expand is up, we will be adding shelves (and a tall ladder) that reach to the top of our 9'6" ceiling. Work has also begun on the conservation, organization, and consolidation of our paper archival records which are being transferred to acid-free "archival quality" folders and boxes.

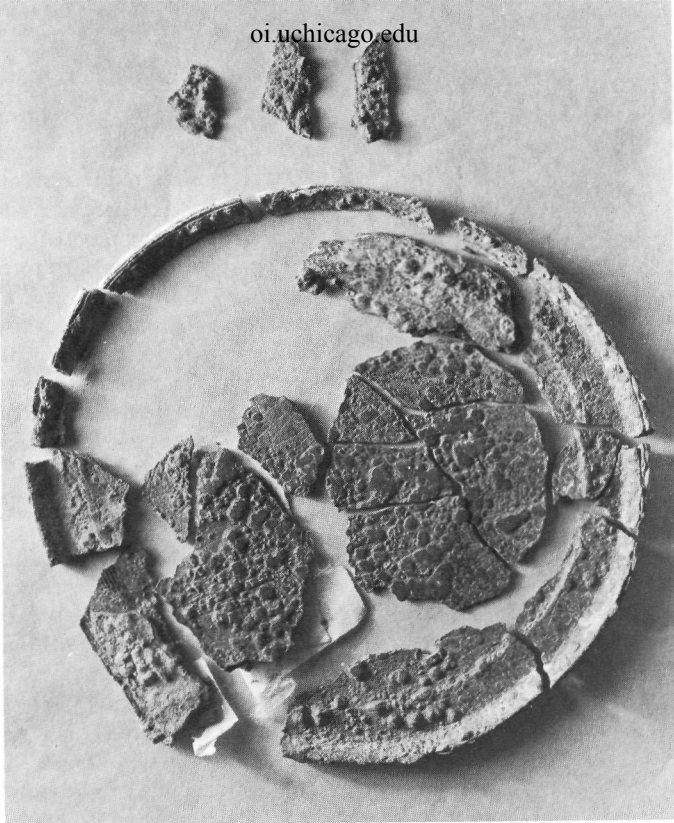
In photography, Jean Grant continued her work for both in-house and outside scholars and publishers who request new photos or copies of old photos from our collection. Joe Denov, Jean's faithful volunteer, has been continuing work on the duplication of 400 3" x 4" glass mounted lantern slides which were made in the early 1950's by Dr. Charles Nims when he served as Photographer of the Epigraphic Survey in Luxor. These color images are documentation for a number of Theban tomb paintings in the Valley of the Kings and the Tombs of the Nobles. Deterioration, vandalism, and limited access to these tombs, even for scholars, makes this group of slides even more important now than they were thirty years ago. Unfortunately, the colors of many of these transparencies are fading, and the purpose of the project is to copy the slides onto 35mm color film, color correcting each glass plate individually as one goes along. A secondary result of the project may be that we will be able to make slides of some tomb groups available for sale to interested scholars. Ultimately, we hope to copy all slides onto black and white internegatives, so that even if we cannot save the color, the image will be preserved.

Our Registrar Anita Ghaemi continued the enormous task of inventorying the collection assisted by her volunteers and graduate students. Areas targeted for completion this year include the Palestinian costumes and the pottery from Egypt, Nubia, and Megiddo. Using IMS funds, she was

able to refurbish, with acid-free materials and a fire-proof filing cabinet, the files containing the accessioning information of the collection. Anita has been investigating the various options for computerization open to the Museum, and we hope within the next year to add a unit to the Museum Office to help with word processing, accounts, and selected areas of archival and registration records. Anita has also been active in organizing a committee of faculty and staff to prepare an Emergency Plan for the Institute in case of disaster.

Each year the Museum offers internships to qualified students wishing to pursue a career in some aspect of museum work. During a 10 week period this fall, Kathy Davis from the Chicago Metropolitan Center served as a Photographic Intern. For 10 weeks during the summer, Bonnie Margulis, a graduate student in Biblical studies at N.Y.U., worked with the Registrar. And Robin Chamberlin from the University of Delaware/Winterthur Museum Conservation Program completed a year's internship in the Conservation Laboratory working on a wide variety of materials. One project involved the restoration of a bronze Etruscan mirror to be included in a corpus of Etruscan mirrors in Midwestern collections being published by a scholar from the University of Iowa. Last year's Conservation Intern Laurie Booth returned for two weeks in the summer to show Robin and myself the latest glass restoration techniques she had just learned at the Corning Glass Museum.

Among those staff members involved in extra-curricular activities were Joe Greene who traveled during the summer first to Tunisia to conduct a survey of archaeological sites in the Kaserini region and then to Cyprus to work as a site supervisor with a



University of Arizona team on the Kourion excavation. Jim Richerson went to Carthage for two months to work with John Humphries of the University of Michigan in setting up a Carthage exhibit in the local museum. Barbara Hall served on a committee appointed by the National Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Property at the request of the Getty Trust in California to determine how Getty Trust funds could best be used to aid American conservation programs. The committee made on-site visits to the three programs at the State University of New York at Cooperstown, University of Delaware/Winterthur Museum in Delaware, and The Institute of Fine Arts, N.Y.U. where they spoke to the faculty, students, and university administration. Barbara also served as

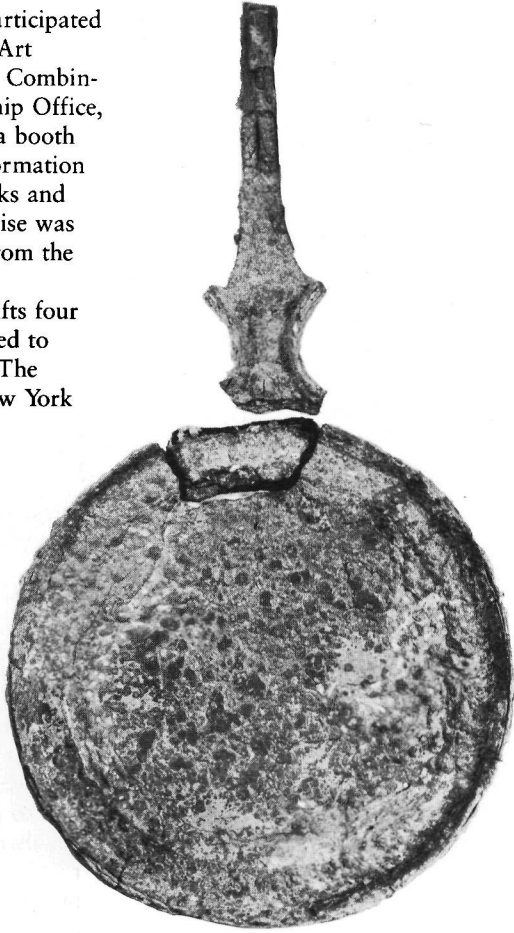
a reviewer for IMS Grants in Conservation. John Larson has been kept busy this spring and summer teaching a series of Saturday Member's Courses, the Art of Ancient Egypt and Introduction to Egyptian Hieroglyphs. Gretel Braidwood, our Membership Secretary, represented the Museum at the annual meeting of the American Association of Museums in Washington, D.C.; she participated in a seminar entitled, "Public Relations on a Shoe String".

The Christmas season brought a small exhibition in the Lobby entitled, "The Sacred Tree" which traced the use of the tree in worship throughout ancient history into modern times. The exhibit was organized by John Carswell and Joe Greene, and Robert Braidwood donated from his farm in Indiana our own sacred tree. In eastern

tradition this was decorated with colorful strips of cloth which one could purchase and tie to the tree with a small donation, in western tradition, to the Oriental Institute.

In May, with other museums in the Chicago area, the Institute participated in the Chicago International Art Exposition held at Navy Pier. Combining forces with the Membership Office, Suq, and Docents, we set up a booth to distribute membership information and take orders for guidebooks and Nefertiti posters. This enterprise was partially funded by a grant from the Illinois Art Council.

The Museum received as gifts four artifacts which we were pleased to accession into the collection: The Museums at Stony Brook, New York



Photograph of a third century B.C. Etruscan mirror before conservation by Robin Chamberlin. Large areas of the original mirrored surface are missing. (Left). The fragments were joined together with adhesive, and to provide sufficient strength to the object so that it could be handled safely, the missing areas were reconstructed with a plastic resin which was in-painted with a compatible color. (Right).



presented us with an inscribed cuneiform cone of the First Dynasty of Isin; an Ur III tablet was received from Col. C.F. Buchwald and a Hittite tablet fragment was given by Leon Pomerance; Dr. Paul Errera gave a Fatimid textile fragment. A generous donation from Elena Druskis, our retired Oriental Institute Accountant, allowed Jean Grant to purchase a Canon SLR body with a macro lens. Our slide collection,

Sacred Tree: December 1983

which is used for classroom and lecture purposes, was enriched by the donation of 105 color transparencies of Egyptian subjects sent by Swedish photographer Per-Olov W. Anderson of Stockholm in memory of his patron, the late King Gustav VI Adolf of Sweden and by a donation from Joseph Antonow enabling us to purchase 250

new 35mm color slides from other museums. Additional gifts from Albert Haas and Jill Maher have also helped to improve our slide holdings.

Two of our favorite people retired this year. Tommy Walker worked for two years as Museum Supervisor (of security) and his gracious manner at the entrance to the Museum made all visitors feel welcome. Peggy Grant, our volunteer Chairperson also retired this year. Peggy worked tirelessly for the Museum and will be greatly missed by all her friends at the Institute. Janet Helman is welcomed as her replacement and we look forward to a long association with her.

Finally, the volunteers who serve the Museum so faithfully deserve our

thanks. It is no exaggeration to say that we could not manage without their contributions of time and talents. These devoted people include Elizabeth Tieken, our pottery restorer extraordinary; Joe Denov, Ria Ahlström, and Richard Frank, M.D., in Photography; Jill Maher, Harold Rantz, and Harold Dunkel in Archives; and Diana Grodzins, Georgie Maynard, Peggy Wick, Lilian Cropsey, Laura Barghusen, Inger Kirsten, Marsha Holden, and Camilla Fano in the Registrar's Office.

Special thanks are also due to our Museum Secretary Myrna Simon, who, in addition to all her other duties, keeps our accounts straight and all of us organized.