

# The Museum

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**T**he past year has been a very busy one for the Museum. I assumed the position of Curator on September 1, 1985. The operations of a university museum are quite different from the public museums where I had previously worked. In addition, the collections are very extensive and diversified. It has taken me months to get my feet firmly planted on the ground.

The heart of any museum, however, is the same: the artifacts. The care and preservation of these precious and irreplaceable objects is the chief objective of any museum head. Therefore, my first priority has been to develop a systematic museum collections' maintenance and retrieval system. To this end I appointed Raymond Tindel as Registrar and Associate Curator with the overall responsibility of developing such a system. This immense project consists of three phases: first comes a complete physical inventory of the collections; then the entry of the registration records into a computerized database; and finally the cataloguing of various coherent groups of objects within the collections in order to provide accurate, scholarly catalogues of such material. With holdings of some 70,000 registered objects and many thousands more in research and study collections, it is a major undertaking.

All three phases are well under way. With the assistance of dedi-

cated volunteers who devote long and, in many cases, tedious hours recording every scarab, seal, flint etc., the inventory is proceeding well. We are fortunate that all these volunteers rallied around to help Ray in his new position. I especially want to thank Lilla Fano who filled in as volunteer Registrar during the transitional phase. We are fortunate also to have the assistance of Diana Grodzins, Georgie Maynard, Luciana Stefani and Peggy Wick who are working on the physical inventory. We welcome our new volunteers in registration, Leah Baer, Steve Knapp, Mila Rowton, and Irv Diamond, who is helping to develop our database program. The dean of our volunteers in the basement, Elizabeth Tieken, has spent long hours mending the multitude of sherds we have in the collection. Yvonne Seng, a specialist in Near Eastern textiles, has completed an illustrated catalogue of the Museum's Palestinian costumes and textiles. The first results are already apparent. We now have a better idea of the massive volume of our holdings.

The exhibit galleries present a great challenge. We have less than 7% of our registered objects on display and there are whole collections of glass, coins, and Islamic textiles that are not on view. Even some entire civilizations are neglected; not a single Nubian, Hellenistic or Islamic artifact is on exhibition. We



The new "Recent Acquisitions" case on view at the beginning of the Egyptian gallery.

are therefore hoping that with some internal renovation we may obtain more space.

Funding is a perpetual problem. With the loss of Institute of Museum Services (IMS) monies last year the budget was very tight, but we managed to stay in the black. This year, 1986-87, our situation has improved. A generous donor provided us with the money to hire an architect to determine our space requirements and our temperature/humidity, lighting and security needs. We were also relieved to receive an IMS grant for the maximum amount allowable. This can be spent on general operation and

will increase the effectiveness and professionalism of all phases of the Museum's operation.

My second concern has been the upgrading of the professionalism of the staff to conform to current American Museum Association requirements. To that end we hired Kimbeth Coventry as Museum Administrator and Assistant Curator. She is a museum professional with an M.A. in Museum Studies from the University of Southern California and has received several fellowships including a Getty which enabled her to work at the Getty Museum. She has also worked at the Toledo Museum of Art and Monterey Peninsula Museum of Art and is experienced in all phases of mu-

seum operations. She is a great asset to me in office administration and temporary exhibitions.

We sorely miss our former Conservator, Barbara Hall, who now works at the Art Institute of Chicago. However, we now look forward to welcoming our new Conservator, Laura D'Alessandro. She has her B.S. in Objects Conservation from the Institute of Archaeology, London. Laura has received many fellowships, including a Mellon, and has been on several excavations. She comes to us from the Bishop Museum, Honolulu, where she was an objects conservator.

Jack Kish's responsibilities were upgraded from Museum Supervisor to Security Supervisor. Together we have instituted a comprehensive study to determine our security and equipment needs. With the aid of IMS monies, we hired Steve Keller, head of security at the Art Institute of Chicago, to help us assess our needs. For the short term we have brought a security desk into the lobby to provide a focal point for providing information to visitors, and to establish an environment of professionalism. Jack has been asked to help in the planning and implementation of a Chicago area museum security network. In addition, he is a member of the Small Museum Security Association. We are also pleased to have Mr. Irving Ward as Assistant Security Supervisor.

There is a constant flow of requests for photographs from our extensive photographic archive. Jean Grant, Kim, John Larson, and I have spent many hours streamlining the system. It is encouraging to note that we have, in fact, processed thou-

sands of photographs. Jean's work, along with her photograph of the Oriental Institute Baal, was featured in an article on museum photography published in the July, 1986, issue of *Photomethods*. Jean also supervises six volunteers and one intern. Tonja Veltman photographed approximately 400 Megiddo artifacts. Joe Denov finished a two year project involving 400 Theban tomb lantern slides, while Ria Ahlström is in the process of making slides from the negatives. Richard Frank undertook the printing of many museum inventory negatives, some of which were taken by Alice Irwin. Kate Grodzins is the newest photo lab volunteer.

Museum Archivist John Larson spent the year working with six very efficient volunteers on special projects. Joan Rosenberg is working on the records from the Oriental Institute excavations at Medinet Habu. Harold Rantz worked on organizing the Epigraphic Survey collation sheets. Lilian Cropsey is in the midst of researching the history of the Oriental Exploration Fund. Kay Ginther is organizing the photographic records of the Oriental Institute's Megiddo expedition, while Kate Grodzins spent the summer inventorying and remounting 35 mm study slides. Mike Davis has been updating the record cards, and Libby Hurbanek has been typing the catalogue cards for the Megiddo scarab photographs.

Although their reports appear below I would also like to commend the diligence and professionalism of other members of the Museum staff. The Museum Education Coordinator, Joan Barghusen, and Chairman of the Volunteer Programs, Janet Helman, along with our dedicated

docents, provide one of the best museum education and guide programs in the city, and Denise Browning, the manager of the *Suq*, provides us with an exemplary store. We have also been fortunate to have had the assistance of staff outside of the Museum proper, and we offer our sincere thanks to Gretel Braidwood, Assistant to the Director, and to Bill Harms of University News and Information.

Honorio Torres maintains the appearance of the Museum galleries with his careful attention to our exhibition cases. He has also spent much of the year refinishing our fading wooden furniture.

James Richerson was unable to go to Carthage this year but hopes to in 1987. Besides his professional work in the Museum, he is an artist of increasing reputation, and some of his work has been featured in a one-man exhibition at Three Illinois Center. His artistic ability is a great asset in the development of the design of our exhibitions.

Some good personnel have gone on to other jobs. Joseph Greene and Eileen Caves went to Jordan where Joe had a post-doctoral, and are now in Cyprus on a Fulbright-Hayes fellowship. I did not have the opportunity to work with Joe, but Eileen is sorely missed, as is her replacement Judith Lee.

We mounted two temporary exhibitions this year, "The Gods of Armageddon" and "ŠALLUMMŪ: The Star with a Beak and a Tail." The first exhibition focused on our gilded Canaanite deity excavated by the Institute at Megiddo in the 1930s. It has commonly been identified with the god Baal. The exhibition also included a reconstruc-



*The central piece from the temporary exhibit "The Gods of Armageddon" was this gilded Canaanite deity excavated at Megiddo.*

tion of the temple in which the statuette was found, together with the artifacts from the 13th century B.C. level. The second exhibition, focused on the important astronomical work of Assyriologists working for the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary project. It coincided with the passing of Halley's Comet. Both exhibitions benefited from the help of the academic staff. I would especially like to thank Lawrence Stager, Dennis Pardee, Erica Reiner,

John Brinkman, and Robert Biggs.

I also want to thank Janet Johnson and the members of the Museum Committee for their continued support during this year of transition. Committee Chairman Helene Kantor has unselfishly given of her time, and McGuire Gibson, Lawrence Stager, Matthew Stolper, and Edward Wente were always ready sources of counsel.

There were many significant gifts in 1985/86. Acquisitions from private gifts are an important augmentation to our archaeological collections. They included: 1) Over thirty Demotic and Greek papyrus documents given us for study by Ms. Sarah C. Riley. Twenty are still rolled and in an excellent state of preservation. This group, when unrolled, will probably prove to constitute an archive. If so it will be one of the most significant finds of this century. 2) Eugene Chesrow has donated a black granite bust of King Senwosret (Sesostris) III. This is an exquisite piece with fine modeling and facial characteristics typical for that period of the Middle Kingdom. 3) A collec-

tion of nearly 100 objects was given to the Museum by George Hughes, some of which were originally acquired by William Edgerton. There are sixty mummy tags; a Coptic tombstone; an illustrated Coptic Testament annotated in Arabic; eighteen sherds and ostraca inscribed in Demotic and Greek; two funerary cones, one of Mermose, the Viceroy of Kush; a rosette inlay; a scarab of Tuthmosis III; various flint tools, probably from Thebes; a Roman oil lamp; a small wooden figurine of Thoth; two shawabti; and a predynastic black-topped vessel dating to Kaiser's Naqada Ic-IIa. 4) A bronze coin of Constantine I, the gift of Mr. Steven Mikhail. We are most grateful to all for their generosity.

1985-86 was a year of consolidation. 1986-87 will be much more exciting as we prepare for major temporary exhibitions. It will also see the beginning of some internal renovation supported by our exciting benefit, held in October and co-directed by Kitty and Rita Picken and Mary Shea. We shall have an account of it in the next *Annual Report*.