

THE MUSEUM

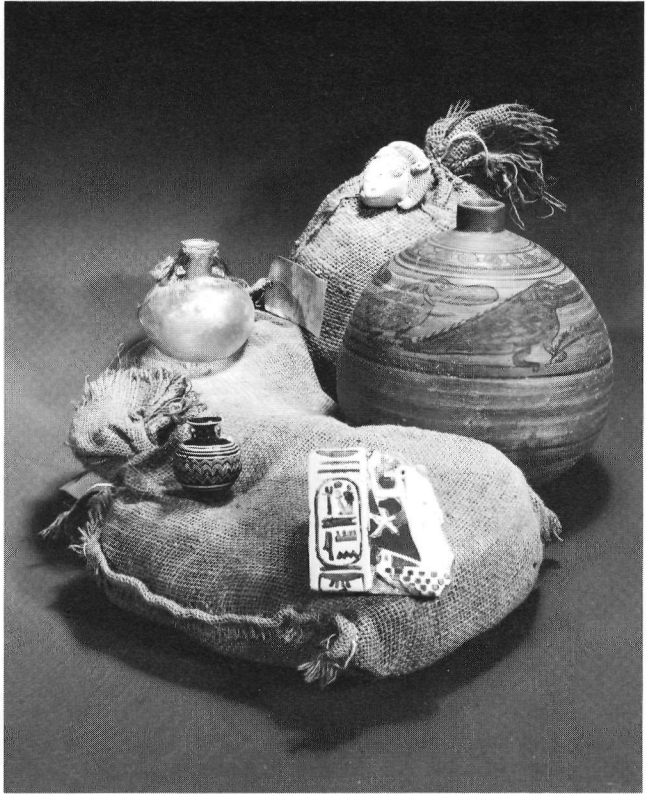
RAYMOND · D · TINDEL

1986–87 has certainly been an interesting year for the Museum, a period of high activity and major staff changes. We have lost our curator Thomas Logan to the prestigious Gibbes Art Museum in Charleston, South Carolina, where he is now director. We wish him the best of luck in his new position. However, we have also welcomed two new permanent staff members, Laura D'Alessandro as conservator and Pat Monaghan as office manager.

Our year began last summer with preparations well underway for the Museum benefit held October 21. Mary Shea and Kitty and Rita Picken chaired the project with the support of Gretel Braidwood. They organized it and recruited the numerous volunteers who wrote and mailed the invitations, solicited contributions, made jewelry, and crafted the hundreds of blue-glazed ushebtis, copied from an original in the Museum collections, which were given as favors at the event. Those who attended were encouraged to come in black-tie or costume and were treated to dining, dancing, a rug and jewelry bazaar, a silent auction, and a live auction with McGuire Gibson as auctioneer. A highlight of the evening was the performance by Kitty Picken and friends from Court Theatre. We thank you all for helping to make the Museum benefit such a spectacular success.

The night of the benefit also marked the opening of our exhibition, "The Unseen Collection: Treasures from the Basement," which remained on display until January 4, 1987. It is no secret that less than ten percent of the Museum's holdings are on display, and that thousands of important pieces are locked away in storage where few but staff and scholars get to see them. This sampling ranged from ancient glass to traditional Middle Eastern costume, and included coins from the Museum's numismatic collections and pieces of Egyptian sculpture whose significance hitherto had not been fully appreciated. Principal among the latter were a granite head of Ramesses VI and a small bronze figure of one of Egypt's Nubian pharaohs. Both of these pieces have since been incorporated into the Museum's permanent exhibits.

● A selection of objects from the exhibition "The Unseen Collection: Treasures from the Basement." Clockwise from top: OIM A17478, terracotta ram's head excavated at Çatal Hüyük, Syria; OIM 22631, decorated pottery jar excavated at Qustul, Nubia; OIM 16721, polychrome faience tile excavated at Medinet Habu, Egypt; OIM X304, polychrome core-formed glass vessel, possibly from Rhodes; OIM A30482, green glass vessel excavated at Khirbet al-Kerak, Israel.



The Institute served as host to a scholarly symposium on the Amarna Period February 1–3. In honor of this event, one of the alcoves in the Egyptian Hall was reorganized to feature the flowering of Egyptian art which took place during the Eighteenth Dynasty, in particular during the reign of the Amarna pharaoh Akhenaten.

The Museum also hosted two traveling exhibits. The first of these, March 14–April 19, was "Twenty-Five Years of Discovery at Sardis," organized by Harvard and Cornell Universities, the Corning Museum of Glass, and the American Schools of Oriental Research. There was also a symposium on Sardis held in Breasted Hall on March 25 which was organized by Eleanor Guralnik of the American Institute of Archaeology. This exhibit recalled for us fond memories of the late Dr. Gustavus F. Swift III who was long associated with these excavations before becoming curator of the Oriental Institute Museum, and we used this occasion to feature his work.

- *Cartonnage mummy mask, late first century A.D., loaned by Mr. Eugene Chesrow for the exhibition "The Unseen Collection: Treasures from the Basement."*

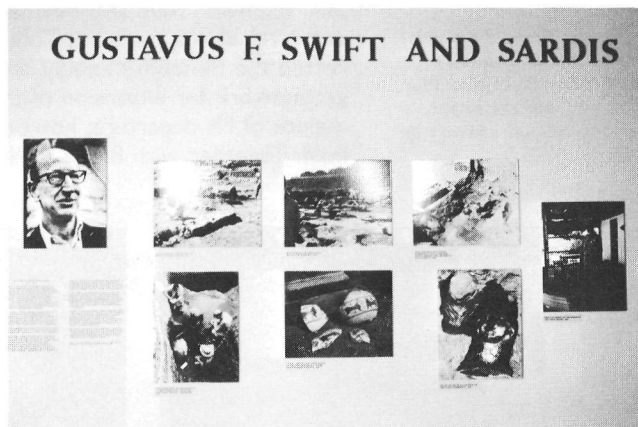


The second of these exhibits, "Site Drawings by Martyl: The Precinct of Mut at Luxor," June 1–July 26, 1987, presented the work of the prominent Chicago artist Martyl. She had been invited by The Brooklyn Museum to record her impressions of their excavations at the Mut Temple, and this experience inspired the works on display. The exhibit was celebrated with an opening reception and an intimate dinner in the galleries for supporters. We are pleased to express our appreciation to The Brooklyn Museum for having organized the exhibition, and to Allied Signal Engineered Materials Research Center, AT&T, Illinois Bell, William Drake, the Institute of Museum Services, Kraft, Inc., and Diane Legge Lohan for their local sponsorship of the exhibition. We especially want to thank the Playboy Foundation for their assistance in producing the poster for this exhibition.

Pieces from our collections have also been displayed in exhibits at other institutions over the past year. Thirty-three of the Museum's finest pieces were lent to the Art

Institute of Chicago for the exhibition, "The Art of the Fertile Crescent: Masterpieces from the Oriental Institute Museum," November 11–February 22, which opened with an introductory lecture by Curator Tom Logan. We wish to thank the Art Institute for this opportunity to bring our collections to the attention of a new and wider audience. We have also made major loans to museums in Memphis, Tennessee, for exhibits co-ordinated with the visit of the Ramesses II exhibition to that city; seventy objects were lent to the Memphis Pink Palace Museum and twenty-two pieces to the Mississippi River Museum. Closer to home, fifty-seven pieces from our Nubian collection were exhibited February 1–28 at Oak Woods Cemetery in "Nubia: Its Glory and Its People," celebrating Black History Month.

- *The Oriental Institute Museum's supplement to the traveling exhibition "Twenty-five Years of Discovery at Sardis," in memory of Gustavus F. Swift III.*



In addition to these rather major efforts, we can also report a number of additional successes and projects completed. The Khorsabad panel in the Assyrian Hall has been completed, thanks to major assistance from Peggy Grant. An exhibit featuring Thomas McClellan's excavations at el-Qitar in Syria was prepared for the occasion of the Institute's Annual Members' Dinner. A minor reorganization of the Iranian Hall displays is currently underway, under the supervision of Helene Kantor and we hope soon to have our Cypriot exhibit completed. The Museum welcomed visitors on the University's Alumni Day on November 8 with behind-the-scenes tours of storage, work, and research areas, and a reception in the galleries hosted by University of Chicago President Hanna Gray.

The Museum's modest operating budget received a substantial subvention during 1986–87 in the form of a grant from the Institute of Museum Services. It supported our temporary exhibits and paid for plans for a new alarm system. Thanks to the grant we could hire Karen Bradley for a year as assistant registrar. It also paid for the design of the Museum's new brochure and made it possible for the Education Office to buy two new films. Also, thanks to the grant, Kim Coventry was able to attend the annual meetings of the American Association of Museums in San Francisco, Jack Kish was able to attend a Smithsonian Institution workshop in Washington, D.C., on museum security, James Richerson was able to attend a Smithsonian workshop on museum lighting, and I was able to attend a Smithsonian workshop on computerizing registration records.

- *General view of the exhibition "Site Drawings by Martyl: The Precinct of Mut at Luxor," and the acrylic painting entitled Sakhmet by Martyl.*

Staff members have also been busy with individual projects and areas of responsibility. Tom Logan, our curator, directed the Museum's exhibit and loans programs, and did groundwork for expansion of the Museum. As a consequence of his departure, however, the latter is now on hold. Together with Bruce Williams he has authored an



article on an unusual Syrian figurine excavated by the Institute at Megiddo. The article will appear shortly in *The Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, reviving the series "Museum Notes."

In the registry we have made great progress with the physical inventory of the collections and the computerization of our registration records. We are very much indebted to AT&T for their donation of an AT&T 6300 computer, and to all of the volunteers who have carried both of these projects along. Debbie Aliber, David Anderson, Leah Baer, Rebecca Binkley, James Bodefied, Lilian Cropsey, Irv Diamond, Lilla Fano, Leila Foster, Di Grodzins, Steve Knapp, Georgie Maynard, Carmen McGarry, Barbara Ramlo, Mila Rowton, Lillian Schwartz, Luciana Stefani, Rose Wagner, and Peggy Wick have spent long hours checking locations, writing shelf lists, correcting records, and entering records into the computerized database. It is a tribute to their thoroughness that we have found objects missing since the 1920's. I have also been very fortunate to have the aid of assistant registrars Karen Bradley and Frank Yurco. Karen, *inter alia*, has registered thousands of palaeolithic Egyptian flints and begun to put our loan records in order. Frank is in charge of our subsidiary research files and has helped greatly in preparing loans.

Kim Coventry, Museum administrator and assistant curator, contributed to the success of the exhibitions listed above, and has had major successes in publicizing the Museum's activities. Thanks to her efforts "The Unseen Collection" and the Martyl and Sardis exhibits were all covered extensively by the local media. Pieces from "The Unseen Collection" were featured in the fall issue of *The University of Chicago Alumni Magazine*. The Martyl exhibit was reported nationally by the Associated Press and will be the subject of a feature article in the fall issue of *Aramco World Magazine*. The Museum also received coverage on WBBM television and on WFMT radio with Harry Borrás and has received first-time coverage in media as diverse as *Crain's Chicago Business* and *Midwest Gallery Guide*. We are indebted to Bill Harms of the University's News and Information Office for his assistance with our publicity efforts. Kim supervised the design and production of the new Museum brochure which will appear shortly; many thanks to John Mahtesian and Joan Barghusen for their help with the photography and text. Kim is currently cataloguing the Museum's glass collection.

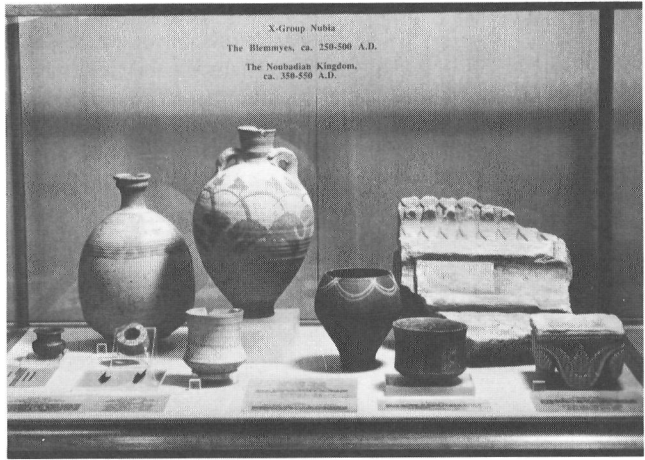
In addition to its conventional functions, the Museum is a major research facility. As such, it houses the Institute's record and photographic archives which are in the charge of Museum archivist John Larson. He answers numerous requests by scholars and publishers for information from these archives and he also does much of the basic research for exhibits and collections management. In the management of the archives he has been assisted over the past year by volunteers Hertsell Conway, Kay Ginther, Kate Grodzins, Joan Rosenberg, Jesse Sheidlower, and Rose Wagner. Kay is involved in a long-range project sorting and cataloguing some 11,000 Megiddo field negatives. Joan is reconstructing from scattered records a field catalog of objects which the Institute excavated at Medinet Habu; their original catalogue was destroyed in Germany during World War II. Kathryn Almy, an intern from Kalamazoo College in Michigan, worked as a volunteer on special projects in the archives from April to June. Kathryn also worked on the inventory of Museum's numismatics collections under the supervision of Kim Coventry.

It is the Museum preparator Honorio Torres who is responsible for the care and appearance of the galleries. He assists with the myriad other tasks which are required to keep the Museum functioning, and had a major hand in installing the Nubian exhibit at Oak Woods Cemetery.

The Museum's security supervisor Jack L. Kish has been constantly upgrading our security procedures and Museum attendant training and has maintained active liaison with Chicago Fire Department and professional museum security associations. Over the past year he supervised a review of the Museum's security systems and procedures by Steven Keller and Associates, consultants on museum security. We hope to implement some of their recommendations over the course of the current year. Jack's increasing reputation within the field of museum security led to his being asked to join the Art Institute as supervisor of its security training program. We wish him the best of luck in his new position.

Jean Grant's progress, as the Museum's photographer, is measured over the course of the year in hundreds of photographs taken and thousands of prints developed. She carefully documents all Museum objects which go out on loan—more than 2,000 prints last year. Well over a thousand more were printed for upcoming Oriental Institute publications, and some 1200 copy negatives were made of an important collection of documentary aerial photos. In addition, there are the numerous scholarly and publication

- Pottery vessels and carved stone architectural fragments excavated by the Oriental Institute's Nubian Expedition in the exhibition "Nubia: Its glory and its people," held at Oak Woods Cemetery, Chicago.



photos which she makes either from objects in our collections or from negatives in our archives for users all over the world. Her photograph of the Museum's Assyrian relief A7363 was chosen by President Gray for her official 1986 Christmas card. All of this would scarcely be possible without the assistance of her capable volunteers, Ria Ahlström, Joe Denov, and Kate Grodzins. Jean also took part in the Fort Dearborn–Chicago Camera Club project to celebrate Chicago's sesquicentennial, in which approximately 100 photographers recorded "tomorrow's history today" by making a photographic record of the city over 24 hours, June 27–28, 1987.

As exhibit designer and coordinator James Richerson had primary responsibility for installing the Museum's exhibits during this very active year. In addition he also assisted in installing the Museum's masterpieces in "Art of the Fertile Crescent" exhibit at the Art Institute of Chicago, helped with the Nubia exhibit at Oak Woods Cemetery, and worked with Denise Browning to set up a satellite of the *Suq* at Harper Court over the Christmas sales season. He designed and erected the Museum's booth for the Chicago International Exposition at Navy Pier, which also featured the University's Smart Gallery and Renaissance Society. We very much appreciate the volunteers who manned the booth and helped make it a success. Jim also attended a workshop on computer graphics at the Art Institute of Chicago and he continues to win recognition as an artist; his work "Painted Women" took Second Prize out of 1092 pieces submitted in the 1987 Whirlpool Foundation Sculpture Exhibition.

Pat Monaghan came to work for the Museum in October as part-time secretary; it is a tribute to her initiative and comprehensive abilities that she was promoted soon thereafter to office manager. As such, she has filled a major gap in our organizational structure. She manages the Museum's operating budget, supervises Museum rentals (Breasted Hall, the galleries, etc.,) and takes care of many of the administrative functions which are required by daily operations of the Museum and Institute. Thanks to her efforts our aging and temperamental slide projectors in Breasted Hall have been replaced with two new machines, and there is also a new lens on the movie projector so that films now fill the screen. She is capably assisted by Margaret Schröder and volunteer Harold Dunkel.

Laura D'Alessandro, the Museum's new conservator, joined the staff last November. She is responsible for the physical condition of the collection. She has to stabilize, prepare condition reports, and assist in packing the objects which are loaned to other museums. She also cleans and prepares objects for photography or exhibit in the Museum. Since her arrival she has worked on more than 150 pieces. Because she was particularly distressed by the deterioration of the organic materials in our collections, she wrote an application to the Institute for Museum Services for a grant to create a climate-controlled organics storage room in a portion of the Institute basement. Her application has been successful, and we look forward to reporting to you next year on the installation of this facility. Also during the past eight months she has served as courier for our loans to the museums in Memphis, Tennessee, and supervised assistants Augusta McMahan and Margaret Schröder in the preparation of cuneiform tablets for return to Iraq.

Those of us on the staff are continually reminded of how much we owe the many who volunteer time to the Museum. There are those who, like Elizabeth Tieken, have been working here for decades; there are others who have come to us only this summer. The volunteers do everything from clerical work in the Museum Office, to cleaning in the galleries, to inventorying the collections. Thanks to the volunteers we have an exemplary guide and education program and an efficient and profitable gift shop. I do not know what we would do without them.

The Museum continues to receive donations to its collections from its friends and supporters. Notable this year were the items of Egyptian jewelry from Mrs. Mildred

Othmer Peterson, and a collection of amulets from Mr. Jack Beem.

Looking to the future, the Chicago summer of 1987 has persuaded us forcefully that the Museum must have climate control. There is no other single step that we could undertake which would help more to preserve our collections and make the Museum more useable. There is probably no other museum in North America of this stature and with collections of this importance which has not already taken this step. Chicago's temperature and relative humidity fluctuate dramatically throughout the year. This causes the salts which permeate many of our artifacts to crystallize, often with disastrous results; limestone reliefs flake and crumble and the surfaces sluff off of decorated pottery. The humidity also helps cause bronzes to develop bronze disease and promotes the growth of mold and fungus in organic materials. It is distressing to realize that some important pieces in our collections have deteriorated more during their few decades in our custody than in the preceding thousand years of stable aridity in the Near East. We are currently getting estimates and developing plans. Generous donors have given us seed money for the project. Thanks to Kim Coventry's successful application, we have received a matching grant from the National Endowment for the Arts that will help with the architectural and engineering plans. Your aid and support in the coming months will be greatly appreciated. We shall report to you on our progress next year.

In our last report to you, we were looking forward optimistically with plans for renovation and expansion. This year we are looking forward to the selection of a new curator. At the time of this writing a committee of Oriental Institute faculty is engaged in the search for someone to fill this position, and by the time you read this report, the decision will have been made. Watch for further developments.