

*The Museum**Raymond D.  
Tindel*

**W**e are pleased to announce that, as of August 15, 1988, the Museum has a new curator, Karen L. Wilson. She was chosen by the faculty after an

exhaustive study of the Museum, its function within the Institute, and its responsibilities to the public and the scholarly community. Karen holds her Ph.D. from New York University where she specialized in Mesopotamian archaeology. She has worked extensively in the Near East, in particular in Iraq, Iran, and Egypt. Most recently she was curatorial co-ordinator at the Jewish Museum in New York. We welcome her to the Oriental Institute Museum.

▼ 1988 also brought the retirement of senior preparator Honorio Torres after twenty years of service to the Oriental Institute. He was not only senior preparator but the senior member of the staff overall. We extend to him our congratulations, best wishes, and thanks for all he has done for the Institute.

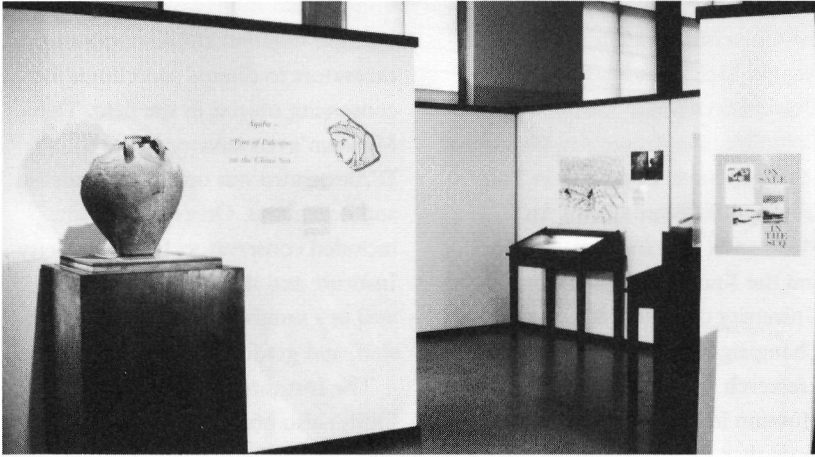
Our new preparator is Philip Petrie who comes to us from the Alexander Milliken Gallery in New York. Phil has a B.A. in history from the University of Rhode Island and a M.F.A. in painting from Ohio University. He works with Jim Richerson in the maintenance of the galleries and the production of exhibits. His duties are myriad, ranging from the daily cleaning of exhibits and the repair of the seats in Breasted Hall, to the movement of fragile artifacts. He is a welcome addition to the Museum staff. ▼ We reported last year that the Museum's veteran security supervisor Jack Kish had departed for the Art

Institute of Chicago where he now supervises its security training program. Our new security supervisor is John Kirulis. Since his arrival the security attendants have been equipped with walkie-talkies to facilitate supervision and to improve communication in case of an emergency. During this past year John has also attended a security workshop at the Art Institute. He is currently working with the Chicago Museum Security Group to set up a city-wide co-operative task force to cope with emergencies. ▼ Exhibits this year featured Oriental

Institute research. Exhibit designer and co-ordinator Jim Richerson and Martha Roth organized a display of Mesopotamian household and dowery items to complement Martha's Oriental Institute Members' lecture on Babylonian family law. Jim and Ray Johnson arranged a display to go with Ray's summer lecture on his research on Amenhotep III. ▼

Together with the Membership Office, the Museum presented a special display on the Oriental Institute's excavations at Nippur. It opened in May in conjunction with the the annual Members' Dinner. 1988

*The Oriental  
Institute  
1987-1988  
Annual Report*



*View of the exhibit,  
Aqaba - "Port of Palestine on the  
China Sea."*

marks the one hundredth anniversary of American excavations at Nippur and the fortieth year since the Oriental Institute began work there. The display, produced by Jim and Mac Gibson, contrasted the excavation techniques of the nineteenth century, where hundreds of workmen moved mountains of earth in search of artifacts, with the more finely honed methods of the present where all data is meticulously analyzed and computers aid archaeologists in the reconstruction of past cultures. Nippur objects on permanent exhibit were highlighted. Two brochures accompanied the exhibit, one prepared by Mac and one by Joan Barghusen. We thank Augusta McMahon for her help in producing the display.

The Museum's major exhibit for the year was *Aqaba - "Port of Palestine on the China Sea,"* featuring Don Whitcomb's current excavations

at that site. Don's work has concentrated on the new Islamic town which was built at Aqaba alongside the older Roman-Byzantine city shortly after the Islamic conquest. It flourished down until the time of the Crusades, drawing commerce, as the title of the exhibit suggests, even from as far away as China. Don's excavations have revealed a city gate and parts of the town plan. These were featured in the exhibition along with some 200 objects from the excavations. The exhibit was curated by Don and designed and erected by Jim. At the end of its venue at the Institute it goes to Jordan for permanent installation. Don provided a booklet on the site and Joan Barghusen produced a brochure to go with the exhibit.

The Museum has also lent objects for display over the past year to a number of other museums, including The Art Institute of Chicago, the

Museum of Art and Archaeology of the University of Missouri at Columbia, the McKissick Museum of the University of South Carolina at Columbia, the Kresge Art Museum at Michigan State University in East Lansing, the Birmingham Art Museum in Birmingham, Alabama, and the Krannert Art Museum of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The Museum also made a research loan to the University Museum in Philadelphia. In total, more than fifty objects were involved.

For the fifth year, the Museum, the Renaissance Society, and the David and Alfred Smart Gallery shared a display booth at the Chicago International Art Exposition at Navy Pier. We are particularly grateful to the volunteers who staffed it and helped to publicize the Institute.

The Institute was host to a workshop sponsored by the Getty Conservation Institute on "Conserva-

tion in Field Archaeology." It brought together conservators and excavators to discuss procedures for conserving objects in the field. The Museum's conservator Laura D'Alessandro was one of the panelists and organizers. Other participants included conservators from the Getty Institute and the Field Museum as well as a number of Institute faculty, staff, and graduate students.

The Institute and the Middle East Center also hosted the annual meetings of the American Research Center in Egypt. By all accounts the meetings went very smoothly, due in large part to the preparation and supervision of museum office manager Pat Monaghan.

Pat, incidentally, is one of those people who hold the Museum and



*Exhibit marking the one hundredth anniversary of American excavations at Nippur and the fortieth year since the Oriental Institute began excavating there.*



the Institute together. She manages the Museum's operating budget, rentals, and purchasing, helps us develop budgets for grant applications and, when the application is successful, monitors the funds. She also co-ordinates the maintenance of the Institute building. She has done much of the research and writing for the climate-control project, about which more in due course. She is assisted by secretary Margaret Schröder and volunteer Harold Dunkel.

**B**ehind the scenes, we at last have some real progress to report on climate control. Thanks to a successful grant application written by Laura D'Alessandro, we received a grant from the Institute of Museum Services to install climate-controlled storage for the Museum's organic collections. Much of our time and effort this year has gone into the preparation of this new facility. The area of the basement under the Persian Hall has been walled off, cleaned, painted with vapor-barrier paint, and outfitted with equipment which will maintain stable conditions of 68° Fahrenheit and 50% relative humidity year-round. Recording hygrothermographs provide a round-the-clock record of temperature and humidity. The installation was carried out under the supervision of Lynn Bender, Mitchell Goldman, Bernard Krawczyk, and James Garcia of the University Office of Physical Planning and Construction, and we are most grateful for their assistance.

The installation of the new organics room also required a major reorganization of the Museum's artifact storage area. Laura and assistant curator Kim Coventry are in the process of repacking the organic objects in clean, archival storage materials preparatory to moving them into the new storage area. Meanwhile, those of us who work in the registry, staff and volunteers, undertook the massive chore of reorganizing the storage of the Mesopotamian and Egyptian collections. The Mesopotamian collection had to be removed, piece by piece, from what had become the new organics room, each object identified, a new location found for it, and its records updated. To make room for the Mesopotamian collection, most of the Egyptian pottery and stone also had to be relocated. Thousands of palaeolithic flints, hundreds of ushebtis and small statues, countless pots, and a few dozen very heavy pieces of stone relief all had to be moved.

As a part of the organics room project, Jim and Phil have installed an industrial dust extractor for the preparations shop. It vacuums up the sawdust and shavings produced by the shop's saws, sanders, planers, etc. As a result the whole basement area will be cleaner.

The organics room is only a first step. The next step is to get air conditioning and climate control for the entire Institute - galleries, work

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areas, offices, classrooms. It is a pleasure to report progress on this front. Director Janet Johnson has formed a climate-control committee consisting of Gretel Braidwood, Kim Coventry, Laura D'Alessandro, Pat Monaghan, and me; Karen joined the group upon her arrival. Preliminary planning for the project is already well underway; faculty and staff have been interviewed, the broad outlines of the project have been sketched, and a basic case statement has been prepared to justify the project. We visited a number of other institutions, such as the Newberry Library and the Deering Library at Northwestern University, to see how they had coped with similar situations. At the behest of the University administration the consultant firm of Grumman, Butkis, and Associates has been retained to undertake a feasibility study and prepare preliminary specifications and cost estimates. We have been assisted throughout by the University Development Office, in particular by Doug Twells, Gary Messinger, Marianne Briscoe, and Margaret O'Dell; and by the Office of Physical Planning and Construction. Watch for further developments.

In other matters conservatorial, the Museum has received a grant from the Institute for Museum Services, thanks to the efforts of archivist John Larson, Pat Monaghan, and Laura D'Alessan-

dro, which will provide for a survey of the Museum's photographic archives and a comprehensive plan for their conservation and storage.

Laura rounded out her year with a number of lectures and conferences. She attended, *inter alia*, the Jubilee Conference on conservation at the Institute of Archaeology in London and the annual meeting of the American Institute of Conservation in New Orleans. She lectured the Oriental Institute membership on "Conservation Concerns at the Oriental Institute." In between, she processed over eighty objects and supervised volunteer assistants Mitchell Merbeck, Debbie Schwartz, and Edward Driggers.

The Museum's activities have been publicized by Kim Coventry who placed feature or special highlight stories in a number of local and national publications. A story on the Aqaba exhibit appeared in the *Chicago Tribune* and the exhibit was highlighted in *Archaeology Magazine* and the *American Schools of Oriental Research Newsletter*. The Museum was also featured in *Shell Update Magazine*, "Weekend Update Plus" of the *Chicago Sun-Times*, the *Daily Herald*, and the *Post-Tribune*. Kim also produced a new four-color brochure on the Museum, of which nearly 15,000 have already been distributed. When not involved with publicity, she has been cataloguing the Museum's glass and repacking the organics collections. She also



*A fragment of a lustre ware bowl, showing a man with a turban, made in Fatimid Egypt during the 10th or 11th century and found at Aqaba. Below the fragment is a modern copy of a lustre ware plate showing how the medieval bowl might have appeared. The drawing on the sherd was used as a logo for the Aqaba exhibit.*

presented a paper on professionalism in university museums at the annual meeting of the American Association of Museums in Pittsburgh and has completed a certificate course on collections care and management funded by the Bay Foundation at the Art Institute of Chicago.

In the registry work has continued this year on the physical inventory of the collections and on the computerization of the Museum's collections management records. The inventory is now approximately 80% complete, and data has been entered for more than half of the Egyptian collection of some 30,000 objects. Data entry has been facilitated by the purchase of an additional IBM computer and printer. We have been fortunate this past year to have the capable assistance in the

registry of Frank Yurco and David Anderson, along with an excellent group of volunteers: Debbie Aliber, Rebecca Binkley, Irv Diamond, Cliff Dossel, Thorin Evans, Lilla Fano, Margaret Foorman, Leila Foster, Di Grodzins, Betty Harre, Steve Knapp, Georgie Maynard, Barbara Ramlo, Lillian Schwartz, and Peggy Wick. Together they have kept up the inventory, reorganized storage for the organics room, found lost objects, gathered material for visiting scholars, processed loans, and cleaned dusty storage cabinets. They have spent many hours typing data into the computers and kept all the innumerable lists, records, and files involved with managing the collections of the Oriental Institute Museum.

John Larson divides his time among the eternal demands of managing the Institute's archives of photographs and expedition field records. He also has the assistance of an dedicated group of volunteers, several of whom - Hertsell Conway, Lilian Cropsey, Kay Ginther, Kate

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 Grodzins, and Joan Rosenberg - are now experienced hands. A major concern is the deterioration of many of the older photographs and negatives. Hertsell has been busy resleeving negatives in new, archival-quality envelopes, separating out deteriorating specimens to avoid chemical contamination of sound negatives. Kay is computerizing the records of the Megiddo photographic archive while Kate has been sorting and repairing the Museum's ever-expanding 35 mm slide collection. An additional IBM computer has been purchased for use in the archives, which will facilitate the computerization of the archives photographic records. Meanwhile, Joan continues her work reorganizing and cataloguing the surviving records of the Institute's excavations at Medinet Habu, on which see her article in

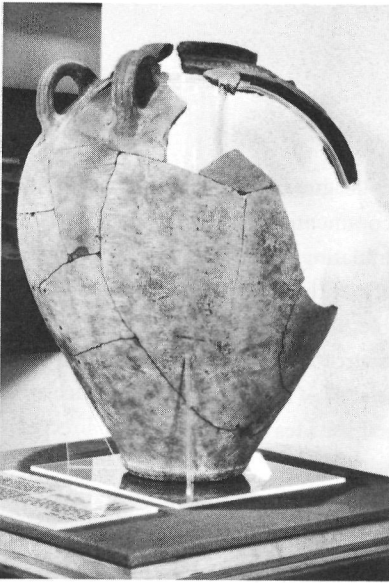
*News & Notes* no. 110 (September-October, 1987). John also had the assistance over a briefer period of Kuo Chien-Hui who registered new photographs and negatives, and of Chris Urban. Chris, a former student in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, has produced a finding aid for the field records for the Institute's Diyala excavations as a part of an archives course at Rosary College.

**A**s keeper of the Institute's excavation records, John also makes them available to visiting scholars. Among those who came this year were Graham I. Davies of Cambridge University, who came to work with the Megiddo records, and Ann Gunter of the Sackler Gallery at the Smithsonian Institution, who came to consult John on the records of Ernst Herzfeld, first director of the Institute's excavations at Persepolis. Other visiting scholars included

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*Jars, juglets, and sherds from the site of Aqaba. The center jar is inscribed on the bottom in pen and ink with a magical inscription in Aramaic.*





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*A large storage jar, excavated from the site of Aqaba, typical of the 11th century but with block impressions imitating Chinese inscriptions.*

Ziony Zevit from California, Douglas Haller from the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania, and David Kennedy of Sheffield, England.

John's scholarly activities have been diverse this year. He spoke on the Pharaoh Akhenaton at the Institute's "Amarna Symposium," chaired a session at the annual meeting of the American Research Center in Egypt, lectured to the docents and to participants in John A. Brinkman's summer seminar, and served as the Museum's ready reference on all matters Egyptological.

As a major research center, the Oriental Institute receives dozens of requests each year for photographs of objects in the collections or prints from excavation negatives. These are the province of the Museum's photographer Jean Grant. Requests came from near and far, ranging from the Sunday School Board, the

*Chicago Tribune*, and the University of Minnesota, to scholars and museums in Berlin, Paris, and Cairo. She has printed stacks of site photos from Megiddo, Tell Agrab, Aqaba, and dozens of object photos for loans and scholarly requests. She has also undertaken the mammoth project of copying the Institute's substantial collection of some 14,000 lantern slides to modern 35 mm slides. These lantern slides are a major resource for reference and teaching, but are difficult to use because of their obsolete format. They will be much more accessible in 35 mm. Much of the work for this project falls on her capable volunteers, particularly Joe Denov, as well as Ria Ahlström, Kate Grodzins, Gregory Braswell, Carol Johnson, Adam Nadel, and David Deckert.

This coming year should see further progress in several areas. There will certainly be developments in the Institute's air conditioning and climate control project, and now that the Museum has a permanent curator, we can begin to make some longer-range plans. We look forward to the coming year.