

RESEARCH ARCHIVES

Charles E. Jones

84

► SCHOLARSHIP

In June 1990 we installed in the Research Archives an integrated computer-based library management system. The primary function of the system is the production of an on-line catalogue of the library collections of The Oriental Institute, and the management of acquisitions and serials. Because most of the published material acquired by the Research Archives is produced by small, mostly European, academic presses which do not participate in national or international pre-publication cataloguing programs, we in the Research Archives are obligated to catalogue each item independently. Over the years we have developed a fairly sophisticated list of cross-referencing rubrics, and have worked out a clearly defined system of cataloguing. With the implementation of an on-line catalogue we are in a position to expand substantially the detailed analysis of our holdings. In addition to simple author, title, or series searches, we now are able to perform complicated key-word and context searches of the data base. Ultimately we will be able to produce complete topographical bibliographies; text name and lexical lemma lists; and subject, author, chronological, and retrospective bibliographies. The catalogue will be of fundamental importance as a research tool in The Oriental

Institute, and in the international scholarly community. By mid-September, 1990, we had processed 5061 records which represent our acquisitions since August 1987, and a substantial portion of our basic Egyptological collection. Working in concert with our colleagues at Chicago House in Luxor, we expect to have the majority of the Egyptological collections of the Epigraphic Survey Library and of the Research Archives on-line in short order. An added benefit of our collaboration with the Epigraphic Survey will be the availability of both library catalogues in each location.

During the past year we have expended considerable effort on the production and distribution of the *Research Archives Acquisitions List*, and the compilation and production of additional library materials e.g.:

Appendixes to the Research Archives Acquisitions List

Research Archives Serials List

*Periodicals Currently Received By the Research Archives -
Oriental Institute*

*Research Archives of The Oriental Institute: Introduction and Guide
Abbreviations of Serials and Periodicals (Near and Middle East
and Classics)*

*Dissertations on the Ancient Near East in Preparation -
A Preliminary Listing*

(all of which are available in 'final' form).

We have also initiated a series of long-term bibliographical projects and concomitant databases. Included among these are:

*The University of Chicago Dissertations on the Near and Middle East
Dissertations on the Ancient Near East*

Festschriften for Scholars of the Ancient Near East

*Bibliographical Sources and Resources for the Study of the
Ancient Near East*

Directory of Scholars in Ancient Near Eastern Studies.

Tools such as these provide an extremely important adjunct to the direct responsibilities of the Research Archives to The Oriental Institute community. They provide scholars with useful information, considerably simplifying the process of research and reference, and they provide an essential link with the extramural scholarly community. Our *Research Archives Acquisitions List* (the six lists produced in 1989-1990 include 208 pages of bibliography), in particular, is now well established as one of the primary bibliographic tools for the study of the ancient Near East.

We continue to entertain a broad range of visiting scholars who come to Chicago for varying periods of time to make use of the facilities of the Research Archives. The editors of several periodicals, and the editorial staff of a number of publishing concerns, make regular use of our facilities to check reference and illustration citations in their manuscripts.

With the arrival of our new Director, and with the planning for the future needs of The Oriental Institute, planning for the physical and fiscal needs of the Research Archives is being consolidated within a general plan. It remains my goal to establish the fiscal independence of the Research Archives. With this in mind, I would like to mention a few sobering (if not frightening) thoughts. Because most of the published material on the ancient Near East is imported, we are dependent on the fluctuating rates of exchange; in recent years these fluctuations have been to our detriment. It is now routine for a book to cost more than one hundred dollars; it is not unusual for a book, or a periodical subscription to cost three times that price. We cannot expect prices to go down in the foreseeable future, nor can we reasonably expect the economic climate and exchange rates to improve. Because of these and other difficulties it is remarkable that we are able to maintain the level of acquisitions reflected in the statistics which follow. The last four years have shown an extraordinarily consistent yearly increase in our collections. It is only through the competence, generosity and cooperation of the other departments of The Oriental Institute, and the generosity of members and friends that we are able to maintain the Research Archives at its current high standard of accomplishment. One of the more unfortunate results of the skyrocketing cost of books is that is no longer possible for us to do blanket purchasing of older material to fill the lacunae in our collections or to trim down our "want-list". For this reason, donations of books on the ancient Near East become particularly important. We are frequently able to negotiate exchanges of older material which duplicates our holdings for thing we need. As you cull titles from your personal libraries, please keep the Research Archives in mind.

It has been my pleasure to have had the help of Terry Wilfong for a fifth year as my chief assistant. Fortunately, Terry will be continuing with us next year. My second assistant, Anthony Tomasino, who has served diligently for two years, will be leaving us to act as Research Assistant to Prof. Mike Wise.

Acquisitions Statistics

The Research Archives acquired and catalogued 1685 items with the following results:

	4/89 - 3/90	Total
Monographs	775	11,528
Series	178	4,468
Journals	246	7,782
Total Books	1,199	23,778
Maps	25	
Pamphlets	91	