

INTRODUCTION

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Faculty and Staff

As I end my first year as director, with the Oriental Institute gradually expanding back into its new and renewed quarters, I take note of the departures of individuals whose vision and work and persistence made all of this possible, and who left the Oriental Institute a different place than the one they found. First and foremost is William Sumner, who came to us in 1989 from far off Columbus, Ohio. Friend, archaeological colleague, former Naval supply officer, and now Director of the Oriental Institute, Bill was given a problem to solve, a climate-control crisis. Bill sized up the situation, drew up a plan, and carried it through. Ably aided from 1993 on by Assistant Director for Development Cynthia Echols, with the help of a tireless Executive Committee and supportive Visiting Committee, they put together for the first time in the seventy-five year history of the Oriental Institute a major fund-raising campaign which, as I write, in its final months, is approaching its \$10.1 million goal. Bill retired as of the end of this year and went back to the campus town he left to join us. We expect to see him at regular intervals as we put back into full commission our renewed and expanded building. Cynthia has not escaped so far, having moved on to Foundation Relations at the University of Chicago, and will continue to suffer, gladly she graciously insists, the importunate queries of her Oriental Institute friends and neighbors.

In terms of faculty configuration, Bill Sumner's retirement was the only formal change this year. But we know that in coming years, here as in other academic institutions, the cadence of retirements will only pick up, and we are very much concerned with how our faculty will look in the first decade or so of the next century. Bill Sumner had been, of course, very much occupied by the directorship, but he still found time to represent Iranian archaeology vigorously here, and his departure means one less presence of archaeological expertise in our midst — a discipline that is so central to the Oriental Institute. Since the search that was suspended in the interest of the building campaign was for a position in Egyptian archaeology, this makes the archaeology gap all the more perceptible. It has been an immense help, at least for our teaching program, that we have been able to have an occasional visiting position in Egyptian archaeology. In spring 1998 we had a newly minted Ph.D. from Pennsylvania, Stephen Harvey. Clearly a high priority for post-Legacy, post-reinstallation development will be to make up this gap.

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A pleasant reminder of how much the position of the Oriental Institute in ancient Near Eastern studies owes to an extraordinary faculty — and an occasion to reflect on what we must do to retain that eminence — was a pair of 90th birthdays: Robert Braidwood (July 1997; celebrated in October 1997) and Hans Güterbock (May 1998; celebrated in October 1998)

Museum and Reinstallation

The new wing was finished and occupied this year by the storage, archival, registration, conservation, and preparation facets of our museum operation — esthetically and functionally it elicits universal praise. At this moment the archaeologists are about to occupy their newly renovated laboratories and workspaces. We now need to reinstall galleries worthy of the building and renovation effort. Given both donor and public expectations, we estimate that three years is about as long as we can take for reinstallation before we turn to concentrate our funding efforts on pressing research needs. Over this period, by keeping our plan to reinstall gallery by gallery coordinated with our fund-raising activity, we expect to be able to meet our reinstallation goal. We plan to open the Egyptian Gallery in spring 1999. If we can open another major gallery by spring 2000 (we are committed to hosting a major traveling exhibit on the Ur Royal Cemetery from Pennsylvania in fall 2000), we should be in a good position to have the remaining galleries at or near completion in 2001.

Programs and Projects

As you will read in the following pages, the work of the Oriental Institute is going forward on all fronts. Our long-term philological projects are making solid headway. The Demotic Dictionary has been getting intensive work this year and should publish the year after next. As for the dictionaries funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Chicago Hittite Dictionary published volume P/3; the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary, one of the defining projects of the Oriental Institute, is seeing two volumes through press (R and T) and is about to begin editing its last three volumes. In Luxor the Epigraphic Survey, another defining project of the Oriental Institute, continued its indispensable work of the recording and conservation of monuments; plates and text were finished for the Epigraphic Survey's Luxor Temple, Volume 2 (OIP 116). At the same time the Theban Desert Road project continued to break new ground in a rich and virtually untouched source of information about ancient Egypt.

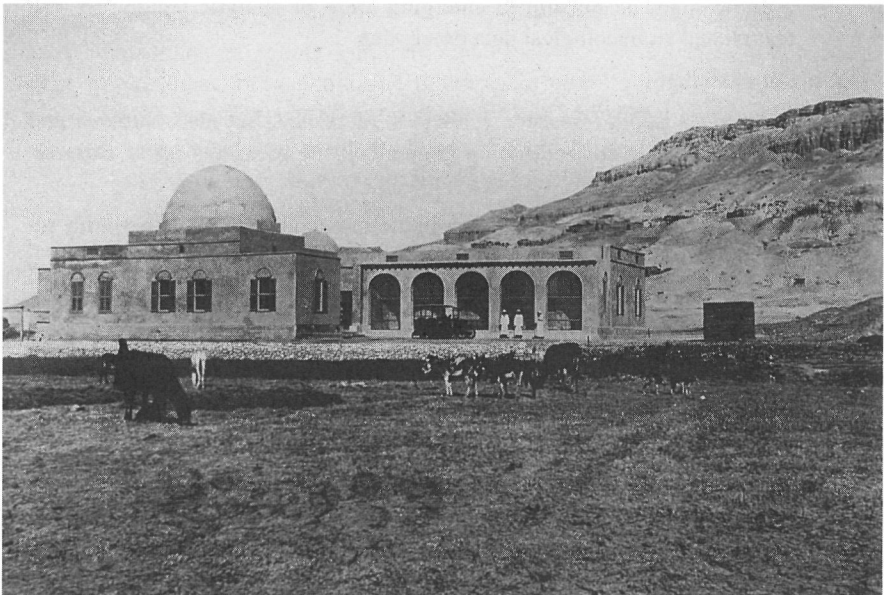
As is becoming almost routine in these annual reports, there is exciting news to pass on this year also in the area of electronic text and data processing. The Oriental Institute is already recognized as a leader in this area; during the year our Website has been averaging more than 100,000 hits a week, with between 1.5 and 2.0 gigabytes of data being downloaded from it each week. On 1 April we put on line the Achaemenid Royal Inscriptions: Persepolis (<http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/PROJ/ARI/ARI.html>). This is an edition, with glossary and links to archaeological plans and expedition photographs of the Old Persian, Elamite, and Akkadian royal inscriptions of the Persian Empire. It serves also as a pilot project for electronic publication of ancient Near Eastern texts and archaeological data, which will be extended to include all areas of activity of the Oriental Institute. We are currently

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planning to bring our text and data markup into conformity with the recently promulgated XML (eXtended Markup Language) standard. A conference on XML, *Networking the <Past>: Archaeological and Philological Publication on the World-Wide Web Using XML*, is being organized by David Schloen, possibly in conjunction with the Chicago Humanities Institute.

At the intersection of document processing and teaching, a four year, \$950,000 Mellon grant to adapt the recent developments in computer technology to new modes of instruction for teaching three less commonly taught languages was awarded to a group of scholars at the University of Michigan, the University of Chicago, Northwestern University, and the University of Wisconsin. Janet Johnson is responsible for the Egyptian language component. The long-range goal of this project is to enable universities to employ technology in innovative ways to rethink the relationship between student and teacher, the difference between classroom learning and distance learning, and the differences between self-paced instruction and instruction that follows the academic calendar. An immediate goal is to create a new paradigm for language instruction, one that can be adapted to a variety of languages in the future.

Profound innovations are going on in archaeology also. Here two University of Chicago-Argonne National Laboratory seed grants promise to have far-reaching effects on the way archaeology is done here (and elsewhere!). One, headed by Aslihan Yener, involves analytic techniques using such facilities as the Advanced Photon Source (its progress was followed by the press, at one point with a front-page article in the *Chicago Tribune*); the other, directed by McGuire Gibson and Tony Wilkinson, is for computational simulation of socio-economic development



Old Chicago House, on the West Bank of the Nile, was in use from 1924 to 1932 when the crew moved to the present house; the old house continued to be used by the Epigraphic Survey for storage and meals during work days; it is now a hotel

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(awarded this year). Out of these has grown the idea of a Center for the Study of Ancient Technology and Environment (CSATE), a joint enterprise of a group of Midwestern universities involving projects in the ancient Near East, East Africa, and Central and South America, and headquartered in the Oriental Institute. A preproposal to the National Science Foundation was accepted (one of 44 out of 283) and a proposal has been submitted. The intellectual promise of the proposal's content is shown by its success up to this point.

For new and ongoing archaeology projects, it seems safe to say that environment, technology, and socio-economic modeling issues will loom large across the board for some time to come. Clearly, this is so for the gold mines of Bir Umm Fawakhir (Carol Meyer), the beginning of urbanism in the Arabian Peninsula at Dhamar (Gibson and Wilkinson), and early Islamic urbanism at Aqaba (Whitcomb). The Amuq Plain (Yener and Wilkinson), an extraordinarily rich archaeological area with literally hundreds of sites, neolithic through classical, is the scene of a return in force, for a long-term involvement, to an area first surveyed by the Oriental Institute in the 1930s. This area, especially, will be the workbench and testing ground for the kind of ideas and techniques that are coming out of the seed grants.

Major Strengths and Challenges

As we end this year, I think we can identify our major strengths as:

- enhanced physical plant
- proven base of support in a donor community
- acknowledged leadership in emerging areas of analytic techniques and textual and archaeological data processing

Our major challenges:

- construct a public presence (galleries, of course, but also outreach and wider, non-specialist education generally) that measures up to expectations created thus far
- with the building complete, coordinate our development effort with research priorities of the Oriental Institute
- set a research agenda that will strike the next century as being as coherent and urgent as the agenda with which James Henry Breasted inspired generations of researchers and supporters in this century
- recruit a set of scholars who can carry on the work of those who are leaving and who have left

Of these challenges, it is clear that a solution to the last two can only emerge from the consensus and intelligent collaboration of the scholars who make up the Oriental Institute. As a beginning in this process, we held a two-day faculty retreat on Saturday 18 April (at the downtown Gleacher Center) and Saturday 2 May (Ida Noyes). Our major collective task this year is to begin to test, concretize, and put into effect some of the concepts which began to emerge during that process.
