

RESEARCH

RESEARCH ARCHIVES

Charles E. Jones

The past year has seen fundamental changes in the physical makeup of the Research Archives. A year ago as I sat writing an annual report, I could see the workmen in the courtyard finishing the outer structure of the new wing. This year, I sit looking at the now familiar blue dormer out the same window, but I sit in the cool silence of the air-conditioned Reading Room. It is astonishing how much more pleasurable the experience is this year.

The completion of the library phase of the renovation and building project has had two areas of profound effect. Environmentally, we now have a constant comfortable temperature and a constant comfortable level of relative humidity. In addition we have much less dust as a consequence of the constant circulation of the air, and much less noise as a consequence of the closed windows. These improvements will help to protect and preserve the collections of the library and the humors of its users. We are already experiencing an increase in the number of visiting scholars who choose the summer to schedule their visits. We expect that the number of such visitors will continue to increase as word gets around that climate control is effective in the Research Archives.

The second area of major change is in the organization of the collections. In early spring we received the space in the new wing, constructed the new book stacks and began to move the monograph collection (formerly kept on the short stacks and built-in stacks of the Reading Room) into the new wing. We then removed the short stacks from the Reading Room floor (preserving many of them for reuse in the new basement Archaeology Laboratories), reclaimed two tables from the Museum Preparation Shop, and moved the series collection from the upper level into the built-in cases of the Reading Room. We managed to complete these phases of the reconfiguration just prior to the Annual Dinner in May, when we hosted a reception in the Reading Room, allowing a preview of the renovations. As it currently stands, the Reading Room has eight of the original ten large oak tables and seating for

RESEARCH ARCHIVES

sixty-four. The reconfiguration also allows us to double the space between the tables which had become unacceptably cramped and claustrophobic because of the creeping addition of shelving. A fortuitous result of the moving of the tables makes four of them now accessible to electrical outlets — a real help for users of laptop computers.

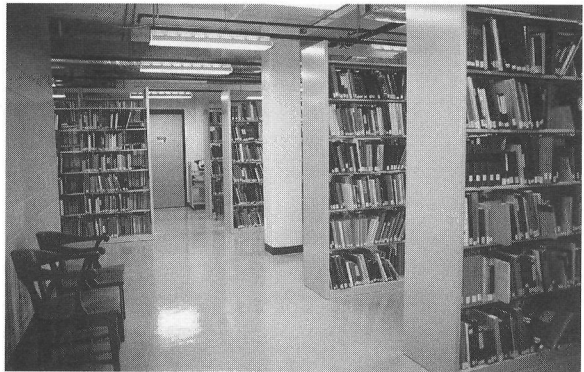
As the summer progresses, we continue to move other components of the collections into their planned configuration. Periodicals will remain where there are (with some slight reorganization and replacement of shelving). The large and important pamphlet file and microfilm collection, currently so cramped as to be almost unusable, will move upstairs into one of the suite of rooms formerly housing the series. The map collection will also move into that space. With the map collection we will gather and assemble the now widely dispersed map, atlas, and geographical resources, making them accessible and usable in a controlled space for the first time ever. In the spaces vacated by the pamphlet collection and the map files on the lower level, we will assemble several other currently dispersed units of the collections, most significant among these being the bibliographical resources.

The reconfiguration made possible by the renovation and building project has already made the Research Archives a much more comfortable, collegial, and productive place to work. The completion of the changes during the summer and fall will have similar effects and will help to make major components of our unique collections fully accessible.

It is, of course, through the generosity of donors to the Legacy Campaign that all of this has come to pass. In honor of the generous support of the Elizabeth Morse and Elizabeth Morse Genius Charitable Trusts, the Reading Room of the Research Archives will be named The Elizabeth Morse Genius Reading Room and recognized with a sign and plaque. We continue to work towards completing the challenge grant generously offered by the Elizabeth Morse and Elizabeth Morse Genius Charitable Trusts that will allow us to restore the lighting in the Reading Room and provide electrical and network wiring access to each of the tables.



New book stacks room in Research Archives with shelving in boxes. Photograph by Jean Grant



New book stacks room in Research Archives with shelving assembled. Photograph by Jean Grant

RESEARCH

On-line Catalogue And Retrospective Cataloguing Project

At the time of writing, the on-line catalogue of the holdings of the Research Archives includes 81,872 records. It is up to date for main entries for all materials acquired through the end of May 1998. The total represents a net increase of well over five thousand records during the past year. We have spent considerable effort in editing the database, in cleaning data, adding information, removing useless or redundant information, and in making the database work more effectively. It remains an extraordinarily powerful research tool and is increasingly useful as the depth of coverage of the collection increases.

All three of the student assistants spent major components of their working hours engaged in processing data sets for eventual inclusion in the catalogue. Much of this effort was in processing the contents of complete runs of periodicals

Complete, and in the final stages of editing preparatory to loading into the on-line catalogue, are analytical records for each essay, article, and review in the following periodicals:

Acta Orientalia — 265 records

Annales du Musée Guimet — 12 records

Aula Orientalis — 277 records

Bulletin de l'Institut Française d'Archéologie Orientale, Cairo — 1,204 records

Egitto e Vicino Oriente — 181 records

Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society — 238 records

Journal of the Manchester Egyptian and Oriental Society — 173 records

Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society — 417 records

Kemi — 184 records

Mesopotamia — 243 records

Mizraim — 68 records

Orientalia Suecana — 180 records

Revue d'Égyptologie — 955 records

Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache — 2,829 records

In addition we have nearly completed the following:

Chronique d'Égypte — 2,821 records

Recueil de Travaux — 389 records

In addition we have processed 9,429 records of analytical records from material acquired during the past year.

Total number of analytical records prepared for entry in 1996/97 is 19,865 records.

Publications

The Research Archives published six electronic items during the past year.

1. *Abzu: Guide to Resources for the Study of the Ancient Near East Available on the Internet*, by Charles E. Jones. Chicago: The Oriental Institute Research Archives; 1994–1997. Oriental Institute Research Archives Bibliographical and In-

formational Documents: Supplements to Oriental Institute Research Archives Acquisitions List, vol. 3. Available exclusively on line

<http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/DEPT/RA/ABZU/ABZU.HTML>

With over a thousand new entries in the past year, Abzu remains the most complete index to on-line materials relating to the ancient Near East.

2. Socioeconomic Organization of Metalworkers During Late Bronze Period at Ugarit. Jill Ashley Fine.

http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/DEPT/DISPROP/Fine_diss.html

3. Technological Style in Early Bronze Age Anatolia. Elizabeth S. Friedman.

http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/DEPT/DISPROP/Friedman_diss.html

4. Structural Analysis of Ben Sira 40:11–44:15. Eric Reymond.

http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/DEPT/DISPROP/Reymond_diss.html

5. Egypt and Ancient Near East: Web Resources for Young People and Teachers. Alexandra A. O'Brien

http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/DEPT/RA/ABZU/YOUTH_RESOURCES.HTML

6. *Recommended Reading on the Ancient Near East: Guide to Introductory Readings on the Ancient Near Eastern World*. Collaborative publication of Research Archives of the Oriental Institute, Oriental Institute Museum, and Oriental Institute Museum Education Program

http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/DEPT/RA/RECREAD/REC_READ.html

Current Acquisitions

Following are the acquisitions statistics for the past year

	<u>April 1997–March 1998</u>	<u>Total</u>
Monographs and Series	796	22,751
Journals	204	9,466
Total Books	1,000	32,217
Pamphlets	13	

Just as the budget for the Research Archives remains constant, we have managed to maintain the level of acquisitions. That we acquired exactly one thousand volumes in the past year is mere coincidence.

I am happy to report that I continue to have the services of my three able assistants: Alexandra O'Brien, Ph.D. Candidate in Egyptology; Justine Way, graduate student in Egyptian and Near Eastern Archaeology; and Hratch Papazian, graduate student in Egyptology. Each of them plays a fundamental role in the routine functioning of the Research Archives, and each of them individually has assumed responsibility for projects of fundamental importance for the development of the collections, the catalogue, and the electronic resources. In addition, they make it pos-

RESEARCH

sible for the Research Archives to be open year-round on the weekends and for extended weekday hours.

Support of the Research Archives by friends and patrons is a fundamental support for the collections. Robert D. Biggs, editor of the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* is, as always, unparalleled in his support, as is Denise Browning, manager of the Suq. Without the support of these two individuals, the Research Archives could not exist. Many others have given of time, books, or funds. Many of you have done so anonymously. I acknowledge the names here of others who have been, and continue to be, generous with their support: Patricia C. Study, Miriam Reitz Baer, Walter and Gertrud Farber, the organizers of the book display at the annual meeting of the AIA/APA, and Gwendolyn P. and Nirmal Singh Dhesi.
