

MUSEUM

Karen L. Wilson

As the past year began, the museum staff gave a collective sigh of relief at finding ourselves once again in charge of a museum that is open, if only partially, to the public and is no longer a construction site. While our visitors were enjoying the new Joseph and Mary Grimshaw Egyptian Gallery, we spent our time above and below deck putting our spaces and our collections back in order and planning the new Persian Gallery, scheduled to open 9 September 2000.

On 3 November, Preparator Joseph Scott and I had our first meeting about the Persian Gallery, followed shortly by our first meeting with John Vinci and Tom Conroy of Vinci/Hamp Architects to begin working on the design of the gallery. Input on the contents and arrangement of the gallery was solicited from the Oriental Institute community in open meetings in the late fall and early winter. Since then, Joe and I have been working closely with faculty and staff to give the gallery its final form. We are especially grateful to Abbas Alizadeh, Charles Jones, Matthew Stolper, and Donald Whitcomb, who are giving so generously of their time and expertise to help make the gallery a great success. As I write this in mid-July, all the objects have been selected; Joe has designed and produced drawings of all case layouts; extra Preparation staff is busy constructing case interiors, buildups, and mounts; and text panels and labels are being written and circulated for input. Both Joe and Assistant Preparator Jessica Peterson are spending much, if not most, of their time in front of their computers, designing text panels, maps, time lines, and other graphics for the gallery. Once again we will be using both our old cases and new casework built by Helmut Guenschel. However, these Guenschel cases will be made of walnut — a material more in keeping with the character of the Persian Collection than the limestone that was so appropriate for the Egyptian Gallery.

As a result of all this, Registrar and Senior Curator Raymond Tindel and his crew handled some 23,000 objects over the past year. They have had to unpack and keep track of more than 1,200 objects for the new Persian Gallery alone. This task was made somewhat easier by the fact that new cabinets, purchased thanks to a grant from IMLS awarded in August, were available into which to unpack nearly 10,000 Iranian objects. Ray and his crew are also in the process of inventorying the Institute's collection of cuneiform tablets and registering the tablet cast collection, both of which have been moved down from the third floor into climate-controlled storage in the basement. Often these casts of tablets are the only form in which these documents are available to western scholars. Altogether these collections number several thousand objects. Those in registration also continue with the ever-ongoing process of registering and cataloging the backlog of unprocessed material in the Institute's collections, and with updating and improving the data on the material already registered.

Over the past year, Registration hosted a number of visiting scholars as well as faculty, research associates, and students within the Institute who used various parts of the collections in their research and teaching. John A. Brinkman arranged a display for his Mesopotamian history class, and Ashlhan Yener, Justine Way, and I used various collections for our archaeology

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Figure 1. Doug Mertes, Milt Samuelson, and Bill Allison, Sr., from Belding/Walbridge preparing to remove an inscribed glazed brick panel from wall in order to relocate it as part of the Persian Gallery reinstatement. Photograph by Laura D'Alessandro

classes. Baruch Brandl from the Israel Antiquities Authority came to study Syrian “censers” from the Amuq excavations, and Maria Trentin visited to study the Amuq phase A material. Desmond Bright from Australia came to study Egyptian stelae, and Jeanine Bourreau continued her work on the Lisht material. Henry Wright from the University of Michigan reviewed some of Robert McCormick Adams’ survey material, and Markus Hilgert from Jena went through some 300 tablets in his continuing research on Ur III administration. Clemens Reichel worked with 400 Diyala tablets in the course of his dissertation research, and Colleen Coyle is using over 100 Diyala weights for a paper that is part of McGuire Gibson’s Diyala Objects Publication Project. Elena Dodge is studying some 200 pieces of Islamic glass from the excavations at Istakhr for a paper she is preparing under Donald Whitcomb’s supervision. Timothy P. Harrison, University of Chicago graduate now with the University of Toronto, spent the week of 30 August in the basement sampling Stratum VI pottery from Megiddo for instrumental neutron activation analysis. While he was here, he also met with Gene Gragg, David Schloen, and myself to discuss plans for the new Megiddo Gallery.

And our collection does continue to grow, albeit slowly, due to the generosity of others. On 14 Sep-

tember the Geographic Society of Chicago donated six cuneiform tablets that one of their members had purchased in Iraq in 1926. Consisting of two Ur III accounts, three Old Babylonian accounts, and one Achaemenid legal text, this donation arrived in a custom-made, black leather case with a glass front. The Geographic Society is thanked by all of us for providing these tablets with a home where they can be cared for and studied along with other related texts.

Assistant to the Registrar, Tamara Siuda, served as Ray’s only paid staff member during the academic year and is now generously giving of her time as a volunteer in Registration. The rest of the work that I described was made possible by some of the world’s most wonderful volunteers: Debbie Aliber, Leila Foster, Peggy Grant, Mary Grimshaw, Janet Helman, Lorrie Luther, Georgie Maynard, Ila Patlogan, Lillian Schwartz, Richard Watson, Peggy Wick, and Lauren Zych. They continue to type data entry, haul objects back and forth, and generally do whatever is necessary. For all that, and much more, we offer them abundant praise and thanks!

While all this was going on, three of our Old Kingdom servant statues and one Old Kingdom relief continued to travel with the exhibition *Egyptian Art in the Age of the Pyramids*. In July 1999 Laura D’Alessandro, Head of the Conservation Laboratory, traveled to Paris to accompany the loan back to New York and, in addition, to study details of the new installation of Khorsabad reliefs at the Louvre in anticipation of our upcoming Khorsabad Court Installation. In August I traveled to New York to supervise the installation of the Old Kingdom pieces at the Metropoli-

tan Museum of Art, and Laura accompanied them from New York to Toronto and back home again, where they once again occupy a proud place in the Egyptian Gallery.

During 1999 Laura and Getty Intern Sara Caspi began use of the Department of Geophysical Sciences' Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM), thanks to funds that are a part of the Getty Postgraduate Conservation Internships. Work began with the analysis of corrosion products on objects that were currently undergoing treatment.

In October 1999 Sara Caspi completed her Getty Internship and moved to New York where she now holds a Mellon Fellowship at the National Museum of the American Indian. Eric Nordgren, a recent graduate of the University of London's University College degree course in archaeological conservation, having recently completed two years at the National Museum of Beirut, Lebanon, began his twelve month internship just before Sara's departure. Eric has chosen, as part of his internship, to investigate the gilding and copper corrosion products on certain archaeological artifacts and is focusing his attentions on our gilded bronze god from Megiddo. He recently completed a research trip to Beirut to carry out a comparative study of figurines in the collection of the National Museum of Beirut and was generously granted permission by the Director General of Antiquities in Lebanon to return with samples for analysis using the SEM. We are pleased to be able to announce that in May 2000 the Institute received another grant from the Getty Program to support three more consecutive postgraduate conservation internships over the next three years. Thus we will be able to continue to train recent conservation graduates in the field of archaeological conservation.

Laura spent much of the year researching and ordering equipment and furniture with the generous Women's Board grant awarded last May. Her purchases included a digital laboratory oven; a low-weight digital balance (which allows the weighing of quantities as small as 0.002 gr); a LEICA MZ6 stereoscopic binocular microscope with fiber optic ring lights and a polarizer; a desiccator cabinet with vacuum pump for vacuum impregnations of mid-sized objects; an ultrasonic moisture meter to measure and monitor the moisture content of our organic materials,

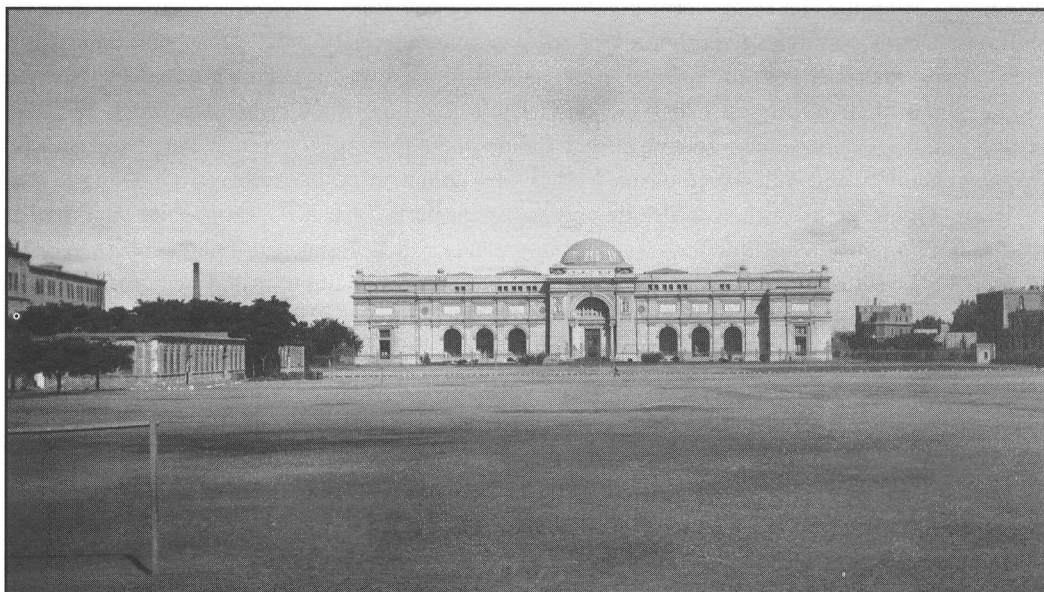


Figure 2. The "new" Egyptian Museum, Cairo, just four years after its official inauguration. Buildings visible on left are part of the Kasr el-Nil Barracks, replaced in the 1950s by the Nile Hilton Hotel. Open space in foreground is now Tahrir Square. Photograph by Sydney Upton on 29 October 1906 (Sydney Upton negative SU 86)

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such as wood and bone; and a pH meter to monitor the pH of flat organic materials such as papyrus, vellum, and paper. These purchases have significantly increased the analytical capabilities of the Conservation Laboratory, and we would like to thank the Women's Board again for their generous support.

In April 2000 the museum received a \$50,000 IMLS Conservation Support grant to purchase cabinets to house our collection of ancient Egyptian pottery vessels dating from the predynastic period through the Middle Kingdom.

Anne Yanaway left her position as museum office manager after Thanksgiving to care for her new baby daughter, Abigail. But before she took on her new duties as a full-time mother, she trained Carla Hosein, who has been ably performing the many and varied tasks that come with that job, including keeping track of accounts, answering phones, supervising custodians, and overseeing audiovisual upgrades in Breasted Hall. Carla has also assumed responsibility for processing the requests that we receive for photographic image materials and reproduction permissions — a total of 209 transactions during fiscal year 1999/2000. Since 1 January we have received four requests for images in an electronic format, and have begun thinking about how we can efficiently accommodate such requests without disrupting the in-house operation of the Computer Laboratory.

Most of Archivist John Larson's time and that of his volunteers over the past year has been spent continuing to unpack the collections and make selected record groups more accessible for research. Priority is still being given to material that will support the reinstallation of the museum galleries and to the needs of both Oriental Institute researchers and visiting scholars.

For 1999/2000, the volunteers who have continued working regularly with John Larson in the Archives are Hazel Cramer, Patricia Hume, Sandra Jacobsohn, Lillian Schwartz, Helaine Staver, and Carole Yoshida. Pat is working on a long-term project based on the papers of Helene Kantor, Lillian has been re-cataloging our collections of nineteenth-century photographs, Helaine is creating Megiddo field diaries for the early seasons (for which none were produced originally) from the surviving correspondence of Megiddo field directors and other expedition staff, and Carole continues with the task of reorganizing our slide library. Hazel and Sandy lend their talents wherever they are needed, especially with proofreading. Though characteristically modest about their efforts on behalf of the Oriental Institute, these volunteers work on many projects in the Archives that might never get done without their dedication. We are truly grateful for the generosity and enthusiasm of our friends who volunteer in the Archives.

Peggy Grant works primarily off-site and has spent part of her New Hampshire summers as well as her home-time in Hyde Park transcribing manuscript materials from photocopies in order to produce useful word-processing files. She has worked on an unpublished manuscript by the late Klaus Baer on the ancient Egyptian workmen of Deir el-Medina and a collection of travel letters written by the late Margaret Bell Cameron in 1954, and now she is transcribing letters and related documents from James Henry Breasted's 1905–1907 epigraphic expedition in Egypt and Nubia. In addition to the regular Archives volunteers, Alison Carter, a student at Oberlin College, returned for a third year to work one day a week in the Archives during the summer of 2000. Since January, University of Chicago graduate student Stephanie Reed has been organizing negatives and prints from recent photography for registration in the Photographic Archives.

John is pleased to report that on 1 May we received a new acquisition: a collection of nearly 600 black-and-white negatives and related materials dating from 1906 to 1908 and documenting the activities of a surveyor for the Sudan Government Railways, Mr. Sydney Upton (1884–1977). These materials come to us as a gift from Mr. Upton's son, Murray Scott Upton. In late February, Mr. Upton saw a copy of the postcard book *Sifting the Sands of Time: Historic Photo-*

graphs from the *Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago* for sale in the bookshop at the Australian National Gallery in Canberra. He sent Institute Director Gene Gragg an e-mail message on 1 March in which he gave a brief description of his father's Sudan materials. Returning to Chicago in late March after leading the Oriental Institute tour to Egypt, John picked up the e-mail correspondence with Mr. Upton who, as it turns out, was seeking a permanent home for his father's Sudan records. It is our happy obligation to acknowledge his thoughtfulness and generosity in preserving these records and presenting them to the Oriental Institute.

Sydney Upton worked in the Nile Valley in the region between Aswan and Khartoum during the same period when James Henry Breasted was conducting the first epigraphic expedition of the University of Chicago in Egypt and the Sudan. The photographic images in the Upton Collection serve as a nice complement to the Breasted Expedition documentary photographs of ancient Egyptian and Nubian monuments.

In addition to Mr. Upton's own negatives and related diaries, the collection includes a nearly complete series of commercial postcards from the same period, made by G. N. Morhig, The English Pharmacy, Khartoum. The only other extensive collection of such material known to us at the present time is housed in the Sudan Archive at the University of Durham in England. These images can best be described as the sort of ethnographic pictures that were used to illustrate the pages of *National Geographic Magazine* in the early years of the twentieth century.

A smaller addition to the collection was presented by John in honor of the stalwart 1990 Oriental Institute group that toured Egypt with him at the time of the Gulf War. This is a student notebook kept by Carleton T. Hodge during the summer of 1939 — class notes for a course on the history of the Egyptian language taught at the Oriental Institute by Professor William F. Edgerton. We don't have a great deal of student-generated material from the past in our Archives, and the Hodge notebook is an interesting record of Edgerton's teaching. Hodge was a

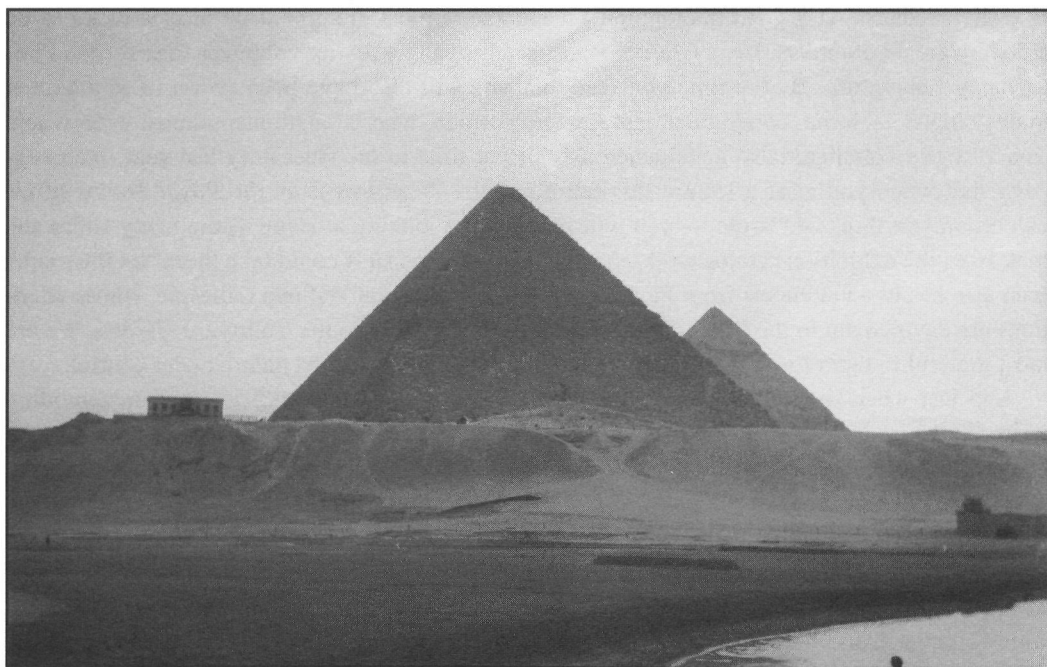


Figure 3. People climbing Cheops/Khufu pyramid. View of Giza Plateau taken from north, showing north face of Cheops/Khufu pyramid, with tip of Chephren/Kha-ef-Ra/Khafre pyramid visible behind and to right. "Modern" building at left is old royal resthouse. Photograph by Sydney Upton, 27 February 1907 (Sydney Upton negative SU 186)

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linguist who specialized in Afro-Asiatic languages, and he and his wife Pat were members of the 1990 Egypt Tour group, which also included Helen Ewing Breasted, James Henry Breasted III, Barbara Breasted Whitesides, and Helen Breasted Horton. We thank John for this thoughtful gift.

The opening of the Joseph and Mary Grimshaw Egyptian Gallery generated a substantial amount of press coverage thanks to the combined efforts of Associate Curator Emily Teeter and our indefatigable friend William Harms of the University News Office, who is always willing and eager to make us sound exciting and newsworthy to the media. The details of that coverage, which contributed substantially to record-breaking attendance throughout the summer, were given in the last *Annual Report*. The level of attention that we received was a welcome, and effective, way of alerting the public to the fact that the museum was again open, and to remind them that additional galleries would soon be available. It also stimulated visits by groups from other museums, including the Freer and Sackler Galleries of the Smithsonian Institution and several of the regional support groups of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Emily continues working on the guide to the Egyptian collection funded by the Women's Board of the University of Chicago. The book, which is written for a general audience, is composed of an introductory history of the Egyptian collection and sixty-two catalog entries, some of which deal with groups of artifacts. Manuelian Design of Boston has begun design layouts, and archivist John Larson and photographer Jean Grant continue to produce new photography of objects that will be included in the publication.

Photographer Jean Grant notes that, even when her subjects lie still for her — as did Lady Meresamun when she spent several days taking color photographs of her — she still needs assistance when she photographs. She says that in her over twenty-five years here, each and every member of the museum staff has been willing to lend two good hands, a good back, or whatever else she needs to get a good photograph — and she is most grateful. Jean also is lucky to be aided by great volunteers. Irene Glasner is, as usual, steady with her volunteer time for the Photography Laboratory. By the time you read this, she will also have been sworn in as a United States citizen — Irene, congratulations! Carole Yoshida, who is mentioned almost everywhere as a versatile volunteer, also gave generously of her time to the laboratory last year. Jean suggests that when you're at a lecture this fall about the *Treasures from the Royal Tombs of Ur* exhibition you think of Carole — you will probably be looking at some of the many slides she took from the exhibition catalog so that Institute faculty and staff could take them “on the road.” Jean also has two volunteers from Flossmoor this year, Teri and William Gillespie, whose attentions are devoted not to the Photographic Laboratory but rather to the Courtyard Garden. We are most grateful to them for their willingness to try to bring its unbridled nature under control.

And just when she had gotten used to the fact that she and her staff were again providing visitor services and security for a functioning museum, Margaret Schröder found out that the University would be putting a new roof on our building this summer and next, and that keeping watch over men in hard hats would again be one of her duties. But, as always, she accepted the situation cheerfully and has them all well under control.

With the Persian Gallery scheduled to open 9 September and *Treasures from the Royal Tombs of Ur* coming up in October, the museum staff continues to remain frenetically busy. I would like to thank them all for their constant hard — and high quality — work and for their unflagging willingness to work as a team as we tackle the reinstallation of the remaining museum galleries over the next two years.