



## Conservation

*Barbara Hall*

Of the many objects treated in the conservation laboratory, few go on exhibit in the museum; most are returned to the study collection in storage. This year was an exception as 22 stone bowl fragments from Jarmo were restored to completeness and placed on display in the “Quest for Prehistory” show.

During excavation of the site during the late 1940’s, more than 1300 of the bowl fragments were recovered and now we intended to incorporate them into the prehistory exhibit. But their small size did not give much of an idea of the wide diversity of sizes and shapes of the whole bowls, so a decision was made to restore a representative group.

By placing the rim of the bowl fragment or sherd on a chart of concentric circles of increasing size, we were able to determine the original circumference of the bowl. The missing area was then cast in plaster of Paris around the stone sherd. After shaping and sanding the plaster, it was painted in a color compatible with the original stone. Three of us in the lab spent four months completing the restoration. I was ably assisted by Laurie Booth, this year’s intern from the conservation program at the University of Delaware/Winterthur Museum—Laurie has a wonderful eye for color and inpainted most of the plaster restoration—and by Annette Manick, an apprentice.

A major project nearing completion this year is the relocation of hundreds of pots and sherds from our Nubian rescue excavations of the 1960’s. Several years ago we received an NEA Grant, matched by Oriental Institute funds, to renovate part of the basement for Nubian storage; this included the purchase of 31 large metal storage cabinets. Up to this time, the collection of pottery, stone sculpture, leather, wood, beads, and other small objects had been stored in various cabinets, open shelves, and rooms throughout the basement so that study of the collection was very difficult. Funded in part by the work-study program and our IMS Grant, one of the Institute’s graduate students in archaeology, spent this year moving the pottery into the new cabinets and doing an inventory for our records. This represents a significant step forward in the continuing job of putting our study collection into good order.