

THE MUSEUM

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During the past year, most of the museum staff's considerable energies was focused on the two exhibits that were mounted in conjunction with the University of Chicago centennial celebrations: "Sifting the Sands of Time: The Oriental Institute and the Ancient Near East" opened on October 6 and "Vanished Kingdoms of the Nile: The Rediscovery of Ancient Nubia" on February 3. Both were so well received by both the Oriental Institute community and the general public that they are being held over for most of this year as well. Congratulations are due to each and every member of the museum staff who contributed to this success—and, especially, to Assistant Curator Emily Teeter, who shouldered the bulk of the curatorial responsibility for both exhibits, and to Preparators Mary Carlisle and Joseph Scott, who designed, built, and installed these two very special shows.



View of the entrance to the exhibit "Sifting the Sands of Time: The Oriental Institute and the Ancient Near East"



The first section of the exhibit “Vanished Kingdoms of the Nile: The Rediscovery of Ancient Nubia”

Thanks to the efforts of Emily Teeter and of University News Staff Writer William Harms, “Vanished Kingdoms of the Nile” received widespread media coverage, including major features in the *New York Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and *The Miami Herald*, as well as interview and feature spots on prime time television. Other projects such as last year’s CT scanning of the Egyptian mummies continued to result in media coverage as far afield as *Al Ahrām* in Cairo, as well as front page coverage in the *Chicago Tribune* and numerous television and radio spots. Due in large part to all this new publicity, museum attendance increased more than 6% last year, making us one of the few Chicago area museums whose visitorship has not decreased over the past 12 months! Our more active days were Centennial Arts Day (Oct. 6—939 visitors), Celebrate Nubia! Day (Feb. 8—523 visitors), and Chicago Day (May 3—862 visitors).

Registrar Raymond Tindel and Assistant Registrar Glenn Carnagey spent much of their time keeping track of the movement of objects for the centennial exhibits, while at the same time playing host to more than fifty researchers from around the world. Visiting scholars ranged from old friends such as Jack

Foster of Roosevelt University and James Keenan of Loyola University, both of whom have long-standing interests in particular groups of Egyptian ostraca, to Françoise Tallon of the Musée du Louvre, who came to look for comparative material amongst the museum's collections of Iranian and Mesopotamian metal objects. Ray and Glenn also continued such daily duties as identifying and describing the objects in the museum collections and recording certain basic facts about each piece—its age, provenience, the material of which it is composed, its cultural affiliations, and its general description. Working with Abbas Alizadeh, who has been preparing material from the Institute's excavations at Tall-e Bakun, Iran, for publication, the staff in registration registered over 3000 objects. Glenn also finished a catalogue of approximately 4600 ostraca from the Institute's excavations at Medinet Habu, which will make this collection of ancient 'business notes' of Greek and Coptic Egypt much more useful to researchers.



A museum visitor on Celebrate Nubia! Day examines one of the sculptures on display in "Vanished Kingdoms of the Nile"

Once again it is a pleasure to thank all the volunteers on whom so much of the work in the registry depends. They catalogue and register, they get objects out for scholars and put them away again, they inventory cabinets, and they spend hours at computers entering data. Several visiting scholars have complimented our organization of the collections and our inventory control; it is the volunteers who have made it all possible: Debbie Aliber, Michelle Biehl,

Aimee Drolet, Anita Eller, Lilla Fano, Leila Foster, Peggy Grant, Mary Grimshaw, Shehla Khawaja, Georgie Maynard, Megan McArdle, Eric Poryles, Patrick Regnery, Lillian Schwartz, and Peggy Wick.

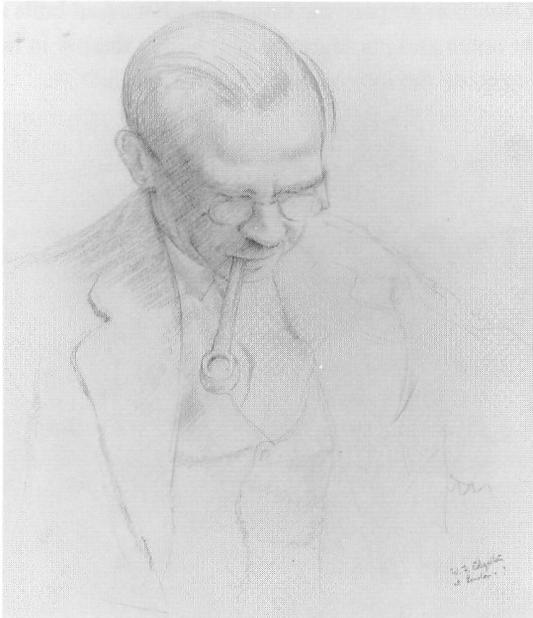
While all of this was going on, Registration, working closely with Conservators Laura D'Alessandro and Barbara Hamann and Preparators Mary Carlisle and Joseph Scott, transferred the manuscript collection into new cabinets especially designed for it and purchased with a Conservation Grant from IMS and installed new shelves for mummies and coffins in the organics room. When not so engaged, Barbara spent most of her time working on objects for the exhibits and for five loans to other institutions, while Laura ran the lab, wrote grant proposals, and began collecting data for an exciting new project. When climate control is installed in the museum galleries, we plan to reinstall our collection of Assyrian reliefs next to the Khorsabad Bull in what is now the Egyptian Gallery; this will recreate the ambiance of the original courtyard in which they stood. (The Egyptian Gallery, along with the statue of King Tut'ankhamun, will move into the present Mesopotamian Hall). Jerry Podany, Head of the Department of Antiquities Conservation at the J. Paul Getty Museum, consulted with us on a preliminary feasibility study for relocating these monuments. Then, in June, Laura spent a week in Paris watching Michel Bourbon prepare the Louvre's Khorsabad bulls and reliefs for reinstallation. Her notes and photographs will be invaluable in helping us plan and successfully execute the movement of our own reliefs.



Awad Abdelgadir in Breasted Hall describing life in modern Nubia on Celebrate Nubia! Day

When not recording all these activities on film, Photographer Jean Grant was kept busy taking photographs and producing prints for the many outside scholars and publishers to request images from us each year. We extend our thanks to her volunteers: David Deckert and Xiaomei Gu, who have done a great deal of slide work. Ria Ahlstrom experienced the tragedy of losing her husband Gösta in January, but has returned to the Photographic Lab again—and we are glad to have her back.

In September 1991, through the good offices of Assistant Professor Peter Dorman, the Oriental Institute Archives acquired four original sketches by artist/curator/scholar Charles K. Wilkinson (1897–1986)—a name that will be familiar to many Oriental Institute members and friends. Mr. Wilkinson joined the Egyptian Expedition of the Metropolitan Museum of Art as an artist in 1920 and, in 1963, “retired” as Curator Emeritus of the museum’s Department of Near Eastern Art. The Wilkinson sketches are the gift of the artist’s widow, Irma B. Wilkinson, and we gratefully acknowledge her generosity and thoughtfulness in seeking to find an appropriate home for some of her husband’s non-archaeological drawings. Included in the group are portraits in pencil of Oriental Institute Egyptologist William Franklin Edgerton (1893–1970) and his first wife Jean, dated to about 1930.



Drawing by Charles K. Wilkinson of Oriental Institute Egyptologist William Franklin Edgerton

Special projects in the Oriental Institute Archives would not be possible without the assistance of regularly-scheduled volunteers and occasional interns. The many hours donated by our able and dedicated museum archives

volunteers enable Archivist John Larson to maintain our range of day-to-day activities at current levels, and we are pleased to be able to take this opportunity to recognize them and to thank them for their valuable contribution. The official roster of Archives volunteers for the fiscal year 1991–1992 includes Carolyn Livingood, Joan Rosenberg, Kay Ginther, Lilian Cropsy, Melanie Petroskey, and Sandra Jacobsohn. In addition to this group who continued in their volunteer roles from previous years, we were fortunate to have the assistance of an undergraduate intern from Lake Forest College, Ms. Sarah E. Lepinski, who worked 150 hours in the Museum Archives from September 1991 to January 1992. With Sarah's help, John was able to continue working on a project to organize the inactive Museum Curatorial files.

As we move into the new year, Museum Office Manager Lisa Snider continues to keep the details of our daily business (from telephones to ledgers to photo orders) running smoothly and cheerfully. Our sights are increasingly focused on the renovation and expansion project, including planning for redesign and reinstallation of the galleries—all of which we will be telling you more about in the next *Annual Report*.
