

CONSERVATION

Laura D'Alessandro

The past year has been a particularly busy year for the conservation staff. As the summer drew to a close, the lab worked hard to complete conservation on the last few objects needing treatment before installation in the new Mesopotamian Gallery. And as with the other museum staff, no sooner did we put the last object in the last display case in the new Mesopotamian Gallery than we began work on the East Gallery reinstallation. For the conservation staff, that involved gearing up the Assyrian relief project for its final phase. The riggers and framers were contacted, supplies and materials were inventoried, equipment rentals were set in train, and in October the crews gathered to install the four Corridor 10 reliefs and the three reliefs from Room 7. The Room 7 reliefs are among everyone's favorites, with their charming representation of a banquet scene in the upper register and the wonderful depiction of King Sargon hunting in the royal forests on the lower register. It was in November that the two parts of the chariot wheel in Room 7, separated in the 1930s, were rejoined for the first time in seventy years. The East Gallery reliefs have their own particular complications; their final restoration is under way as of this writing.

Over 250 objects from Khorsabad, Syria-Anatolia, and Megiddo came through the conservation laboratory during the year in preparation for the East Gallery reinstallation. Analytical work continues on the collection as the conservation staff continues to have access to the Department of Geophysical Sciences JEOL scanning electron microscope. The ability to analyze inorganic materials, such as core metal or corrosion products, is a critical component in the conservation of ancient materials. The additional information is also of use to researchers and students and adds immeasurably to the body of data on the collection. The work of the conservators has been greatly facilitated by this welcome feature.

In September, Sarah Barack, our fifth and final Getty-Replogle Postgraduate Conservation intern, began her twelve-month internship. Sarah came to the Institute upon her graduation from the Conservation Center, Institute of Fine Arts Masters of Art History/Conservation Program at New York University. She has been working on objects in the lab, assisting with the restoration



Figure 4. Oriental Institute conservators help prepare tablets for shipment to Iran. From left: Vanessa Muros, Sarah Barack, and Alison Whyte

of the Assyrian reliefs, and working hard on her research project: the analysis of the original pigments on the reliefs.

Vanessa Muros, Assistant Conservator, and Alison Whyte, Contract Conservator, together have been responsible for the bulk of the object treatments for the gallery reinstallations and have been heavily involved in the work on the reliefs. Additionally, Vanessa and Alison, with the assistance

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of Sarah, taught a workshop on analytical processes for Aslihan Yener's class on ancient technologies and provided technical assistance to students in the class.

In February, the conservation laboratory hosted the University of Chicago Laboratory School's innovative high school forensic science class, taught by Dr. Mark Dreessen, whose son Sam just happens to volunteer as a docent guide for the museum. The visit provided the conservators with the opportunity to show how many of our investigative techniques are borrowed from forensic procedures.

In March, Laura D'Alessandro again served on the Institute Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Conservation Project Support panel in Washington, D.C. We learned in late April that our most recent IMLS Conservation Project Support grant application was successful. The \$50,000 award will be used to purchase twenty-one Delta Designs museum storage cabinets and archival packing materials that will be used to rehouse the Oriental Institute's collection of Nubian ceramics from Qustul.

Later in the spring, an additional 300 cuneiform tablets from Persepolis came into the lab as the conservation staff began the time-consuming job of preparing the Persepolis Foundation tablets for their return to Iran (fig. 4). At the end of April, Laura D'Alessandro accompanied Gil J. Stein and Bill Harms to Tehran to return this group of tablets to the Iranian Cultural Heritage Organization. This trip provided Laura with an opportunity to confer with her Iranian colleagues. Although too short, it was an exciting and memorable journey and we hope it will pave the way for future collaborations.

In May, the Conservation Laboratory hosted a meeting of the local association of conservators (Chicago Area Conservation Group) where Vanessa and Alison presented a lecture on the history, analysis, and conservation of the glazed bricks from the Sin Temple at Khorsabad (fig. 5) and Sarah gave a synopsis of her Getty research project. In June, Vanessa, Alison, and Sarah attended the annual American Institute for Conservation (AIC) conference in Portland, Oregon, and presented a poster on the conservation treatment of the glazed bricks entitled, "Brick by Brick: Piecing together an Eighth Century B.C. Façade from Iraq." Their poster has been accepted for publication in the AIC Objects Specialty Group Postprints due out in the fall.



Figure 5. Khorsabad glazed bricks showing head of bull from Sin Temple stacked together again for the first time since their removal from the site in the 1930s