

## RESEARCH ARCHIVES

### Magnus Widell

It was with a measure of disbelief that I, as well as many others, read the following post on the Ancient Near East listserv by Charles E. Jones from Sunday, April 17, 2005:

After twenty-two years as the Librarian at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, I have accepted the position of Head of the Blegen Library at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens (<http://www.ascsa.edu.gr/>). This choice did not come easily - I spent a great deal of time and effort weighing the options of this offer and the counteroffers made at the OI. In the end I decided that the position in Athens offers me extraordinary opportunities for personal and professional development at this stage in my career. It's going to be a real adventure leaping simultaneously eastward (physically) and westward (intellectually). I will begin in the new position in July 2005. ...

I have enjoyed the decades I have spent in Chicago, and I have enjoyed the interactions with those of you on these lists. I will continue to participate here and elsewhere, and I suspect I will see many of you in Athens.

Yours,

-Chuck Jones-

Chuck had a profound impact on the Research Archives. During his twenty-two years of dedicated service, he helped to guide the Archives into the world-renowned institution it is today. The on-line catalog of the Archives, which he initiated, continues to be at the core of the library's digital resources. Chuck envisioned and realized the enormous potential for on-line scholarly dissemination before most of us had e-mail accounts. Since 1993, thousands of students and scholars of the ancient Near East have exchanged ideas and debated sundry topics on the ANE list. In more recent years, his work on the IraqCrisis list has provided substantive information worldwide on cultural property damaged, destroyed, or lost from libraries and museums in Iraq during and after the war in April 2003. His contributions cannot be overestimated and his presence around the Oriental Institute will be sorely missed.

### Goals for the Coming Year

As the new Head of Research Archives, I will build on many of the projects and programs that Chuck developed over his years (for a more thorough introduction of my work, see my *Individual Research* report). This includes, but is not limited to, updating and improving the on-line catalog of research material and continuing the involvement of the Archives in academic electronic communications.

We are currently in the process of upgrading the catalog software and porting it to Mac OS X. The on-line interface will also be upgraded in the next month and put on a new server running OS X. The new catalog framework will not only improve the display of records, but also ensure more intuitive search capabilities as well as faster and more stable on-line access to the collection.

In order to further improve the on-line catalog, we will significantly increase the efforts of retrospective cataloging of material from before 1990. We expect to be able to include a significant part of the pre-1990 monographs in the on-line catalog within the coming year. During the past year, we have acquired approximately 1,000 new volumes for the library (monographs, journals, and series) putting the total number of volumes at roughly 39,000. Additionally, we

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have added over 16,000 new records to the catalog. As of August 9, 2005, the total number of records stands at 146,598. The catalog is available on-line at <http://oilib.uchicago.edu/>.

### Staff and Acknowledgments

Our team this past year included Foy Scalf and Benjamin Trofatter. Foy, a graduate student in Egyptology, has been responsible for developing cataloging procedures for the Archive's map collection. The database will be made available on-line together with digitized scans of the maps through the work of the CAMEL lab of the Institute. In addition, Foy has compiled a comprehensive list of abbreviations used in ancient Near Eastern studies. This list will be made available on-line in the coming year. Benjamin, who recently graduated from the College majoring in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, has been responsible for cataloging new acquisitions as well as retrospective cataloging of monographs. As of August 2005, all monographs from A to C have been entered into the on-line database. Benjamin has also been involved in reorganizing the journal stacks.

My transition into the Archives has been a lot easier than I expected largely because of the warm support and assistance by so many of the faculty, students, and staff of the Institute. I am grateful to my assistants who have helped me in many ways. The cheerful assistance of Steve Camp and Carla Hosein with various practical and economic matters has meant a lot to me. I am also very grateful to John Sanders, who has tirelessly guided me through the electronic world of the Archives.

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