



<http://oi.uchicago.edu/OI/PROJ/CAMEL/Main.html>

Scott Branting

The Center for Ancient Middle Eastern Landscapes (CAMEL) has become quite a hub of research activity within the Oriental Institute in only the first year after the major transformation of its laboratory facilities and vision. We assisted forty different projects this year from researchers and institutions around the world, providing them with data, expertise, and the use of our facilities. In addition, the scanning capabilities provided by the CAMEL laboratory saw use by at least three dozen researchers and projects within the Oriental Institute. With such positive returns in



Portion of a Quickbird Image of Samarra. To the south is the al-Askari (or Golden) mosque prior to the February 22 bombing. Image courtesy of DigitalGlobe

only the first year, we can see ourselves already well on our way to becoming a major resource for those with interests in the various landscapes of both the ancient and modern Middle East.

If you were to stop by the William M. Sumner Computer Laboratory on the second floor on any given day you would find faculty, staff, students, and volunteers working away on various projects. But what sorts of projects are these? During this year they have ranged from helping researchers plan archaeological surveys and excavations, to remotely monitoring the destruction of portions of sites in countries we can't physically visit, to archiving unique maps and aerial photographs held in the Institute's collections, to providing data and software for teaching and publication. We also hosted ambassadors, researchers, and visitors from various countries, all interested in seeing what CAMEL was about.

While the bulk of the reorganization and refitting of the CAMEL facilities took place last year, we continued throughout this year to expand our capabilities and holdings. Through a generous grant from the Provost's Program for Academic Technology Innovation (ATI) we have been able to acquire both a large format map scanner and a large format plotter. This will allow us to scan entire large maps, including very fragile ones, into digital format for use with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and to professionally produce poster sized plans, imagery, and maps. CAMEL also played the leading role in setting up the Institute's new Multi-Terabyte Storage Server, which provides a large amount of secure disk storage space for not only CAMEL's data

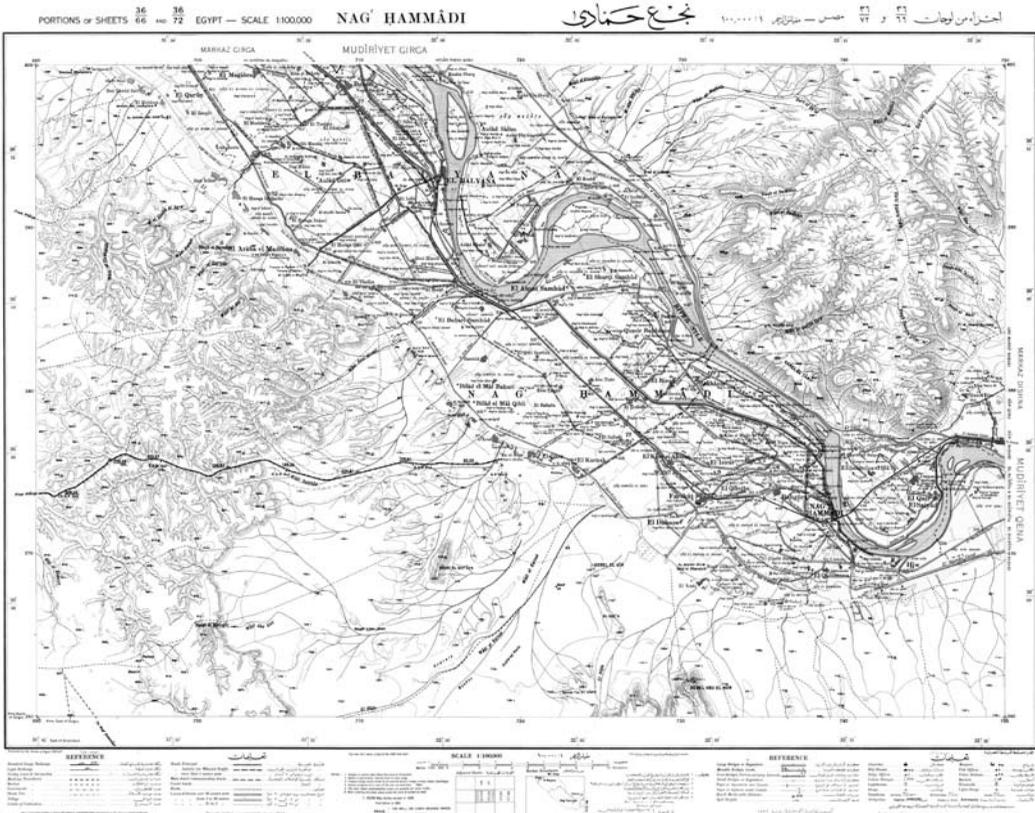
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Portion of a donated Quickbird image of the University of Chicago showing the Oriental Institute. Image courtesy of DigitalGlobe

holdings but also the invaluable data collected over the past one hundred years by the Institute’s researchers and staff.

CAMEL’s data holdings, the heart of its mission, also grew significantly during this past year. Generous donations of data from a number of researchers contributed to this growth, as did the sizable grant from the Women’s Board of the University of Chicago mentioned in last year’s *Annual Report*. Negotiations undertaken with the United States Geological Service (USGS), the organization that holds all the declassified Corona imagery, were successful in lowering our costs for the bulk purchase made possible through the Women’s Board grant. This will allow us to purchase almost 800, rather than 300, of these important declassified spy satellite images produced from the 1960s to the 1980s.



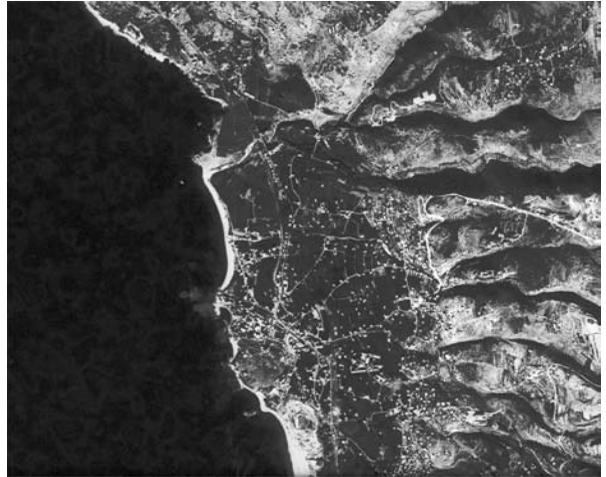
A British Survey of Egypt map produced in 1936, and scanned on our new large format scanner. Near the modern town of Nag' Hammâdi is the ancient city of Abydos, burial place of Egypt's first kings and a center for the worship of Osiris Khentyamentiu

However, not all of our new data acquisitions were taken by satellites or airplanes decades ago. In March of this year, CAMEL tasked the DigitalGlobe Quickbird satellite to take an image of the city of Samarra in Iraq. This occurred just weeks after the tragic bombing of the shrine and gave us almost immediate real time information on the wide variety of different types of destruction taking place at this important ancient and modern city. We look forward to continuing to work with DigitalGlobe and other commercial satellite providers in the years to come, as a way to provide up to date information on the modern landscape for research, policy generation, and site management.

Two additional long-term projects were begun this year to expand CAMEL's data holdings. The first is a project jointly undertaken with the Institute's Research Archives to scan and georectify the ca. 3,700 maps held within its collections. This will not only protect some of the fragile maps that date from the 1800s and early 1900s, but will also make the data they contain more readily available to researchers at the Institute and in the field. The second project, begun in conjunction with the Institute's Museum Archives, is to scan and when possible georectify the rich collection of aerial photographs and field maps collected and produced by researchers at the Institute since 1920. Together these two projects will greatly expand the unique vision we are able to offer to people of Middle Eastern landscapes, past and present, as they have been transformed over the past century.

Finally, CAMEL continued to play a role in teaching and training a range of students. The CAMEL facilities hosted several different classes during the year. The facilities and data were utilized by a number of students working at both the Master's and Doctoral level. In the past year, five theses were completed for Master's Degrees and one dissertation for a Doctoral Degree that made extensive use of our facilities and data. In addition, we are happy to report that Dr. Carrie Hritz, who worked for several years with CAMEL as a Research Associate, Interim Director, and then Associate Director, graduated this past year and has accepted an academic position with Washington University in St. Louis. We wish her well and thank her for her years of dedicated service.

So what lies ahead for CAMEL in the second year and beyond? In part the answer to this lies in the hands of our generous supporters. It is always quite exciting to receive a donated or acquired package of imagery and look through it to see what pieces to which puzzles it might hold. Such imagery, with the wealth of information it contains, has a way of leading you into areas you never expect to visit. On the other hand CAMEL is



The ancient and modern port city of Byblos, Lebanon, on the Mediterranean Sea coast as viewed from a declassified United States spy satellite image (ID# DS1105-2267DF026) taken on November 20, 1968. Image courtesy of the United States Geological Services



Portion of an aerial photo of the Euphrates in the Institute's collections, taken on May 4, 1961

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also actively seeking out partnerships that will enhance its ability to realize its vision more fully. In addition to discussions with the USGS, CAMEL also has discussed with NASA the possibility of forming an active partnership. I hope to be able to report on the fruits of these discussions next year, but in the meantime I would point you to our updated website (<http://oi.uchicago.edu/OI/PROJ/CAMEL/Main.html>) for more information on CAMEL and our activities.

Acknowledgments

I wish to personally thank the numerous supporters who donated maps and imagery, and who contributed financially to the continued work of CAMEL. Donations of maps, data, and imagery from outside of the Institute this year were received from: DigitalGlobe (Longmont, Colorado), Peter Piccione (University of Charleston, South Carolina), Nicholas Kouchoukos (University of Chicago), and Bert de Vries (Calvin College).

I would also like to thank all the students who worked with CAMEL this year. Joshua Trampier served exceptionally well in the role of Assistant Director, while Robert Tate continued to work with us in the role of Senior Supervisor. Student Assistants for the year were: Paul Christians, Jessica Jarvinen, Kathy Lemberg, Morning Washburn, and Bryan Kraemer. Volunteers who worked with us this year were Liz Rietz-Clark and Brian Wilson. All your efforts are highly appreciated.
