

RESEARCH ARCHIVES

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Introduction

When I started my job as the head of the Research Archives last summer, the first thing I had to do was to learn the daily routines and management of the library. While many aspects of the Archives have remained unchanged, I have implemented significant changes in the way the library is managed. A major concern was to make the transition smooth and unobtrusive for Archives users.

Acquisitions

During the past year, the Research Archives's holdings have increased by roughly 1,500 volumes. This represents an increase of approximately 50% from the previous couple of years. In addition to acquiring newly published items, we have purchased a number of important older publications that were missing in our holdings. In order to remain one of the world's foremost libraries in ancient Near Eastern studies, it is necessary to fill these gaps now before these items go out-of-print forever. Also, the Archives have received several hundred volumes as donations, both from private individuals and from the Regenstein Library.

Online Catalog

One of the main goals this year has been to develop the electronic catalog of the Research Archives into a powerful, comprehensive, and modern research tool. The ultimate goal is to make this catalog an indispensable research tool for all scholars of the ancient Near East. The electronic

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catalog (available online at <http://oilib.uchicago.edu/>) includes all books and journal articles/reviews acquired since 1990. Several years ago, Charles Jones started the process of retrospective cataloging of pre-1990 monographs and journals. For obvious reasons, this labor intense and time-consuming process has been rather slow in progress. Nevertheless, the value of the electronic catalog essentially depends on the level of confidence its users can have of its completeness. This emphasis on completeness is reflected in the dramatic increase of cataloged entries in the past year. In July 2005, the number of bibliographic records stood at less than 140,000. At the time of writing, the catalog contains slightly over 206,000 records. About 90% of all journal articles/reviews have been entered in the catalog, as well as roughly 30% of all monographs and about 40% of all serials. By this time next year, entry of all serials and journals should be complete, and approximately 50% of all monographs.

A further goal was to seamlessly incorporate online resources into the Archives catalog. In the past year, roughly 30,000 online journal articles or books have been made available as full-length PDFs. For example, all articles published in the journals *American Journal of Archaeology*, *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, *Cuneiform Digital Library Bulletin*, *Cuneiform Digital Library Journal*, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* and *Review of Biblical Literature* are now individually available in the online catalog, partly through the University's subscription to JSTOR and EBSCO. In addition, the catalog links to all Oriental Institute publications available online as well as 176 books available through the ETANA project. In the coming year, all articles in the journals *Antiquity*, *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale*, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, and *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* will be incorporated as well.

Finally, during the past year, the catalog received a completely new look. The display problems of bibliographic entries in the old catalog have been corrected, and search options have become more sophisticated and intuitive. The changes are not limited to the graphical user interface: to ensure robust and very fast access to the catalog, the six-year old software has been upgraded and the entire catalog has been moved to a new dedicated Apache server.

Computers

In the last couple of months, the office of the Research Archives has transitioned from Macintosh to PC computers. The three-year old Macs in the offices have moved out into the Archive Reading Room and replaced the very old and inadequate student terminals. The PCs work a lot faster and better with our cataloging program and make it easier for us to share data with other libraries.

Staff and Acknowledgments

Our team this past year included Annie Caruso, Kamran Cross, Foy Scalf, and Seunghee Yie. Alexander Eger masterly processed a significant private donation of largely Hebrew publications in May and June. I am most grateful to my assistants for all their help in the past year, and for their hard work cataloging new acquisitions as well as retrospective cataloging of monographs, series, and journal articles.
