

OI NEWSLETTER - FIRST MONDAY - MARCH 2004

FROM THE EDITOR

THE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE  
DEVELOPMENT

UNITS

COMPUTER LAB / John Sanders  
PUBLICATIONS / Tom Urban  
RESEARCH ARCHIVES / Chuck Jones

PROJECTS

CHD / Theo van den Hout  
METEOR / Michael Berger

INDIVIDUALS

ABBAS ALIZADEH  
CHUCK JONES  
CLEMENS REICHEL  
JASON UR

IN THE NEWS

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FROM THE EDITOR  
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This is the sixth OI Newsletter to appear by way of the automated mailing list:  
<https://listhost.uchicago.edu/mailman/listinfo/oi-newsletter>  
The archive of all fifty-six issues of the newsletter dating back to early 1998  
is accessible only to members of the list. If you wish to have access to the  
archive, please request your password from:  
[oinews@babylon-orinst.uchicago.edu](mailto:oinews@babylon-orinst.uchicago.edu)  
Please send any other inquiries about the newsletter to the same address.

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THE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE  
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Museum Director Search

As many of you already know, onsite interviews have begun for the OI museum  
director position. James Armstrong was the first to be interviewed at the end  
of February and the next three candidates are scheduled to arrive over the  
course of the next two weeks as follows:  
March 1 & 2: Regine Schulz  
March 4 & 5: Dan Rahimi  
March 8 & 9: Geoff Emberling  
Each candidate is meeting with the search committee as well as having separate  
meetings with voting members, museum staff, an all staff session, and individual  
half-hour interview sessions for those interested. We hope this provides enough  
opportunity for all OI faculty and staff to interact with each of the candidates  
and provide feedback to David Schloen, who is chairing the search committee.

Please contact Nicole if you fail to receive a detailed itinerary prior to a candidate visit. The search committee hopes to provide final recommendations to Gil shortly after the end of this review process.

#### CAMEL Remote Sensing Lab Director Search

A correction is required for last month's update on the CAMEL Research Associate search. A search committee was formed as noted, but at the committee's initial meeting, it was decided that a reposting and advertising for this position was not necessary due to the fact that the original pool of candidates provided enough talent to warrant further consideration. An onsite interview with an open-to-all presentation is already being planned for the beginning of April.

#### New Zooarchaeology research space

Construction of the new zooarchaeology research space in the archaeology common area will begin on March 4th, 2004 and will last about 5 weeks. Thanks to all of you who, on short notice, helped clean the common area of artifacts, equipment, and other items. The construction crew has agreed to limit their noisier tasks to the mornings, thus leaving the afternoons somewhat more peaceful. We apologize in advance for any inconvenience this causes you over the next month. Please contact Nicole if you have any complaints or if you are in need of more information regarding this upgrade to the facility.

#### Electrical Upgrade

As noted at our last all staff meeting, we should find out in the next week or so whether or not Facilities will be upgrading the interior electrical system of the OI this summer. As of our last discussion with the project manager, he is still waiting to get budgetary approval for this upgrade. If approved, work would begin this summer. If not approved, work will be rescheduled for next summer or thereafter. An email will go out to everyone once we hear of a decision. Please be assured that any work will be preceded by more detailed information on the process as well as sufficient notice regarding the schedule.

#### Breasted Hall AV

Also noted at our last all staff meeting, we are in the final stages of selecting a vendor to upgrade the AV/Sound capabilities of Breasted Hall. Thanks to those of you who provided feedback on issues we should take into account prior to changing any equipment. We hope the upgrade will provide Breasted Hall users with a reliable and easy to use system. Please email Nicole if you have any comments or suggestions regarding this upgrade.

#### Staff Changes

The OI is proceeding with a search for a new development director. The position has been posted and we're working with central development to form a list of potential candidates. Our goal is to have the position filled by the end of April.

#### Upcoming Meetings to Remember

Programming Meeting - Tuesday, March 9th 2 PM - LaSalle Room (Contact Nicole Torres to suggest potential events)

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DEVELOPMENT

2004 OI Gala

Planning continues for the OI's upcoming Gala which is scheduled for May 20th, 2004 at the Drake Hotel. A committee has been formed to ensure that we are progressing toward a successful event. This event requires the involvement of many faculty, staff and volunteers and we're hoping that we can count on your participation, especially those of you who have participated in past events. We will soon be contacting some of you to help participate in the planning and managing of this year's Gala.

Gift Tracking

We recently setup an internal database to track all gifts coming to the OI. This does not mean that gifts were not being tracked in the past. Central Development's ADDS system is a useful and powerful gift tracking tool, however, it does not provide us with timely and easy access to data on our gifts. A new system is being developed by central development but we thought it unwise to wait for this roll out. With our internal database, we can now easily access information such as restricted vs. unrestricted gifts, annual fund vs. standard, and can assign classifications to gifts that are more meaningful to the OI as opposed to the University as a whole. We hope this database will allow us to share more gift information with you in the future.

Notification of Gifts

Based on faculty and staff feedback, when a gift is provided to the OI for a specific project or program, the faculty or staff member responsible for that project will now receive a copy of the OI's "thank you" letter so that they are aware of the gift and can provide a personalized "thank you" note as well, if desired. We hope this process is the most efficient way to communicate with you regarding these gifts. As always, if you have any questions or concerns regarding our ability to get this information to you, do not hesitate to contact the development office.

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UNITS

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COMPUTER LAB / John Sanders

As mentioned in last month's Newsletter, we are close to finishing the preparatory work to allow the OI (well, a couple of "trusted agents" within the OI) to hand out Guest Usernames and Passwords for access to the university's network and the larger internet for individuals who visit the OI and need to connect from their own computer. Everyone will get an email from me announcing when this capability is actually up and running. It will not be long now.

The Manifold GIS software has arrived. I will be installing it on the large (19" monitor) Dell workstation in the Computer Lab the first week of March. Then it will be available for use by all. The only documentation presently on

hand is the online Help files, and some 2000 pages of manual in .pdf format on the installation CD. Once it is loaded and available I'll see what the consensus is on making a manual available.

The Q volume of the Chicago Demotic Dictionary is now available on the OI website, as is a recently updated version of the Iraq Museum database (now with circa 450 objects).

The Membership and Development offices are now operating on Dell Windows 2000 computers, replacing the G4 and G3 Macintosh computers of old. With the exception of the Director himself, the entire administrative operations of the OI has gone over to the dark side. So be careful out there, especially as you walk down the admin corridor of the building. The Windows-based evil-doers might convert you too!!!

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PUBLICATIONS / Tom Urban

New Book for Sale in the Suq at a 40% Discount from February 26 to March 26. Your cost is \$65.25 (includes tax).

Neo-Babylonian Texts in the Oriental Institute Collection

David B. Weisberg

Oriental Institute Publications 122

Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 2003

Pp. xxiv + 258; 72 plates. Case-bound 9.00" x 11.75"

ISBN 1-885923-28-7

\$100

After March 26, the volume can be purchased from: The David Brown Book Company, PO Box 511, Oakville, CT 06779; Tel: (+1) 860-945-9329, Toll Free: 1-800-791-9354; Fax: (+1) 860-945-9468; Email: david.brown.bk.co@snet.net; Website: www.oxbowbooks.com

We also published: The Demotic Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, Volume Q. Edited by Janet H. Johnson. Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 2004. 105 pages. PDF file. Available exclusively at: <http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/DEPT/PUB/SRC/CDD/CDD.html>

With Leslie Schramer, Katherine S. Burke, and Ali Witsell away for quite some time, either traveling (Leslie and Ali) or teaching (Katherine), Katie Johnson and Lindsay DeCarlo have stepped up to keep production rolling. We expect Katherine to return in mid-March and Leslie in early April.

If you noticed a different look in room 229, it's because we obtained another Mac G4 with large monitor and shifted the computers around to accommodate it. The system was given to us by Membership, which had to switch to Windows computers. Thank you Rebecca! The large monitor allows five manuscripts to be in production at the same time. We are now well set up for the return of the student editorial assistants.

Work continued on Tony Wilkinson's manuscript on Land Use in the Upper Lake Tabqa Dam Area (Tell es-Sweyhat 1; OIP 124); George Hughes's Demotic Texts in

the Brooklyn Museum (OIC 29); Brian Muhs's Demotic Tax Receipts in the Oriental Institute Collection; and Abbas Alizadeh's manuscript on Tall-e Bakun.

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RESEARCH ARCHIVES / Chuck Jones

During January, the staff of the Research Archives worked towards the completion of a number of projects.

Michael Beetley is continuing with the retrospective conversion of records to the on-line catalogues for titles acquired before about 1990. He has completed the conversion of records for all volumes in the "f" section

Foy Scalf has completed the unified abbreviations list. A paper-based copy of this is now floating around the offices. Once the transfer of the website to NSIT servers is complete we will work towards a searchable on-line version. In the meantime, Foy is learning the secrets of map cataloguing.

I again thank them both for filling in and working extra hours during my absence.

The new mailing list announced in January now has nearly three hundred subscribers: ETANA-Abzu-News serves to publicize developments at those projects, and includes monthly listings of items catalogues in Abzu (<http://www.etana.org/abzu/>), the Research Archives' digital catalogue of web-based scholarship on the ancient Near East.

Instructions for adding your address to the list, or for viewing list traffic on-line, can be found at:

<https://listhost.uchicago.edu/mailman/listinfo/ETANA-Abzu-news>

We finally have a door on one of the upper level spaces, which means we have secure storage for the first time in years and can finally begin to organize duplicates and other uncatalogued corpora.

As we enter this month, we are coming to the end of our first decade serving data on the Web. The very first component of our web-presence appeared in in April 1994, residing on a Macintosh computer operated by the University of Chicago's Computer Science Department Macintosh Laboratory.

In the final week of February 1995 (the first year for which we have full statistical data) we served 6835 files (ca. 130 megabytes) to 435 users of our site. Last week, the final week of February 2004, we served 632159 files (ca. 13.5 gigabytes) to more than 22 thousand users.

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PROJECTS

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CHD / Theo van den Hout

Things are moving along just fine at the CHD. All the material for words in SAR (and there are very many of them) is now completely ready in near-final version. Harry and I have established a definitive text, Rich implemented all the changes and he and Kathleen have already started proof reading them. Meanwhile, Rich is putting in all the changes for the remaining words starting in SA. Harry and I have started working on words beginning in SE/SI while keeping a close eye on how many we need for another new fascicle.

The eCHD P is now nearing its first launching: Sandy Schloen, our programmer, is working on the querying capabilities that form the last serious hurdle before we can go public. Hopefully, we will be able to follow the first electronic volume up relatively quickly with the older material of our first printed volume that covered the letters L/M/N. This material is only partly available in computer files and the status of those files is such that we could not use it for the kind of conversion that Sandy wants to subject them to. So the choice was either having it scanned or keyed in all over again. We have chosen for the former and thanks to a generous gift of a donor we have now been able to send a sample of the material off to Moscow to have it scanned and corrected. If the sample is to our liking we will have the rest of the material done as well.

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METEOR / Michael Berger

Under the direction of Professor Janet Johnson, development continues on the Middle Egyptian Text Editions for Online Research project. After the initial four-year grant expired at the end of 2001, the Mellon Foundation granted the project two no cost extensions, one for 2002 and one for 2003-04. METEOR is an annotated, interactive, electronic readingbook for Middle Egyptian, the classic stage of the ancient Egyptian language. The readingbook includes a corpus of texts representing the numerous genres represented in Middle Egyptian and appropriate for students beginning their study of that language and the hieroglyphic script. Students are able to access any section of each text, sentence by sentence, in hieroglyphs, and practice reading the hieroglyphs and transliterating and translating the text. A click of a button brings help with reading signs, understanding grammar, or finding vocabulary. In addition, there are extensive linked informational sidebars and graphics. The sidebars include brief explanations or descriptions of topics mentioned in the texts and supplementary chronological, geographical, historical, and cultural information. The graphics include digital maps and images illustrating Egypt, the areas where individual texts were discovered, items mentioned in the texts, and, to the extent possible, the actual individuals mentioned in the texts, thereby helping the student to place the individual texts in their social, cultural, religious, political, historical, and geographical contexts.

Most of the data entry of the transliteration, translation, lexical, and grammatical analyses of the 11 Middle Egyptian texts has been completed. Much of the cultural information, including historical and explanatory notes, images, maps, genealogical data, a sign-list of hieroglyphs, and a tutorial for writing hieroglyphs has been entered. During the summer of 2003, graduate students began to prepare a comprehensive bibliography and a mail-merge database of all images used in the readingbook. This database will be used to track the copyright status of every image. Students also began to proof-read all hieroglyphs, and



use, relating these changes to observed shifts in hydrological and sedimentary regimes, and assessing the implications of these shifts for environmental and taphonomic processes.

The combined archaeological and geomorphological evidence from our last season established various lines of evidence for shifting, intermittent occupation of the eastern Khuzestan plains in the Late Susiana period. Our observations thus support existing hypotheses about the development of specialized mobile pastoralism during this era and will contribute to understandings of its chronology and spatial organization. Importantly, our observations suggest that specialized pastoralism was not as a localized development but one that was related integrally to the development of hierarchical polities across western Iran through such mechanisms as the production of valuable textiles or the presentation of catalyzing military threat.

With the help of a generous grant from NSF and financial support from the Oriental Institute and the Department of Anthropology, this season we intended to expand our excavations and surveys in central Khuzestan as well as to explore the proper strategies to excavate and rescue Jundi Shapur, one of the most important Sasanian capital cities. Don Whitcomb from the OI and Dr. Masoud Azarnoush, the director of Archaeological Research Center of the ICHO were to jointly undertake this project in 2005.

With these goals in mind, I went to Tehran in January to find a suitable place to stay and provide the necessary materials for the expedition to arrive in February. Finding a place was easy, thanks to Mr. Talebian, the director of the Chogha Zanbil and Haft Tappeh Project. He offered us the very comfortable Haft Tappeh compound that is conveniently located some 20 kilometers southwest of our target region and sites.

Nevertheless, we experienced great difficulty in obtaining visas in time, despite sincere efforts by Mr. Mohammad Beheshti, the director of the ICHO. Because of our tight schedule and because a number of our specialists had to return to the States on specific dates, regrettably we had to postpone our project. We will regroup and hope to obtain our visas in time, especially because Mr. Beheshti intends to write a memo to the Foreign Ministry explaining the importance of timing the granting of visas for the international members of joint projects.

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CHUCK JONES

For a number of years, some of us have been thinking about applications of scanning technology to data capture, manipulation and distribution with respect to ancient Near Eastern artifacts. In our work on the Persepolis Fortification Tablets, Matt Stolper and I have been contemplating the implications of repatriation. 3D Scanning is one of several possible archiving techniques we began to investigate. A number of tablet scanning projects, or experiments, have been undertaken in various places, with the most ambitious being the "Digital Hammmurabi" project at The Johns Hopkins University. Results of that project are not expected for several years. A group of us began to look for what was commercially available, Gene Gragg enlisted the help of a volunteer, Tom

Pedersen, with considerable experience in these matters. He compiled an impressive dossier on the commercially available scanning tools. With Patrick Durusau of the SBL, I identified one particular tool and visited Detroit in 2001 for a personalized demonstration using a cast of a tablet. One particular commercial scanning enterprise submitted an ambitious, and prohibitively expensive, proposal.

Recently we have been talking with Roberto Marquez, of the University's Digital Media Laboratory, and Lec Maj, the Humanities Division's computer research support officer. Both of them have been looking into similar sorts of tools for other interested groups on campus. As a consequence we have had a series of demonstrations of, so far, three different approaches to three-dimensional scanning. This past week we had the most recent demonstration, this time of an engineering/surveying tool designed to scan and record in great detail fairly large spaces, like bridges, small buildings, piles of coal, caves (and probably well suited for archaeological sites, ancient structures, internal and external spaces?). This tool shows great promise as a surveying instrument but is not designed to offer the kind of detail needed for small object scanning, or even for Chicago-house style epigraphy of texts on walls or blocks.

Other demonstrations are being arranged. Those who wish to participate should contact me (or John Sanders, Roberto Marquez, or Lec Maj). If past experience is any guide, we can expect presentations to take anywhere from two to five hours!

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CLEMENS REICHEL

During the month of February I finished an extensive structural overhaul of our Iraq Museum Database. The new layout is now fully relational, enabling systematic data entry and permitting systematic searches of multi-variate data entries. The data is entered into a dynamic database on a local machine; for output onto the web this data is scripted to html pages. Elaborate output programs have made the data output very easy, allowing updates of our webpages with no manual work involved. Currently there are 1320 objects in the local database, of which 508 (as of 2/25) are displayed on the web. We are putting a heightened emphasis on cylinder seals from the Iraq Museum, which are confirmed to have been stolen, and the Nimrud Ivories, whose status at the Iraq Museum remains uncertain. We are able to document some 650 Diyala cylinder seals from our own archival material, to which some 100 seals from Abu Salabikh, supplied by the British School of Archaeology, can now be added. I still have no clear idea how many ivories from Nimrud from the Iraq Museum we can document--scans of them, which were most generously supplied by Georgina Herrmann (University of London), also include material from other museums--but the numbers are clearly in the thousands. Karen Terras, our faithful volunteer, who has been doing most of the principal data entry, clearly has her work cut out for herself for the next few...month?...years?

A catalogue of objects looted from Iraq's provincial museums in 1991 after the first Gulf War, which was kindly sent to us by Nicholas Postgate, will be added successively to our site--a preliminary count indicates that it contains over 2000 objects. Since only about half a dozen of these objects were ever recovered

