

OI NEWSLETTER - FIRST MONDAY - NOVEMBER 2004

FROM THE EDITOR

THE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

UNITS

- COMPUTER LAB / John Sanders
- MEMBERSHIP OFFICE / Maria Krasinski
- MUSEUM EDUCATION / Carole Krucoff
- RESEARCH ARCHIVES / Chuck Jones

PROJECTS

- CHD / Theo van den Hout
- EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY / W. Raymond Johnson
- IRAQ WORKING GROUP / Chuck Jones

IN THE NEWS

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 FROM THE EDITOR
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 The archive of all issues of the newsletter dating back to
 early 1998 is accessible only to members of the list. If you wish to
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 THE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE
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Comparative Semitist Search - Progress Report

We are moving forward with the search for a Comparative Semitist. The joint OI-NELC search committee chaired by Walter Farber prepared the position advertisement, which was then reviewed and unanimously approved by the voting members at their October 27, 2004 meeting. We will be conducting an international search and hope to bring in finalist candidates for interviews starting at the end of February 2004.

New OI Electronic Publications Policy

A committee chaired by Jan Johnson developed a formal policy on electronic publications; this was approved unanimously by the OI voting members at the October 27, 2004 meeting. The new policy marks a tremendous step forward for the Oriental Institute. The key element of the new policy is that we will make available all previous and new OI publications in PDF form on our website. The PDF files will be available online without charge; higher resolution scans, when available, could be made available for a fee. Precautions such as watermarks on

images or security settings on PDF-files will be used, as appropriate, to safeguard intellectual property. As it becomes possible, annotated, searchable, and/or modified versions will be posted.

OI Building Emergency Committee

This committee was formed to review and update building emergency plans. Steve Beaudoin from Facilities Services has agreed to serve on the committee to help us ensure that the committee's proposals are aligned with campus policies and systems. Please contact Olivia Boyd if you have specific concerns or suggestions that you would like the committee to consider.

OI Website Committee

A group of faculty and staff have begun meeting to review the OI's current website and suggest improvements in the design, organization and administrative structure that will keep the site current and continuously updated with new information. This review was called for due to the change over from managing content and changes on our own internal OI server to an NSIT supported system. We hope that these upgrades will enhance a user's experience when visiting our website. Please contact John Sanders if you have specific concerns or suggestions that you would like the committee to consider.

OI Quarterly Meeting, November 10th

An OI Quarterly meeting will be held on November 10th from 3:00 to 5:00pm in the LaSalle Bank room. Besides updates on current programs and issues involving the OI, Seth Sanders will be giving an update on the upcoming Oriental Institute conference "Margins of writing, origins of cultures: Unofficial writing in the ancient Near East and beyond" scheduled for February 25-26, 2005 and we'll be handing out Employee Service Awards to staff. Light snacks, beer, wine and refreshments will be provided during the meeting.

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COMPUTER LAB / John Sanders

Plans for the merger of the Computer Laboratory and one part of the CAMEL lab in Rm. 202 are well underway. Necessary electrical, networking, and desktop/table hardware changes have been accessed, and the process of change is about to begin. The renovation will require the closing of the current facilities for an as yet undetermined amount of time, presumably in November or December. More details will follow as the plans firm up.

The first designs for the new OI website were presented to the Web Design Committee in late October, and discussions refining the new "look and feel," and navigation continue. As soon as possible we will present one or more designs to the entire faculty and staff for comments. Stay tuned.

Due to the notion of "free" printing, which isn't really free, "outsider" use of our printing facilities, and great paper and toner waste within the building, we are in the process of rethinking the way printing, scanning, and photocopying is

handled throughout the building, looking at a solution to combine all three into one piece of hardware, and having some yet to be determined number of these machines placed in strategic locations throughout the building. Once again, stay tuned. Ideally, we would like a system with account number to track usage for faculty and staff, University ID card access for students, and coin operations for visitors to the Research Archives. One possible solution would allow scanning of paper or books directly into an Adobe PDF file, which would then be emailed to the users email account - reducing paper waste if electronic access is what is desired in the first place.

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MEMBERSHIP OFFICE / Maria Krasinski

On October 20th, the documentary film premiere of "Persepolis Recreated," from director Farzin Rezaeian, drew a huge and enthusiastic crowd. The program was co-sponsored by the Membership and Education Offices, Iran House of Chicago, the Iranian Cultural Society, and the Center for Middle Eastern Studies; However, the event would not have been possible without Abbas Alizadeh's outstanding coordination from the outset.

Here is Margaret Schroeder's report from the front lines:

From what I saw, and gather from reading the figures and talking to other people, the Persepolis film showings, reception, and Book / DVD sale was a staggering success.

The first film showing at 6:00 "sold out" at 6:05. We filled every single seat in the hall, then, following fire regulations, we had to close the doors and turn people back, telling them to please come back for the 8:00 show. People had begun coming in for the 6:00 show before 4:00, some of them clutching copies of the Tribune article from Tuesday. This indicates that the Tribune article was a great success in garnering people to come to the film.

Abbas estimates that they sold perhaps 150 to 175 copies of the DVD & book boxed set of the film. The reception was jam-packed; Every scrap of food was eaten.

Some of the people turned back for the 6:00 film indicated they would not be able to stick around for the 8:00 film, so at least some people were disappointed. However, the 8:00 film showing was not a "sell-out," so all the people who did hang around got an opportunity to see the film.

Numbers:

- 6:00 film showing: 272 (maximum capacity)
- We turned away about 50 people from the 6:00 showing.
- 8:00 film showing: 166 people
- Between 4:00 and 8:30, we counted 312 people in the galleries. This includes people attending the reception, waiting for the 8:00 film showing, etc. (I think this number may be somewhat under-representative....)

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MUSEUM EDUCATION / Carole Krucoff

Fall adult education courses began in October, with excellent participation for both on-campus and correspondence courses. Instructors this quarter include Malayna Evans-Williams, who is teaching an on-campus course on "Religion and Magic in Ancient Egypt," and Andrew Baumann and Jackie Jay, who have close to 60 students for their 'Hieroglyphs by Mail" course.

Other courses are readying members and friends for new museum exhibits by focusing on themes related to the galleries in the new East Wing. Theo van den Hout is teaching an on-campus course on "The Land Where the Sun Rises: An Introduction to Ancient Anatolia" and Gabrielle Novacek is teaching at the downtown Gleacher Center on " Digging for God and Country: The Archaeological Excavation of the Holy Land." Aaron Burke is reaching a statewide and national audience with "Warfare and Empire in the Ancient World," a course on audio-tape.

Special programs filled the museum's galleries this month. See the Membership section for a description of the film premiere that drew huge crowds to see a new documentary on Persepolis. Guided tours, lectures, and a special Sunday film showing brought nearly 400 visitors to the museum for the University's Parents Weekend and Humanities Day. And hundreds of parents and costumed children joined us for "Mummy's Night," a pre-Halloween celebration that featured films, hands-on activities, music, and storytelling in conjunction with the city of Chicago's celebration of Book Month in October.

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RESEARCH ARCHIVES / Chuck Jones

In October, Abzu, the Research Archives' catalogue of data relevant to the study and public presentation of the Ancient Near East via the Internet, completed ten years of continuous service on-line:

<http://www.etana.org/abzu/>

At the moment Abzu includes 7163 records.

Many will remember that Abzu was integrated into ETANA (<http://www.etana.org/>) in 2002 with funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. You can receive occasional e-mails detailing news of these projects by subscribing to the ETANA-Abzu-news list:

<https://listhost.uchicago.edu/mailman/listinfo/etana-abzu-news>

As reported by John Sanders, work continues on the redevelopment of the OI's website with a team from NSIT and a committee from the OI. Some really interesting design ideas are under consideration.

Durung October 122,421 unique visitors came to the Oriental Institute website, as determined by the number of unique IP addresses. The web site received 174,281 visits, and served 2,871,543 files. A typical visitor examined 13.24 distinct files before leaving the site. A typical visit lasted for 5.15 minutes. The longest visit lasted for 1,439 minutes. The web server delivered 31,655 unique documents one or more times each. The web server was linked to by 85,269 distinct pages on other web servers. The web server was linked to by one or more pages found on 4,658 distinct web sites.

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CHD / Theo van den Hout

Early this year we sent out a copy of the CHD L-N volume to a group in Moscow under the supervision of Prof. Alexei Kassian. The goal was to have all 477 pages scanned and corrected. Just a few weeks ago all the material came back and the quality of the scan is excellent. We have long about how to get a reliable digital version of this earliest part of the CHD. The files that we have are of doubtful quality and do not match the eventual printed version anyhow. The choice was to have everything either keyed in all over again or to have it scanned. At about the same time when we had decided to go for the latter option, we received a very fortunate gift from a donor which made it possible to put this into effect. This means that we will be able to have the very first version of the P volume of the eCHD followed fairly soon by the L-N material!

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EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY / W. Raymond Johnson

Luxor is still hot as a six-shooter (upper 90s F), but we are all very well and quickly settling back into the Chicago House routine. The season paperwork went smoothly in Cairo, thanks to the kind assistance of Amira Khattab and the American Research Center. Our permissions all came through in good order, and I signed the contract for our six-month field season at SCA headquarters in Zamalek with director of Foreign Missions Magdi Ghandour. On arrival in Luxor I delivered the contract to our local SCA director Dr. Holeil Ghaly, and a copy to west bank director Ali Asfar. We reopened the Small Amun temple at Medinet Habu Monday October 18, and transferred most of our ladders, scaffolding and equipment the next day. Over the next two days Brett McClain and I collated the red-painted inscription on the red-granite naos, recently cleaned by conservator Lotfi Hassan. Brett, who pencilled the inscription (inked by Margaret De Jong) deserves credit for teasing out the devilishly difficult-to-see names and titulary of Ptolemy IX; his efforts are a major contribution to the history of the small Amun temple complex. The painted inscription was intended to be a guide for carving the inscription in sunk relief, but the carving was never even started. While we may not know who originally commissioned the naos, thanks to our team's combined efforts we now know that it was no later than Ptolemy IX. Brett and I needed to finish the collation so that stone cutter Dany Roy could move the whole naos to the other side of the room for restoration; special scaffolding is being erected in the naos room now in preparation for the move. Earlier in the week Dany and his workmen Ali, Sayid, and Hassan removed the tile floor laid in the two southern sanctuaries. Now the original, very well-preserved stone floor is exposed, something the local SCA officials have been wanting us to do for years, and I will admit that it looks terrific. Some isolated patching will be necessary, but most of the paving stones are intact.

Several days later we resumed our activities at Luxor Temple, with staff photographer Yarko Kobylecky and assistant Gharib taking our annual reference photographs of the Colonnade Hall walls and column bases to document the salt efflorescence and progressive decay of the sandstone. This year the salt and staining from high groundwater was exceptionally pronounced all over the temple,

and we extended our documentation to include parts of the Ramesses II court as well, interior and exterior, and the alleyway of sphinxes (all 70+ of them) in front of the temple. Word is that the groundwater lowering project for Luxor and Karnak Temples is going ahead in the new year, and not a moment too soon; the salt and decay has never been so bad.

Tina Di Cerbo and our workmen did an outstanding job this year cleaning and opening the house for the season; Tina started a bit earlier to do some painting in the front offices and hall, and to finish before the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan (October 15). The house and grounds were spic and span by the time we arrived, and the gardens were green and lush. As I said, the heat has been intense, but it's been a pleasant change from our cool summer in Chicago! I am pleased to welcome new staff member Marie Bryan, who started work as Chicago House librarian this past Monday, when we reopened the library for the season. Jen Kimpton, who has very capably minded the library half-time for the last two seasons will now join epigraphers Brett and Harold Hays at the MH wall full time.

Because of Ramadan, the archaeological activity in Luxor is at a minimum for the time being, but there are a number of groups working: Daniel Polz at Dra Abu El Naga; the French at the Ramesseum, Andriej Niwinski and his Polish team in the Deir El-Bahri cliffs, a group from Pisa also working in Dra Abu El Naga, Ted Brock in the Valley of the Kings, and the Franco-Egyptian Center at Karnak. Most of these mission members joined us for our annual Halloween party last night (the 30th), the opening gathering of the season. Wednesday afternoon I met with the Karnak inspectors, SCA Luxor director Dr. Holeil, Ted Brock, and Franco-Egyptian Center directors at east Karnak to look at a road the city is constructing right over the site of Akhenaten's Aten temple complex. We explained why this was not a good idea, and they will now effect to bring the project to an end. Constant vigilance is necessary out here, even around the major antiquities sites.

One other important milestone: Yarko and our engineers Nashet and Sammy have finished a prototype flat-bed blueprint box which utilizes black-light tubes instead of natural sunlight. During the last few years we have experienced fewer and fewer of the really clear days needed for the best blueprinting with natural sunlight, the effect of increased humidity and greatly changing times. Yarko has been testing the time needed for proper black and blue prints, and the device works beautifully. No longer are we slaves to the daylight, but are able to blueprint at any time of the day or night.

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IRAQ WORKING GROUP / Chuck Jones

During the Summer the Iraq Working group published the following on-line:

Gibson, McGuire; McMahan, Augusta. Lost Heritage: Antiquities Stolen from Iraq's Regional Museums, Fascicle 1. Chicago: American Association for Research in Baghdad; 1992. 1 volume (xii + 54 pages [illustrated]): American Association for Research in Baghdad, 1155 E. 58th St., Chicago IL 60637, USA.

