

# MUSEUM

DENISE BROWNING, LAURA D'ALESSANDRO, JEAN M. EVANS,  
ANNE FLANNERY, and HELEN MCDONALD

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The staff of the Oriental Institute Museum had a productive year of activity increasingly focused on realizing the aims of the Gallery Enhancements Project (GEP), which is on schedule to be completed for the celebration of the 2019 Centennial of the Oriental Institute during the 2019–20 academic year. Because of the GEP, we have reduced some of our other activities, including special exhibitions, object loans, and research visits.

## GALLERY ENHANCEMENTS PROJECT

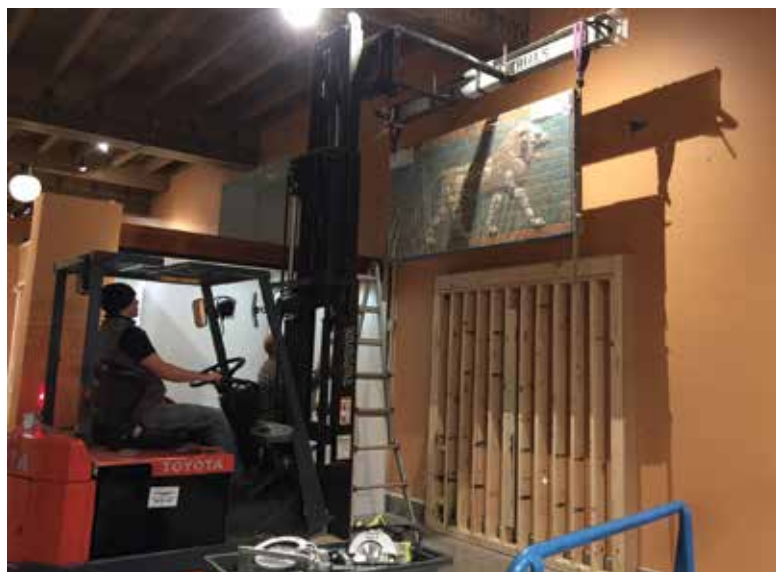
In 2014, the Oriental Institute Museum initiated the Gallery Enhancements Project, the principal aim of which is to improve the visitor experience in the galleries through updated displays, improved lighting, and the replacement of freestanding cases, many of which date to the 1931 opening of the Museum in its current location and earlier. The project has been made possible through the generosity of an anonymous donor and additional funding.

At the end of the last fiscal year, some fifty-five cases were ordered from Helmut Guenschel, Inc., based in Baltimore. This past fiscal year, we received and installed two of the five display case deliveries. We continue to work with our same outside exhibition design team of Elizabeth Kidera (Museum Exhibit Design and Architecture) as exhibition designer, Franck Mercurio (Mercurio-Exhibits) as exhibition developer, and Lori Walsh (Walsh Graphic Design) as senior graphic designer.

The elimination of graphic repetition and the consolidation of graphics continues to be a focus of our work. We continue to produce new display case designs for both existing cases that will not be replaced in addition to the new Guenschel cases. In particular, the GEP work in the Henrietta Herbolzheimer, M.D. Syro-Anatolian Gallery and the Haas and Schwartz Megiddo Gallery is completed. We are currently completing The Joseph and Mary Grimshaw Egyptian Gallery. In the coming year, our focus will be on the Edgar and Deborah Jannotta Mesopotamian Gallery, the Yelda Khorsabad Court Gallery, the Dr. Norman Solkhah Family Assyrian Empire Gallery, and the Robert and Deborah Aliber Persian Gallery.

For the GEP, Conservation continued their role of object-driven activities over the course of the year, assisting with the deinstallation of objects from their display cases and examining them in the Conservation laboratory to assess their condition and determine if stabilizing treatments were needed. At the same time, the mounts that hold the objects in the displays were assessed to check their functionality. Where necessary, new mounts were specified or modifications of existing mounts were recommended. Material identification of the objects in the collection continued. The Conservation lab's hand-held x-ray fluorescence spectrometer has been of immeasurable value in this activity. We corrected many of the historical designations that were based on visual identifications and have proven to often be incorrect.

Testing of display materials ensured that any product used inside a display case would not emit harmful volatiles that could contribute to the deterioration of the collection. Conservation treatments continued on the objects that required intervention to ensure their long-term survival. Even with



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Figure 1. Moving the Babylonian lion panels in January 2018. Figure 2. Borescope being used to examine the interior of Sennacherib's Prism (OIM A2793). Figure 3. Conservators Stephanie Black (left) and Alison Whyte (right) place a protective cover over a wooden boat model (OIM E11492).

museum quality climate-control and other passive measures taken to ensure the long-term preservation of the collection, such as light restrictions and use of inert display materials, an archaeological collection is often difficult to stabilize and must be closely monitored.

Museum Registration has kept track of objects as they come off display, move around between different departments, and eventually go back on display (or back into storage if they are no longer being used). To do this we have been using the IDB to keep a deinstallation record for each case to which all the affected object records are attached and then a reinstallation record to which different objects are sometimes attached (this depends on how many objects are new additions to the case, how many are not going back on display, and if some objects are moving from one display case to another). When objects are being deinstalled the registrars arrange housing and object and case labels so that every object has the relevant labels with it as it moves through the Conservation and Preparation departments. Quite a lot of cases have been deinstalled twice; once when their gallery was being repainted and again when their case was being replaced. Registration has also been bringing new objects out of storage when requested by the curators and has been sending them up to the Conservation lab for assessment. Additionally, Registration checks the registration numbers and any available information in Registration as well as the accession records for the label copy before the new case labels are printed.

Finally, thank you to the many of members of the OI community who have shared their enthusiasm for the GEP with us.

## MUSEUM ATTENDANCE

The total number of visitors to the Museum in the past fiscal year (July 1, 2017–June 30, 2018) was 45,070. The decline from 2017 in the number of visitors is likely a reflection of the gallery closings that were necessary for the Gallery Enhancements Project. Every gallery in the Museum experienced closing of at least a few weeks this past year. Many thanks to Victor Cruz, director of Visitor Services and Security, for recording our visitor statistics.



## CONSERVATION

Conservation welcomed a new staff member to the lab in July to assist with the GEP activities. Stephanie Black, assistant conservator, joined the Oriental Institute after working as a conservator and laboratory technician for UCL Qatar’s MSC Conservation Studies training program. Stephanie holds an MA and an MSc from the University of London’s Institute of Archaeology graduate conservation training program. One of her most interesting projects to date was working on Sennacharib’s Prism this past winter. The prism’s interior was exhibiting crystalline growths which were able to be viewed by the lab’s borescope (fig. 2). Stephanie successfully cleaned and stabilized the interior, allowing the prism to be returned to display in the Assyrian gallery.

Alison Whyte, associate conservator, was notified that the paper she co-authored with Simona Cristanetti, “The Conservation of the Coffin of Ipi Ha Ishutef,” was accepted for publication in the *Proceedings Second Vatican Coffin Conference*, Musei Vaticani, Rome. On a slightly smaller scale, one of Alison’s more interesting conservation treatments of 2018 focused on a boat model from the Egyptian collection. During its time in the lab, the boat was protected from the sprinkler system when not actively undergoing conservation (fig. 3). After stabilization of the fragile painted decoration and cleaning of the surface, the boat model was returned to display in the Egyptian gallery.



LEFT:  
Figure 4.  
The all-  
Museum  
*Highlights*  
volume edited  
by Jean M.  
Evans, Jack  
Green, and  
Emily Teeter was  
published and  
is now on sale in  
the Suq.

Conservation hosted several groups over the year with very abbreviated tours of the lab due to the number of objects from the GEP taking up every available surface and making it difficult to maneuver safely around the objects. One of the larger tours was a group from the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois that was organized by special arrangement with our colleagues at the Regenstein Library. Participants from twenty-seven different institutes of higher education toured the lab in the spring and were very enthusiastic about the opportunity to learn about the treatment of 3-D objects.

Conservation attended a special viewing of the exhibit “Mummies: Images of the Afterlife” hosted by our colleagues at the Field Museum of Natural History and presented by the curator of the exhibit, Field Museum Conservator JP Brown. Conservation also attended a workshop on Oddy testing issues at the Field Museum, where participants from the Art Institute, the OI, and the Field Museum discussed the latest developments in testing methodologies for materials used inside display cases.

An important role of conservation is encouraging the interest of future conservators. To that end, the lab hosted several visitors over the course of the year who had expressed interest in pursuing careers in conservation. The potential future conservators are always appreciative of the opportunity to visit a conservation laboratory and speak with professional conservators about their experiences.

## REGISTRATION

With so many objects off display for the GEP, Registration made the most of this opportunity to photograph and measure as many as possible and add those images and measurements to the database. In the last year, 5,560 images have been added to the IDB.

Registration work on the new Exhibition Objects module continued this year. The design and narrative, mentioned in last year’s report, were submitted late summer 2017. By January 2018, we had the first test version installed. Comprehensive testing was done and any issues were submitted to the database company, Axiell. In June 2018, we completed our third round of testing. At this point, all major changes have been made and bugs corrected. The fourth test version is currently under construction and we hope to begin testing soon. We should go live with the module later this year.

In May 2018, the associate registrar Susan Allison began managing photo permissions and new photography. Thus far, incoming photo requests have been heavy. The majority are requests for archival images, but also include object photo requests. The amount of time it takes to process an order varies widely and depends largely on the accessibility of the image(s) requested. If images aren’t readily available, new high-resolution images will need to be created or new object photography may be necessary. A fair amount of research is also involved if the requester does not know either the image or object registration number of the image in question. The orders are managed in our IDB.

The photographer now works directly with Registration. Susan puts the new photography on the schedule and pulls the objects needed from either display or storage. Our new Exhibition Objects module, detailed separately in this report, includes an updated request workflow, which will allow us to better manage photography requests. After the photographs are approved, the images are registered with digital numbers, entered into the database, and attached to the corresponding object record.

The registrar embarked on a reorganization of our temporary storage boxes this year, an inventory of them having been carried out in 2014. Thirty boxes have been unpacked and a further 320 boxes have been moved within storage to consolidate the space they take up and to make them more accessible. This work is ongoing.

## ***Loans***

A loan of Nubian beads for LA-ICP MS analysis went out to Laure Dussubieux at the Field Museum and has now returned. Our loan to the Booth School of Business on campus has been renewed for a further year (see it on display in a case in the Booth school lobby). We have just renewed a loan of two objects from the Art Institute that are on display in our Egyptian gallery (a baked clay orant figure in the chronology case and a stone relief in the same display case as the child mummy).

## ***Requests***

Registration has responded to 152 different requests this year for the following reasons: Gallery enhancements (19 requests); research (54); class use (30); photography (31); and special events/viewing (13). All this activity affected over 10,600 different objects and generated over 53,000 object movements. The gallery enhancements project accounted for over 4,500 object movements. Slightly fewer than 4,400 object moves were related to location changes or inventory. Just over 2,500 object moves were related to research of all kinds and just over 500 moves related to class use. Photography requests accounted for 1,030 object moves and around 500 objects have been registered. Some 38,000 moves were related to returning objects to storage or display that had been out for all of the reasons listed above. Compared to recent years this was a busy year for classes.

An additional 75 different requests involved the tablet collection (affecting over 1,700 different objects and 5,900 object movements). While the tablet curator's assistant moved the objects in question, the registrars kept the request records and carried out all the location changes for the objects in the IDB.

## ***Visiting Researchers***

We were honored to be able to continue the Oriental Institute Collections Research Grant programs thanks to the generous support of O. J. Sopranos. The following applicants were funded to carry out research on the collections: Marie-Laure Chambrade (University of Lyon, project entitled "Water-scapes of Ancient Persia from the Bird's-Eye View of the Friend of Iran"); Serenella Mancini (Sapienza University of Rome, project entitled "The Pottery from Istakhr in the Oriental Institute Museum"); and Albert Planelles Orozco (Universidad de Alcalá, project entitled "The Epistolary Genre in the Cuneiform Archives from Nuzi"). Remaining funds were allocated for the purchase of a high-quality camera for the tablet room.

This year we accommodated a range of visiting researchers in addition to the three visits relating to the collections research grant awards made in 2017:

- Lindsay Allen (King's College London) was awarded a CRG for the study of the stone architectural sculpture from Persepolis acquired by the OI through the Oriental Institute's Persian Expedition in Iran (1931–1939) and the associated archival material from the excavations at Persepolis. This material will assist Allen in her creation of a catalog of object biographies of Persepolitan fragments held in museums outside of Iran.
- Astrid Nunn (Julius-Maximilians University, Würzburg), Barbara Jändl (Archäologische Staatssammlung, Munich), and Heinrich Piening (Bayerische Schlösserverwaltung) were awarded a CRG for the study of pigment on Diyala statues visited and examined fifty statues and fragments in the Conservation lab (October/November).
- Serenella Mancini (La Sapienza University of Rome) was awarded a CRG to study Islamic pottery from Istakhr (Iran). She visited for November and December and examined around 180 pots and 16 drawers of sherds.

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- Aaron de Souza (PhD graduate, Macquarie University, Australia) studied Egyptian pan grave material as part of his CRG award. While most of the material is a loan stored in the arch labs with Bruce Williams, he also looked at material from Hiw in the Museum collection.
- Anette Schomberg (postdoctoral fellow, University of Berlin) visited to conduct 3-D scanning of the stone water clock in the Egyptian gallery in July (E16875).
- Anastasia Amrhein (PhD Candidate, University of Pennsylvania) visited to study Neo-Assyrian and Achaemenid seals and their impressions (August).
- Stephane Fetler (PhD Candidate, Université Libre de Bruxelles) visited to photograph mummy cartonnage and coffin fragments of the Twenty-first and Twenty-second Dynasties (December). While it was not possible to get this material out, we were able to take Stephane into storage to take the images he needed without moving or handling any of the objects.
- Atefeh Razmjoo (working with Abbas Alizadeh) studied drawers of Chogha Mish sherds to try to identify Late Susiana 1 sherds (December/January).
- Margarita Gleba (McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, University of Cambridge UK) came in to examine textile traces on one of the Egyptian mirrors while attending the post graduate conference on textiles (E18836). This examination took place in the Conservation lab.
- Marina Pucci (University of Florence) came in to check the details on a few Chatal Höyük objects for her forthcoming publication and requested photography of some scarabs from the site.
- Douglas Inglis (PhD student, Texas A&M University) came in to study an Egyptian pot decorated with an incised boat (April).
- Jaś Elsner (University of Oxford, UK) looked at Coptic textiles while visiting the Logan center (April).
- Fr. Sharbel Iskander Bcheiry (American Theological Society) came in to study some Syriac folios (A12000–A12006). He is about to publish an article on sections of manuscripts A12008 in *Parole de L'Orient*.
- Lynn Welton (CRANE project, University of Toronto) studied Amuq sherds and some statue fragments from Tayinat while in Chicago to give a lecture on the CRANE project (May/June).
- Antonino Crisa (University of Warwick, UK) visited to study Palymyrene tokens in June.

In addition to visits we have answered queries about Egyptian archery equipment (Samantha Cook, University of Liverpool), Amuq phase A stone vessels (Philip Edwards La Trobe university, answered with the assistance of Carol Meyer)

### ***Classes and Special Events***

Summer 2017

- Arabic manuscripts including Kufic Quran folios and some Arabic historical textual fragments were made available for a viewing by attendees of the Working with Arabic-Script Manuscripts in Africa workshop held at Northwestern University on August 17.
- A backstage tour for the Hittite conference attendees on August 29 showed them a selection of sculpture and architectural elements as well as Alishar pottery and Hittite tablets.
- A selection of objects from the Book of the Dead special exhibit were taken up to the gallery for a preview for the OI Advisory Council on September 27. UChicago News filmed selected objects from the same special exhibit in the Conservation lab on September 14.

## Fall 2017

- Yousef Casewit (Divinity School) used a selection of eight Arabic manuscripts for his graduate course on codicology and manuscript editorial techniques.
- Persis Berlekamp (Art History) used a selection of eighteen Arabic manuscripts for her graduate seminar on Arts of the Book in the Islamic World (November 10th).
- Donald Whitcomb used a selection of Islamic sherds from Khirbet Kerak for a class in the autumn term.
- Alice Yao (Anthropology) used a drawer of lithics for a class in October.
- Rachel Schine brought her class in to look at a selection of Hebrew and Arabic inscribed material.
- Franklin Lewis (NELC) used a small number of Arabic manuscripts for classes in both the autumn and winter terms.

## Winter 2018

- Foy Scalf used a selection of manuscripts and book bindings for an evening class for Dominican University. The class visited in February.

## Spring 2018

- Foy Scalf and the members of his Coptic evening class visited to look at a selection of Coptic ostraca and manuscripts.
- James Osborne taught a class on ceramic technology which made use of a wider variety of sherd material. All eleven of the students came in to study and write a paper on one particular vessel.
- Brian Muhs taught a class that used a selection of Demotic ostraca. Each of the students also studied their own selection of ostraca for class papers.
- Robert Ritner used the usual selection of heart scarabs for the Beginning Hieroglyphs class.

## MUSEUM ARCHIVES

The 2017–18 year was filled with a variety of projects, researchers, and events for the Museum Archives. Great strides were made in the way of access and research, as well as administrative improvements. The Museum Archives continues to refine its mission, policies, access, and discoverability in order to best serve its research and scholarly communities.

### Access

Students and volunteers tirelessly cataloged the Museum Archive's collections this year, in particular the Oriental Institute's Negative Collection. We are nearing 80% completion on this project which means that over 35,000 folder-level records have been cataloged since 2016. This translates into a collection that allows researchers to access an image's description and learn its location and any identification numbers associated with it. This involves greater access to a photographic collection that is widely used by research and scholarly communities. This is a huge boost in transparency for the archives since this information was not previously accessible to the public.

The Museum Archives has also provided the Research Archives access to negative cards and expedition records for digitization. The generosity and resources of the Research Archives will allow records to become even more beneficial to researchers in the coming year.

In addition to cataloging archival records, old media — such as reel-to-reel film and cassette tapes — continue to be digitized and made available through the Oriental Institute's YouTube channel.

## ***New Research/Visitors***

The Museum Archives responded to more than 150 research and information requests, which required the transfer of approximately 2,000 documents and photographs, much of which involved new scanning.

The Museum Archives hosted visitors from all over the globe this past year. Researchers and requests came from a variety of institutions including: University of Amsterdam; Boston University; Brown University; University of Cologne; University of Copenhagen; George Washington University; The Iraqi Parliament; King's College, London; Metropolitan Museum; New York District Attorney's Office; The University of Oxford; and The University of Sydney.

Collections that were most requested this year included: Records of the Amherst Papyrus 63; Records of Anatolian Expeditions; Directors Correspondence; Records of Diyala Expeditions; James Henry Breasted Papers; Records of Jarmo; Records of Medinet Habu; Records of Megiddo; Records of Persepolis; and Records of the Oriental Institute's Negative Collection.

## ***Grants***

The Museum Archives continues to be involved with the latest IMLS grant, which focused on cataloging and digitizing archival materials related to sites which are currently under threat of terrorism. Records from Diyala, Khorsabad, and Tell Sweyhat have been incorporated into the IDB. The current two-year grant cycle will come to a close in September 2018.

## ***Special Projects***

The Oral History Project continues to move forward as a joint project between the Museum Archives, Research Archives, and IT. The goal of the Oral History Project is to collect and preserve information about the institute, its people, and their experiences. These interviews represent a unique perspective on institutional history rarely captured by conventional research and publications. New interviews that have already been recorded and will appear on the Oriental Institute's YouTube channel include: Janet Johnson, Carlotta Maher, and Gil Stein.

Additionally, the Museum Archives has been involved in a variety of outreach efforts in order to reach the campus community and beyond. Archival materials are regularly supplied for tours, undergraduate and graduate classes, and volunteer training. The head of Museum Archives has participated in a wide-range of provenance research, training, and network building including: The German-American Provenance Research Exchange Program; The National Geographic Society's and Association of American Museum Director's Antiquities Provenance Workshop; and the Association of Art Museum Curators' Webinar on Provenance.

Special thanks to Foy Scalf and the Research Archives for teaming up to work on digitization projects like the negative cards and IMLS grant requirements, as well as IDB support and regular archival advice. Thank you to everyone who assists in evaluating archival materials including: Jean Evans, Kiersten Neumann, and Tony Lauricella. Thank you to Jean Evans for her support of archival projects at home and abroad! And last, but not least, thank you to students and volunteers who do so much on a daily basis, especially: Jeff Cumonow, Fan Ge, Heidi Hilliker, Mitchell Jackson, Kat Jarboe, Bonnie Nelson, Rosemary Ott, Mike Ramberg, Charles Ro, and Amy Zillman.

## **SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS**

The special exhibition, *Book of the Dead: Becoming God in Ancient Egypt*, ran from October 3, 2017–March 31, 2018, and was curated by Foy Scalf. The exhibit included over fifty objects that explored



what the Book of the Dead was, what it was believed to do, how it worked, how was it was made, and what happened to it. The show featured two Books of the Dead shown in full for the first time in nearly a century. A recreation of a burial with a rarely exhibited mummy illustrated how the many objects inscribed with the Book of the Dead literally surrounded the deceased. The exhibit presented the newest research on the Book of the Dead, with an accompanying catalog also edited by Foy Scalf.

Emily Teeter, our special exhibitions coordinator, retired in October. Over her career of twenty-seven years, Emily contributed to many aspects of the Museum, in addition to coordinating — and frequently curating — our special exhibits. She authored and edited numerous publications, including *Ancient Egypt: Treasures from the Collection of the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago* (2003) and *Highlights of the Collections of the Oriental Institute Museum* (2017). Among her most notable accomplishments was curating the Joseph and Mary Grimshaw Egyptian Gallery. We thank her for her contributions to the Oriental Institute Museum and for her many years of service.

## ACQUISITIONS

In October, the Acquisitions Committee decided in favor of accepting the following materials: 1) sherds and other materials collected during excavations at Tell Kurdu; 2) documentation related to Donald Hansen's excavations at Mendes and Jujah; and 3) artwork by Audrius Plioplys.

## SUQ

The Suq had an exciting year working with Foy Scalf developing new merchandise for the special exhibit, *Book of the Dead: Becoming God in Ancient Egypt*. We developed a mug that depicted a spell for not getting scalded, an “I Am Osiris” T-shirt, a magnet, a Thoth temporary tattoo, four bookmarks depicting different spells from *Book of the Dead*, and a postcard and a small sculpture created by Brian Zimerle of a unique scarab with a human face. The merchandise was very successful and most of it was gone by the end of the exhibit.

Our stock was augmented by many wonderful donations from Jane Meloy, Sara Johnson, Joan Fortune, Emily Teeter, and Shirlee Hoffman.

Our wonderful docents gave excellent service to our customers, Ray Broms, Louise Despres, Alice Mulberry, and our returning Ann Schumacher. We are also totally indebted to our charming and elegant Norma van der Meulen who creates the most beautiful jewelry for us.

We finished the year off with our annual rug sale selling over \$28,000 worth of rugs!