

RESEARCH ARCHIVES

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The pace of change has certainly quickened as we mark the centennial celebration of the Oriental Institute, which doesn't officially begin until autumn quarter 2019–20, but which has been marked by a frantic pace of activity here in our colony. It is an opportune time to harness this energy for change, including making much needed improvements to the Research Archives. Visitors will now notice a much improved and reorganized library entrance, where the desk and nonfunctional security gates were removed and replaced with updated signage and a display case highlighting one of the library's holdings. These developments open up the hallway and make for a much more pleasant environment. Prior to this, there wasn't even a sign with the name "Research Archives" on it; the library was only announced by a sign for the "Elizabeth Morse Genius Reading Room," named after the trust that funded major renovations to the library in the '90s, and which hangs over the double doors at the entrance. Now, several signs matching the university's maroon template identify the library for visitors and provide basic information on hours and access. A new graphic panel is now on display underneath the large rosette window in the reading room. This panel provides information on the Archaeological Corpus Project, a card catalog project intended to comprehensively catalog the architecture, iconography, cultural lexica, and material culture of the ancient Middle East. It was a visionary project, founded by Breasted, but closed with budget cuts in the '50s. Further details can be found in the volume *Discovering New Pasts: The OI at 100*. I'd like to express my appreciation to Josh Tuliak in the Preparation Department for his help in designing, printing, and hanging the new signage.

Just inside the library entrance, further changes have been underway. At the end of 2018, with the help of the staff in the Preparation Department, the library put on display a collection of hieroglyphic letterpress type in a forty-eight drawer Hamilton cabinet (fig. 1). This cabinet had been in off-site storage for many years. At some point, there was talk of disposing of it, at which time we made the offer to display it in the library. The University of Chicago acquired the font in 1928, used it at the press until roughly 1970, and then passed it to the OI where it has remained. The font was designed by Norma and Nina de Garis Davies for Alan Gardiner to be used in his *Egyptian Grammar*; the font was produced and cast by Oxford University Press. A more complete history of this font can be found in the *Oriental Institute News & Notes* 242 (Summer 2019).



Figure 1. The hieroglyphic letterpress font on display in the Research Archives.

Acquisitions

The Research Archives acquired 1,264 volumes in 437 accession lots of printed materials during the 2018–19 academic year (see table 1). This is up 15–20% over our historical average of 900–1,000 volumes per year. Of these accessions, 302 came in via purchase, 100 through gifts, and 35 through exchanges. Over one-third of these volumes consisted of additions to serial publications (455 volumes) and nearly one-third contributed to new journal issues (342 volumes). The remainder consisted of monographs (425 volumes) and theses (1 volume). Over \$49,000 was spent on book purchasing in addition to over \$3,000 spent on shipping charges. In preservation efforts, 350 volumes were sent for binding with HF Group in April.

Table 1. Research Archives Acquisitions July 2018–June 2019

Month	Number of Accession Lots	Monographs, Series, Pamphlets	Journals	Total Volumes
July 2018	48	94	54	148
August 2018	43	86	76	162
September 2018	46	80	33	113
October 2018	39	49	35	84
November 2018	24	56	27	83
December 2018	29	38	22	60
January 2019	38	39	40	79
February 2019	42	61	40	101
March 2019	30	107	24	131
April 2019	33	75	22	97
May 2019	26	67	18	85
June 2019	39	93	28	121
Totals	437	845	419	
Total Volumes				1,264

Table 2. Catalog Records

Year	No. of Catalog Records Added	Total No. of Catalog Records
2018–19	10,000	555,000
2017–18	10,000	545,000
2016–17	10,000	535,000
2015–16	15,000	525,000
2014–15	20,000	510,000
2013–14	30,000	490,000
2012–13	40,000	460,000
2011–12	30,000	420,000
2010–11	30,000	390,000
2009–10	40,000	360,000
2008–9	63,000	320,000
2007–8	62,000	257,000
2006–7	28,000	195,000

Online Catalog

In 2018–19, the library staff and volunteers worked together to create over ten thousand new records in the library’s catalog within the EMU database platform that powers the Oriental Institute’s Integrated Database (see table 2). Every volume acquired by the library is analyzed according to its contents, and any section that has an attributed independent author is analyzed for our catalog. This includes all conference proceedings, Festschriften, and encyclopedias. In addition to the general bibliographic data captured for standard library purposes, we also catalog abbreviations and abstracts, all of which are searchable through the online catalog (<https://oi-idb.uchicago.edu>). This data is publicly accessible so that users can select and download data in a variety of formats—including comma-separated values, CSL JSON, EndNote, and simple text—for use in software applications of their choosing.

Analyzing the individually authored content from newly acquired volumes results in many more database records than overall volumes in the library (see table 3). The library holds over 68,000 individual volumes, but the database contains over 555,000 individual records. Predictably, articles account for the vast majority of these records (480,000 records), but these records are among the most useful for researchers, as they are not typically indexed in other library systems (although articles are indexed on third party platforms such as JSTOR and are more frequently being integrated with library catalogs). With the download feature, users can import such records into their own bibliographies and software applications. This data expands the usefulness and purpose of the tool beyond that of a library catalog. On the one hand, the information provided tells users what is in the library and where to find it—a typical and necessary resource for any catalog. On the other hand, analyzing individual articles and reviews, along with their abstracts, provides a more comprehensive index to ancient Middle Eastern studies that empowers efficient, user-driven research.

Through Google Analytics, we are now able to examine how users access our catalog information. We hope that over time this analysis will provide insights for how to better develop and improve the tools available to users. Over 14,000 new users accessed the oi-idb.uchicago.edu site over the academic year in more than 32,000 sessions with an average six pages viewed per session, amounting to 218,495 page views and an average session duration of 00:06:09. The users are overwhelmingly from the US but do represent a global audience: US 57%, UK 4.69%, Germany 3.52%, France 3.35%, Turkey 3.09%, Italy 2.46%, Canada 2.33%, Spain 2.02%, and Egypt 1.87%.

Fifty-five percent of events consisted of new searches, 30% consisted of views of individual record details, and 12% consisted of revised searches. Direct links to individual records consisted of only .86%. With the implementation of stable URLs employing GUIDs, we hope that users will feel more confident in linking directly to our records.

Currently, it is clear that new searches for keywords are by far the most common searches. It is not always possible to tell if users are looking for library materials, as popular keyword searches for “Egypt,” “Persepolis,” “Iamassu,” “Megiddo,” “Hammurabi,” and “mummy” will find results in every department. For searches specific to the Research Archives, some of the most common terms were “Mesopotamia,” “Sumerian literature,” “Osiris,” “king list,” “Ctesiphon,” and “Egypt.”

Table 3. Research Archives Analytics

Type	Total No. of Records
Total Volumes	68,129
Monographs	17,023
Monograph Sections	69,810
Series	1,705
Series Volumes	21,314
Series Volume Sections	94,398
Journals	1,021
Journal Volumes	28,734
Journal Volume Articles	319,621
Thesis	1,058
Pamphlets	2,594
Reviews	121,613
Festschriften (Volumes)	648
Digital Invoice Records	1,812
Digital Cover Art Records	9,996
Adobe PDF	37,364

RESOURCES ON THE WEB

The online catalog remains the primary resource for the distribution of information about content related to the study of the ancient Middle East. The catalog includes records for various websites and other online resources. The Research Archives maintains a limited set of open access online resources available from its webpage (<https://oi.uchicago.edu/research/research-archives-library>).

Introduction & Guide

https://oi.uchicago.edu/sites/oi.uchicago.edu/files/uploads/shared/docs/research_archives_introduction%26guide.pdf

An updated introduction and guide to the Research Archives contain a brief history, a guide to the Research Archives collection, and instructions for using the online catalog.

Acquisitions Lists

<https://oi.uchicago.edu/research/research-archives-library/acquisitions-lists-research-archives>

The acquisitions reports of the Research Archives are distributed in Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) on a monthly basis. This process has been active and continuous since September 2007.

Annual Reports

<https://oi.uchicago.edu/research/research-archives-library/research-archives-annual-reports>

Annual Reports for the Research Archives are available from 1969 to 2014.

Oriental Institute Staff Newsletter

<https://oi.uchicago.edu/research/research-archives-library/oriental-institute-staff-newsletter>

From February 1998 until March 2005 an Oriental Institute Staff Newsletter was circulated among faculty, staff, students, and the wider academic community. In the interest of preservation, remaining copies of the newsletter have been scanned and archived online.

Dissertations

<https://oi.uchicago.edu/research/research-archives-library/dissertations>

With the permission of the authors, the Research Archives provides access to Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) copies of dissertations completed in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations of the University of Chicago.

Dissertation Proposals

<https://oi.uchicago.edu/research/research-archives-library/dissertations/dissertation-proposals>

With the permission of the authors, the Research Archives provides access to Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) copies of dissertation proposals completed in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations of the University of Chicago.

Adopt-a-Book Campaign

<https://oi.uchicago.edu/research/research-archives-library/adopt-book-campaign>

The Research Archives has an “Adopt-a-Book” campaign in order to increase support for the Research Archives. Donors are recognized through personalized book plates made in their honor and placed in volumes of their choosing.

Social Media Sites

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Research-Archives-of-the-Oriental-Institute/153645450792>

The Research Archives now maintains an official page on Facebook. Information about recent publications of Oriental Institute scholars or reviews of recent Oriental Institute publications is distributed through this page. Currently, 3,315 individuals follow the Research Archives through this presence on Facebook.

DONATIONS

The Research Archives has received a record number of volumes in book donations in 2018–19, with major gifts from the Robert McCormick Adams estate, Andrea Dudek, James Holland, Janet Johnson and Donald Whitcomb, Roger Johnson, and Miriam Reitz, along with dozens of smaller donations, totaling one hundred accessions in total. This represents a significant portion of the overall total acquisition efforts. Donations allow us to fill important gaps in our collection—acquiring duplicates of well-used volumes—and to replace aging or damaged volumes. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our donors for thinking of the Research Archives with their gifts.

VISITORS

The Research Archives has been more popular than ever. A report for the academic year 2018–19 of all the patrons who scanned ID cards to enter the library runs to an astonishing 1,166 pages! This represents 2,279 patrons who scanned IDs 40,907 times. Given the extremely limited staff (one full-time librarian, and three to four part-time assistants) running our library, we are beyond proud to have served such a robust community so well over the past year.

Many visiting researchers, members, and friends of the Research Archives visited over the course of the academic year. These include (in alphabetical order): Jennifer Andruska, Ashley Arico, Colleen Bailey, Cynthia Bates, Christina Cheng, Ashley Demma, Robert Demos, Ellen Fleischmann, Courtney Fullilove, Dora Goldsmith, Susanne Görke, Ann Hamilton, Rolland Long, Saphinaz Amal Naguib, and Michael Watson. In addition to these individuals, the Research Archives also hosted tours for new volunteers, prospective students, the Admiral, the Breasted Society, a group with David Wilson, members of ATLA, and a great libraries class from Elmhurst College.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

The Research Archives continues to manage 25% of all the OI's volunteers. We have had over a dozen volunteers during the past year. With the help of Sue Geshwender, we review new applications on a roughly quarterly or biannual basis. We typically take in six to ten new volunteers each year, to replace turnover and to fill positions. These volunteers are responsible for much of the direct labor involved in the many projects running in the Research Archives. They have transformed the Research Archives by providing the necessary manpower to expand our capabilities and extend our services. Many thanks to Gabe Arcaro, Betty Bush, Gabriella Cigarroa, Gaby Cohen, Kim Crawford, Rafer Dandy, Irene Glasner, Dannica Hannah, Kat Jarboe, Aiko Johnston, Emily Kane, Kris Kerkman, Jane Klinkert-White, Jacqueline Mendoza, Marge Nichols, Stephanie Reitzig, Roberta Schaffner, Sharon Shapiro, Gabriele Correa da Silva, George T. Thomson, Julian Thibeau, Theresa Tiliakos, Jeremy Walker, Kayleigh Watson, and Annie Zhu.

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