



MUSEUM

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Jack Green

The staff of the Museum has been extremely active over the past year both within the galleries and behind the scenes. I officially joined the Museum as Chief Curator on August 1, 2011, with several weeks of advance orientation being vital in terms of familiarizing myself with faculty and staff at the Oriental Institute and with the collections, and outlining strategies for my first year and beyond. My immediate focus was setting up a close working relationship with Museum staff and prioritizing a number of Museum projects and strategic goals. The past year has also afforded a real opportunity to gain an overview of the wide range of activities of the Museum, which continues to impress me greatly. I am grateful to my predecessor, Geoff Emberling, for the work put into the special exhibits program, grant applications, and the development of a strategic plan for the Museum. It is also important to acknowledge the challenges we face in delivering special exhibits to a high standard, reaching a greater and wider audience, juggling multiple special projects, as well as being engaged in the “business as usual” work of the Museum in providing care for and access to the collections.

Visitor numbers in the past year continue to be at around 50,000, with seasonal ebbs and flows consistent with past years. We did experience a slight rise in recorded numbers compared to last year (a 3 percent increase overall), and suggested donations per visitor did

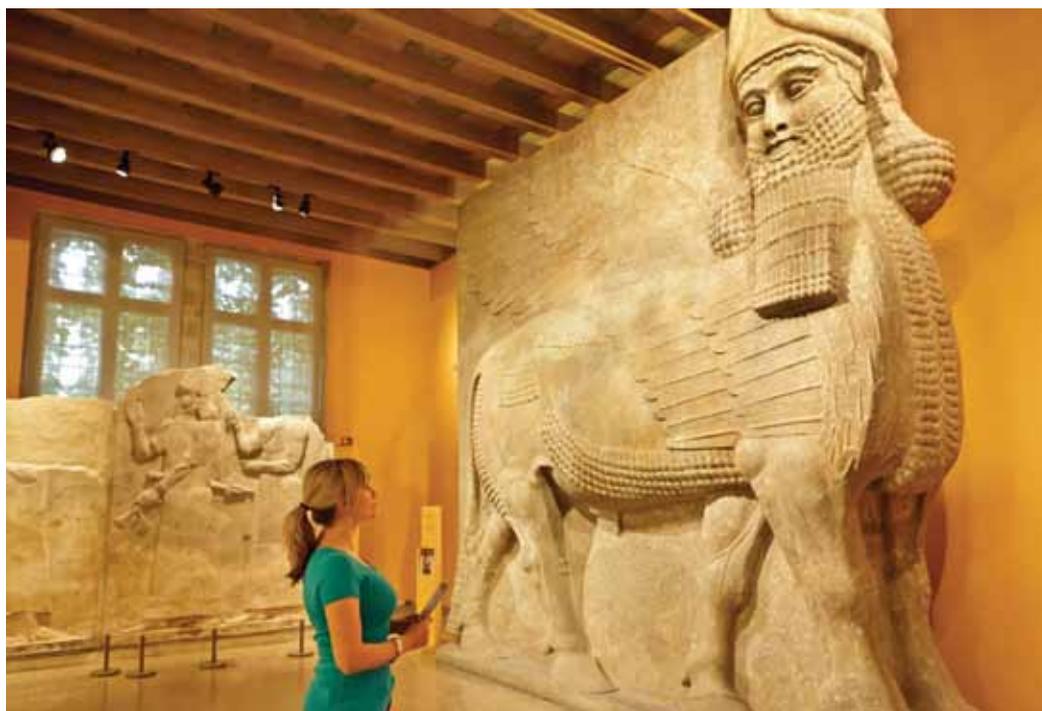


Figure 1. Photograph of the lamassu in the Yelda Khorsabad Court used for our new Visitor Guide, featuring a friend of the photographer to give scale and a sense of discovery. Photo by Anna Ressman

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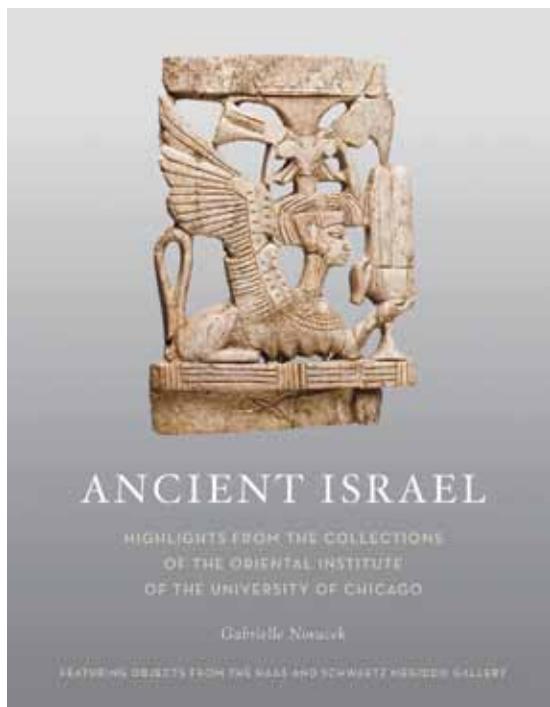


Figure 2. Cover of *Ancient Israel: Highlights from the Collections of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*. By Gabrielle V. Novacek. 2011 (OIMP 31)

show a slight increase in the last fiscal year. In addition, there was a healthy increase in Suq sales (see report below). It seems that roughly the same number of visitors are spending a little more than usual, perhaps thanks to the enticing range of products on sale. We also updated our Visitor Guide, with thanks to Anna Ressman for new photography (fig. 1) and Kat Silverstein for design work.

Dedicated publicity efforts have come largely through our special exhibits program, which continues to play a major role in bringing visitors to the Museum (see report below), but it remains unclear why these efforts do not lead to significant increases in numbers. An audience research survey of Oriental Institute Museum visitors conducted by Slover-Linnet Strategies, made possible through a grant from the Arts Engagement Exchange (Chicago Community Trust and the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs), may help us pinpoint some of the answers. The findings were presented

in a focus group meeting at the Oriental Institute (July 19, 2011). The results are currently helping us address concerns and build strategies to make our Museum more welcoming for new visitors, and, we hope, encouraging them to return to us again and again. A key outcome of the focus group was the consensus that we intend to reach out more to families with children and young professionals (under 35s).

The list of Oriental Institute Museum Publications continues to grow, and sales are increasing steadily. In November 2011, the latest Collections Highlights Catalog, *Ancient Israel: Highlights from the Collections of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago; Featuring Objects from the Haas and Schwartz Megiddo Gallery*, appeared both in print and online (fig. 2). This volume, written by Gabrielle Novacek, joins the long-standing *Ancient Egypt* gallery highlights book by Emily Teeter. Other collections highlights volumes are in various stages of development, including (in likely order of forthcoming publication) Mesopotamia, Nubia, Persia, Syro-Anatolia, and a book on the less well-known Islamic collections. We are currently working on a replacement for the long-out-of-print highlights brochure (last edition published 1989). Getting highlights catalogs published and accessible online is one of the ways of sharing our collections with researchers, museum professionals, and the wider public around the world.

The work of Emily Teeter in the curation of the special exhibit *Before the Pyramids: The Origins of Egyptian Civilization* deserves special acknowledgment and appreciation. This exhibit was extremely well received by scholars and the public alike and included a loan of two fabulous objects from the Ashmolean Museum at the University of Oxford: one of the earliest known stone sculptures of an Egyptian ruler, Khasakhem, and the Battlefield Palette

fragment. It was sad to bid farewell to these old friends as they made their return journey in November.

In my first few months as Chief Curator, I was immersed in an intense period of curation and research in preparation for the special exhibit *Picturing the Past: Imaging and Imagining the Ancient Middle East* (opened February 6). It was a great pleasure to work on this exhibit and catalog and to provide significant creative and academic input into the show, even at a relatively late stage in its development. I am extremely grateful to co-curators Emily Teeter and John Larson, and our Museum team, especially Erik Lindahl and Brian Zimerle who designed and built the show, which has been very well received. A particular thrill for me was the opportunity to insert the model of “King Solomon’s Stables” (fig. 3) and items related to aerial photography at Megiddo into the exhibition, building on my prior research. We hope the catalog continues to highlight the wealth of the Oriental Institute’s archival collections beyond the lifetime of the exhibit.

Preparations are now underway for our next special exhibit, *Between Heaven and Earth: Birds in Ancient Egypt*, guest curated by Rozenn Bailleul-LeSuer (NELC). It opens with a Members’ preview on October 15, 2012. In addition we are planning the future “Connections” photography exhibit (see *Special Exhibits* below) to open later in 2013. I am grateful to our Special Exhibits Committee (Donald Whitcomb, Christopher Woods, Yorke Rowan, Emily Teeter, Carole Krucoff) for critically reviewing submitted exhibit ideas, and to individuals who offered us a new and exciting range of ideas. The Community Focus Group that met three times in the past year has also been valuable in shaping and improving the standards our special exhibits.

Numerous smaller-scale temporary exhibits, changes, and display rotations took place over the past year. In the Edgar and Deborah Jannotta Mesopotamian Gallery, a mini-exhibit entitled *Commerce and Coins in the Ancient Near East* was installed (August 11–October 30, 2011). Co-curated by doctoral students Brittany Hayden (NELC) and Andrew Dix (Assistant Curator, Tablet Collection), this interdisciplinary exhibit presented early coinage and “pre-

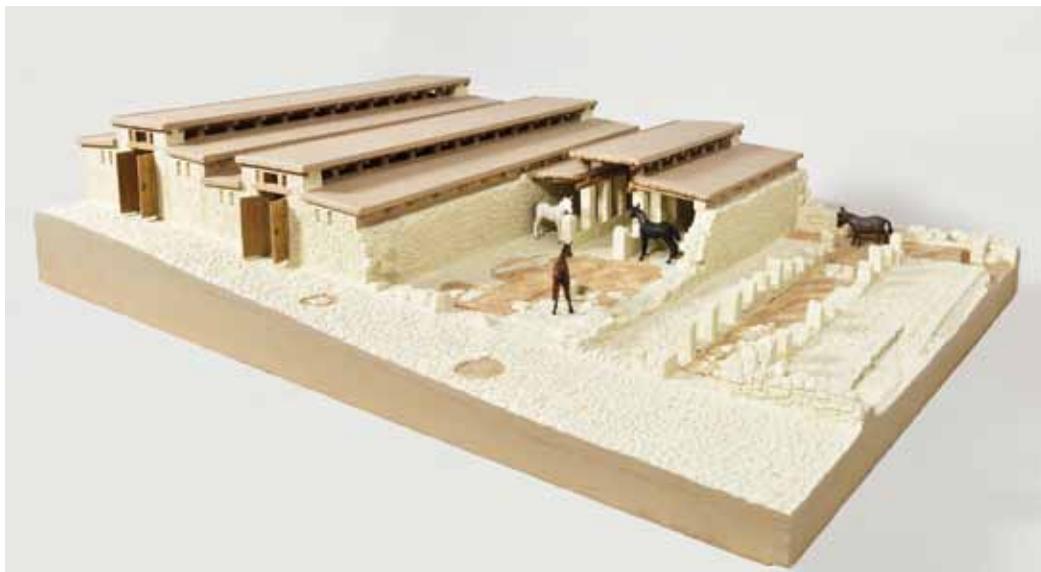


Figure 3. Model of “King Solomon’s Stables” at Megiddo, built by Olaf Lind, 1931. Featured in the *Picturing the Past* exhibit (Catalog No. 34 in the exhibit catalog, OIMP 34). Photo by Anna Ressman

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currency” silver from Mesopotamia and Anatolia alongside clay balls and tablets that relate to early accounting, exchanges of goods and contracts. It coincided with the American Numismatic Association’s World’s Fair of Money, Chicago (August 16–20, 2011).

In the Mesopotamian gallery we updated, as part of the Mesopotamia relabeling project, part of the development of writing exhibit to incorporate two cuneiform tablets (OIM A160995 & A161000) donated by members of the Gibson family, in memory of Joseph W. Gibson, who had acquired them from Edgar J. Banks. These come from of a group of seven Ur III to Old Babylonian period tablets registered last summer to the Oriental Institute Tablet Collection. Thanks to Walter Farber, Gertrud Farber, and Andrew Dix for their assistance with this display.

Other temporary developments in the Mesopotamian gallery have been somewhat less welcome but extremely necessary. In May, the Oriental Institute was formally notified of the potential impact of works on the new Becker Friedman Institute for Research in Economics building (former Chicago Theological Seminary building) on 58th Street immediately opposite the Oriental Institute. This has led to the temporary removal of a number of fragile or restored objects from display that may be more prone to vibration impact. Vibration monitors have been installed along the north side of the gallery and we moved smaller display cases to the south side of the gallery as a precaution. We continue to work closely with vibration consultants and engineers Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc. (WJE; contracted by the University of Chicago’s Capital Projects), who are taking steps to keep vibrations to a minimum.

In the Joseph and Mary Grimshaw Egyptian Gallery, the “Egyptian Scripts” display was updated in August, incorporating a well-preserved fourth-century BC Demotic papyrus from the Faiyum featuring an annuity contract (OIM E17481; fig. 4). Later in the fiscal year, the temporary “Fakes” display was deinstalled, which will allow the mummy of Meresamun to be moved closer to her interactive screen. In the Robert F. Picken Family Nubian Gallery, we changed the textiles display in December, replacing the Meroitic carpet fragment from Qustul (late fourth century AD) with a selection of other dyed and woven textiles of the same period (*News & Notes* 213 [2012], pp. 30–31). We are grateful to Bruce Williams, who helped us select a range of fragments of tapes or belts, plain textiles, bead necklaces, and even a pair of leather sandals. Lastly, in the Dr. Norman Solhkhah Family Assyrian Empire Gallery, a new wall panel



Figure 4. New installation of the fourth-century BC Demotic papyrus from the Faiyum (annuity contract) (OIM E17481)

was installed entitled “Assyrian kings built pleasure gardens,” which complements the reliefs from Khorsabad adjacent to it and also illustrates the Oriental Institute’s work on the Assyrian aqueduct at Jerwan.

In the Lower Level corridor, we temporarily revived the 2008 special exhibit *Catastrophe! The Looting and Destruction of Iraq’s Past* following a review of our past exhibit panels by Erik Lindahl. A selection of panels from the show, originally co-

curated by Geoff Emberling, Katharyn Hanson, and McGuire Gibson, was put up in April. The information on these panels remains relevant as looting continues not only in Iraq, but more extensively across the Middle East. This also provides an important cultural heritage perspective for Museum visitors, including school groups using our Kipper Family Archaeology Discovery Center (see *Public Education* section), who are learning about the importance of archaeological recording and context.

In March, soon after the opening *Picturing the Past*, we installed an Apple iPad within the Marshall and Doris Holleb Family Gallery for Special Exhibits. This replaces the visitor survey that gathers information and feedback from visitors about their visit to the Museum and the special exhibit. This installation begins our experimentation with iPads and other forms digital technology in the galleries, which we intend to explore further in the coming year, through focus groups, surveys, and the preparation of grant applications. During an overseas research trip in April, I took the opportunity to visit a number of museums and review digital technology and interactives, ranging from iPads and smart-phones, video projections and tech-tables, as well as “low tech” installations. I visited museums in London and Oxford in the U.K., Warsaw in Poland, Jerusalem in Israel, and Amman in Jordan. This was also an opportunity for the Oriental Institute Museum to make connections with museums in the Middle East — especially through meeting senior curators at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, and the Jordan Museum, Amman. Over the past year, I have also visited museums and collections in Washington, D.C., San Francisco, San Diego, and Chicago.

Professional development activities included two all-Museum staff visits to Chicago’s Field Museum of Natural History. Firstly, we visited *Natural Wonders: A Roman Mosaic from Lod, Israel*, kindly led by Jim Phillips (December 16), and secondly, *Opening the Vaults: Mummies as well as Genghis Khan* (March 16). Thanks to J. P. Brown for facilitating this latter visit. Both field trips helped us to bond as a team, see how other museums carry out their work, as well as critically review aspects of exhibit design. This research has been vital as we intend to selectively enhance the Oriental Institute’s galleries with content-driven multimedia displays, integrate low-tech educational group activities within the galleries, and consider the needs of visitors with disabilities.

The past year has witnessed several staff changes for the Museum. Thomas (Tom) James (fig. 5) left at the end of August 2011 to take up an opportunity as a Historic Preservation Specialist for the Federal Emergency Management Agency. He now supervises fieldwork for the Mississippi Recovery Office assessing the impact of Hurricane Katrina on historic and archaeological sites. Tom came to the Oriental Institute as a temporary employee in June 2004, and was soon hired as Curatorial Assistant at the Museum. In October 2009, his job-title changed to Assistant Curator of Digital Collections, reflecting his role



Figure 5. Tom James. Photo by Anna Ressler

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Figure 6. Mónica Vélez

in managing the image database, photo orders, social media, tackling other technical and digital needs, and numerous other tasks (see *Prep Shop* report). We thank Tom and wish him every future success.

Tobin Hartnell assisted us with our photo orders in the interim months between Tom's departure and the establishment of his successor. On November 1, 2011, Mónica Vélez joined the Museum in her role as Curatorial Assistant (fig. 6). She is a graduate in anthropology and museum studies from New York University and also worked in the Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Mónica has made excellent headway, having streamlined our photo-order process, resulting in increased orders for academic, educational (including

eBooks), and commercial uses, bringing us vital revenue. In addition to assisting the Museum at various levels, including regular assistance on special exhibits, she continues to update our archival image database and manages volunteers and interns engaged on this ongoing project. Given the pace of newly scanned images and photography (see *Archives* and *Photography* reports) there will be no shortage of future work for database entry and image management. Mónica also plays an important role in building our social media following, particularly on Facebook, alongside Amy Weber (Membership).

Jason Barcus joined us as our new Head of Visitor Services and Security in January this year, replacing Adam Lubin (now Financial Management Assistant for the Oriental Institute). I thank both Adam and Jason for their management of the gallery attendants, for reporting and facilitating maintenance issues that directly impact the Museum. Special thanks to Jason for overseeing our recent security upgrades.

We recently said farewell to Carole Krucoff, who served the Oriental Institute as Head of Public Education for the past two decades. Her contributions to the Museum are impossible for me to summarize in such a short space, but it suffices to say that she will be a tough act to follow. We look forward to soon working with her successor, Catherine Kenyon. The Museum continues to work closely with Public Education and Outreach. Key collaborations included docent training for the Biblical Emphasis Tours, the Ground to Gallery course, and the Public Symposium in connection with *Picturing the Past*. I am particularly grateful to Carole and Sue Geshwender for making these events a great success.

Many interns and volunteers assisted us over the past year, mentioned in subsequent reports from other sections of the Museum. We are extremely grateful to the volunteers and work-study interns who come to us through the Master of Arts Program in the Social Sciences (MAPSS) program. Thanks to Morris Fred (Anthropology) for his help in finding candidates and promoting the program.

Volunteers who assisted the Museum Office include Augusta Gudemann, who worked on social media and the highlights catalog, and Lucie Adler, who has assisted with the image database (and archives). We hosted two interns through externally financed programs, for which we are very grateful. From February to March 2012, François Bridey, a postgraduate of the Institut National du Patrimoine (INP), Paris, funded through the French national curatorial program, joined us for a six-week internship. He conducted a review of the Robert and Deborah Aliber Persian Gallery, as well as an assessment of archives and artifacts not

currently displayed. His expertise on prehistoric material from Iran was of particular value in his reassessment of our prehistory case, providing useful ideas we are likely implement when it comes to updating the gallery, or making small-scale modifications.

Mariam Qaryaqs, a former employee of the Iraq Museum, Baghdad, and currently a masters student in museum studies at the University of Western Illinois, joined the Museum and the Public Education Department in June for a ten-week internship supported by the Fulbright Foreign Student Program and America-Mideast Educational and Training Services, Inc. (AMIDEAST). Her role is as the Oriental Institute's "ambassador" to Arab-American and Iraqi communities in the Chicago area. She is developing an online survey helping us to learn more about how we can reach out to these communities in developing our tours and programs.

The Museum continues to facilitate collections study for researchers within the Oriental Institute, the United States, and around the world (see *Registration* and *Archives* reports). This year has been particularly active in the preparation of publications of our collections from the Nubian Salvage Project. Bruce Williams has been working alongside researchers from the University of Warsaw who are busy helping to bring material from sites such as Qasr el-Wizz and Dorginarti to publication (see *News & Notes* 214 [2012], pp. 3-9; see also *Oriental Institute Nubian Expedition* report). Publication preparation and collections research by necessity also generates new registration numbers — a total of 8,500 objects were registered this year, and many more moved or updated during the course of various projects and research visits. Teaching using our reserve collections has also grown in the last year, and we encourage other members of the faculty to make more use of the collections. Work continued on Eleanor Guralnick's Khorsabad publication project, leading to further large and small sections of reliefs being cleaned, photographed, and moved. It was with very great sadness that we heard of Eleanor's passing in July. She had done so much to highlight the Khorsabad relief fragments in storage, and had made good progress in preparing these pieces for final publication.

Loans continue to play an important role in widening the reach and reputation of the Oriental Institute and the University of Chicago at multiple levels — within Chicago itself, domestically (from Toledo to Atlanta), with international loans being prepared to go



Figure 7. Carved relief depicting a winged genie with part of a standard inscription from Nimrud (OIM A34980). A life-size image of the relief (112 cm high) was featured in the *Write Now* exhibit at the Chicago Cultural Center, September 30-April 29, 2012. Photo by Anna Ressler

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to Madrid and Barcelona later this year (see *Registration* report). Closer to home, we are assisting the Art Institute of Chicago as they prepare their new galleries of Greek, Roman, and Byzantine art, due to open in November 2012. Among other artifacts, the Oriental Institute will loan sections of Byzantine church floor mosaics from the Oriental Institute's expedition at Bet Yerah (Khirbet Kerak), Israel, in the 1950s; these have not been seen by the public for decades. It is worthwhile that such material can be made more accessible, and it is hoped that these will serve as downtown signposts to the Oriental Institute. In a similar vein, this March saw a loan of astronomical clay tablets from the Oriental Institute installed at the Adler Planetarium — which we see as a mutually beneficial collaboration (see *News & Notes* 215 [2012]). Although not a loan, a new color photograph of our Assyrian winged genie from Nimrud (fig. 6) was the opening item in the Write Now: Artists and Letterforms exhibit at the Chicago Cultural Center, curated by Nathan Mason. It was reproduced at 1:1 scale to show the cuneiform inscription.

Ongoing essential work to conserve, preserve, and document the collections was made possible through the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Metals Room Cabinet renewal project. This involves an upgrade of purpose-built cabinets, the last group of which was delivered and installed in June, into which newly conserved and better documented and photographed metal objects will now be transferred. Work continues on the conservation, registration, and photography components of the project in the coming year. As John Larson's report states, steady progress has also been made with the transfer of archival material into compact storage.

The Integrated Database (IDB) project funded by the Institute for Museums and Library Services (IMLS) is still in progress (see separate reports, *Integrated Database*, *Public Education Initiative*, and *Registration*) and has been the largest-scale project for Registration over the past year. This first stage of the project is nearly complete, and involves the integration of two major silos of data into the new EMu (Electronic Museum) database designed by KE Software — one from the Research Archives and the second being the Museum artifact database. For Registration staff Helen McDonald and Susan Allison this has been a complex, detailed, and lengthy procedure, but one that will ultimately pay off when the collections can be accessed and used more readily by Museum staff, faculty, and eventually everyone with Internet access. In November 2011, a grant application was submitted to IMLS for Stage 2 of the Integrated Database Project, which will involve the integration of digital images of museum collections in varied silos and formats into our updated online database, so they can be more readily accessible online to researchers, educators, and the wider public.

As discussed in Oriental Institute Director Gil Stein's special report (see separate report), in May the Oriental Institute initiated its partnership project with the National Museum of Afghanistan (NMA) in Kabul, Afghanistan, the aim of which is to create an electronic inventory, conservation assessment, and repacking of collections there. Oriental Institute Museum staff who visited the NMA in Kabul this year included Laura D'Alessandro and myself (who helped write the grant application), and Erik Lindahl of our Preparation and Exhibits Design Department. Erik remained as the Project Registrar with other team members to help initiate the project in its first few months. We were able to have discussions with the Director General of the NMA, Mr. Massoudi, as well as meetings and workshops with curators, conservators, and other staff. Laura gave training sessions for the NMA's conservation department, building on training she gave to Afghan conservators who came to the Oriental Institute in 2007.

We are pleased with progress made so far, thankful to the staff of the NMA, and hopeful for positive outcomes for the future of cultural and world heritage in Afghanistan.

The past year went unbelievably quickly, and I remain immensely impressed at the strength, vitality, and resourcefulness of our Museum team. I am grateful for their support in helping to deliver our objectives, sometimes within constrained time periods and with limited resources. Lastly, I wish to thank Oriental Institute Director Gil Stein and Executive Director Steve Camp for providing great support and encouragement over the past year. In the coming year, we will continue to work very closely together on improvements for the Museum, to ensure that we serve our role in preserving and conserving its rich collections, facilitating access to researchers here and from around the world, and presenting the rich tapestry of ancient Near Eastern cultures and civilization to the public through our exhibits, programs, and publications.

SPECIAL EXHIBITS

Emily Teeter

The period covered by this report includes the exhibits *Before the Pyramids: The Origins of Egyptian Civilization* (March 29–December 31, 2011) and *Picturing the Past: Imaging and Imagining the Ancient Middle East*, which opened on February 7 and runs through September 2, 2012.

For background on *Before the Pyramids*, please see pages 194–96 of the *2010–2011 Annual Report*. The show aged well, and from my perspective, the materials kept on raising new questions making it fun to tour and to discuss. Unfortunately, but inevitably, the statue of Khasekhem and the fragment of the Battlefield Palette borrowed from the Ashmolean Museum had to be returned before the end of our show in order to be present for the opening of their new Egyptian gallery. *Before the Pyramids*, like many of the other shows we have done, had a tremendous amount of residual benefit for the Museum because it entailed research on the collection, conservation, and photography, all aspects of the proper care of our holdings.

It was good timing that our new Chief Curator, Jack Green, arrived as *Picturing the Past* was in its formative stages, allowing him to make a meaningful contribution to the structure and content of the show and to give the remarks at the Members' preview (fig. 1). The concept of the show was the result of several factors. Foremost was the goal of giving the public an idea of the very important role that the Oriental Institute has played in the documentation of the ancient



Figure 1. Chief Curator Jack Green and his wife Akemi Horii at the Members' preview of *Picturing the Past*. Photo by Anna Ressman

SPECIAL EXHIBITS



Figure 2. Section of the exhibit on J. H. Breasted's quest for accuracy and the development of the Chicago Method of epigraphy. Photo by Anna Ressler

Middle East. The impact of our work is easily seen. For example, Google “Sumerian temple” and a version of Hamilton Darby’s 1934 pencil and watercolor of the Temple Oval at Khafajah (the original of which is in the exhibit), will pop up. The exhibit was also designed to show how sites, inscriptions, and buildings are documented, preserved, and virtually restored by archaeologists and artists, and also to explore how architectural reconstructions are done, posing the question “What is really there and what is imagined, and why?” The Google test was illuminating for this question as well. Search for “ziggurat” and

the top results include a version of our model of the ziggurat at Babylon — which, as we demonstrate in our show, has some problematic aspects. We also wanted to show the different methods that have been and are presently used to “picture the past” and also to display spectacular examples of archaeological illustration in our collection, many of which have rarely, or never, been exhibited. It was also desirable that the show not be “object heavy” to give Conservation and Registration, upon whom a huge burden of preparing for special exhibits falls, a chance to catch up on their routine work and special projects.

The show opens with the story of James Henry Breasted and his quest to make accurate copies of texts and representations ultimately leading to the development of the “Chicago Method” of epigraphy, which is illustrated by a sequence of a photo, drawing, blueprint, collation sheet, and final printed plate — material kindly loaned to us by our Epigraphic Survey (fig. 2). This section included two of Breasted’s copybooks and his camera. In addition to epigraphy, the show was divided into sections devoted to making facsimile copies of tomb and temple reliefs, architectural illustration and reconstruction, photography and documentation (including materials as diverse as a 1920s Harry Burton image from the tomb of Tutankhamun and a CORONA satellite image, the latter supplied by our CAMEL lab). The show was enlivened by models of a ziggurat, “Solomon’s stables,” a copy of the bust of Nefertiti (see fig. 3, right foreground), and a few artifacts. Many of the artworks in the show, even those that have been reproduced repeatedly in books, had not been exhibited for decades. For example, Joseph Lindon Smith’s huge (205 x 133 cm) impressionistic image of the Apadana at Persepolis (and three of its companion paintings) had been crated in the basement since their return from an exhibition in New York in 1940. The paintings are so beautiful that Oriental Institute Director Gil Stein replaced the Nina Davies Egyptian tempera that had hung above the fireplace in the Director’s office (which we think had been there since 1931!) with another Smith study of Scythian tribute bearers. We were delighted that in June, the artist’s granddaughter Lindon Gaspar and her husband Jay visited the Institute to see her grandfather’s work.



Figure 3. View of the entrance to *Picturing the Past*. Photo by Anna Ressman

We were very pleased to have several special loans to the show. The first is a painting of Nippur by Chicago artist (and former Oriental Institute staff member) Peggy Sanders (fig. 4). From farther afield are two spectacular ink-and-watercolor renderings of Medinet Habu by artist/Egyptologist Jean Claude Golvin, one of the most highly regarded artists in the field of architectural reconstruction. We are very grateful to Mr. Golvin, and to Alain Charron, Curator in Chief of the Musée départemental Arles antique from whose collection they were borrowed. In the same breath, the curators must thank Registrar Helen McDonald and Head Conservator Laura D’Alessandro for all the extra effort this loan required.

A popular feature of the show is a large flat-screen monitor that shows the newest methods of documentation with sites as diverse as Giza, the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem, the palace of Ashurnasirpal II at Nimrud, Karnak, Chogha Mish, and Persepolis. Our Curatorial Assistant Mónica Vélez was responsible for securing the reproduction rights for the footage (a huge and complicated job) and our designer Brian Zimerle edited the excerpts into a continuous loop. A kiosk nearby features static images of reconstructions from cultures all through the region.

As indicated in the acknowledgments to the catalog, the curators (Jack Green, John Larson, and I) called upon a great many of



Figure 4. Chicago artist Peggy Sanders with her painting of Nippur at the Members’ preview of the exhibit. Photo by Anna Ressman

SPECIAL EXHIBITS

our colleagues here at the Oriental Institute and elsewhere to gather the information for the show. We are very grateful for their contributions and input concerning the show.

The exhibit was designed by Erik Lindahl and Brian Zimerle. The walls were painted a soft gray that went well with the artwork and gave the space a contemporary feel. Because the material in the show was colorful, the installation itself was deliberately understated. Brian designed very handsome art museum-style labels (fig. 5). Erik and Brian experimented with a new (to us) technique, printing the introductory panel of the show (with a large image of Joseph Lindon Smith at his easel at Persepolis) on canvas (see fig. 3, on panel in left foreground). The panel had an introductory quote from T. S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" (ferreted out by Gil) that set the tone of the show with its reference to "a heap of broken images." Brian also developed graphics for the entrance to the Marshall and Deborah Holleb Family Gallery for Special Exhibits (fig. 6) to differentiate it from the permanent exhibits.

The audio guide for the show was the result of a collaboration between Jack, John Larson, Seth Richardson, Gil, and me. The audio was produced by Tiffany Salone of Chicago Media Initiatives Group of the University of Chicago, the campus organization that has worked with us on many other projects.

As with other exhibits, *Picturing the Past* benefited from the advice of our Museum Focus Group. We met on November 11 for an evaluation of the themes and organization of the show. Among the very good suggestions to come from the discussion was to add photographs of the sites to the labels to enable the visitor to judge for themselves how well preserved a site was and thus how much may have been speculation on the part of the artist. The group met again on February 29, when they commented on the exhibit in its final state. The group consists of Randy Adamsick (Chicago History Museum), Nathan Mason (Chicago Cultural Center), Angela Adams (South Shore Cultural Center), Matt Matcuk (Field Museum), Molly Woulfe (journalist), Beverly Serrell and Patty McNamara (exhibit evaluators), and Dianne Hanau-Strain (exhibit designer).

The catalog turned out to be especially interesting and diverse, with a much more "arty" slant than our usual volumes. Twenty-one au-

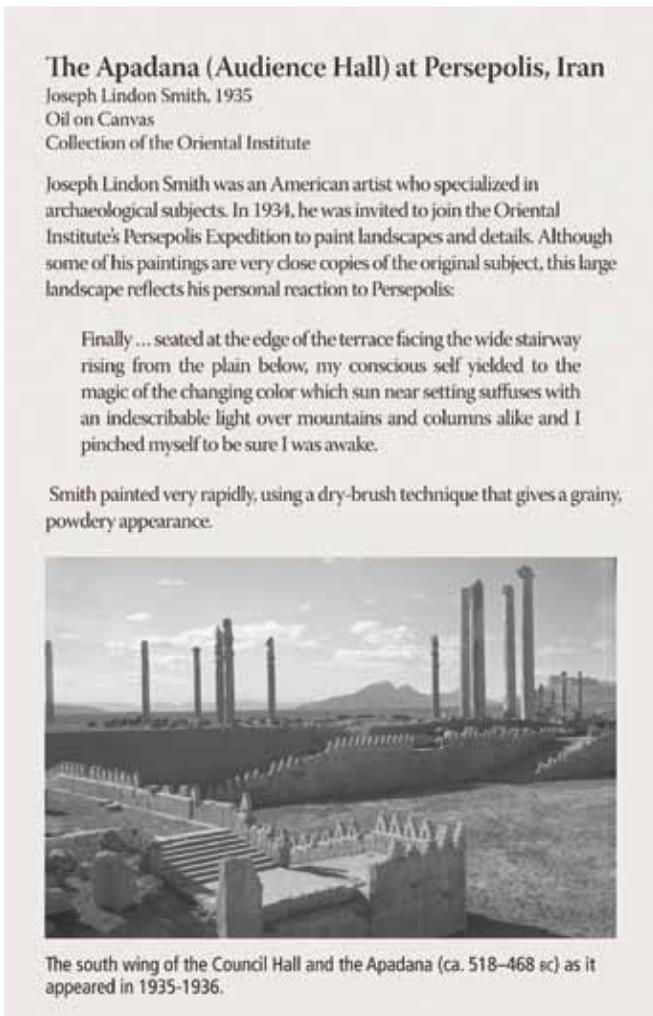


Figure 5. Sample label from *Picturing the Past*

thors contributed essays and entries and special thanks are due to Farzin Rezaeian, who graciously allowed us to put his striking reconstruction of a palace/temple from Chogha Mish on the cover. Again, the Museum finds itself in awe of and in debt to our publications department, Tom Urban and Leslie Schramer (assisted by Rebecca Cain, Zuhul Kuru, and Jessen O'Brien), for their skill at taking a zillion files and images and transforming them into a beautiful book. As usual, their careful planning meant that the catalog was ready for the opening, no mean feat considering the short turn around time for production and printing. The catalog for this exhibit is selling well, as are the catalogs from prior exhibits, especially *Visible Language* and *Before the Pyramids*. The print run for the current catalog was 1,000 copies.

We continue to produce free brochures with Mandarin and Spanish translations of the major text panels for our special exhibits. I thank Mónica Vélez for the Spanish translation and Huiying Chen for the Mandarin text. This is the second exhibit for which we have produced multi-lingual materials (those for *Before the Pyramids* were introduced after the appearance of the last *Annual Report*) (fig. 7). We hope that the brochures, designed by Brian Zimerle, make our Chinese and Latino visitors feel welcome.



Figure 6. View of the entrance to the special exhibits gallery with graphics designed by Brian Zimerle



Figure 7. Brochure with Mandarin translation of text panels for *Before the Pyramids*

SPECIAL EXHIBITS

As usual, we are working on several shows at a time trying to maintain a three-year advance schedule. Jack and I are working closely with Egyptology doctoral candidate Rozenn Bailleul-LeSuer, who is the guest curator for the next exhibit, *Between Heaven and Earth: Birds in Ancient Egypt* (October 15 Members' preview through July 28, 2013). The extended run of the show allows for programming in prime bird-watching season and we have partnered with the Audubon Society on public programs for the exhibit. Rozenn, who has a naturalist's interest in birds, does a wonderful job of combining her knowledge of bird behavior with Egyptology to tease out all sorts of interesting features of the objects in the exhibit. In 2010, Rozenn started working with Assistant Registrar Susan Allison to survey the Egyptian and Nubian collection for any and all objects that pertain to birds. As of the writing of this report, the exhibit is moving along well, with the conservation and photography of the objects completed, wall color and fabric selected, and a floor plan established. The focus group commented on the show on February 29, giving Rozenn and all of us very frank and helpful input. The group met again on June 20 to evaluate the progress of the show. For that meeting, the group had some new members. Oscar Sanchez of the National Museum of Mexican Arts replaced Randy Adamsack, and Jacqueline Dale of the DuSable Museum joined the group.

We are also working on the next exhibit with the tentative title "Connections" that will be a series of photographs that connect ancient and modern culture. We will select artifacts that reflect continuities with today's world, such as a tablet with a medical text, a scythe, and a statue of a policeman to refer to today's professions of doctor, farmer, and security guard, respectively. We will invite people who represent those (and many more) professions to come to the Oriental Institute and sit for a portrait with "their object." This will be a fun experiment involving the community with the planning and implementation of an exhibit.

An essential and never-ending task associated with the shows is securing funding. We were honored and so fortunate that Tom and Linda Heagy were major benefactors of *Before the Pyramids*. Additional funding came from Exelon and the Antiquities Endowment Fund of the American Research Center in Egypt. Exelon again supplied partial funding for *Picturing the Past*. We also thank the consistent support of our members.

The special exhibits program, now in its seventh year, continues to delight and challenge us with the complexity of conceptualizing, designing, and implementing shows one after the other. We work closely with Development on funding, with the Publications Department on the catalog, with the Public Education Department on a wide variety of public programs, and we consult frequently with the faculty. As a result, each show is truly the result of a collaborative process. The special exhibits program has matured into an integral part of the operations of the Oriental Institute and its Museum and it is hard to recall what life here was like before the program was instituted. As a sign of its success, a recent visitor survey indicated that 78 percent of the respondents viewed the special exhibit during their visit, the vast majority finding the show to be very interesting.

Current and Upcoming Exhibits (*some titles and dates are tentative*)

Between Heaven and Earth: Birds in Ancient Egypt

October 15, 2012–July 28, 2013

Connections

August 19, 2013–February 23, 2014

PUBLICITY AND MARKETING

Emily Teeter

Traditional Media

Our publicity and marketing strategy is formulated to attract a larger and more diverse audience. We continue to partner with the Chicago Convention and Tourism Bureau (CCTB; now renamed Choose Chicago) in their efforts to attract visitors from China. In September, I attended a CCTB-sponsored Educational Seminar on Foreign Tourism building on our effort to attract Chinese leisure and business travelers. In October, we hosted a delegation from the Chinese TV program “Getaway” for a tour of the galleries and to see the Mandarin-language resources including our highlights of the collection and the Mandarin translation of the major text panels for our special exhibit (see illustration in *Special Exhibits* report). On a less specialized level, in June, Jack, again in conjunction with Choose Chicago, hosted a group from Destination Management Company (tour operators) to tell them about the Oriental Institute and to encourage them to add us to their itineraries.

In October, Carole Krucoff, Amy Weber, and I attended the annual Spotlight on Chicago to present the Museum and its programs to the press, concierges, and tour operators.

From October to June, intern Claire Gainer assisted with a variety of publicity-related projects. She reached out to University of Chicago student clubs (such as archaeology and anthropology) as part of our effort to increase student membership. She updated online Chicago travel site listings to include information about the current exhibit, reviewed some of the audio tours to identify inconsistencies between the Museum’s posted information and the audio tour, and explained which parts were the most useful for a layperson and why. Claire also maintained the electronic comment book (see further below), producing biweekly reports.

Claire also wrote and formatted a fifteen-question survey about the new exhibit and the Museum in general. She used the response data to write a series of biweekly reports charting visitor habits, preferences, and reactions to the exhibits. She also created and operated a visitor tracking project for *Picturing the Past*, observing over seventy visits to the gallery, noting the time spent at each artifact, the number of artifacts viewed, and other data. This study is very helpful for our evaluation of the effectiveness of the special exhibit and it allows us to improve our future exhibits.

We received good press coverage throughout the year. William Harms of the University News Office

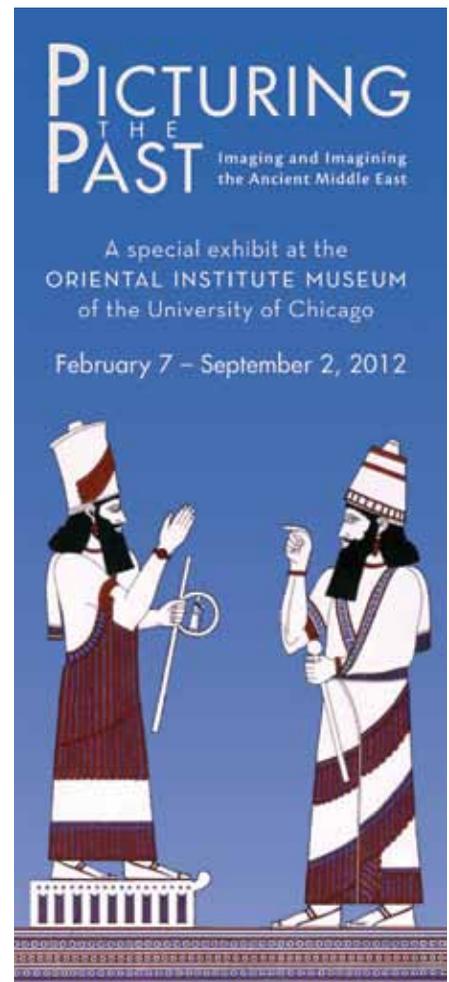


Figure 1. Rack card for *Picturing the Past*, designed by Brian Zimerle

PUBLICITY AND MARKETING

continues to be a huge support and help in getting the word out about our research, programs, and exhibits. General coverage of the Museum and the Institute appeared on WTTW, in the *Hyde Park Herald*, and on the websites Trip Advisor and Concierge Preferred in their valuable list of things to do in Hyde Park. The Chicago Office of Tourism and Culture included us in the City's official FourSquare badge, which generated quite a bit of publicity. "Picturing the Past" was featured in the column "Museum Pick of the Week" in the *Chicago Tribune*. We were pleased to be the subject of a *Time Out Chicago* blog entry "New Oriental Institute Exhibit: Best Thing I Did This Week." The show was profiled in a feature story in the *Chicago Tribune* "Can you

Trust Her?," a reference to the "improvements" on our copy of the bust of Nefertiti. Another story, "A Matter of Interpretation" in the *Hyde Park Herald*, and a third, titled "Oriental Institute Exhibit Shows Seeing Isn't Always Believing," was authored by William Harms. Two stories about the Kipper Family Archaeology Discovery Center appeared in *Chicago Parent*, and another on the sources in the online publication Palos Patch. An article on Breasted (with the Indiana Jones "hook") appeared on the Examiner.com. Press coverage of Oriental Institute research included a major story on the Persepolis tablets in *Archaeology Magazine* and another on Donald Whitcomb's excavations at Jericho-Mafjar produced by Bill Harms in the University of Chicago News Office.

Trip Advisor issued a Certificate of Excellence to the Museum for 2012 based on the overwhelmingly positive comments (four and a half stars out of five) by visitors posted to their site.

The galleries were in demand for filming. Because the construction on 58th Street disrupted the galleries and produced noise (see *Museum* report), we were not able to accommodate all the requests, deferring several until later in the year. Among the projects shot in the galleries was a three-minute biography on James Henry Breasted by Pablo Korona for his series "Rockford: Our City, Our Story," another on Assyrians and their cultural heritage by Al Rasho, and a seventeen-minute student-authored feature film *A Visit to the Museum*, directed by Don Rossi of Latino Art Beat complete with a mummy chasing overly inquisitive students. The film will premiere at a Halloween-themed family event at the Oriental Institute.

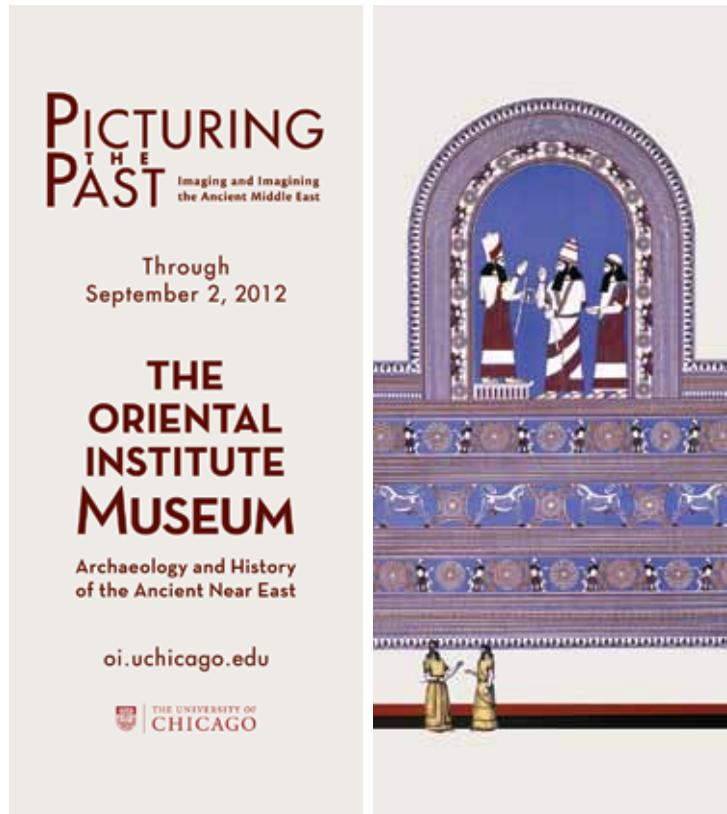


Figure 2. *Picturing the Past* street pole banners, designed by Brian Zimerle

Our small budget for paid promotion is used primarily to advertise the current special exhibit. We ran two ads in the *Hyde Park Herald*, printed 4,000 rack cards, and commissioned sets of street pole banners that are displayed throughout the neighborhood. We also sponsored spots on WBEZ for the opening of the show. A continuing problem that I have referred to in many of these reports, and which is not unique to us, is the difficulty of evaluating the effectiveness of paid advertising. To help us gain a better idea of who is visiting the Museum and why, we now have an electronic visitors' book on an Apple iPad in the Marshall and Doris Holleb Family Special Exhibits Gallery. The data is collected and analyzed through Survey Monkey, an online survey program. The numbers are indeed interesting. The most recent data records that 70 percent of our visitors said that they heard about the Oriental Institute "from friends and family." Out of fifty responses, only 10 percent cited our website, another 8 percent indicated that the street banners directed them to us, and — very surprising — only 3 percent cited Facebook and Twitter. However people hear about us, we are indeed building new audiences. A full 70 percent of the visitors who left comments stated that it was their first visit. The reasons given for visiting include "just for fun" (46.4%), "family outing" (28.6%), and "religious group" (10.7%).

NEW MEDIA

Amy Weber and Mónica Vélez

Since October 2009, the Membership Office has been publishing the *E-Tablet*, our e-newsletter, with great success. Almost 8,000 friends and supporters of the Oriental Institute receive the *E-Tablet*, which keeps them up-to-date with news, events, and announcements. This year the *E-Tablet* received a face-lift with a new template and layout. The *E-Tablet* is published on the first week of every month and is free. To sign up for the *E-Tablet*, visit our website — <http://oi.uchicago.edu> — and click on "Subscribe to our e-newsletter" at the bottom of the page. A new addition to our e-mail campaign is an option to subscribe to different e-mail lists including Event Reminders, Family Programs, Member, Special Discount Offers, and Travel. Members receive an exclusive Members' Newsletter keeping them in the know about Oriental Institute breaking news, academic lecturers, and Members' events and programs.

In addition to the *E-Tablet*, the Membership Office has been involved in maintaining several New Media profiles and sites with the assistance of the New Media Working Group (Mónica Vélez, John Sanders, Emily Teeter, Wendy Ennes, and Amy Weber). Members are encouraged to visit the Oriental Institute page on Facebook, our channel on YouTube, follow us on Twitter, and visit our website to interact with and learn more about the Oriental Institute and our online community.

We continue to build audiences via Facebook; to date, the Oriental Institute page has 5,545 "Likes." When our constituents "Like" our page it allows us to see their newsfeeds with our postings of stories, photographs, and listed events from Membership and Education. If they choose to "Like" a specific post instead, it allows our post to appear on their newsfeeds, which can then be seen by their circle of friends (viral users). As of June, this means that we are potentially reaching as many as two million individuals, not including our own followers, who can become our fans or also "Like" and share any of our posts, furthering our outreach. Thus far, this system has allowed us to reach an average of 1.5–2.5 thousand viral users through our fans, in addition to the two thousand primary users that view our posts weekly.

PUBLICITY AND MARKETING

One important statistic that contributes to this great potential is the age demographic that we are attracting: college-aged individuals and young professionals who make up the majority of active Facebook users. The majority of our constituents on Facebook are between the ages of 25 and 34 and equal approximately 20 percent of our total outreach. The next age bracket to offer substantial support is the 35–44 group, who comprise about 12 percent of our outreach. Both of these groups likely link closely to college students of all levels, and young professionals in the field of ancient Middle Eastern studies as well as museum studies. It is also important to note that the majority of our followers on Facebook are based locally in Chicago, followed by fans in Egypt and Italy. The regional outreach may speak to the effectiveness of our membership and education events as many of our visitors are local to the Chicagoland area.

REGISTRATION

Helen McDonald and Susan Allison

Registration's main priority this year has been the continuing process of moving our data from dbase 3 to KE Software's new museum-specific program EMu (Electronic Museum), thanks to the Museums for America grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). KE Software has now built us a database modeled on the design used by the University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology at Pennsylvania, but with extensive modifications to make it suitable for our own material and records. We subjected the new database to three rounds of testing over the winter and were able to request further modifications. At the time of writing (early July) we have just finished the testing of the database with our data loaded into it. That is just the first round of testing, however, and we have now re-submitted our data to be loaded a second time and will start the next round of testing as soon as we get it back. As we have been testing we have not only seen things that have not loaded correctly, but have also discovered ways of improving our data-mapping to load data in a more meaningful way and have sometimes discovered mistakes to correct. We hope to be using the new system by the end of the summer. Over the autumn and winter we found time to continue with the cleanup of our data mentioned in last year's report; we did some data cleanup on the "period" and "date" fields in the object database. We would like to thank Abbas Alizadeh, Tasha Vorderstrasse, and Bruce Williams for answering specific dating questions relating to their areas of expertise; George Sundell for taking part in our dating cleanup sessions and converting our dbase files into .csv files for KE to load; and Courtney Jacobson, who took part in extensive testing of the new EMu database. The database has absorbed the majority of Registration's time this year, but we are hoping the end result will make it all worthwhile.

Assistant Registrar Susan Allison has continued to fulfill the registration component in the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Metals Survey and Re-Housing grant; keeping track of object locations, printing labels, and helping move objects to temporary locations in preparation for the deliveries of new cabinets that took place in September and June. She has also kept track of objects used in the special exhibits, during the dismantling

of *Before the Pyramids* and the installation of *Picturing the Past*, as well as the object movements related to the forthcoming *Between Heaven and Earth: Birds in Ancient Egypt*.

The Museum received a gift of a painted Iranian ceramic vessel dating to the second millennium BC from Susan Bazargan and Richard Raskin (OIM A163001). There were no other acquisitions this fiscal year.

Several incoming and outgoing loans have taken place this year. We lent a model of a mastaba tomb at Abusir (OIM C213) to the Michael C. Carlos Museum at Emory University in Atlanta for an exhibit entitled *Life and Death in the Pyramid Age*; it went out in August and returned in January. That same month a loan of Egyptian material returned to us from the Toledo Museum of Art. A long-term loan to the Walters Art Museum (Baltimore) returned in September. Registrar Helen McDonald together with Head of Preparation Erik Lindahl made multiple trips to collect Nippur Expedition potsherds, excavation records, and books from the house of Dr. Judith Franke (Lewistown, Illinois). The Nippur sherds are now housed in Museum storage, the excavation records are with Prof. McGuire Gibson, and the books were donated to the Research Archives. Dr. Franke (a previous Registrar and Curator of the Oriental Institute Museum) is moving closer to family near Pittsburgh. Three astronomical tablets went to the Adler Planetarium in March and will be there for three years. The current special exhibit *Picturing the Past* has included two watercolor-and-ink works of the temple at Medinet Habu by Jean-Claude Golvin on loan from the collection of the Musée départemental Arles antique (France). A couple of loans took place for research purposes. The first of these went out last July when a group of Uruk-period token balls from the site of Chogha Mish were taken out to North Star Imaging in Minnesota to be scanned, in order that the tokens inside the balls could be seen and studied. This research is being carried out by Prof. Christopher Woods and Dr. Abbas Alizadeh. In April, a loan of obsidian tools from the Syrian site of Abu Hureyra went to McMaster University (Canada) for study by Dr. Tristan Carter, who will be subjecting them to non-destructive energy dispersive X-ray fluorescence (EDXRF) analysis; this loan will return in a year's time. Loan contracts have been drafted and objects are being prepared for loans to the La Caixa Foundation venues in Barcelona and Madrid and for the Art Institute here in Chicago. The La Caixa exhibit is entitled *Before the Flood: Sumerian Art (3500–2000 BC)*. The Art Institute is re-installing their galleries of ancient Greek, Roman, and Byzantine art and have requested the loan of several pieces of a floor mosaic from the Byzantine church excavated at Khirbet Kerak (OIM A30490 A–E; fragment "F" of this mosaic is on display in our own Haas and Schwartz Megiddo Gallery and will be remaining here). Both loans go out later this year. With regard to loan renewals, the Registrar paid a visit to the DuSable Museum to check the condition of two objects we have on loan there: a Nubian A-Group pot and a ushebti. The objects are unchanged and the loan will now be renewed for two more years. We have just started the process of renewing loans to both the University Museum at the University of Pennsylvania (pots from the embalmer's cache of Tutankhamun) and the Michael C. Carlos Museum (Diyala material). Both renewals will require visits by our Conservation staff to re-assess and record the condition of the objects.

The Registration Department has moved or inventoried almost 22,500 objects this year (a total of nearly 38,000 object movements). Over 8,500 objects were registered and nearly 3,800 had new labels printed and applied to bags or containers. Newly registered material includes pots from Mendes (Egypt), sherds from Tepe Sohz (Iran) and Semna South (Sudan), as well as wooden ethnographic models of agricultural tools made by a workman at Alishar Hüyük (Turkey) in the 1930s. Almost 6,000 objects were the subject of research of all kinds.

REGISTRATION

Nearly 3,900 had their locations updated, checked, or corrected. More than 2,000 objects were moved as part of the Metals Survey and Re-Housing grant. Almost 300 objects were moved for display-related reasons; including the Mesopotamian Relabeling project. Over 140 objects (representing 281 separate object movements) were moved related to loans or while being considered for loans of various sorts. A further 300 sherds were moved into the Teaching Collection cabinets. Around 90 objects were moved for temporary exhibits that were installed, dismantled, or in preparation, and 54 objects were used in teaching. We had fewer outside researchers this year due to the pressure of work on the database, but use of the collections by students and faculty for research and teaching continued unabated.

Visiting researchers:

- Helen Taylor (PhD candidate, University of Cambridge, U.K.) came in August for a second look at the Bakun-phase sherds from the Kur River basin survey (Iran).
- Lidija McKnight of the Animal Mummy BioBank (University of Manchester) visited to take a quick look at our animal mummies in August.
- Artur Obluski (Polish Center of Mediterranean Archaeology at the University of Warsaw) and Alex Tsakos (Humbolt University) visited for the month of September to begin work on the Qasr el-Wizz material. A monastery and church were excavated by George Scanlon at this Nubian site as part of the Aswan High Dam salvage project. Artur and Alex are part of the team that will write up the final publication. Artur returned as a visiting scholar in April for a year working on the Wizz material.
- Joanna Then-Obluska (Oriental Institute Research Associate and the University of Warsaw) also arrived in April and has been carrying out research on the Nubian beads in our collection.
- Brian Janeway (University of Toronto) visited briefly in October to look again at the Iron Age II pottery from Tell Tayinat.
- In November, Daniela Galazzo (University of Paris IV-Sorbonne) visited to research New Kingdom statues and monuments made of quartzite.
- Clemens Reichel (University of Toronto/Royal Ontario Museum) visited and photographed a selection of Diyala sealings and tablets in February and March.
- Nyree Manoukian (student, University of Toronto) came in May to study sherds of Early Bronze Age Khirbet Kerak ware from a variety of sites.
- Aleksandra Hallmann (PhD candidate, University of Warsaw) studied Egyptian objects with representations of private costume from the Twenty-fifth–Thirty-first Dynasties in July 2011.

Oriental Institute faculty, staff, researchers, and students:

- Tasha Vorderstrasse has begun to study all the Islamic material in our collections in preparation for a book on Islamic archaeology that she and Dr. Donald Whitcomb are working on. In response to their interest we have begun to register the sherds from the Iranian site of Istakhr. Tasha has already looked at more than a thousand objects and sherds.
- Rozenn Bailleul-LeSuer and others have studied objects relating to the catalog for the forthcoming exhibit, *Between Heaven and Earth: Birds in Ancient Egypt*.

- Tate Paulette and Mike Fisher looked at a small group of Diyala pots that may be associated with brewing.
- Lisa Heidorn finished a first pass through the sixty boxes of unregistered Dorginarti sherds and is now drawing selected sherds for the Dorginarti publication. She has made selections of registration priorities for material that will be illustrated in the volume.
- Karen Wilson has continued working on the publication of the Inanna temple sounding at Nippur with McGuire Gibson and others. She also kindly inventoried all the Bismaya material, now that her volume on J. Edgar Banks' excavations at the site has appeared in print.
- Angela Altenhofen has continued to draw seal impressions from Nippur and the Diyala, among other projects.
- Katharyn Grossman looked through the Hacinebi and Gritille bone boxes in June in search of sheep/goat teeth for Melissa Zolnier who is using them in her thesis.
- Robert Ritner used a number of heart scarabs for the Beginning Hieroglyphs class
- Brian Muhs used a number of stelae (glyphs) and papyri (Demotic) in his classes in the winter and spring terms.
- Donald Whitcomb borrowed a selection of Islamic pots and sherds for a class on Islamic ceramics in the autumn term.
- Yorke Rowan borrowed a selection of objects in the winter term for a class on chipped and ground stone industries and also some of the flint from Abu Hureyra for students to write papers about.
- Registration gave a talk and tour to the Egyptology high school summer class being taught this year by Rozenn Bailleul-LeSuer. Natasha Ayers used a selection of Egyptian pots and sherds for a session with the students on the study of Egyptian ceramics.
- In November a selection of possible fakes and forgeries kept in storage were made available to the adult education class, From Ground to Gallery, taught by Megaera Lorenz.

These accomplishments have been made possible with the assistance of a wonderful group of volunteers and interns, including Courtney Jacobson, Ila Patlogan, Michael Lombard, Daila Shefner, Toni Smith, O. J. Sopranos, and George Sundell. Janet Helman and Yalda Razmahang have continued to register Tall i-Geser sherds (Iran) as part of assisting Abbas Alizadeh with the publication of that site. Although we had to call a halt to our regular volunteer activity in January, due to the pressure of work on the KE EMu transition, we are looking forward to seeing them again as soon as we have the Integrated Database up and running. In June, Courtney Jacobson left Chicago and we wish her all the best in San Diego.

ARCHIVES

John A. Larson

As of December 2011, John Larson has served as Museum Archivist for thirty-one years.

Archives

Visiting scholars during fiscal year 2011–2012 included Jeffrey Abt of Wayne State University, who came to Chicago in December 2011 for a signing of his new book, *American Egyptologist: The Life of James Henry Breasted and the Creation of His Oriental Institute*, and stayed to do some research in the Papers of James Henry Breasted on behalf of Jason Thompson; Lindsay Ambridge of the University of Michigan, who worked on the wartime (World War I) correspondence of James Henry Breasted in May 2012; Artur Obluski, who is visiting from Poland to work on the Nubian site of Qasr el-Wizz; Barbara Richter from the University of California at Berkeley, who came to look at photographs of the Egyptian site of Dendera; and Barbara Breasted Whitesides, who is reading Breasted Family diaries and correspondence. From within our own Oriental Institute community, Rozenn Bailleul-LeSuer, John A. Brinkman, Fred Donner, Jack Green, Randy Shonkwiler, Emily Teeter, Bruce Williams, and Karen L. Wilson have conducted research using Archives materials.

Recent Acquisitions

On July 12, 2011, Mary Shea presented the Archives with the gift of some docent records. Throughout the summer, the inactive records of the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary Project were deposited in the Archives; this now constitutes the largest record group in the collections and includes the card catalog of the CAD as well as some correspondence relating to the project. In May 2012, the records of Robert McCormick Adams' Akkad Survey were turned over to the Archives by Scott Branting, after they were scanned by the CAMEL Lab.

Volunteers and Student Assistants

The following people have contributed their time as Archives volunteers during fiscal year 2011–2012 and have made it possible for us to continue a number of projects in the Oriental Institute Archives that would not have been possible without their generous assistance: Jean Fincher, Peggy Grant, Sandra Jacobsohn, Robert Wagner, and Carole Yoshida. In January 2012, Jean Fincher moved to Florida, where we hope she will be very happy. We are saddened by the retirement of Sandy Jacobsohn from volunteering but look forward to seeing her often in the future. We are grateful to have benefited from the help of these dedicated volunteers, and we thank them here for all of their efforts on behalf of the Archives. In addition to the regular volunteers in the Archives, Roberta Buchanan and Nancy Rose volunteered for Bruce Williams and the Nubian Salvage Publication Project.

Undergraduate student Matthew Williams assisted in the Archives throughout the summer of 2011, and MAPSS graduate student Gerard Dougher continued working with Archivist John Larson until August 2011. John has been assisted in the Oriental Institute Archives during this academic year by MAPSS graduate student Kye Barker. On May 22, 2012, Lucie Adler

began an internship in the Archives and with the Photographic Database, which lasted until the end of July.

Archives Compact-Storage Project

John Larson's principal accomplishment during the past fiscal year is the continuing re-organization of the Archives, which was made possible by the successful application to the University of Chicago's Capital Projects Program by Gil Stein and Steve Camp. By September 2010, the installation of new compact storage shelving had been accomplished, and a version of the shelf-list had been completed. The shelf-list is a work in progress. During the summer of 2012, we will be transferring the flat files (contents of the old map-cases) into the new map-cases, re-housing the collections generally, and updating the shelf-list accordingly.

In addition to the routine of running the Archives, we have scanned 10,000 additional existing images for the online photographic database, in preparation for Phase 2 of the Integrated Database project.

Picturing the Past

The temporary exhibit *Picturing the Past: Imaging and Imagining the Ancient Middle East* opened on February 7, 2012, and ran through September 2, 2012. Among the items exhibited, there are a number of pieces from the Archives, including drawings, plans, and photographs. Easily lost in the overall exhibit is my personal favorite, a reinforced photograph of a relief from the Nubian site of Abu Simbel (fig. 1), with a paper and ink attachment showing how

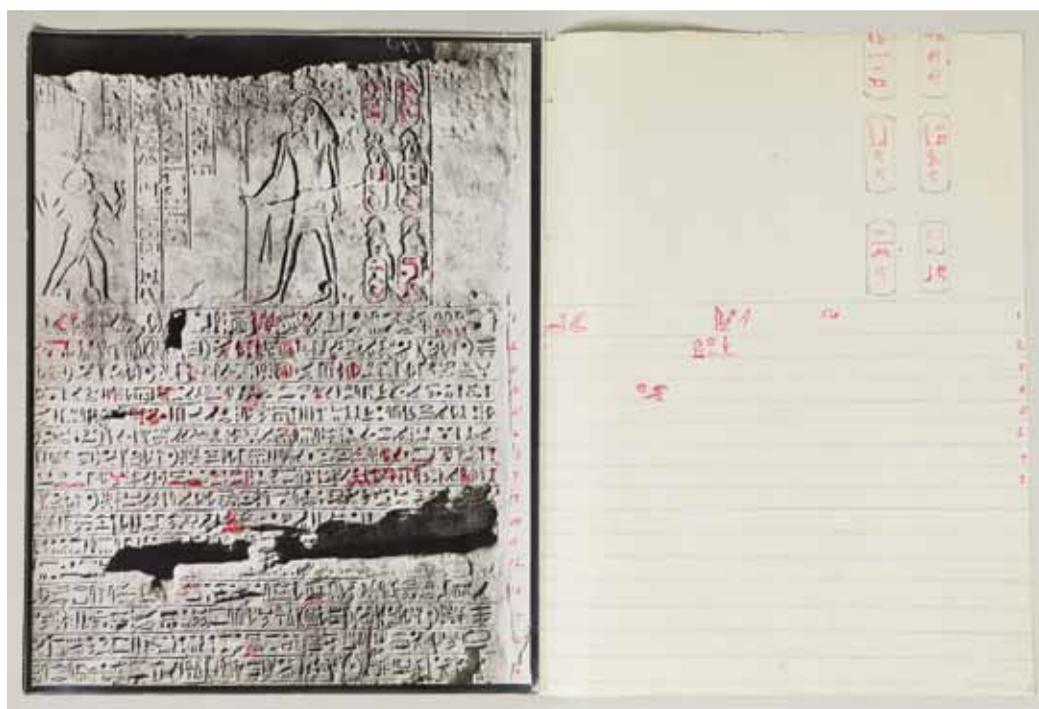


Figure 1. Reinforced photograph: Relief from Abu Simbel. Collection of the Oriental Institute, digital image no. 17464. Photo by James Henry Breasted (Catalog No. 4 in the exhibit catalog for *Picturing the Past*, OIMP 34)

James Henry Breasted first envisioned the more sophisticated method now used by the Epigraphic Survey of the Oriental Institute.

CONSERVATION

Laura D'Alessandro

This past year has been a very intense and exciting time for the Conservation Laboratory. The changing displays in the Marshall and Doris Holleb Family Special Exhibits Gallery have provided the Museum with a wonderful way to reach out to new audiences and use our collections in fresh and interesting ways. It also serves to keep the Conservation staff busy with the needs it places on the collection and the work that is associated with mounting new exhibits. In the same way, our active loan schedule is important to the life of the Museum and our colleagues in the museum world, but it obviously has a great impact on the staff within the Museum. Conservation, in particular, spends a large proportion of its time dealing with the various activities that are involved in getting an object ready for travel. The Conservation staff has been kept occupied keeping up with these demands and maintaining our other responsibilities to the collections within our care.

Alison Whyte, the laboratory's Associate Conservator, had a particularly full year juggling the needs of multiple projects. In between conducting conservation assessments and treatments for objects to be included in our own upcoming exhibits, she handled many responsibilities associated with our very active loan schedule. In the midst of all this, Alison took on the job of preparing our very fragile bird mummies for travel to the University of



Figure 1 (left). Bird mummies undergoing CT scanning at the University of Chicago Medical Center (OIM E9164, E9237, and E42440)

Figure 2 (below). Small bird mummy (OIM E42440) about to undergo microCT scanning



Chicago Medical Center's CT scanners for imaging (figs. 1, 2). These images provide valuable information on the identity and condition of the mummified birds in our collection and will serve as a resource for the upcoming exhibit *Between Heaven and Earth: Birds in Ancient Egypt*. The packing of these small, delicate bundles of mummified remains and brittle fabric were a challenge that Alison met with very inventive solutions. As a result of this work, Alison authored an article for *News & Notes* (#214 [2012]) entitled "Bird Mummy Conservation: A Delicate Balance." Alison also found the time to co-author an article with Gil Stein, "Before the Pyramids: An Exhibit Presented with Support of AEF," for the spring 2012 issue of *Bulletin of American Research Center in Egypt*. In the spring, Alison was invited to present a lecture entitled "Soluble Salts and Archaeological Objects: A Case Study from the Oriental Institute Museum" to the Anthropology Department at the University of Illinois at Chicago, an example of outreach to our local professional colleagues that was very well received.

Simona Cristanetti, National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)-funded Metals Room conservator, had a very productive year as she continued to make great strides in this critical project to assess and re-house our metals collection. Simona is in the second year of this two-year project funded by an award from NEH Preservation and Access: Sustaining Cultural Heritage Collections. This award supports the conservation assessment, imaging, and re-housing of the Oriental Institute's metals collection of over 11,000 objects. Over the past year, Simona completed the conservation assessment of the entire coin collection and oversaw the labeling and re-housing of over 1,500 coins. She also began the survey of the three-dimensional objects, making a great start in their initial assessment. To date, over 4,500 objects have been surveyed and the re-housing of this portion of the metals collection has begun (figs. 3, 4).

One of the more interesting purchases for this project was a DinoLite hand-held digital microscope that allows for detailed record views of an object's condition, in situations where



Figure 3 (left). Re-housed bronze statue of a deity. Medinet Habu. Photo by Simona Cristanetti

Figure 4 (below). Re-housed bronze model hoes. Medinet Habu. Photo by Simona Cristanetti



CONSERVATION

the metal exhibits a particular problem. The magnified images obtained with the DinoLite microscope are now part of the conservation assessment database for these objects. This past year also saw the delivery of the remaining Delta Designs cabinets that complete the purchase of the NEH-funded cabinets for the Metals Room. These beautiful, museum-quality cabinets are custom sized to make the most efficient use of the room's small footprint.

All of this could not have been done without the assistance of our cadre of willing conservation volunteers supervised by Simona: Kate Aguirre, Ashley DeLio, Jennifer Hunt Johnson, Anna Kusters, Ryan Lavery, Hannah Lee, Amy Lukas, Laura Moeller, Megan Mueller, Liz Sorokin, and Evelina Zielinski. These talented young interns are planning to make a career in conservation and their time spent working on the project helps them to fulfill an entrance requirement for the graduate programs in conservation. We are fortunate to have the assistance of these fledgling conservation professionals and enjoy getting to know them and serving as mentors.

Robyn Haynie, the dedicated conservator of the Persepolis Fortification Archive (PFA) Project supported by a grant from the PARSA Community Foundation, spent another year cleaning away the dirt and debris of millennia to reveal the texts and seal impressions on tablets from Persepolis. Her painstaking cleaning, stabilizing, and rejoining of the small fragments of unbaked clay takes unremitting patience and fine hand skills. One tablet came to her in over thirty fragments; she reconstructed and cleaned it using a structural support that enabled the tablet to be safely handled, making the combined Elamite and Aramaic texts, and seal impressions, visible to PFA Project imaging specialists and editors. Most recently, Robyn discovered an unrecognized Aramaic inscription hidden beneath soil on a sealed tablet that PFA Project editor Matt Stolper cataloged for editing (fig. 5). Robyn particularly enjoyed working on tablets sealed with the images of worship scenes after attending Mark Garrison's Oriental Institute members' lecture on fire altars found in the seals and sealings of the Persian Empire. This instance serves as a wonderful example of how our members' lecture series can serve many audiences.

This account of the past year would not be complete without mention of our most interesting research project to date. In October, Conservation staff attended a conservation science seminar sponsored by the Art Institute of Chicago and Northwestern University and held at the Advanced Photon Source (APS) of Argonne National Laboratory. The topic was synchrotron research in cultural heritage science and provided an exciting opportunity to hear about current research in our field from leading scientists in the field of material science. One of the speakers, Dr. Steve Heald, is the director of Sector 20 at the APS. After Dr. Heald's presentation, I approached him about a project that we were pursuing that seemed ideally suited to his work at Argonne. This meeting led to an invitation by Dr. Heald to run



Figure 5. Tablet with revealed Aramaic epigraph after removal of an obscuring layer of soil (see also fig. 5 in the Persepolis Fortification Archive Project report)

preliminary tests at the APS to determine the suitability of his equipment to our research question, that of identifying the changes that have taken place over time in the ancient blue pigments on our eighth-century BC Assyrian reliefs from Sargon II's palace. Following the successful conclusion of these tests, and with Dr. Heald's support, we have submitted a request for beamtime at the APS to pursue this project in the coming year. We hope to report next year on the continuation of this promising research.

All of these projects and activities were overshadowed by the Oriental Institute's award to take part in a major project to inventory and re-house the collections of the National Museum of Afghanistan (NMA). When news of the award from the Department of State reached us early in the new year we were thrilled. It is both an amazing responsibility and an incredible opportunity, one with which we are so very pleased to be faced. As part of the team that visited Kabul in May, I was able to reconnect with our Afghan colleagues. It was a wonderful experience, made more so by the welcome we received by all the staff at the National Museum in Kabul, from the director, Mr. Massoudi, to the curators and conservators. Their generosity of spirit, professionalism, and commitment to cultural heritage are an inspiration to all of us.

PREP SHOP

Erik Lindahl

This *Annual Report* marks my tenth year at the Oriental Institute. In my time here I have been lucky to be a big and small part of many exciting projects and events. I'd like to thank the Oriental Institute for these opportunities past, present, and future. Currently, I am writing this report from Kabul, Afghanistan, where I function as registrar (in its initial stages) for the National Museum of Afghanistan-Oriental Institute (NMA-OI) partnership program. It is the beginning of a new chapter in the history of the Oriental Institute and I am thankful to be a part of it.

2011 has been a busy year. It started with King Khasekhem returning to the Ashmolean Museum and our new Chief Curator Jack Green coming to the Oriental Institute from the same institution. As with any year we have continued to assist with several long-term projects such as the registration and publication of the Oriental Institute collection of reliefs from Khorsabad, the relabeling of the Edgar and Deborah Jannotta Mesopotamian Gallery, and the Oriental Institute Research Archives compact storage project (now in its second year).

The special exhibits program has continued strongly under the guidance of Dr. Green. *Between Heaven and Earth: Birds in Ancient Egypt* has been in preparation since the last report. It will open in October. The exhibits team is excited for the arrival of several well-chosen, beautiful loans and the production of what looks to be a very dynamic exhibit. We are hoping to integrate classic Egyptian motifs and multimedia content to recreate the atmosphere of the Nile Valley in ancient times.

Brian Zimerle has continued to contribute above and beyond his official role as part-time preparator assisting with special exhibits (fig. 1). Over the last year he has accomplished much, including the designing of graphics and multimedia content for the special exhibits program, designing outdoor signage, and working on the installation of temporary exhibits.

PREP SHOP

For the *Picturing the Past* exhibit Brian designed the graphic panels, produced the interactive computer kiosk, and edited the video of reconstruction fly-throughs. Some of his other accomplishments for the year have been designing Oriental Institute advertisements for the *New York Times* and other publications as well as making several large, meter-tall reproductions of ancient Sumerian beer-brewing vessels for a collaborative brewing project between the Oriental Institute and a local craft brewery.

The Prep Shop would like to thank, welcome, and say good-bye to several people that graced us with their presence. 2011 marked the end of Tom James' time at the Oriental Institute. He is missed and his contributions to the Oriental Institute will be felt for years to come. Jack Green arrived as Chief Curator in August 2011 and has been busy getting to know the place, making plans, and making improvements. One of his accomplishments of the year has been to change the rotation schedule for special exhibits from two exhibits a year to two exhibits every eighteen months. He has also been furthering the Museum's cause by making research trips, being a part of the NMA-OI project, guest lecturing, and writing grants for future projects. Mónica Vélez is the Oriental Institute's new Curatorial Assistant. She has become an important member of the exhibits team and is becoming a vital part of the Institute as a whole. Jason Barcus as the new Head of Visitor Services and Security has been very helpful to the Prep Shop and the exhibits team through facilitating work done by facilities and generally going above and beyond his duties to assist the Museum with anything within his powers. Jason Hunt was our intern for 2011–2012. He quickly became a key part of the Museum team and things would not have run as smoothly if he had not been so dedicated and flexible. We wish him luck in his future endeavors. Michael McSherry also contributed as assistant preparator to the exhibits team. His construction skills and eye for detail were greatly appreciated.

There are several smaller noteworthy projects, missions, and surprises from this fiscal year that deserve note. In conjunction with a numismatics conference held in Chicago the



Figure 1. Installing Breasted's camera and notebooks for the *Picturing the Past* exhibit. Left to right: Emily Teeter, John A. Larson, Brian Zimerle, Erik Lindahl

Prep Shop helped put together a small display on Commerce and Coins in the Ancient Near East. Andrew Dix and Brittany Hayden did a wonderful job curating the exhibit under the guidance of Emily Teeter. The Prep Shop has been working with Conservation and Registration on the Metals Room re-housing program by assisting with the installation of new storage cabinets. The Adler Planetarium requested a loan of astronomical tablets for their history of astronomy exhibit; the Prep Shop constructed the mounts and assisted in the installation of the display. Erik Lindahl accompanied Helen McDonald to central Illinois three times in the past fiscal year to collect an outstanding study loan and donations of books and other items from Judith Franke. It was wonderful to spend time with Judith, who has a deep history with the Oriental Institute, especially through her involvement in the Nippur Expedition. This year also saw for the first time in many decades the hanging of a new painting in the Director's office. Inspired by the Picturing the Past exhibit and at the recommendation of Emily Teeter, Gil Stein requested that Joseph Lindon Smith's painting of a relief from Persepolis be conserved and installed above the fireplace. From the hallway you now see a procession of Scythians bearing gifts walking toward the Director's desk. There have also been several minor water leaks and other facilities-related projects and emergencies that the Prep Shop has needed to assist with by moving display cases, escorting workers, and repairing damage.

The Prep Shop is looking forward to the coming year. The Birds in Ancient Egypt exhibit looks to reach new heights as we build upon much we have learned from our previous exhibits, many of our outstanding projects will hopefully be completed, and with any luck the Museum will have another productive year.

SUQ

Denise Browning

This was an exceptional year for the Suq so that we were able to surpass last year's sales feat — which was an accomplishment in itself with a 24 percent increase. This year our net sales were up a very healthy 7 percent over last year's sales.

It was an exciting year developing merchandise for the special exhibits. Special thanks to Erik Lindahl, who scanned James Henry Breasted's old stereocards so that we could sell the reproductions in the Suq. We had two book signings: *American Egyptologist: The Life of James Henry Breasted and the Creation of His Oriental Institute* by Jeffrey Abt, and *Muhammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam* by Fred Donner. It was perfect timing that in December the magazine *Time Out Chicago Kids* did an article on the Suq, which encouraged many new shoppers. The first weekend in June we had a 20' x 30' tent outside in the parking lot filled with rugs from Afghanistan! It went well and it may become an annual event. We are currently working on ways to improve our online sales and redesigning the layout of the Suq.

Many thanks to our loyal volunteers who greet and educate the public about the Oriental Institute. It is their cheerful enthusiasm that generates all those sales. Many thanks to Ray Broms, Judy Bell-Qualls, Peggy Grant, Jane Meloy, and Norma van der Meulen. Additionally, Norma designs and creates many beautiful jewelry pieces for the Suq which draw



Figure 1. Florence Ovadia in the Suq

many returning customers. Unfortunately, we had to say good-bye to Jane at the beginning of this fiscal year. She had some great ideas for display that we augmented in the Suq. She even donated the framing for two of our posters, which did sell this year! Our student employees Matthew Hess who has been invaluable in the office and Dylan Genest who keeps us well stocked have been a delight to work with.

It is with a very heavy heart that we say good-bye to Florence Ovadia (fig. 1). She has meticulously installed and maintained the displays for the Suq for over thirty years! Her art background and her knowledge of the Near East have been invaluable! The Suq will not be the same without her.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Anna R. Ressman

The past year has been a fruitful time for the Photography Department. We were helped in all our work by Digital Photography Assistant Bryce Lowry, a current PhD candidate in anthropology. He has been working hard on the record photography aspect of the current Metals Survey and Re-housing Project as well as acting as an assistant and object handler in the Photography Studio. We were helped by an excellent volunteer, Mac Ragan, who diligently spent over fifty hours on the recent images produced for the Khorsabad Large Objects Project from November 2011 through March 2012. From March to June 2012 we were joined by John J. Whitcomb, an architectural student intern learning the effects of light on three-dimensional space and how to modify light for specific effects. The Photography Department is very grateful to these three people; without their hard work and dedication, much of what we accomplished this year would have been impossible.

A new rapid digital imaging station was set up in Small Objects Storage so that record photography of the Metals Survey and Re-housing Project could go forward in tandem with regularly scheduled studio photography work. We are very lucky to have Bryce Lowry committed to continuing the work on this project through the upcoming fiscal year of 2012–2013. He came to the Photography Department as the first MAPSS intern in the 2007–2008 term with no prior photography experience. He returned in 2010 and has since worked very hard to learn the complex skills needed to do the lighting and photography for this project as well as the many computer programs needed to process and catalog the resulting images. The new rapid digital imaging station allows the record photography of metals objects to be

done as they are re-housed by the conservators as well as providing a work station for the processing and cataloging of the thousands of images the project is creating. This new rapid digital imaging station also paves the way for future rapid digital imaging projects, giving the Photography Department, and the Museum, an important and flexible resource for years to come.

In August 2011 work began on new photography for the catalog for the special exhibit *Picturing the Past: Imaging and Imagining the Ancient Middle East*. A total of 45 archaeological objects and archival items were photographed, resulting in 163 new images. In February of 2012, work began on new photography for the upcoming special exhibit *Between Heaven and Earth: Birds in Ancient Egypt* (fig. 1). There were



Figure 1. Photographing OIM E10504 with new photography studio equipment

65 archaeological objects and archival items photographed, and 204 new photographs were created. Throughout the 2011–2012 year, an additional 64 objects and architectural features were photographed for miscellaneous individual requests for study, publication, loan, and exhibition. These requests resulted in 503 new photographs. Oriental Institute Museum photography has been published in numerous national and international outlets over the past year and a large, fine art print was exhibited at the Chicago Cultural Center as part of the exhibition *Write Now: Artists and Letterforms*.

Beginning in September 2011 and finishing in June 2012, the Photography Studio has undergone a dramatic renovation. All the old equipment, and the shelving that housed it, was taken out of the studio thanks to some hard labor by Bryce Lowry, Erik Lindahl, and Brian Zimerle. With new funding from the Oriental Institute, we were able to upgrade the studio equipment to current and future-compatible digital photography technologies. High-output fluorescent lights, flexible stands, a new light table, LED lights, and a new studio stand were all purchased. The Photography Studio equipment now matches the recent upgrades to new computer and camera equipment upgraded over the past couple of years. It has even been upgraded to High Definition video capabilities. Overall, the 2011–2012 fiscal year has been an exciting and productive year for the Photography Department.