

INTEGRATED DATABASE PROJECT

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Phase one of the Integrated Database Project was successfully completed during this past year. This is quite an achievement that has been eight years in the making. As described in last year's annual report, the Integrated Database Project is designed to provide a more stable, integrated, and web accessible platform for housing the millions of records, photographs, maps, artifacts, and texts that the Oriental Institute has produced or acquired since its inception. An expanding effort over the past decades has digitized a large amount of this information, but it was held in a wide range of different software and did not allow for queries to cross between the different collections. Some of the software was also becoming outdated and unstable, a relic of the early and very forward thinking initiatives of the Oriental Institute in the 1980s and 1990s.

Over the past two years a wide range of different members of the Oriental Institute family have participated in the effort to bring Phase One of this project to a successful conclusion. Foy Scalf, Helen McDonald, and Susan Allison have put in long hours designing templates for accessing the data and testing their implementation within the KE EMu software that powers the new system. Volunteers and students have put in countless hours cleaning up data, testing recently imported data, or adding in completely new data. Faculty, staff, students, and volunteers have graciously participated in focus groups led by Wendy Ennes, to guide

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 The Suq is rapidly filling up with lots of new handmade merchandise for our Museum's New Special Exhibit.

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SEARCH OUR COLLECTIONS

Welcome to the online home of the Oriental Institute's Integrated Database. This is an on-going project that aims to provide public access to information about the diverse research and object-based collections managed and cared for by the Oriental Institute.



Museum Collection
 Explore over two hundred and seven thousand registered objects in the permanent collection and special exhibitions galleries.



Research Archives
 Browse over four hundred and fifty thousand entries that represent complete analytics [volumes, manuscripts, essays, articles, and book reviews] for all cataloged Research Archives materials.

[Search Tips and Instructions](#)

Thank you to the following donors for their generous support.




Aimee Drolet

How can we make this a more valuable resource? Let us know what content and features you would like to see.

Browse Galleries

Museum Gallery:

Object Type/Description:

Materials:

Place Name:

Culture:

Dating:

Revised: July 26, 2013

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Figure 1. The Search Our Collection webpage (oi.uchicago.edu/idb), which provides the entry point for people to search the over 650,000 records pertaining to the Oriental Institute collections

the design of the new “Search Our Collections” webpages that provide access to this data. John Sanders and I have coordinated this effort together with our external project manager, Angela Spinazze. Jack Green, Chief Curator of the Museum whose units house and maintain much of this data, played a key supportive role in completing Phase One since joining the Oriental Institute. Over the past year, the University’s IT Services group, particularly Rose Pezzuti Dyer and Alan Takaoka, brought our ideas to life through their software coding skills. None of this would have been possible without this extensive effort by so many of us.

The culmination of all the hard work of so many people can be seen by visiting the Search Our Collections initial webpage (oi.uchicago.edu/idb). Here you will find the public entranceway to the wealth of information pertaining to the ancient Middle East that has been collected by the Oriental Institute over its more than ninety year existence. While not all of

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Figure 2. The results of a search for “Tyre” from the Search Our Collections webpage yields a list of resulting records containing both bibliographic citations (blue) and museum objects (red)

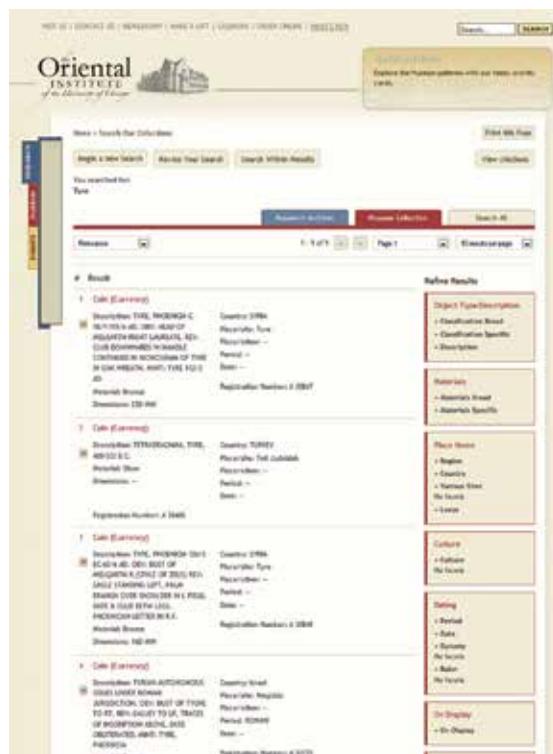


Figure 3. Clicking on the Museum Collection tab narrows down the list of results for “Tyre” to just those which are museum objects. Facets to the right of the page allow these results to be further refined by factors such as materials or dating

the millions of items are yet available, over 450,000 bibliographic records and 207,000 object records are now available through this webpage. Take a look and see! Typing in “Merneptah” as a search across all collections will provide you with books and articles written about the life and times of the Nineteenth Dynasty pharaoh as well as objects from his time at the Oriental Institute. Typing in a more complex search like “Schmidt AND Hissar” will yield the bibliographic citation to Erich Schmidt’s publication of his excavations at Tepe Hissar, as well as reviews of that publication, and will show some of the sherds he excavated at the site and brought back to Chicago. Typing in “Guterbock” or “Güterbock” will yield bibliographic records pertaining to publications by Hans Güterbock. While typing in “grit” will yield just museum objects, mostly sherds and vessels with grit inclusions or temper. You can view all the results together in one list or see only the museum objects or only the bibliographic records in separate lists. Both of the separate lists can then be further refined and bibliographic records can be exported into a working bibliography.

The Search Our Collections webpage launched on January 31 of this year. Since that time it has become an indispensable resource for scholars, students, and people around the world. However, it is only a start to bringing online all the millions of items connected with the Oriental Institute. It is also only a start in the form that access to the collections will take in the years ahead. We welcome more feedback as you use this expanding resource, and encourage you to submit it to us through the feedback button on the webpages. Your feedback can help to shape how future versions of the Search Our Collections webpages look and work.

With Phase One of the project brought to a successful conclusion, work has already turned to Phase Two. We have been very fortunate to acquire generous financial support for Phase One from a combination of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the University of Chicago, and Aimee Drolet Rossi. The success of Phase One helped lay the groundwork for a second grant submission to IMLS to help fund Phase Two. We were extremely pleased to subsequently find out that we were awarded this second IMLS grant. Without all our ongoing support this work would soon grind to a halt.

The focus of Phase Two is to start to bring online the wealth of scans of the photographic records held by the Oriental Institute as well as to integrate data pertaining to the conservation and care of objects. Currently, you will notice that there are very few images attached to any of the records in the database. This will change with Phase Two thanks to the hard work of Mónica Vélez, who has been working with us on developing fields within the database to hold the images' metadata as well as the front-end layout. Images will be increasingly more common within the records that you already see, as photographs of objects are added. But there will soon be a separate tab in the results window that will show you all the new images that your searches uncover. These may be images of objects or they could be images taken in decades past by prior generations of Oriental Institute researchers. At the same time, the Oriental Institute conservators, led by Laura D'Alessandro, have been hard at work developing the backend database to convert the variety of recording systems they currently use into KE EMu. While their work will be less obvious to most users, behind the scenes it will help to coordinate communication and information management regarding each object's care.

Phase Two has also seen some changes in the core project team. Jack Green has taken on a much larger role in helping to oversee the implementation of Phase Two. At the same time, John Sanders, the visionary who has been pressing for just this sort of an integrated system since the early 1990s, retired shortly after the launch of Phase One. While no one could possibly replace his experience and vision in regards to the Integrated Database, Paul Ruffin, has filled in more than ably on the more technical portions of the project over the

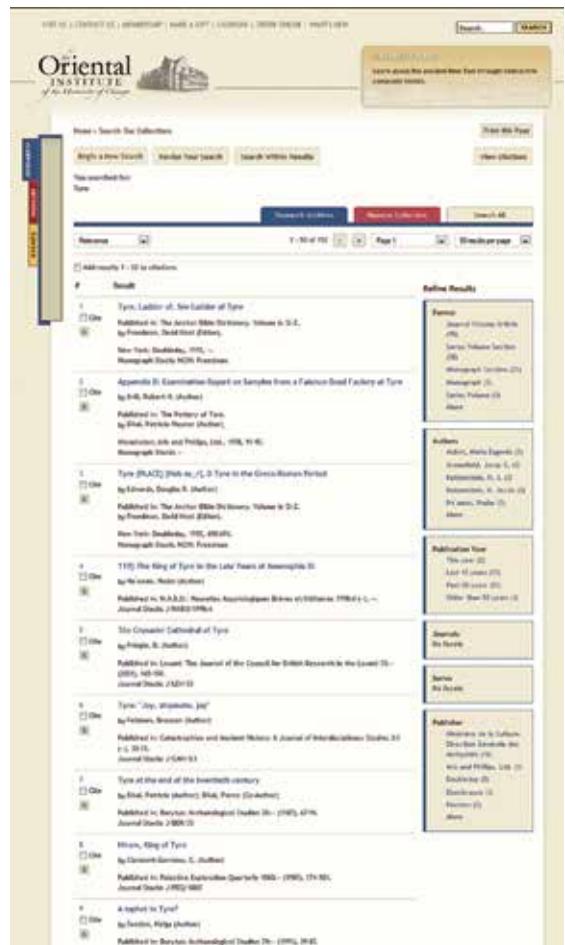


Figure 4. Clicking on the Research Archives tab narrows down the list of results for “Tyre” to just those which are bibliographic records. Facets to the right of the page allow these results to be further refined by factors such as publication year or author. Citations can also be selected and then exported into a variety of formats by checking the box next to the record and pressing the “View citations” button

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past several months. John's presence is still very often missed. Together Jack and Paul have joined me, Angela, and Foy in overseeing the operations of both Phase Two and the ongoing everyday work that builds upon the success of Phase One.

As can be seen above, there have been numerous people who have given time and effort to bring Phase One to a successful conclusion and to begin the work of Phase Two. Beyond the various people listed above, a number of individuals should be credited for their efforts this past year. Volunteer George Sundell, as has been the case over the past eight years, provided invaluable expertise and assistance to various aspects of the project this past year. John Larson and volunteer Justin Seppi have played key roles in assisting Monica with her work on the photographic collections. Likewise, Alison Whyte and Simona Cristanetti have worked closely with Laura on the conservation templates. Volunteers Roberta Schaffner, Andrea Dudek, Stephen Adamcik, Paula Pergament, Amanda el-Khoury, and Su Hyeon Bok have assisted in testing changes to the database and website and in the herculean task of cleaning up large amounts of data. They were joined in that effort by student assistants Melissa Bellah, Taylor Coplen, Laura Holzweg, Nicola Kanmany John, and Min Won Song. Magnus Widell, Chuck Jones, Tate Paulette, and Miller Prosser have also provided very useful guidance and suggestions throughout this past year. This project would not be the success that it has become without everyone's efforts and the funding of IMLS, the University of Chicago, the Oriental Institute, and Aimee Drolet Rossi.
