

RESEARCH ARCHIVES

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Introduction

There is an inherent contradiction in our work at the Research Archives of the Oriental Institute. On the one hand, we are the custodians, stewards, and facilitators of 60,000 print volumes representing the collective research conducted in the fields of ancient Near East studies over the past 200 years. On the other hand, we have worked tirelessly and diligently to create and refine a host of digital tools for navigating our esoteric branch of humanities academia. While many institutions and critics are touting the rapid move toward exclusively digital libraries, we have resisted, and continue to maintain a collection based primarily on the printed word. Yet, electronic tools have revolutionized the organization of information and the retrieval of data, both of which have become absolute necessities to a world drowning in information. With the close of another year for the Research Archives, it is an appropriate time to reflect on our mission, current practices, and future goals. The relationship between print and digital media is fundamentally intertwined within these concerns.

The digital age has opened up a wealth of resources and made access to research far more democratic. In many ways, it has been a boon for the study of the ancient Near East. If this development has been so positive, why do we continue to increase our print holdings? I can say unequivocally that it is not the result of any backward-leaning perspectives of traditionalism. There are real concerns to consider. The proliferation of born digital publications presents a number of problems to the archivist, first and foremost in the realm of preservation and access. Although electronic publications on the World Wide Web offer access to anyone with an Internet connection, it also means there is no access without that connection. This raises issues of connectivity, but as a librarian I am more concerned with long-term preservation of scholarly work. A brief tour of our journal stacks will reveal dozens of journals that were born with good intentions, but that quickly died, some after only a few issues. For digital publications without long-term and institutional support, digital death means that the fruits of this research will essentially disappear. As soon as a server fee is not paid, or there is an electricity crisis, or a major connectivity issue, users will not be able to access this material. If a journal's website goes under and their server disappears, the only remaining copies of that research in existence will be paper copies (if they were published) or randomly saved digital copies squirreled away in private individuals' digital collections. Paper copies will last until physically destroyed; around the Institute, the joke is that if you want your information to last, record it on clay tablets. Once baked, they're nearly indestructible



Figure 1. Cuneiform tablets, once fired, can preserve information for millennia (University of Chicago Library, Special Collections Research Center apf2-05368)

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and last for millennia (fig. 1). Without adequate policies in place, the information of the Information Age may not be so safe. For these reasons, we have maintained our print collections of journals for which digital access does not have secure preservation policies in place with backing from major institutions.

In the realm of research tools, however, the digital revolution has been a blessing to librarians and researchers alike. Overwhelming amounts of data, from object information about primary sources to bibliographic data on secondary literature, can be cataloged, indexed, sorted, searched, filtered, and mined for amazing scientific results. The Research Archives online catalog remains an incredibly important resource for scholarship within ancient Near East studies. The 460,000 records in our catalog represent a veritable index of our fields. With the developments offered through the Integrated Database Project, users can now find new and exciting ways to find, sort, sift, store, and share this information. Producing such an index by hand without the use of digital resources (an attempt was made by the Oriental Institute under the Archaeological Corpus project) is nearly unimaginable. We continue to catalog each and every book, article, and book review received. Now we can connect this data together so that for every book, all the book reviews are displayed; for every author, an author biography, degrees completed, and work history are shown; for every open-source digital document, a PDF is attached. Such projects allow us to marry our print media and digital media in unexpected and exhilarating ways. The future for the Research Archives of the Oriental Institute is certainly bright and the rest of us will benefit immensely from it.

Acquisitions

Acquisition efforts remained at the forefront of our priorities for 2012–2013. Our move to the EMu (Electronic Museum) database as part of the Integrated Database Project has given us more flexible and robust methods of organizing our data. One change from last year is reflected in table 1: the number of accession lots we received through the year (numbers for July and August 2012 are not available because the database was not in use at that time). We are also tracking the growing costs paid toward shipping and look to reduce those costs as much as possible in the coming years in order to efficiently apply the budget toward the acquisition of research materials. Although the numbers in table 1 are slightly below our historical average of 1,000 volumes, we actually exceeded the historical average, yet time commitments devoted to the Integrated Database Project forced us into a backlog from which we are still recovering. Several significant donations remain to be cataloged and the acquisition of several large encyclopedia volumes has required many hours to analyze fully in the database. We were able this year to acquire the majority of the back issues from two journals: *Égypte, Afrique et Orient* and *Sokar*. These represent important additions to the collection as they are not held in any other libraries in the Chicago region. In these ways, we continue to strive to fulfill our mission as a premier library of ancient Near East studies of providing for the research needs of scholars, students, and the public.

Table 1. Research Archives acquisitions, July 2012–June 2013

<i>Month</i>	<i>Number of Accession Lots</i>	<i>Monographs, Series, Pamphlets</i>	<i>Journals</i>	<i>Total Volumes</i>
July 2012	?	66	25	91
August 2012	?	43	13	56
September 2012	21	20	13	33
October 2012	54	43	51	94
November 2012	40	50	24	74
December 2012	20	35	12	47
January 2013	41	54	21	75
February 2013	17	25	3	28
March 2013	24	28	40	68
April 2013	34	58	45	103
May 2013	64	56	52	108
June 2013	33	45	19	64
Totals		523	318	841
		Total Volumes		841

Online Catalog

One of the major developments over the past year is the design and implementation of a new online catalog for the Research Archives as part of the Oriental Institute's Integrated Database Project. The web version of the new catalog went live to the public in February 2013 (oi.uchicago.edu/idb). The advances over the old catalog are tremendous. Foremost among these changes is that bibliographic data from the Research Archives can now be searched simultaneously with data from Museum Registration. If the user desires, they can also search only the Research Archives catalog separately. The interface is intuitive and aesthetically pleasing. Searches can be built from very simple to exceedingly complex depending upon the user's knowledge and experience. Searches can be quickly and easily audited or augmented through the "Revise Your Search" and "Search Within Results" features. Results can be sorted according to user-defined criteria and refined through a series of facets displayed on the right-hand side of the screen to demystify bibliographic research. These features ease the notoriously difficult challenge of finding what you want in a vast sea of information. A citation tool allows users to select records of their choice and download them for use in their own databases (e.g., Zotero, EndNote) or to build bibliographies in their text documents. All these developments are just the beginning of what we believe will be a long and incredibly interesting project through which the way we conduct research will change, become more efficient, and lead to increasing insights. We have many surprises in store for the future.

From July 1, 2012, to June 30, 2013, the Research Archives online catalog has grown by 40,000 records, from 420,000 to 460,000 analytic records (see table 2). These records include complete analytical entries for the back issues of *Égypte, Afrique et Orient* and *Sokar*. Roberta

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Schaffner and Andrea Dudek have also begun an inventory of our serial holdings and they have worked diligently to catalog large sections of this collection and add PDF copies where appropriate to the catalog records.

Table 2. Catalog records

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of Catalog Records Added</i>	<i>Total Number of Catalog Records</i>
2012–2013	40,000	460,000
2011–2012	30,000	420,000
2010–2011	30,000	390,000
2009–2010	40,000	360,000
2008–2009	63,000	320,000
2007–2008	62,000	257,000
2006–2007	28,000	195,000
—	—	—
2003–2004	10,000	130,000

We continue to add links to online material, both new and old. Currently, there are over 105,000 links (only 103,987 recorded in table 3, below) to online material in the Research Archives catalog (roughly 25% of all catalog records). We have begun the process of adding PDF files directly to the new EMu database and we look forward to developing access to these files via the online catalog during the coming year.

Table 3. Links to online journal articles

<i>Call Number</i>	<i>Journal</i>	<i>Links</i>	<i>Access</i>
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>	14,818	JSTOR
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>	11,610	Ebsco
ANT	<i>Antiquity</i>	11,094	Antiquity
AJA	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>	11,019	JSTOR/AJA
ZPE	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>	7,205	JSTOR
Syria	<i>Syria</i>	5,689	JSTOR
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>	4,873	JSTOR/JNES
JEA	<i>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i>	4,143	JSTOR
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>	3,574	Open
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Research</i>	3,336	JSTOR
ZDMG	<i>Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i>	3,360	Open
PEQ	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>	3,286	Ebsco
ZA	<i>Zeitschrift für Assyriologie</i>	3,061	Open
CRAIBL	<i>Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres. Comptes rendus</i>	2,255	Open

<i>Call Number</i>	<i>Journal</i>	<i>Links</i>	<i>Access</i>
BIAR	<i>Near Eastern Archaeology (formerly Biblical Archaeologist)</i>	2,072	JSTOR
JESHO	<i>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient</i>	1,446	JSTOR
BIFAO	<i>Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale</i>	1,688	Open
JARCE	<i>Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt</i>	1,180	JSTOR
RBL	<i>Review of Biblical Literature</i>	1,084	Open
JCS	<i>Journal of Cuneiform Studies</i>	1,004	JSTOR
IRQ	<i>Iraq</i>	993	JSTOR
BiOr	<i>Bibliotheca Orientalis</i>	845	Peeters
ANS	<i>Anatolian Studies</i>	732	JSTOR
FUB	<i>Forschungen und Berichte</i>	673	JSTOR
IRN	<i>Iran</i>	685	JSTOR
PAM	<i>Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean</i>	495	Open
JANES	<i>Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society</i>	435	Open
Orj	<i>Orient: Report of the Society for Near Eastern Studies in Japan</i>	380	Open
ARO	<i>Ars Orientalis</i>	317	JSTOR
BSEG	<i>Bulletin: Société d'Égyptologie Genève</i>	270	Open
KAR	<i>Cahiers de Karnak</i>	89	
BMSEAS	<i>British Museum Studies in Ancient Egypt and Sudan</i>	64	Open
LingAeg	<i>Lingua Aegyptia</i>	47	Open
ARTA	<i>Achaemenid Research on Texts and Archaeology</i>	34	Open
StOr	<i>Studia Orontica</i>	32	Open
CDLJ	<i>Cuneiform Digital Library Journal</i>	32	Open
ENiM	<i>Égypte Nilotique et Méditerranéenne</i>	28	Open
CDLB	<i>Cuneiform Digital Library Bulletin</i>	20	Open
CDLN	<i>Cuneiform Digital Library Notes</i>	19	Open
Total		103,987	

Resources on the Web

In addition to the online catalog, the Research Archives maintains a series of open-access online resources.

Introduction & Guide

http://oi.uchicago.edu/pdf/research_archives_introduction&guide.pdf

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

Dissertations

<http://oi.uchicago.edu/research/library/dissertation/>

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

Dissertation Proposals

<http://oi.uchicago.edu/research/library/dissertation/proposals/>

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

Acquisitions Lists

<http://oi.uchicago.edu/research/library/acquisitions.html>

The acquisitions reports of the Research Archives are distributed as PDFs on a monthly basis. This process has been active and continuative since September 2007.

Annual Reports

<http://oi.uchicago.edu/research/library/annualreports.html>

Annual Reports for the Research Archives are available from 1969 to 2012.

Networking Sites

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

The Research Archives now maintains an official page on Facebook. Information about recent publications of Oriental Institute scholars or reviews of recent Oriental Institute publications is distributed through this page. Currently, 1,961 individuals follow the Research Archives through this presence on Facebook.

Monographs

<http://oilib.uchicago.edu>

Copies of out-of-copyright monographs have been scanned and are made available as PDFs through links in the online catalog of the Research Archives. As of June 2013, the Research Archives provides access to over 225 volumes.

Adopt-a-Journal

<http://oi.uchicago.edu/research/library/adopt-a-journal.html>

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

Visitors

The Research Archives continues to be a place of international collaboration among the community of scholars studying the ancient Near East. Over the past year, we had research visits from the following individuals (in alphabetical order), and I apologize for anyone I may

have missed: Jan Bremmer, Ed Castle, Eva von Dassow, Peter Dorman, Grant Frame, James Hoffmeier, Alexis Jankowski, Jackie Jay, Cindy Jurisson and her class for the University of Chicago Lab Schools, Isaac Kalimi, Massimo Maiocchi, Lina Meerchyad, Adam Miglio, Miriam Müller, Maggie Paddock, Elaine Fetyko Page with Jacob Hill and the Great Chicago Libraries class of Elmhurst College, Stephanie Rost, Seth Sanders, JoAnn Scurlock, Philip Venticinque, Matteo Vigo, John Wee, Jennifer Westerfeld, and Avi Winitzer.

Acknowledgments

As always, running a research library is not a solitary endeavor. I have had the privilege to work with incredibly gracious and devoted colleagues, who continue to help support the Research Archives in a variety of ways. I would like to thank the following individuals for their time, effort, and donations over the past year: Tom Urban, Leslie Schramer, Chris Woods, Seth Richardson, Jason Barcus, John Sanders, Paul Ruffin, Scott Branting, Angela Spinazze, Bruce Williams, Andrea Dudek, Catherine Mardikes, and Emily Teeter.

Our student employees continue to be responsible for a lion's share of the data entry in the Research Archives. Laura Holzweg, Taylor Coplen, Melissa Bellah, Nicola Kammany John, and Min Won Song have been instrumental in the strides we have made over the past year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for all their hard work and their exceptionally cheerful attitudes that make working in our office such a delight.

The work of our volunteers and the relationships I have established with them have been the most surprising and gratifying experiences of my tenure in the Research Archives. We have a tremendous group of people who have given their time and effort to our projects. No gesture made here could approximate the appreciation we have for them. Roberta Shaffner, Andrea Dudek, Ray Broms, Su Hyeon Bok, Paula Pergament, Amanda el-Khoury, and Stephen Adamcik spent countless hours cataloging, reshelving, scanning, and just all around making the Research Archives a better place. I cannot stress enough my admiration and gratitude for their generous service.
