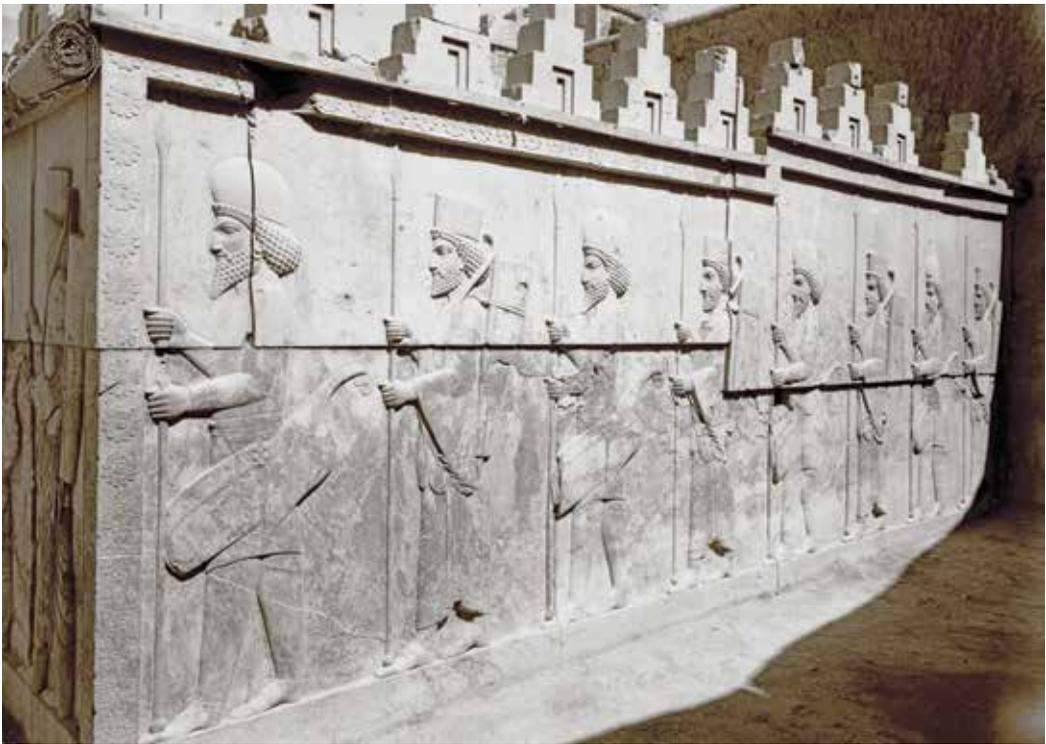




**MUSEUM**



*Above and overleaf (detail): Relief of Persian and Median guards from the Central Building at Persepolis. Schmidt Expedition, 1936 (D. 13312)*

## MUSEUM

### Kiersten Neumann

The past year has been a productive and exciting one for the Oriental Institute Museum, with the ongoing growth of our special exhibits program, updates to our Orientation Area, strong progress on our Gallery Enhancements Project, and an increase in public engagement and outreach. The Oriental Institute and the Museum also continue to play an important role in offering support to cultural heritage projects and the preservation of archaeological heritage in the Middle East as devastating news of loss and destruction continues to come out of the region.

### Museum Attendance

The Museum continues to see an increase in visitors to the galleries, with the total number in the past financial year (July 1, 2015–June 30, 2016) seeing a 7.7% rise to 55,308. We attribute the increase to our continued efforts in marketing and publicity, as well as tours, programs, and events that draw in repeat and new visitors. The kiosks that were installed in June 2015 in front of the Museum continue to have a positive impact on numbers, yet this is not reflected in an increase in donations, which has remained stable over the past couple of years. Many thanks to our head of Visitor Services and Security, Adam Finefrock, who joined us last June, for recording and circulating visitor numbers; and to Knut Boehmer, who joined us in October as the new IT Support Specialist, for his aid in problem solving our iPad-based visitor guide survey and reviving it with the new Feed2Go app.

### Gallery Enhancements Project

In 2014 the Oriental Institute Museum initiated the Gallery Enhancements Project, the principal aim of which is to improve visitors' experience in the galleries and the display of the collections by way of updated graphics, new lighting, and new free-standing display cases. The project has been made possible by the generosity of an anonymous donor, with additional funding to be raised. We look forward to completing the project in time for the celebration of the Oriental Institute centenary in 2019. Over the past year we have made significant progress in all aspects of the project. After meeting with several case vendors, both national and international, we selected two vendors to produce three prototype display cases: Helmut Guenschel Inc., an American company based in Baltimore, Maryland, to produce a table case; and Cäse[werks], LLC, the North American agent for Vitrienen- und Glasbau REIER, GmbH of Lautau, Germany, to produce a wall and pedestal case. The cases were delivered to the Museum in May and now stand in their respective galleries: the pedestal case has replaced a case in the Haas and Schwartz Megiddo Gallery that holds a recumbent sphinx carved in stone; the wall case has replaced the mummy trappings case in the Joseph and Mary Grimshaw Egyptian Gallery; and the table case stands in the Robert F. Picken Family Nubian Gallery, where it holds ceramics from the A-Group culture (fig. 1).



*Figure 1. Reinstalled Guenschel display case, Nubian Gallery (photo: D. 13358, by K. Bryce Lowry)*

Our assessment of these cases and the feedback we receive from Oriental Institute staff, faculty, volunteers, visitors to the gallery, and our anonymous donor will make a significant contribution to the project's next steps. Our overall objective for the design of new free-standing cases is to acquire cases with improved display and functionality, yet which at the same time preserve the existing aesthetics and traditional style of the Oriental Institute Museum. We continue to work closely with Elizabeth Kidera, the exhibit designer and architect whom we hired to work with us at the outset of the project. In addition to helping with the prototype case designs, Liz has created numerous gallery mockups and drawings of custom cases that have proven invaluable for envisioning possibilities for enhancing the display of different object groups. We look forward to finalizing the list for the full order of display cases by the end of the summer.

In the last year, we also acquired professional input for enhancing the lighting scheme in the galleries from lighting consultants Lightswitch Architectural. Drawing on this feedback, we have started to replace the overhead gallery lights and in-case lighting of our existing Guenschel cases with LED lighting. This transition has already had a noticeable impact on visibility and the display of objects in the galleries. Many thanks to Erik Lindahl for working with University Facilities to obtain funding from the University as a result of the savings on energy the change in lighting will have.

A third area of progress has been the redesign of the south alcove of the Robert F. Picken Family Nubian Gallery. In addition to the replacement of the old free-standing table case with the Guenschel prototype case, the neighboring existing Guenschel cases are receiving updated



Figure 2. Redesigned orientation area, including a map of the ancient Middle East and timeline (photo: D. 16997, by Austin M. Kramer).

graphics based on our new graphic hierarchy, LED lighting, and a slight reconsideration of the arrangement of objects. The impact of these enhancements on the display of the Nubia collection has already received very positive feedback.

## Orientation Area Redesign

In December 2015 we completed improvements to the Orientation Area (fig. 2). Upon entering the Mesopotamian Gallery, visitors are now welcomed by a series of introductory panels on the history of the Museum and Oriental Institute, its ongoing projects, and a large-scale plan of the Museum galleries. This section is followed by a 12' wide by 8' 6" tall map of the ancient Middle East, the highlight of which is the identification of all of the sites that have been excavated by the Oriental Institute since the early twentieth century. Beginning on the neighboring wall and following a curve in the corner is an 18' 5" long timeline of the ancient Middle East. The timeline is separated into bands that correspond to the geographical regions represented by our museum galleries: Mesopotamia, Anatolia, Levant/Megiddo, Egypt, Nubia, and Persia. Each band includes events and objects that highlight themes and innovations that took place in the ancient Middle East from around 10,000 BC to AD 1000. All of the objects pictured on the timeline are on display in the Museum's permanent galleries.

The new didactics in the Orientation Area have been well received by visitors and by our volunteers and docents, who engage with these materials when leading tours. In addition to providing a welcoming introductory space, the area is a great multipurpose space for

education programs, membership events, and receptions. We would like to thank graphic and exhibit designers Elizabeth Kidera, Karen Backe, and Jason Gagovski. We would also like to thank Emily Hammer and her team at the Center of Ancient Middle Eastern Landscapes (CAMEL) for their contribution to the map, and Oriental Institute faculty and scholars for their input.

## Special Exhibitions

Our special exhibits program has had another successful year. In September 2015 “A Cosmopolitan City: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Old Cairo” closed and was followed by “Persepolis: Images of an Empire” in October, curated by Kiersten Neumann. The exhibit, which features large-format prints of archival photographs taken during the Oriental Institute Persian Expedition (1931–1939), has made available to the public a selection of images that have never been seen before, either in exhibition or publication (see *Special Exhibits*, below).

We have held a range of academic, public, and community events and programs in association with “Persepolis.” In November we welcomed Alexander Nagel, Research Associate, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, as part of the Oriental Institute Member’s lecture series, to speak on “Taking Care of Color in Persepolis: New Research on Painters, Palaces and Polychromies in Achaemenid Persia, c. 520–330 BCE.” This was followed in March by two events held in celebration of the Persian New Year, a Nowruz-themed Epic Wednesday and Ancient Game Day. Both programs were generously supported by the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America, the Zoroastrian Association of Chicago, and the Iran House of Greater Chicago. In May, Emily Hammer, Director of the Center of Ancient Middle Eastern Landscapes (CAMEL), led a lunchtime gallery talk in the exhibit space, entitled “Persepolis from the Air: Aerial Imagery and Archaeology.” Since the opening of the exhibition Kiersten Neumann has given a number of public talks on the significance of photography to the Persepolis excavations. The exhibit has also received positive media attention, including a highlight in the *University of Chicago Magazine’s* Original Source (Winter 2016), the University of Chicago’s homepage feature story, entitled “Preserving Persia’s Glorious Past” (May 16, 2016), and most recently in the *Biblical Archaeology Review*, “Picturing Persepolis” (July/August 2016).

The lower level of the Oriental Institute has seen two exhibits over the past year, including an abbreviated version of “Our Work: Modern Jobs, Ancient Origins,” and a new student exhibition, “Don’t Take My Stuff. Tell My Story.” in collaboration with Dream Rocket. The exhibition opening took place on May 18 as part of the Oriental Institute Teacher Appreciation Night & Award Ceremony, drawing fifty-eight educators to the event.

## Outgoing Loans

The Museum continues to support an active lending program, including both small-scale loans and renewals, as well as contributions to large-scale special exhibitions (see Registration below). Our Neferhotep statue (OIM E8303) was prominently featured in the Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art exhibit “Ancient Egypt Transformed: The Middle Kingdom” (October 12–January 24). We contributed a barrel cylinder of King Sargon II from Khorsabad (OIM A17587) to the University of Pennsylvania Museum exhibit “The Golden Age of King Midas” (February 13–November 27). We are happy to announce the renewal of a loan of thirty objects to the Booth School of Business at the University of Chicago, which are featured as part of a

satellite exhibit “Doing Business in the Ancient World,” co-curated by Jack Green and Brit-tany Hayden.

## Museum Acquisitions

Acquisitions to the Museum (see *Registra-tion*, below) include the Bingham Collection, a group of ten cuneiform tablets that were generously gifted to the Oriental Institute by Ms. Edith Bingham of Louisville, Kentucky (fig. 3), wife of Robert W. Bingham. The tablets had been in the Bingham family since 1919 and were discovered by Ms. Bingham in a vintage wooden box in the former house of her husband’s grandfather. Nine of the tablets date to the Ur III period, and one is a standard inscription of Sin-kashid. Wal-ter Farber, Curator of the Tablet Collection, with the aid of Miguel Civil, was able to track down the original sale of the tablets. On May 7, 1919, the sale ledgers of Edgar Banks, the well-known archaeologist and dealer in cuneiform tablets, record the sale of eleven cuneiform tablets to Robert W. Bingham for the sum of \$33. The date of the sale explains the *New York Times* newspapers dated to May 5, 1919, in which the tablets were wrapped inside the box. The group will be published in an article by Gertrud Farber. The Museum also acquired a collection of Fustat sherds that were gifted by Erik Gronberg and which will be added to the sherd teaching collection. Mr. Gronberg was a member of the first season of George T. Scanlon’s excavations in 1964, which laid the founda-tion for this long and very important archaeological project at Fustat, Egypt. The Museum Archives (see *Archives*, below) received a generous gift from the Baramki family, a collection of slides and prints, as well as published and unpublished writings belonging to Palestinian archaeologist Dimitri Constantine Baramki (1909–1984). Baramki conducted excavations at Khirbet al-Mafjar (north of Jericho) from 1935 to 1948, accompanied by Robert Hamilton from 1944 to 1948; and then at Jumeirah, Dubai, from 1971 to 1975. This collection will be useful for a definitive biography of Baramki in the future.



*Figure 3. Bingham Collection recently gifted to the Tablet Collection at the Oriental Institute (photo: Gertrud Farber)*

## Conservation of the Coffin of Ipi-ha-ishutef

In September 2015, the First Intermediate Period cedar coffin of the Commander of Troops and Scribe, Ipi-ha-ishutef (OIM E12072) was reinstalled in the Egyptian Gallery after an extensive conservation assessment and treatment. The coffin, purchased by Breasted in 1923, had been off exhibit since 1996 awaiting the opportunity and funding for its treatment. In 2014, we received a generous grant from the Antiquities Endowment Fund of the American Research Center in Egypt that allowed the work to proceed. Preliminary reports on the project can be seen at <https://oi.uchicago.edu/collections/coffin-project>, and a final report will appear soon in the *Bulletin* of ARCE. See *Conservation*, below.



Figure 4. Coffin of *Ipi-ha-ishutef*, Egyptian Gallery (photo: D. 13355, by K. Bryce Lowry)

Following its treatment by Conservators Simona Cristanetti and Alison Whyte, the coffin was photographed by Austin Kramer and Jeffrey Newman. Some of those images were included in a new detailed label designed by Josh Tulisiak. The coffin is now prominently displayed between the mummies of Meresamun and Petosiris in the Joseph and Mary Grimshaw Egyptian Gallery, giving our visitors a better idea of the development of Egyptian coffins (fig. 4). Following the completion of the conservation project, Simona Cristanetti left the Oriental Institute and now works at the Arthur M. Sackler and Freer Gallery of Art at the Smithsonian Institution.

### Integrated Database Project (IDB)

Over the last year, the Museum, in conjunction with the Integrated Database team, has made great progress inputting and updating records of our collections, which are available online through the “Search Our Collections” feature on the Oriental Institute website: <http://oi-idb.uchicago.edu>. Incomplete records in our Photo Archives collection were updated with images and descriptions, including 2,916 photographs from the Anatolian Expedition, 1,220 photographs from Megiddo, 402 photographs from Tell Asmar, 94 photographs from Jerwan, and 1,299 from Luristan. New records were created for archival photographs of objects from the Diyala expeditions, including 978 from Tell Agrab, 114 from Ishchali, and 1,519 from Khafajah. New records were also created for the digital images now on display in the current special

exhibit “Persepolis: Images of an Empire,” which were created from scans of the original negatives from the Oriental Institute Persian Expedition in the 1930s. Further, over 200 new records were created for the new object photography to be included in the upcoming publications *Highlights of the Oriental Institute Museum* and *Ancient Mesopotamia*. Over 23,000 new Museum Archives records were created. This process has involved not only cataloging collections old and new into the Integrated Database, but also reorganizing the physical space of the Museum Archives in order to provide better access to researchers in-house and online. See further Archives below.

As of August 2015, all image requests received by the Oriental Institute are processed exclusively through the Integrated Database, with new records being created and updated by our Photographic Archives Assistant, with support from Kiersten Neumann, Curator, and John Larson, Head of Museum Archives. In transferring our workflow to the database, we have been better able to monitor past requests and have seen a greater number of requests fulfilled through the delivery of complimentary copies of publications to the Museum Office, which are then incorporated into the Research Archives (library) for use by resident and visiting scholars. The number of requests we fulfilled has risen by 26 percent compared to last year, with a total of 166 since the beginning of June.

## Oriental Institute’s Achemenet Project

The Oriental Institute’s Achemenet Project wrapped up its activities in March 2016. Over the past year, Project Researcher Tytus Mikołajczak, with help of Jack Green, former Chief Curator, and Kiersten Neumann, Curator, as well as the Photography Department, completed, exported, and transferred to Achemenet detailed descriptions and photographs of more than 600 objects (fig. 5). Among these objects are some of most spectacular and important finds from the Oriental Institute excavations at Persepolis in the 1930s, many of which have never been published or documented since their arrival to Chicago. The updated descriptions and photographs of the objects are available online through the Oriental Institute website’s “Search Our Collections” (<http://oi-idb.uchicago.edu>) and at [Achemenet.com](http://Achemenet.com). We are grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with our partners at the Musée du Louvre on this project and for the support from the France Chicago Center of the University of Chicago, Roshan Cultural Heritage Institute, and the Oriental Institute.



*Figure 5. Gold pendant with granulated decoration and garnet pendant, Persepolis, 550-330 BC (OIM A19575). Photograph taken as part of the Achemenet Project (photo: D. 16026, by Austin M. Kramer)*

## Museum Publications

We have made significant progress with preparations of highlight volumes of our permanent collections, including our Mesopotamia and Syro-Anatolia collections, as well as an all-Museum volume. Our sincerest thanks go to the contributors and editors of these volumes, as well as to the Photography, Conservation, and Registration departments for their assistance. We are look-



Figure 6. Front cover of the redesigned Oriental Institute Visitor Guide. Design by Kiersten Neumann and Hannah Linton

ing forward to having these volumes available to the public, both in print and as complimentary downloadable PDFs from our website. In November the Museum launched a new Oriental Institute Visitor Guide, which can be picked up on site and downloaded online (<https://oi.uchicago.edu/galleryguide>) (fig. 6). The redesigned guide features updated graphics, museum plan, gallery images, and descriptions, as well as links to further information. Thank you to Hannah Linton, Josh Tulisaiak, and Leslie Schramer for their help with the design.

### 3D Scanning Projects

The Oriental Institute continues to make advances in the area of 3D scanning using an ARTEC Spider portable unit. Josh Cannon (PhD candidate, NELC) has been scanning second-millennium ceramics from the Alişar Höyük collection housed at the Oriental Institute in order to measure their proportions with a high degree of accuracy (0.05 mm). His research, which is for his dissertation, consists of comparing this assemblage to that of Çadır Höyük, an Oriental Institute sponsored archaeological excavation near to and contemporaneous with Alişar Höyük. We again would like to thank Katherine Tsiang and Charles Crable of the Center for the Art of East Asia for their collaboration and support.

Josh Cannon is also working with Emily Teeter on additional scanning projects to produce 3D prints of objects in our collection for use in the Public Education and Outreach Department's programs for low-vision visitors. We hope to use these scans to create reproductions for sale in the Suq. The 3D printing is being done at the University's Chicago Innovation

Exchange, using several different types of printers (a Stratasys Connex3 and a Uprint ES) to test the resolution of the prints. Emily and Carol Ng-He are also working on printing parts of the skeleton of our mummy Meresamun for use in science-based programs for families and adults.

### Collections Research Grant

We were honored to be able to continue the Oriental Institute Collections Research Grant program in 2015–2016 thanks to the generous support of O. J. Sopranos. Three applicants were awarded funds to carry out research on the Oriental Institute collections for their proposed projects: Moujin Matin (University of Oxford), “The Origins of Tin Glazed Pottery: A Technological Examination of 8th–10th Century Ceramics from Islamic Lands”; Yael Rotem (Tel Aviv University), “Nahal Tabor Cemetery in the Central Jordan Valley during the Early Bronze Age I–II: Burial Customs and Death Rituals at the Transition to Urban Life”; and Tasha Vorderstrasse (University of Chicago), “Material Culture from Medieval Anatolia in the Ori-

ental Institute Museum.” We are looking forward to the next round of innovative research projects as we continue the grant through 2016–2017.

## Museum Staff

Thank you to all of the Museum Staff, work-study interns, graduate students, and volunteers for their commitment and hard work over the past year. In December we welcomed two new full-time additions to the Museum team: Joshua Tulisak as Graphic Design and Preparation Assistant, with a focus on the Gallery Enhancements Project, and Jennifer Castellanos as Assistant Manager for the Suq. We have since also welcomed Erin Bliss and Kathleen Cescon as Assistant Preparators. In July our Photographer Anna Ressler left the Oriental Institute. We have since been contracting with Austin Kramer, a University of Chicago Alumnist and former work-study student of the Oriental Institute. Completing the photography team were work-study students Bryce Lowry and Jeffrey Newman. Additional work-study interns from the University of Chicago, as well as part-time employees and summer interns who assisted the museum in the past year include: Michelle Farley, Elisa Landeverde, Andrew Wright, and Maria Mosso (Integrated Database/Image Requests); Joseph Hermiz (Museum Archives); Kathleen Cescon, Jordan Galcynzski, Danielle Zwang, Tine Rassall (Registration Department); Benham Taleblu (Suq).

In December we said goodbye to our Chief Curator, Jack Green, who now holds the position of Deputy Director at the Corning Museum of Glass. In September Jean Evans will be joining us as Chief Curator and Deputy Director for Collections and Exhibitions. Jean is currently a Postdoctoral Fellow at Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich and prior to that was an Assistant Curator in the Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art for over nine years. Jean also currently holds a Research Associate appointment at the Oriental Institute and has worked on multiple exhibits in the museum and with faculty on field projects in Syria and Turkey. I want to give special thanks to everyone on the Museum team for their support and assistance in ensuring the smooth operation of museum programs and projects in the interim period between Chief Curator appointments. The initiation of a bi-weekly Senior Staff Meeting was very helpful in this respect. I also wish to express my sincere gratitude to our Director Gil Stein and Executive Director Steven Camp for their advice and support, in particular with my appointment as Curator and Research Associate at the beginning of the calendar year.

In sum, the year has presented many opportunities and welcome challenges for the Museum, and we look forward to another fulfilling year complete with gallery enhancements, research on the collections, programs and publications, and expanding our public outreach. We also look forward to continuing to engage with the academic community and public on matters of cultural heritage and preservation.