

SPECIAL EVENTS

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During the 2015–2016 academic year, we hosted a variety of events at the Oriental Institute and off-site for our members, donors, and the general public. This year was a success for our continuing programs as we saw the twelfth year of our annual Postdoctoral Seminar, the fourth year of the annual David A. Kipper Ancient Israel Lecture Series, and the second year of our biennial Braidwood Visiting Scholar Program. In addition, we continued to develop unique programming, collaborating with the Adler Planetarium for our off-site James Henry Breasted Society event, and with Atlas Obscura to host their Illinois Chapter’s inaugural celebration entitled “Egypt Mania: A Festivity for the Pharaohs.” We hope you were able to enjoy some of the brilliant events, a few of which are highlighted below. We would like to thank our generous donors and members, whose support makes our exhibits, programs, research, and special events possible.



Dancing in the Suq at the Atlas Obscura Egypt Mania event (photo: Michael Wilson/Stage Photographic)



Guests enjoying the Oriental Institute collection at the Atlas Obscura Egypt Mania event (photo: Michael Wilson/Stage Photographic)

~~distilling~~ Atlas Obscura's Egypt Mania: A Festivity for the Pharaohs

On the evening of July 31, 2015, the Atlas Obscura Society celebrated the opening of their Illinois Chapter by hosting an Egyptian-themed fête at the Oriental Institute. Guests came donned in attire prevalent at the height of “Egyptomania,” sipped on Prohibition-era cocktails, and danced to live jazz music in our Suq. Emily Teeter regaled guests with stories of our founder James Henry Breasted’s travels in Egypt and the foundation of our collection, as well as those of Robert Braidwood, the real-life inspiration for the fictional Indiana Jones. Flappers, dandies, and guests in masquerade were found exploring the galleries, in awe of the breadth of the collection, which many guests had never seen.

Thank you to Atlas Obscura for introducing many new friends to the Oriental Institute.

“Persepolis: Images of an Empire” Exhibition Preview



Members and their guests enjoy a preview of the “Persepolis: Images of an Empire” special exhibit in the Doris and Marshall Holleb Special Exhibit Gallery (photo: Robert A. Reddy)

On October 11, 2015, members and their guests joined us for an exclusive preview of the special exhibit “Persepolis: Images of an Empire” in the Marshall and Doris Holleb Family Special Exhibits Gallery. Professor Matthew W. Stolper delighted guests with details of and discoveries made during the Oriental Institute excavations at Persepolis in the 1930s. Curator Kiersten Neumann led members and friends on private tours of the exhibit, which not only demonstrated the art historical importance of the imperial ideology expressed in the architectural and sculptural elements at Persepolis, but also emphasized the importance of the Oriental Institute’s own Museum

Archives collection for the study of this great city and the Persian empire at large. The Persian influence extended into our reception held in the Edgar and Deborah Jannotta Mesopotamian Gallery, with wine provided by Darioush Winery and Persian-themed hors d'oeuvres.

This exhibit was made possible with generous support from Guity Nashat Becker, the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America, the Zoroastrian Association of Chicago, and the Iran House of Greater Chicago, as well as the continued support of the members of the Oriental Institute. In-kind support was kindly provided by Darioush Winery.

James Henry Breasted Society Event: Beyond the Galleries II

On November 11, 2015, we continued our expedition, begun in 2014, to venture beyond the collection and the galleries of the Oriental Institute Museum. This year, our many project directors and researchers shared first-hand their current research and discoveries. Our archaeologists took us across the ocean to experience their discoveries at our excavations in Israel, Jordan, Egypt, Turkey, and the Palestinian Territories. We journeyed into the world of our philologists and learned what the Demotic, Hittite, Elamite, and Aramaic languages can tell us about the ancient cultures of the Middle East from the directors of the Demotic and Hittite Dictionaries and the Persepolis Fortification Archive. Lastly, our JHBS members explored the world of the Integrated Database and Center for Ancient Middle Eastern Landscapes (CAMEL) labs to see how these two unique resources contribute to scholarship, collections research, publications, and archaeological heritage preservation.

The research of Oriental Institute scholars and this event was made possible by the generous support of our James Henry Breasted Society members.



Professor David Schloen discusses findings at the archaeological site of Tel Keisan, Israel, to James Henry Breasted Society members at the Beyond the Galleries event (photo: UChicago Creative)

2016 Twelfth Annual Postdoctoral Seminar

Postdoctoral Fellow Stephanie Rost organized the twelfth annual postdoctoral seminar, hosted at the Oriental Institute on March 3–4, 2016. This year's conference, titled "Irrigation and Early States: New Directions," brought together domestic and international scholars to explore the role of irrigation management in early complex societies. Conference speakers and panelists received a curator-led tour of the Oriental Institute and attended a dinner hosted in the Director's Suite, former office of Oriental Institute founder James Henry Breasted. This provided the speakers and those participating in the conference with the opportunity to discuss their research with their colleagues.

Each year the conference seminar, presented by an expert on the conference topic, is free and open to our members and the public thanks to the generous support of Arthur and Lee Herbst. A publication of the conference proceedings is currently in production.

Braidwood Visiting Scholar Program

On May 11, 2016, the Oriental Institute welcomed Holly Pittman, Bok Family Professor in the Humanities, Department of the History of Art, University of Pennsylvania, as the second Braidwood Visiting Scholar. As part of the Braidwood Visiting Scholar Program, Dr. Pittman delivered one public lecture, titled “From Mesopotamia to the Oxus through Iran: Shifting the Center in Bronze Age Trade,” and two workshops intended for graduate and undergraduate students, as well as faculty and staff, titled “Case Study in Glyptic Art: Evaluating the Place of Arslantepe in the Late Chalcolithic and the Late Uruk World” and “Excavations at the Site of Konar Sandal South.” Following the public lecture, Dr. Pittman answered questions regarding her excavations at Konar Sandal South in southeastern Iran and how the seals and seal impressions found there contribute to our understanding of complex Bronze Age trade networks. Afterward, guests enjoyed a reception in the galleries.

The Braidwood Visiting Scholar Program in Archaeology aims to encourage and perpetuate the educational values of Robert and Linda Braidwood, particularly their commitment to the mentorship and training of graduate students specializing in the archaeology of the ancient Near East.

David A. Kipper Ancient Israel Lecture Series

Assaf Yasur-Landau, Associate Professor of Mediterranean Archaeology, Department of Maritime Civilizations, University of Haifa, gave the fourth lecture in the annual David A. Kipper Ancient Israel Lecture Series, on May 16, 2016, entitled “Red Wine and Minoan Frescoes: The Canaanite Palace at Tel Kabri.” Dr. Yasur-Landau focused on excavations at the palatial site of Tel Kabri, located in the Galilee, and how analysis of those excavations help us to understand the life of Canaanite elite and the political economy of the region during the Middle Bronze Age.

During a workshop, Dr. Yasur-Landau met with graduate students from the Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations Department, the Divinity School, and the Anthropology Department, as well as faculty and staff from the Oriental Institute, to discuss how connections through maritime trade and relations were deliberately used as an adaptive form of risk-management strategy and resilience in Israel.

The David A. Kipper Ancient Israel Lecture Series focuses on the history and archaeology of ancient Israel and was established through a gift from Barbara Kipper and the Kipper Family. The program includes an annual public lecture as well as a workshop for faculty, graduate, and undergraduate scholars at the Oriental Institute.

James Henry Breasted Society Event: The Unwearying and Imperishable Stars

On the thunderous and rainy Chicago evening of May 25, 2016, the ancient Egyptian sky could still be seen clearly at the Adler Planetarium. During a reception, co-hosted by the Oriental Institute’s James Henry Breasted Society and the Adler Planetarium’s Webster Institute, in the Daniel F. and Ada L. Rice Solarium, members viewed artifacts from the Adler’s collection and a stunning view of the Chicago skyline during the storm. Following the reception, Sarah L. Symons, Associate Professor of the Integrated Science Program and School of Interdisciplinary



Photos from The Unwearying and Imperishable Stars: The Night Sky of Ancient Egypt, a James Henry Breasted Society event held at the Adler Planetarium on May 25, 2016 (all photos: David Turner Photography)

Science at McMaster University, recreated the Egyptian sky, the same stars we see today, in the Adler's Grainger Sky Theater, to illustrate the relationship between the ancient Egyptians and astronomy. The regularity of the star cycles and the constancy of their relationships with one another were noted by the ancient Egyptians and described, explained, or used in stories, images, instruments, and tables, a few of which survive today.

This event was sponsored by the members of the James Henry Breasted Society, who provide an annual, renewable source of unrestricted support for the most pressing research projects of the Oriental Institute.