

THE MUSEUM

Three special exhibits were arranged in the Museum in 1955-56. Mrs. Max Schloessinger, of New York, lent us her collection of ancient lamps. These, when augmented by the Institute's finds from the earliest periods in Mesopotamia, demonstrated the range of floating-wick oil lamps from around 3000 B.C. through the Roman period. During October we hung an exhibit of water-color paintings by Eliot O'Hara. The job of hanging pictures in a museum without spare wall space was one that really taxed our ingenuity. In December we set up a series of plaster casts of sculpture from Nineveh, as well as photographs, drawings, and objects borrowed from other museums, to illustrate the beginnings of narrative art. This tied in with a symposium that the Archeological Institute of America held at the Oriental Institute the week after Christmas.

In our laboratories three volunteers have helped faithfully with restoration. Mrs. John Livingood is reconstructing an Egyptian title-ceiling ornament; Mrs. Theodore Tieken has rebuilt many pottery vases from the fragments found buried in excavated mounds; and Mrs. John Womer has made new model trees and other accessories for the model of the Tell el Amarna house that is exhibited in the Assyrian Hall. Preparator Hanson has been installing new

lighting fixtures on exhibition cases, and Assistant Preparator Timoscewski undertook the delicate restoration of a stela from Dendera.

Some noteworthy new acquisitions were added to the Museum collection last year, in addition to selected objects from the excavations at Nippur, Jarmo, and Khirbet Kerak. We were fortunate to acquire a fragment of one of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which Dr. Frank Cross has identified as part of the Cave 4 hoard. It, some papyri from Khirbet Mirt, and the Dead Sea Scroll storage jar make the nucleus of what we hope will be a growing exhibit of this interesting material. So far this fragment is the only verified piece in any American museum.

Through the generosity of Mrs. Edwin Seipp we have been able to acquire a gold plaque, roughly 2 by 5 inches, of the Achaemenian period. It shows a winged griffon and winged bull walking toward a stylized tree. The plaque was once part of a larger gold ornament, probably a pectoral or breastplate. The plaque is part of the famous Ziwiyah treasure found in Kurdistan in 1947 by women looking for clay to repair their mud-brick houses. The Metropolitan Museum in New York has bought enough pieces of the gold to restore an entire breastplate, and some

of the ivories. We are glad to have at least a sample of the material.

A Sumerian bronze statuette and its accompanying stone tablet are also new acquisitions, purchased with membership funds. They were excavated at Ur but came to us through a dealer. It was the custom for Sumerian kings to place such bronze statuettes and tablets under the walls of buildings they were erecting to commemorate the event and perhaps to work some magic for the king too. The statuettes regularly show the king carrying on his head the first basketful of earth from the excavation. Often from the waist down the figures show no anatomical definition and hence are known as "nail men." The accompanying stone tablet bears the dedication of the king, whose dates were around 1900 B.C. The purchase of these objects in January must have brought us luck, because in February at Nippur our expedition uncovered seven such foundation deposits three of which the Iraq Department of Antiquities permitted us to bring back to our Museum. After cleaning and examination, all will be on exhibit in the fall.

We have exchanged some duplicate items in our collection with Egyptian pieces from the Royal Archaeological Museum at Toronto. Three prehistoric maceheads of un-

usual shape, a figurine, a jar, and an ivory hairpin are now ours on indefinite loan.

From the estate of Miss Helen Gardner, late lecturer at the Art Institute, we received a Roman gold bracelet. Mr. Chester D. Tripp gave us a spectacular collection of Hellenistic gold jewelry from Syria, on loan since 1953.

The official accessioning of expedition finds and purchases in the Museum archives cannot be accomplished until the archeologists have prepared the material for publication. In 1955-56 the descriptive cards were made for all the objects from the first four seasons at Nippur and for the objects found at Khirbet Kerak. About 553 items, large and small, were accessioned. Some 2,864 photographs and their negatives were put on file. In the Museum office 1,094 map guides, 1,945 postcards, 212 Iranian Hall handbooks, 375 photographs, 165 copies of *La Peinture ancienne égyptienne*, and 94 unbound copies of Oriental Institute publications were sold. Museum attendance for the year was 39,190. There were 152 groups. The lecture hall was host to 36 different meetings.

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