

Research Archives

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During the past year, the Research Archives has become an integral part of the Oriental Institute, providing reference materials in the areas of ancient Near Eastern archeology, cuneiform studies, and Egyptology. Of special advantage are subscriptions to more than one hundred current journals of relevant interest. The usage of the reading room has risen to an average 340 man-hours of research and study per week, an increase of nearly 80 per cent over last year's figures. Often there are now as many users in a single day as there once were in an entire week!

The collection of the Research Archives has grown in a fashion appropriate to its increased usage, although it is still far short of being complete. At the conclusion of a statistical year ending May 15, 1975, the collection contained the following:

Monographs	3079 volumes
Series	1910
Journals	2256
Microfiche editions	<u>73</u>
Total Books	7318
Pamphlets (est.)	5395 items

This marks an effective increase during the year of 1353 volumes in the collection. The larger part of this growth has taken place in the fields of archeology and cuneiform studies. It has been possible to acquire or complete numerous sets of pertinent journals and series (e.g., *Israel Exploration Journal*, *Berytus*, Selim Hassan's *Excavations at Giza*, and Maurice Dunand's *Fouilles de Byblos*).

Particular attention should be drawn to a new category that appears in the archive statistics: microfiche editions. The microfiche is a relatively new method of reproducing books, somewhat similar to microfilm; but it differs from the latter in that the books reproduced take the form of a series of sheets of film (ca. 4" × 5") which contain photographs of up to one hundred pages of an original book, whereas microfilm is a strip of film with the pages reproduced on adjacent frames in the film. As in microfilm, the microfiche is viewed on a



The village of Girsch, April 11, 1900, by Hermann Thiersch.

small, illuminated screen. The advantages of this new system are several. Microfiche is easier to use than microfilm; it requires less storage space than a regular book; and it costs less than conventional reprinted editions or rare and often expensive original editions. It may be noted that many of the Oriental Institute's publications are now available in microfiche. In future years, a large proportion of individual titles and of journals whose use is restricted to occasional consultation will be acquired in this form.

A number of exchanges with related scholarly institutions throughout the world have been undertaken during the past year, and their cooperation has been greatly appreciated. Additional exchanges are currently in process. As usual thanks go out to those people who have generously contributed to the Research Archives. Special mention is owed to Professor Raymond A. Bowman for his contribution of a number of accounts of travel in the Near East in the nineteenth century and to the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* for its continued assistance. The work of the Research Archives could not have been done without the help of its able staff for the past year: John A. Larson, Margaret C. Root, and Howard M. Farber.

Two new services have been instituted by the Research Archives during the last year in the hope that better use might be made of its collections. A list of recent acquisitions is now produced at the end of each month, and it is available for consultation. This list shows not only what recently printed books have been received, but also how coverage of various subject areas has been expanded. Because of the limited staff, it is impossible for us to provide complete cataloging of all items received; however, a selective subject index of all books received bearing an imprint of 1969 or later is in the course of compilation. This will serve as a supplement to the published catalogue of the old Oriental Institute Library.

Of special interest among our collection of unpublished works and papers is a sketchbook by Hermann Thiersch, 1874-1939, a German architectural historian who specialized in classical antiquity and the Near East. His small portfolio, "Nubien und Ägypten," contains a series of some 28 pencil drawings made during a visit to Egypt and Nubia in the winter of 1900. The drawings record village architecture now submerged beneath the waters of Lake Nasser behind the Aswan High Dam, as well as inscriptions, diagrams, and a collection of sailing vessels and a Red Sea steamer.

The Research Archives is available for use by members of the Oriental Institute, and they are cordially invited to make use of its resources.