

RESEARCH ARCHIVES

CHARLES·E·JONES

Fourteen years ago, when the Research Archives was being set up, estimates indicated that a complete library in the appropriate fields of interest would contain some twenty thousand volumes. This year we have surpassed that magic number, but have not achieved the elusive (and probably unattainable) goal of a "complete" library.

During the decade and a half of its operation, the focus of collection development in the Research Archives has slowly and significantly matured. With our core collection of periodical and serial publications firmly established, we have become free to concentrate our efforts on the acquisition of new material, and to expand our holdings in related disciplines. While our greatest strength continues to be in Egyptology and Assyriology, we are to a significant extent a function of our academic constituency. Thus the opening of new positions in the Oriental Institute; for example those in Syro-Anatolian Archaeology, and Aramaic; requires us to expand our holdings in those important fields. The result is a broader based, and more useful library. Another important measure of the maturity of the Research Archives is the great demand for our Acquisitions List. This list, produced on a bi-monthly basis, was originally intended as an informational guide for internal consumption. Recently, however, the list has been more widely distributed, and is now a regular and valued source of information for such central bibliographical resources as the *Keilschriftbibliographie*, and the *Annual Egyptological Bibliography*. The cost of producing the list has become so great that I can no longer distribute it except in exchange for similar bibliographical tools. The most extraordinary feature of the Research Archives, the feature which makes it most useful as a research tool, is the availability of the collections. It was originally, and remains today, one of the basic principles of the Research Archives that the organization and cataloguing of the collection remain simple and transparent; and, most importantly, that all of the books be available all the time—books do not circulate except on a short-term, intramural basis.

The primary emphasis of the staff of the Research Archives during the year 1986–87 has been to continue the

project to recatalogue the collections, and to turn the catalogue into the tool it should properly be. We have concentrated on areas of particular difficulty, with the goal of making obscurely catalogued items more accessible to our users. We have been researching the needs of the Research Archives, both administratively and bibliographically, for the inevitable computerization. I believe it to be essential that a central resource such as the Research Archives, be both internally consistent, and externally accessible through the various systems now available. We expect to initiate some degree of automation within the next year.

Pat Monaghan of the Museum Office has convinced the Plant Department of the University to exercise their obligation to properly maintain the floor of the Reading Room. The floor, which had been neglected since the removal of the Oriental Institute Library to Regenstein, was completely restored and resurfaced early this summer. This renovation, along with last year's repair and restoration of the ceiling frescos, makes the Reading Room far more attractive and presentable.

Last summer we negotiated, on behalf of the Oriental Institute and Regenstein Library, the extraordinary gift of the library of Col. Alan MacKenzie of Holmes Beach, Florida. We retained his collection of travels, history, and geography of the Near East, constituting one-third of the sixteen hundred volumes he donated. The remainder went to Regenstein Library. We are slowly processing this very generous gift.

Acquisitions statistics
for the past year are
as follows:

	April 1986–March 1987	Total
Monograph	742	9,440
Series	138	3,963
Journals	259	7,059
Total books	1,139	20,462
Pamphlets	48	

We are, as usual, indebted to Thomas Holland and the Publications Office, and to Robert Biggs and the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* for their willingness to support our efforts through exchanges of publications.