

THE RESEARCH ARCHIVES

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During the past twelve months, the staff of the Research Archives has been engaged in the fundamental restructuring of two of its primary resources. One year ago, we installed an integrated computer-based library management and cataloguing system. The software package we selected is microcomputer based (Macintosh), makes full use of the new networking capabilities, is simple to operate, and is extremely fast. The primary function of the system is the production of a catalogue of the collections of the Research Archives.

As a result of the past year's work we can boast of two new public resources:

1 - Research Archives On Line. Through a module of our management system we are able to provide our patrons with the ability to perform sophisticated searches of our catalog database. Patrons can search in the Call number, Author, Title, and Subject fields, or by Keyword in the entire record. The searching capabilities support Boolean operators, as well as primary and final truncation of keywords. This capability has been available for some time in larger university libraries, but remains rare in smaller academic settings.

Since the founding of the Research Archives in the early 1970s, we have followed the standard practice of producing card sets for each item acquired. Each card set includes main entry (generally author), title, series, as well as subject, and tracing cards. In 1985 we began to analyze all pertinent entries from periodicals, multi-author works, conference volumes, and the like. For the most part each of these analytics consisted of a single card filed under the author; subject entries (such as names of archaeological sites or culture areas) were frequently but inconsistently made; book reviews were filed under the reviewer as well as under the book reviewed. Despite the procedure's limitations, it made our card catalogue a really extraordinary tool for access to the bibliography on the ancient Near East. With the development of the on-line database, the usefulness of these analytical entries has increased by an order of magnitude. While in other "world-class" collections, such as Regenstein Library, the Harvard Library

System, or the Oxford University Libraries, one can automatically search for the word "Nippur" in the titles of all catalogued books, only in the Oriental Institute Research Archives can one begin to search the records of all articles automatically as well. We are only beginning to discover the potential for research which our new system will provide.

At present the catalogue includes the following corpora:

- Acquisitions of the Research Archives (with the exception of serials) since August 1987.
- Titles common to the Research Archives and the Klaus Baer Library of Egyptology (now housed at the Department of Near Eastern Studies, University of California - Berkeley).
- All publications of The Oriental Institute.
- Dissertations in the collections of the Oriental Institute.
- Analytical entries as described above entered since May 1991.

We have a number of additional subject corpora in process which will be loaded into the database in the near future. Among these are our small Arabic and Islamic collection (including Arabic language materials, as well as western language materials for the study of late antiquity, and the early and medieval Islamic world); our collection of sources for the geography, topography and toponymy of the ancient Near East; and materials for the history of "Orientalism," including travelers literature. We will continue to catalogue analytical entries for all new acquisitions as they are processed. We expect that the basic retrospective catalogue will be complete in about eighteen months. When that portion of the catalogue is complete, we will begin the task of retrospective analysis of periodicals, serials, conference proceedings, *festschriften*, etc.

2 - The second of our newly developed public resources is the redesigned *Oriental Institute Research Archives Acquisitions List*. Since December of 1974 the staff of the Research Archives has produced a periodical acquisitions list. Until the Autumn of 1987 these lists provided simple short-title references to material catalogued in the Research Archives, and served primarily as an internal document intended to inform our immediate constituency of newly acquired material. With the introduction of a degree of automation, the list expanded in October 1987 to include full citations for each entry. This development spurred an increased interest in the Acquisitions List outside the Oriental Institute. We currently have a formal distribution list of seventy-five individuals and institutions. Most of these are exchanges for similar bibliographical tools or for other published material. Others are arrangements which have been made between the recipients and the editor to provide information on research projects, dissertations, or forthcoming publications. The cataloguing procedures described above have, as of the May-June 1991 issue of *The Oriental Institute Research Archives Acquisitions List*, enabled us to include an alphabetical index of essays, articles, reviews, major contributions, and other 'bibliographically discrete' items included within the items catalogued in the Acquisitions List proper. We are now, in effect, producing a 'current contents' for the literature on the ancient Near East. The Acquisitions List is filling an important niche in the international academic community. While for important fields such as Assyriology or

Egyptology there are well established periodical bibliographical tools, they tend to appear with a substantial delay. The current *Keilschriftbibliographie*, which covers material published in 1988-1989, appeared in the second half of 1991 — a two year delay. The most recent *Annual Egyptological Bibliography*, covering the publications of 1985, appeared in 1989. For other fields, such as Near Eastern Archaeology, or Northwest Semitic Philology, there are no comprehensive bibliographical tools. What the Acquisitions List provides is a more rapid distribution of information to the scholarly community. We hope to be able to find an appropriate method of subscription and distribution for this document within the next year.

I have enjoyed the benefit during the past year of two extremely capable assistants, both graduate students in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations. Terry Wilfong continues as Assistant Research Archivist. To many of you who visit on the weekend or Wednesday evening, he has even (and perhaps to his chagrin) come to embody the Research Archives. I know you appreciate, as I do, his extraordinary competence, friendliness, courtesy, and initiative. As my second assistant this year, it has been my pleasure to have Paul Cobb, a graduate student concentrating in early Islamic history and archaeology. His particular interests have enabled us to process and develop materials properly which had been badly neglected in the past few years. I am pleased to report that both Terry and Paul will be with us for the coming year.

In the year ending March 31, 1991 the Research Archives acquired and catalogued 2087 items with the following results:

	April 1990 - March 1991	Total
Monographs and Series	1000	16966
Journals	255	8037
Total Books	1255	25003
Maps	25	
Pamphlets	293	
Videotapes	1	