

## RESEARCH ARCHIVES

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This has been a year of solid progress for the Research Archives in several areas. We have managed to settle comfortably into the new configuration of stacks and study space required by the move of a year and a half ago which was described in last year's *Annual Report*. Acquisitions continued at a steady pace—we acquired and cataloged more than thirteen hundred volumes; we finally began the long planned Retrospective Cataloging Project; and we implemented and developed the Ancient Near East Mailing List (ANE) on-line discussion group, an electronically linked community of scholars. As the collections grow, the facilities of the Research Archives continue to see increased use by faculty and staff of the Oriental Institute and other divisions of the University of Chicago, by students in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, by members of the Oriental Institute, and by more and more frequent visiting scholars from around the world. In addition to the steady flow of routine acquisitions, we have been fortunate to acquire the Papyrological and Egyptological library of the late Professor Linda Ricketts. Early this spring, the University of Chicago Libraries, through the good offices of Catherine Mardikes, the new Bibliographer for Classics and the Ancient Near East, transferred to us the legendary pamphlet file of the old Oriental Institute Library. We have begun the process of integrating this important mass of material into our own collections

### ELECTRONIC MEDIA

As the year began in early July 1993, we publicly announced the existence of the Ancient Near East Mailing List, an on-line forum for the scholarly discussion of issues related to the ancient Near East. For more than a year prior to that date, with the intimate collaboration of John Sanders, Head of the Oriental Institute Computer Laboratory, we had been investigating the various means by which we might begin the electronic distribution of files, and by which we could promote communication among scholars locally, nationally, and globally. The experience we had all gained following the installation of the local electronic mail system, QuickMail,

had whetted the appetites of a number of staff and faculty members for the establishment of media connected to the Internet that would to some degree filter out the kinds of resources which would be of interest to scholars dealing with the ancient Near East, without requiring each and every one of them to become an accomplished "network surfer." We ultimately settled on beginning with a double-headed approach. The two components of this approach are the electronic mailing list and an archive site. Subsequent to the implementation of these resources, John Sanders has continued the development of the Oriental Institute's connection to other components of the Internet, particularly the document he designed and continues to develop for the World-Wide Web. Each of these technical developments is described more fully in the report of the Oriental Institute Computer Laboratory (above). I would like to concentrate here on the role such new technologies are beginning play in the world of the library.

Academic research (at its best) is conducted in three interconnected ways: dialogue with artifacts, dialogue with books, and dialogue with humans, each of which are components of the particular variety of research that is conducted in the library. It has always been the exceeding good fortune of those working in the Oriental Institute to have not only an extraordinary collection of artifacts in the museum, its associated archival and photographic materials, and an extraordinary library in the Research Archives, but also a large number of teachers, students, and colleagues—all in the same building. Questions, whether trivial or consequential, simple or complex, can be discussed with interested and informed colleagues as they arise. Difficulties encountered in the interpretation of primary or secondary literature can be easily and quickly solved by consulting with authorities who are physically adjacent to or actually visible in the reading room of the Research Archives. With the introduction of on-line academic discussion groups, as exemplified by the Ancient Near East Mailing List, the physical adjacency is no longer a necessity. One simply poses a query, formulates a hypothesis, or expresses an opinion, and sends the resulting text to an address at the Oriental Institute file server. The file server then redistributes the message to each of the electronic mail addresses that have voluntarily subscribed to the list. Anyone who then receives the message is free to respond, either publicly or privately, to the person sending the original message. Most frequently, in actual practice, responses to messages posted on the list are sent privately, but there have been a number of interesting and stimulating public debates of issues of substance. Like all scholarly discussion, this medium depends upon the tolerance, goodwill, generosity, and occasionally the good humor of each of the participants. The principle of voluntary subscription demonstrates the apparent success of the medium and testifies to the willingness of the scholarly community to participate: the Ancient Near East Mailing List currently boasts more than seven hundred addresses subscribed, and an actual readership of nearly eight hundred individuals. The real and potential effect on scholarship and on the community of scholars is enormous. Each of the members of the list is effectively brought into the reading room of the Research Archives. Likewise, each member of the electronic mailing list is also brought into the reading room or research facilities of each of the other projects represented by membership in the list, and those scholars, teachers, researchers, and students whose circumstances require them to work in physical isolation from their colleagues are provided with a global electronic "common-room." It is significant that this common-room is provided by the Oriental Institute, and that it forms a compo-

ment of the Research Archives. I invite anyone wishing further information on the Ancient Near East Mailing List to contact me (see the telephone numbers and e-mail addresses printed on the last pages of this *Annual Report*).

For the bibliographer, such resources have provided an immense help. It is now possible to track down difficult references with a speed unheard of half a decade ago. Archival sources can be examined remotely through the use of cooperative local surrogates, electronic scanners, and the like. Immediate questions can be answered immediately. Information on the development of electronic archives can be shared. Indeed, with the development of sophisticated text/image databases it is now possible to read documents that are maintained remotely and thereby to reduce the acquisitions costs of the library.

While it can be fairly said that the development and use of on-line electronic resources and communications media have already revolutionized the management of the library, the flow of information, and the scope of scholarly dialogue, it is also true that we cannot begin to imagine the topography of the technological infrastructure that will come into existence by the end of the millennium. It remains the role of the library to investigate the resources that appear, to bring them to the attention of those for whom they will be of use, to develop techniques by which resources can be used and exchanged, and to provide both a physical, mental, and electronic environment conducive to productive research.

It becomes more and more evident as time passes that certain components and functions of the Research Archives and of the Oriental Institute Computer Laboratory not only overlap, but are identical. It has been my pleasure to be able to work closely with John Sanders to develop new resources and to plan for the future needs of each of our departments. In the plan for the new wing of the Oriental Institute are two areas that will allow both of these departments to acquit themselves far more effectively than they have been able heretofore. The topmost level of the new wing, some seven thousand square feet, will become climate-controlled stacks space for the Research Archives. Since this space will allow us room to grow for a number of years, it will also (initially, at least) provide additional space for classes, seminars, meetings, etc. Moving the books from the existing stacks space will allow us to restore the full complement of tables and chairs in the reading room and will enable us to vacate the current stacks areas on the mezzanine level of the library and in the adjacent offices. William Sumner, Director of the Oriental Institute, has expressed the intent that the vacated mezzanine level become the new home of the Computer Laboratory. Its adjacency to the Research Archives will allow us to share resources, to maintain a single security perimeter, and in general to act in a fully integrated manner.

## **CURRENT ACQUISITIONS**

During the past year we have done much to standardize and to regularize the procedures for processing new material into the Research Archives. With the aid of Archival Assistant Belinda Monahan, currently a graduate student in archaeology in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, we have worked out techniques that allow us to streamline the production of analytical catalog records, to edit them effectively, and to produce the two parallel organs of the Research Archives: The On-Line Catalog and the Oriental Institute Research Archives Acquisitions List.

Two issues of the Acquisitions List have appeared during the year:

Numbers 7–8, including material acquired and cataloged during the period February–July 1993, appeared in the autumn of 1993. Its 530 pages include 971 cataloged items with an indexed analytical list of 5,237 essays, articles, and reviews.

Numbers 9–10, including material acquired and cataloged during the period July 1993–January 1994, appeared in the early summer of 1994. Its 558 pages include 1,083 cataloged items with an indexed analytical list of 5,356 essays, articles, and reviews.

## RETROSPECTIVE CATALOGING PROJECT

In the autumn of 1993 we began the long promised and extremely arduous process of processing data for the Retrospective Cataloging Project. We have been fortunate to have acquired the services of Gregory Munson, graduate student in Assyriology in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, as an Archival Assistant in the Research Archives, and it has been his task this year to work on this project. We decided to develop a mutually advantageous corpus for him to process, allowing him to thoroughly survey a body of literature within his own general area of interest and at the same time to provide a record, to be made available via our on-line catalog, of each of the bibliographical items within that corpus. Greg began by selecting “Assyrian History in the Periodical Literature” as his corpus, but almost immediately modified the corpus to include complete runs of each of the periodicals of central interest to Assyriology/Cuneiform Studies. During the nine and one half months of the academic year, Greg has thoroughly examined 262 volumes of journals and yielded a grand total of 10,751 analytical catalog records of essays, articles, and reviews contained in those volumes. The material analyzed so far is as follows:

### Completed

*Archiv für Orientforschung* 1–35

*Assur* 1–4/2

*Iraq* 1–53

*Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 1–42/1

*Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 1–33

*Mar Šipri* 1–6/1

*Revue d'Assyriologie* 1–84/1

*State Archives of Assyria Bulletin* 1–5/2

TOTAL: 10,751 items

### In Process

*Anatolian Studies*

*Archaeologia*

*Baghdader Mitteilungen*

*Baghdader Mitteilungen Beiheften*

*Bibliotheca Orientalis*

*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*

*Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society*  
*Journal of Semitic Studies*  
*Orientalia NS*  
*Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*

This very substantial corpus is currently passing through the editorial process. Upon the completion of that process it will be loaded into the On-Line Catalog.

As of the time of writing, the On-Line Catalog holds 30,550 records. With the addition of the material currently in process from the Retrospective Cataloging Project and the current acquisitions, I expect that we will add another 25,000 records to the catalog by the end of the summer.

The Research Archives welcomed an entirely new staff this year. It has been my pleasure to work with both Belinda Monahan and Greg Munson on the projects described above. Both of them have exhibited diligence, thoughtfulness, cheerfulness, and flexibility in their work with me and with the users of the Research Archives. I am also grateful for the continuing support and collaboration of the faculty and staff of the Oriental Institute, and particularly to the staff of the Museum, the Computer Laboratory, the Public Education Department, and the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*. The members of the Oriental Institute and the general public who support the Research Archives in various ways are legion. It is your donations of books, funds, and time that keep us going.

In the year ending March 1, 1994, the acquisitions statistics for the Research Archives are as follows:

	<i>April 1993–March 1994</i>	<i>Total</i>
Monographs and Series	1,150	20,055
Journals	226	8,682
Total Books	1,376	30,737
Maps	56	
Pamphlets	37	
Data Files	6	