

## RESEARCH ARCHIVES

**Charles E. Jones**

The past year has been one of both progress and retrenchment in the Research Archives. Austere budgetary measures, pandemic in academic institutions as the 1990s progress, have hit the Research Archives with particular severity. When budget restrictions are combined with the declining buying power of the dollar overseas, and with the inflation of production costs and consequently of book prices in the publishing industry, the result might reasonably be described as catastrophic. For this library, the consequence is that our funding for next year will have about one half the buying power of last year's budget. This extraordinary difficulty notwithstanding, it remains the goals of the staff of the Research Archives to maintain and improve the quality and usefulness of the collections, and to retain and assure the position of the Research Archives among the preeminent research collections for the study of the ancient Near East. It has been my extreme pleasure to have earned the support of the faculty, staff, and students, who are the primary users of the Research Archives, and of a solid core of friends and members of the Oriental Institute. With the help of each of you, we have been able to continue the operation of

the library without undue dissonance and without requiring radical changes in the research styles of the scholars who use the collections.

Aside from the day-to-day activities of the library—reference services, book ordering, processing, cataloging, and general maintenance of the collections—the focus of work in the Research Archives has been threefold:

1. Analysis of the collection and collections policy to determine the most appropriate and useful areas to retain.
2. Analysis of the means by which materials are acquired, in order to maximize the acquisitions power of the resources at hand.
3. Investigating and developing new tools and techniques, primarily now electronic, for the collection, presentation, publication, and distribution of scholarly endeavor.

Each of these areas of focus requires constant vigilance and an eye for changes that might affect the process both negatively and positively. All together they are a continuing and developing dynamic that will determine the future of the Research Archives and will help to shape the future of research on the ancient Near East.

### **Collections Policy**

The Research Archives has been exceedingly fortunate to have had the unqualified moral, intellectual, and financial support of the Oriental Institute over the last two decades. It is only because of this support that we have been able to collect so widely and extensively, and to assemble and catalog this collection for the benefit of our users. Heretofore, we have been able to provide virtually any scholarly publication dealing with virtually any area of the ancient Near East. Indeed it has been our practice to anticipate the requests of the users of the library, by ordering, processing, and cataloging materials before they are requested. Our collections are particularly strong in the publications of primary source material: publications of texts, excavation reports, and museum collections. Nearly as strong, we have very extensive holdings in secondary literature: text editions and commentaries; archaeological site and regional synthesis; social, religious, and intellectual history; and a category in which I would include of our very extensive collection of dissertations. In a third general area, our collections are notable, but not as strong: methodological and theoretical studies, extra-regional contacts, and scholarship which places the ancient Near East in wider disciplinary and methodological contexts.

In our efforts to maintain the quality and usefulness of the collections it is our goal to continue to acquire as much as possible of newly published primary source material. These materials are the building blocks of scholarship. They are essential for the study of ancient cultures and for the interpretation, reinterpretation, and analysis of secondary sources. It is our intention not to try to impose geographical limits on our construction of the ancient Near East. We will endeavor to continue to include all the cultures we traditionally associate with that term. It is in the second and third areas mentioned above that we expect to see the most cuts. We are now far more cautious and circumspect in what we acquire of secondary interpretive literature. We are already working with colleagues in the University of Chicago Libraries (who are under similar pressures to reduce acquisitions budgets), to assure that there will not be wholesale abandonment of areas of scholarship in local libraries, and in the hope that we can complement the collections under our collective care for the benefit of all of the University of Chicago community.

## Maximizing Resources

With the help of the Development Office of the Oriental Institute and the Oriental Institute's Information Systems Committee, we have begun to identify new sources of support for the Research Archives in order to supplement the operating budget. I am certain that there are sources of philanthropic support for such undertakings which we have not yet utilized, and for which there are not competing interests. In the short-term we hope to exploit such resources primarily as a source of supplemental funding, but we are also looking towards the potential for raising endowment for the Research Archives. The establishment of an endowment would have a twofold effect. It would supply the Research Archives with a guaranteed source of funding, and it would free the current annual operating budget for the support of other projects and units of the Oriental Institute. I would appreciate hearing of any information members and friends might have about such potential sources.

There are, of course, other sources of support for the Research Archives. Among these are, notably, the various exchange programs in which we engage. Our side of these exchanges depends on the generous support of three departments: The Publications Office of the Oriental Institute; the Journal of Near Eastern Studies; and the Membership Program of the Oriental Institute. We are most grateful to Thomas Holland, Robert Biggs, and Cynthia Echols for their continuing assistance with these exchanges and for their willingness to expand them. We also sell and exchange an increasing number of duplicate volumes. Many of these have been donated by members and friends—I would like to encourage all donations of books. Even if we already have a copy, the sale or exchange of such items allows us to acquire books for our collection which we would otherwise be unable to afford. The administration of sales and exchanges is fairly labor intensive but is ultimately worthwhile.

## Development of Electronic Tools

In collaboration with John Sanders and the Computer Laboratory, we have been engaged over the previous two years in the development of a number of electronic resources. Many of these resources are already becoming essential tools, in libraries, for the study of the ancient Near East. Beginning with this year's annual report, there will be a separate section devoted to the description of these resources (see *Oriental Institute Electronic Resources*). I refer the reader to that section for a full description of the project. Here, I will briefly discuss some of the roles such resources increasingly play in libraries such as the Research Archives.

Publication in all areas of scholarship has increased in an almost unbelievable manner during the last few years. This puts an enormous strain on those who collect books, and particularly on libraries. This strain is both fiscal and physical. Of the fiscal strain, I have already written. The physical strain is at least as severe. Many major academic libraries built or expanded during the last three decades in the expectation that they would be sufficient for a century's worth of expansion are already filled to capacity. The space now occupied by the Research Archives, as recently as twenty-five years ago, housed the entire Near Eastern collection of the University of Chicago Libraries, including the extensive Islamic Near East collection. The Research Archives, the collections of which are limited to the ancient Near East, has now nearly exhausted this space. While we are fortunate to be included in the plans for the Oriental Institute's expansion into a new wing, the space now al-

lotted to the Research Archives is inadequate for the long-term growth of the collection as it is now conceived.

The price of many, if not most, academic publications, is based essentially on the production, inventory, and distribution costs. In addition, many books, including those published by the Oriental Institute, are published in runs which, from a commercial publisher's point of view, would be considered unprofitable. As a result, many of the publications in ancient Near Eastern Studies are produced, like those of the Oriental Institute, by not-for-profit institutions, with the help of subventions. Others are produced by academic divisions of for-profit publishers. Authors of books of considerable intellectual importance may experience difficulty in finding publishers for their work who will produce them at an affordable price.

One of the ways to solve both the cost and the space problem is to begin to publish, and for libraries to collect, "books" in electronic formats. The Abzu project, produced under the auspices of the Research Archives and the Oriental Institute Electronic Resources Project, began as an experiment to collect all such electronic publications currently available on the Internet, to catalog them in a rational manner, and to make them accessible to anyone who can use a terminal or who has access to an Internet connection. Abzu quickly developed beyond its original goal and has now become the first fully electronic publication of the Oriental Institute and the most intensively used component of the Oriental Institute Electronic Resources. Scholars using Abzu now have large corpora of data delivered to their desktops, frequently data that would otherwise have been inaccessible to them, or which would have been prohibitively expensive to print in the traditional manner. In addition, these documents are very often supplemented by sophisticated indexing and searching tools—tools that offer possibilities for manipulating data in ways not possible in paper-based versions. In addition to the Oriental Institute's own World-Wide Web database, another shining example of this potential is the recently realized online edition of Adriaan De Buck's corpus of Egyptian Coffin Texts by the Center for Computer-Aided Egyptological Research in Utrecht, originally published by the Oriental Institute in seven volumes between 1935 and 1961. Making it inestimably more useful than the original edition, though, is the overlay of Dirk van der Plas' lexical index to the corpus. If this is a sample of the kind of resources that will soon be commonly available, then we will be fortunate indeed! Many other such projects are now in process. I was approached recently for advice on the usefulness in libraries of a complete run of a journal being issued, at a nominal cost, in an electronic format. I assured the publisher that we are desperate for any publication that would save us (as in this case) seven meters of shelf space. We are convinced that the continuing development of electronic resources will in the long-term contribute to the solution of these pressing financial and physical needs. It is appropriate that the Oriental Institute, with its Research Archives and Computer Laboratory, is at the forefront of the development of such resources.

### **Retrospective Cataloging Project**

We have continued to make very respectable progress in processing the bibliographical data for our Retrospective Cataloging Project. I am extremely fortunate to have had two excellent assistants this year, who have concentrated their efforts in the Research Archives on this project. Gregory Munson, Ph.D. candidate in Assyriology, has continued to concentrate on the analysis of Assyriological journals, while Rachel

Dahl, second-year student in the College, has begun the analysis of our Egyptological journal holdings. This year they have examined 424 volumes of journals, which have yielded a total of 10,218 analytical catalog records documenting each essay, article, and review relating to the ancient Near East contained in those volumes. Details of the material analyzed this year are as follows:

<i>Archiv für ägyptische Archäologie</i> , Volume 1 (the single volume issued) [complete]	77 records
<i>Baghdader Mitteilungen</i> , Volumes 1–21 [complete]	226 records
<i>Göttinger Miszellen</i> , Volumes 1–141 [complete]	615 records
<i>Orientalia</i> , Volumes 1–2, 4–32, 34–38, 43–49, 51–55 [complete]	106 records
<i>Orientalia</i> , New Series, Volumes 1–17, 22–59 [complete]	3,383 records
<i>Sudan Notes and Records</i> , Volumes 1–10 [ancient Near East articles only]	216 records
<i>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i> , Volumes 1–76 [complete]	3,330 records
<i>Journal of Field Archaeology</i> , Volumes 1–20 [ancient Near East articles only]	254 records
<i>Zeitschrift für Assyriologie</i> , Volumes 24–80	2,011 records

This reflects a pace consistent with that of last year. Though still at the beginning of this project, we are now putting a serious dent in the backlog, and the catalog becomes more and more useful as its volume increases.

At the time of writing, the On-Line Catalog of the Research Archives holds 53,631 records. With the addition of material currently in process in the Retrospective Cataloging Project and from current acquisitions, I expect that we will increase the On-Line Catalog by some 25,000 records by the end of the summer.

## Publications

The Research Archives published three items during the year.

*Abzu: Guide to Resources for the Study of the Ancient Near East Available on the Internet*, by Charles E. Jones. Chicago: The Oriental Institute Research Archives, 1994, 1995 (Oriental Institute Research Archives Bibliographical and Informational Documents: Supplements to Oriental Institute Research Archives Acquisitions List; v. 3; available exclusively on-line at: <http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/DEPT/RA/ABZU/ABZU.HTML>).

*Oriental Institute Research Archives Acquisitions List with an Indexed List of Essays, Articles, and Reviews*, edited by Charles E. Jones. February 1994–July 1994. Numbers 11–12.

*Women in the Ancient Near East: A Select Bibliography of Recent Sources in the Oriental Institute Research Archives*, by Terry G. Wilfong. v + 42 pages. Chicago: The Oriental Institute Research Archives, 1992 (Oriental Institute Research Archives Bibliographical and Informational Documents: Supplements to Oriental Institute Research Archives Acquisitions List; v. 2; reprinted edition available exclusively on-line at: <http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/DEPT/RA/WOMEN.HTML>).

## Current Acquisitions

Within the limitations required by the budgetary restraints outlined above, we have continued to have a respectable level of acquisitions

	<i>April 1994–March 1995</i>	<i>Total</i>
Monographs and Series	841	20,896
Journals	210	8,892
Total Books	1,051	29,788
Maps	9	
Pamphlets	45	
Data Files	4	

In addition to these statistics, please also bear in mind the large quantity of material “acquired,” that is cataloged and made available in the Research Archives by means of the Abzu project. It is not possible at this time to quantify this material in the same way as is possible for books and periodicals.

I have been most fortunate to have had the help of a superb staff this year. As mentioned above, Greg Munson and Rachel Dahl have taken primary responsibility for processing material for the Retrospective Cataloging Project. They also play an absolutely fundamental role in the day-to-day operations of the Research Archives, and in particular in providing all public reference services on weekends and during our Wednesday evening hours. They also bear the primary responsibility for the general order of the reading room. Thanks to them, the books are on the shelves when you need them.

We are, as always, indebted to a large number of friends—too many to name individually. In addition to those I have mentioned by name in the sections above, I would like to single out Harry Hoffner and the Hittite Dictionary Project, for the donation of a large and valuable collection of Hittitological offprints; Abbas Alizadeh and Guillermo Algaze for extraordinarily generous donation of the following two titles from the library of the late Professor Helene J. Kantor:

*The Monuments of Nineveh. From Drawings Made on the Spot by Austen Henry Layard, Esq. C.D.L. First Series: Illustrated in One Hundred Plates.* By Austen Henry Layard. London: John Murray, 1853. 1 folio volume (10 pages + 100 [loose] plates).

*A Second Series of The Monuments of Nineveh; Including Bas-Reliefs from the Palace of Sennacherib and Bronzes from the Ruins of Nimroud From Drawings Made on the Spot, During a Second Expedition to Assyria by Austen Henry Layard, M.P., Author of “Nineveh and Its Remains,” “Discoveries at Nineveh and Babylon.”* By Austen Henry Layard. London: John Murray, 1853. 1 folio volume (7 pages + 71 [loose] plates).

We also thank Bud Haas for the donation of many other books from the library of Professor Helene J. Kantor. Many others have donated books, funds, and time. To all a heartfelt thanks.