

INTRODUCTION

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That this *Annual Report* covers an unusually eventful year at the Oriental Institute is evident in the descriptions of research projects, individual scholarship, and activities in the Museum, the Research Archives, the Computer Laboratory, and the Publications Office. The retirement of three faculty members, the recruitment of one faculty replacement, and the final approval of our climate control project by the University of Chicago were among the landmark events of the past twelve months.

Faculty

Erica Reiner, the John A. Wilson Distinguished Service Professor, retired at the end of January 1996. Erica Reiner came to the Oriental Institute as a Research Assistant on the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary (CAD) in 1952. After receiving her Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 1955 she was appointed Research Associate (Assistant Professor). In 1957 she became Associate Editor of the CAD and in 1959 she was appointed to the faculty of the Oriental Institute with the rank of Associate Professor. In 1962 she became Editor and in 1973 Editor-in-Charge of the CAD, a title she held until her retirement. She was promoted to Professor in 1965 and to the John A. Wilson professorship in 1973.

Professor Reiner's publications include important linguistic studies of Akkadian and Elamite, but she is perhaps best known for her publications on incantations, planetary omens, and other matters astrological and magical. She has written on historical subjects and also on Mesopotamian literature, particularly poetry—as is well known to those of you who are familiar with her book, *Your Thwarts in Pieces, Your Mooring Rope Cut*, or her wonderful Ryerson Lecture, “Thirty Pieces of Silver.”

However, it is as Editor-in-Charge of the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary that Professor Reiner has firmly placed the stamp of her scholarship on the whole field of Assyriology. She has played a role in the production of every one of the 16 volumes published since the first volume appeared in 1956. As Editor-in-Charge since 1973 she has assured that the dictionary continued to be produced according to the principles and high standards set by the original editorial board. The CAD, which has been funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities since 1976, has always received high critical praise and is a fundamental reference work for all students of ancient Mesopotamian languages, history, and culture.

Professor Reiner has been awarded honorary degrees by the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Leiden; she is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, a Guggenheim Fellow, and formerly a Member of the Institute of Advanced Studies.

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We all wish Erica happiness and contentment in her retirement and hope to see her in the Institute often. May your thwarts remain solid, your mooring rope strong.

Edward F. Wente, Professor of Egyptology, retired at the end of December 1995. Professor Wente received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 1959 after several years in Egypt as a Fulbright Exchange Student and Director of the American Research Center in Egypt. He returned to the Oriental Institute in 1959 as a Research Associate (Instructor) and joined the faculty as Assistant Professor in 1963. He was promoted to Associate Professor in 1965 and Professor in 1970. He was a member of the staff of the Epigraphic Survey (1959–68) and Field Director in 1972–73. He worked on projects at Medinet Habu, the Khonsu Temple, the tomb of Kheruef in Luxor, and at Beit el-Wali in Nubia. He also served as Acting Chair of the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations (1971, 1986) and as Chair (1975–79). He continues to serve on the Visiting Committee of the Egyptian Department, the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Professor Wente's publications have helped to reshape the way Egyptian history and culture are viewed. His early work, *Late Ramesside Letters*, is an essential tool for the study of the history of the late Twentieth Dynasty; the challenging texts from the tomb of Kheruef that he translated, with commentary, have increased our understanding of the history of rituals celebrating kingship. His article "Mysticism in Pharaonic Egypt?" raised basic questions about the nature of Egyptian religion and philosophy that have reinvigorated scholarly debate. Professor Wente's most recent book, *Letters from Ancient Egypt*, has become a standard reference for Egyptian culture. The broad topical scope of Professor Wente's scholarship is also reflected in the diversity of dissertation topics selected by students under his guidance. His students now hold positions on the faculty or staff of many of the leading centers of Egyptological study in the United States.

Our best wishes go with Ed in his retirement and we hope to see him in the Institute often.

Lanny D. Bell, Associate Professor of Egyptology, retired at the end of June 1996. Lanny Bell received his Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania in 1976. For five seasons (1967–74) he was Field Director of the Theban Tomb Project sponsored by the University of Pennsylvania Museum. In 1977 he was appointed Field Director of the Epigraphic Survey with academic rank of Assistant Professor. He remained at Chicago House for twelve years supervising a major campaign of epigraphic recording and conservation work at both Medinet Habu and Luxor Temple. During his tenure as Field Director he did not hesitate to make hard decisions in order to maintain the highest quality for the Luxor Temple drawings despite unanticipated technical problems. He was successful in a vigorous campaign, in collaboration with Carlotta Maher, to raise funds from private, corporate, and government sources to support the work of the Epigraphic Survey. In 1984 he was promoted to Associate Professor and in 1989 he returned to Chicago as a member of the teaching and research faculty.

Professor Bell has published reports on the Theban Tomb Project, on epigraphic methodology, and on Luxor Temple, particularly his article "Luxor Temple and the Cult of the Royal Ka."

We wish Lanny much success in his new role as Egyptologist-at-Large and have no doubt that he will be in great demand as teacher and lecturer.

Other notable news of the faculty and staff included: Professor Emeritus Hans Güterbock was awarded the American Oriental Society Medal of Honor, Harry Hoffner was named the John A. Wilson Professor, Martha Roth was promoted to Professor and

became the Editor-in-Charge of the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary, and Robert Ritner joined the faculty as Associate Professor of Egyptology. Karen Wilson's title was changed to Oriental Institute Museum Director in recognition of the actual range of duties and responsibilities of her position.

Climate Control Project

The groundbreaking ceremony for our climate control, renovation and expansion project is scheduled for August 15, 1996, with construction to begin immediately. A complete history of the project will be published in the *Annual Report* for 1996/97. At this time I wish to acknowledge the effort expended by the staff, often above and beyond the call of duty, and the wonderful spirit of cooperation all year long as the museum was prepared for construction to begin. We all owe a huge debt of gratitude to Karen Wilson and every member of the museum staff. I also wish to thank Joe Auclair who has relentlessly bulldogged this project from the moment he arrived last autumn; without his knowledge, his determination, and his negotiating skills, I doubt if we would be breaking ground this summer. As presently scheduled, construction and renovation will require twelve months; after that we will reinstall and reopen the galleries one at a time at approximately six month intervals.

Legacy Campaign

As of June 30th the Legacy Campaign had reached \$6.9 million. We are most grateful to all of the donors who made pledges and gifts—large and small—that have enabled us to begin construction this summer. I also wish to express my appreciation to the members of the Legacy Campaign Executive Committee, who have been unstinting in their dedication and have given generously of their time, energy, and talent to the campaign. My heartfelt thanks also to Cynthia Echols and the staff of the Membership and Development Office who have worked diligently, often with short notice, to maintain the pace of the campaign. It is through the tireless effort of the Executive Committee and the Development Office staff that we will succeed in fulfilling the goal of the Legacy Campaign.
