

RESEARCH ARCHIVES

Charles E. Jones

Sitting in the cool silence of the Elizabeth Morse Genius Reading Room of the Research Archives during the July heat wave, I can see a crowd of faculty, staff, and students. Joining them this month are visiting scholars from Austria, Egypt, Israel, and Italy, as well as colleagues from California, Colorado, Maryland, and Tennessee. All of them are here to work with the resources of the Research Archives: many of them come each summer. This is the second year they can work here in comfort.

We have made great progress this year with two important and related projects. Firstly, the reconfiguration of the collections is essentially complete. The map room on the upper level is in place and functional (with great strides having also been made towards the cataloging of the map collection [see the statistics below]). The pamphlet collection has been moved to the upper level and the quickly growing bibliography section (at the base of the stairway) is now established, while the monographs (in the new wing) and series (in the reading room) are now thoroughly sorted. Secondly, the winter months saw the successful completion of the raising of the matching funds for the renovation of the Morse Genius Reading Room. As a

consequence of the diligent work of the Development Office staff and the generosity of donors we have exceeded the goal of \$84,800.00, successfully meeting the challenge presented to us by the Elizabeth Morse and Elizabeth Morse Genius Charitable Trusts. Those trusts have matched our funds with \$70,000 as promised. More than ninety donors contributed to the achievement of this goal, including many members of the scholarly community (many of whom are alumni). The response has been extraordinarily gratifying to me, and testifies to the esteem in which the Research Archives is held among those groups.

At the time of writing we are now nearly ready to begin work on the project, and fully expect to have the construction complete by the end of September in time for the beginning of the Autumn Quarter. The plans for the project include replacement of the original lighting in the reading room, establishment of power and internet connections at each of the tables in the reading room, and replacement of the cork flooring. Once these improvements are complete, the library will again be "the most beautiful room in the building."

On-line Catalog and Retrospective Cataloging Project

The on-line catalog of the holdings of the Research Archives now includes 84,640 records. It is up-to-date for all materials acquired through the end of May 1999. More than twenty-seven hundred records have been added to the database during the past year. With the help of our software supplier, we have now converted the database to the most recent version of the software and have the hardware and software poised to make the catalog fully accessible over the internet. As the summer progresses, we will, with the help of John Sanders and the Computer Laboratory, have this new version up and running on an independent Research Archives web server. With this development, the catalog will be accessible world-wide, and its role as a research tool will consequently change in interesting ways. It will be a stimulating challenge to observe and adapt to these changes, and I look forward to communicating with the larger academic community that will have access to the catalog for the first time.

Complete, and in the final stages of editing preparatory to loading into the on-line catalog, are analytical records for each essay, article, and review in the following periodicals:

<i>Item</i>	<i>Number of Records</i>
<i>Annales du Service des antiquités de l'Égypte</i>	1,830
<i>Oriens Antiquus</i>	1,083
<i>Semítica</i> (volumes)	409
<i>Tel Aviv</i>	247
<i>Zeitschrift der Deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i>	1,404
<i>Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina Vereins</i>	2,181
<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>	1,106
Map collection	3,455
Total of records in retrospective cataloging project	11,715

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In addition, we have processed 8,659 analytical records from material acquired during the past year, giving us a grand total of 20,374 analytical records prepared during 1998/99 for entry into the on-line catalog.

Publications

The Research Archives published or revised eight electronic items during the past year:

1. **Abzu: Guide to Resources for the Study of the Ancient Near East Available on the Internet**, by Charles E. Jones. Chicago: Oriental Institute Research Archives, 1994–1998. Oriental Institute Research Archives Bibliographical and Informational Documents: Supplements to Oriental Institute Research Archives Acquisitions List, volume 3. Available exclusively on-line.

<http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/DEPT/RA/ABZU/ABZU.HTML>

With more than 750 new entries in the past year, Abzu remains the most complete index to on-line materials relating to the ancient Near East.

2. Search the Oriental Institute Web space.

http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/DEPT/RA/OI_Search.html

3. **Persepolis and Ancient Iran: Thumbnail Images from Oriental Institute Web Pages.** (This page includes more than a thousand images and will take some time to load. Please be patient.)

<http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/DEPT/RA/Iranthumbs.html>

4. **Ancient Egypt and Nubia: Thumbnail Images from Oriental Institute Web Pages.** (This page includes nearly two hundred images and will take some time to load. Please be patient.)

<http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/DEPT/RA/Egyptthumbs.html>

5. **Dissertation Proposals in Ancient Near Eastern Studies Approved by the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, the University of Chicago:**

Continuity and Change of Reproductive Beliefs and Practices in Egypt from Ancient to Modern Times. Nicole B. Hansen

http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/DEPT/RA/DISPROP/hansen_diss.html

6. **International Association of Orientalist Librarians (IAOL): WWW Presence.**

<http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/IAOL/iaol.html>

7. **Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale/International Congress of Assyriology and Near Eastern Archaeology: XLV^e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, 5–8 July 1998, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and 9–10 July 1998, New Haven, Connecticut**

http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/DEPT/RA/rai/45_2ndCirc.html

8. In addition, nearly all of the other on-line publications of the Research Archives have been revised, updated, and expanded.

http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/DEPT/RA/Research_Arch.html

All URLs are case-sensitive.

Other Activities

A number of continuing projects and initiatives have been based out of the Research Archives during the past year:

Oriental Institute Staff Newsletter. Intended to increase the level of communication among the units, projects, faculty, and staff of the Oriental Institute in Chicago and abroad, this e-mail based newsletter is issued monthly during the academic year.

“Techno-lunches.” Informal presentations and discussion of projects in ancient studies that have technological components in their production or presentation. Meeting monthly, interested faculty, staff, and students use this forum to develop a perspective on the wide variety of projects underway at the Oriental Institute.

Oriental Institute Arabic Manuscript Project. In collaboration with, and funded by, the Regional Information Technology and Software Engineering Center (RITSEC) in Cairo, and with the essential cooperation of the Oriental Institute Museum, this project is preparing detailed photographs of, and catalog records for, many of the Arabic Manuscripts — primarily papyri — in the collections of the Oriental Institute Museum. Most of them will become available for the first time as a consequence of this project.

Oriental Institute Website Development. In collaboration with the Computer Laboratory we continue to develop the website which is as wildly successful as ever — now having more than three quarters of a million hits each month.

Cooperative On-line Resource Catalog (CORC). The Research Archives is collaborating with the Technical Services department in Regenstein Library in a pilot project — the Cooperative On-line Resource Catalog (CORC) — to provide useful and properly formatted records for a corpus of on-line resources. CORC is working with Abzu and its links to materials published on-line at the Oriental Institute website as a launching pad and test case. You can already find Abzu itself, Richard Jasnow’s article “Graffiti of Luxor Temple” (from the *Chicago House Bulletin*), and many other such on-line resources culled from the links in Abzu in the University of Chicago’s on-line catalog Horizon. If you care to investigate, CORC is described at: <http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/Annex/TechSvcs/corc.html>.

Current Acquisitions

Following are the acquisitions statistics for the past year:

	<u>May 1998–April 1999</u>	<u>Total</u>
Monographs and Series	613	23,364
Journals	216	9,682
Total Books	829	33,046
Pamphlets	4	

The statistics are slightly down from last year due to a number of factors. Significant among these is the delay in shipping resulting from the requirement to prepay for many of our orders. This requirement is increasingly common among publishers and is particularly acute among the publishers with whom we had to cancel significant standing orders following the budget crisis of the mid-1990s.

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While we do not have a means to keep visitor statistics, it is clear that the Research Archives is more heavily used than ever before. Three factors are important in the increased use:

1. Climate control makes the room a much more comfortable place to work.
2. The increased number of tables and work spaces facilitates the use of the collection and reduces crowding.
3. The increasing participation of faculty in teaching survey classes and classes of wider interest to students outside the department has raised the profile of this resource among other units of the University.

The Research Archives remains one of the central North American research facilities in ancient Near Eastern studies. Many scholars from outside the University of Chicago make periodic trips to this facility to conduct research. For example, more than a dozen Egyptologists took the opportunity of the Chicago location for the ARCE meeting this Spring to spend additional days on research here in the Research Archives.

Staff

Two members of the staff, Hratch Papazian and Justine Way, left at the end of summer 1998, the former to work at Chicago House in Luxor, and the latter to concentrate on studies and to continue work at Giza. Later in autumn, Alexandra O'Brien also left to complete her dissertation on women in Hellenistic Egypt. I am grateful to all three of them for their careful and diligent work and their pleasant and agreeable presence on the staff for so long. For most of the year, the staff of the Research Archives was entirely new. Aaron Burke, third-year graduate student in Archaeology, shouldered the task of cataloging the map collection. Katherine Strange, first-year graduate student in Archaeology, and Tamara Siuda, first-year graduate student in Egyptology, shared the analytical cataloging tasks for both the current acquisitions and the retrospective cataloging project. All three shared office duties and covered weekend and evening hours. A qualified and interested staff is a key component of any organization, and I am pleased to have had this group working with me this year.

Thanks

In a year in which so many individuals and organizations contributed so much to the future of the Research Archives, it is difficult to single out specific contributions. As always, my colleagues at the Oriental Institute are essential to the smooth and successful operation of the Research Archives. The Director, Professor Gene Gragg, and his staff have constantly and consistently supported the Research Archives. Professor Robert Biggs and the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, and Denise Browning and her staff in the Suq are, as always, generous with books, information, and moral support. But it is John Sanders and the Computer Laboratory whose generosity with time, experience, effort, and advice to whom I am most indebted for the continuing development of the Research Archives. To each of them, and to all who offered help and support, my thanks.