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News & Notes

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The Oriental Institute

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Museum Curator Carswell Attends Armenian Congress

Armenia, source of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, home of Mount Ararat (where Noah's ark is said to have landed), has not yet struck the popular imagination as have the cultures of Egypt and Mesopotamia. However, there is a strong and continuing scholarly interest in Armenia. Recently John Carswell, Curator of the Oriental Institute Museum, and Mrs. Carswell were the guests of the Armenian Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. for the II International Congress of Armenian Art and Archeology. The Congress was held in Erevan, capital of Soviet Armenia, from September 11 to 19, and was attended by more than 300 delegates from around the world, including sizable delegations from Moscow, Leningrad, and Georgia. Among well-known scholars from the United States were Professor Nina Garsoian (recently appointed the first woman Dean of Graduate Studies at Princeton) and Professor Avedis Sanjian of U.C.L.A.

Five working sessions were held simultaneously. The first working group was devoted to the study of Uartian and ancient Armenian remains; the others concentrated on medieval architecture, decorative and minor Armenian arts, miniature painting, and 19th-20th century art and architecture. Mr. Carswell, whose interest in Armenian topics has centered on his work on the Armenian diaspora in 17th century Iran, read a paper on *A 14th Century Carved Wooden Door in the Armenian Cathedral of St. James, Jerusalem*.

Each session took place at different parts of Erevan: in the Academy of Sciences, the Institute of Fine Arts, the Armenian Architectural Association, and the Matenadaran Library. The library is an imposing stone building overlooking the town; it contains the world's largest collection of early Armenian manuscripts and a fine collection of early Armenian printed books. Its holdings are rivalled only by the manuscript collections in the Armenian Cathedral of St. James in Jerusalem and in the Convent of San Lazzaro in Venice. On another hill above the town stand the remains of ancient Erebouri, an excavated and restored Uartian fortress. Modern Erevan is built on the site of Erebouri, which was founded in 782 B.C. by the Uartian king Argishti I, and which has now become a flourishing city of more than 720,000 inhabitants.



A young Caucasian lady gets an Oriental Institute badge!

The Congress visited a number of sites not normally accessible to Western travellers; an excursion to the Holy See at Echmiadzin was particularly interesting, as it was possible to inspect the results of recent excavations under the high altar of the cathedral. These have revealed that early Armenian texts on the history of the building were correct, in that the cathedral was indeed built on a pagan temple. The foundations of the altar were actually crushing a large earthenware pot, filled with ashes, in the apse of the temple.

The highlight of the Congress was a tour of Armenian monuments in the Caucasus. The delegates boarded a brand-new train, complete with sleeping cars, for an overnight journey to Allaverdi, a copper-mining town in the northern range. The delegates were met at 7:00 a.m. by a fleet of buses and the entire local population. This was the beginning of a progression through the mountains, visiting Sanahin, Haghput, Ozdun, and Goshavank. Lunch in the mountains was in the open air, with pork kebabs, freshly baked flat bread, pickled meats, and an infinite variety of salads and fruit, washed down with champagne and local wine. Perhaps

the most impressive moment came at the end of the day, when the delegates left the buses and were led up a grassy, wooded path, at the end of which lay the church of Haghart. In the adjacent medieval refectory, the finest double cross-vaulted structure of its kind, there was a table fifty feet long, laid with a handmade earthenware bowl of yogurt, a carved wooden spoon, white cheese, herbs and sweet bread for each of the 300 visitors, and early Armenian choral music rose from the nearby church. Later in the evening the delegates dined beside the moonlit shore of Lake Sevan, returning to Erevan after midnight.

A visit to the Erevan Museum the next day afforded the opportunity of meeting a number of Armenian archeologists and discussing their finds. One particularly poignant encounter was with a lady archeologist who has been digging the medieval complex at Dvin, who said that standard foreign reference works were in such short supply that whenever she excavated anything unfamiliar, she was obliged to go to Leningrad to identify the material. Indeed, a plea heard from all quarters was for books, articles, and off-prints in any way connected with the area. Books



In the Erevan Museum: wooden-wheeled oxcarts of the fourth millenium B.C., excavated from Lake Sevan.

seemed to be the most prized of material possessions, at least among the circle in which the Congress moved. At the special bookstalls at the entrance to each of the working sessions of the Congress, it was almost impossible to penetrate the crush of the local population, who stormed the counters every day.

MEMBERS TOURS TO EGYPT

The popular annual tours to Egypt, each led by one of our professional Egyptologists, are open for reservations. These archeological tours will visit many of the marvels of ancient Egypt, including the major monuments of ancient Thebes, the Valley of the Kings, the treasures of Tutankhamun in the Egyptian Museum, and the temples of Abu Simbel.

This year two types of tours are available:

Tours #1 and #2 are of 16 days duration. Members of these tours will journey by land along the Nile, beginning in Cairo and stopping at various sites in and around Abu Simbel, Aswan, and Luxor. **Tour #1** leaves Chicago January 18 and returns February 2. **Tour #2** leaves Chicago February 8, returning February 23.

Tour #3 is of 19 days duration. In addition to being a more intensive archeological survey, it also includes a deluxe boat cruise on the Nile between Luxor and Aswan and a visit to Middle Egypt. **Tour #3** departs Chicago March 1, returning March 19.

Lecturers

Tour #1

Charles C. Van Siclen III, formerly acting director of Chicago House in Luxor.

Tour #2

James P. Allen, Assistant Director of the American Research Center in Egypt.

Tour #3

Bruce Williams, James H. Breasted Research Associate, The Oriental Institute.



Total cost of **Tours #1 and #2** is \$2,495.00 per person, which includes a tax-deductible contribution of \$300.00 to the Oriental Institute. The total cost of **Tour #3**, with the Nile cruise, is \$2,845.00 per person, including a tax-deductible contribution of \$350.00. Single room accommodations are available at a supplementary cost of \$280.00 per person. The fee for the trip covers air fare and all other transportation and transfers, hotel (double occupancy), tips, and nearly all meals. A detailed itinerary for each tour and further information may be obtained by calling or writing Bernard Lalor, Membership Secretary of the Institute (753-2389).

News from Turkey

Istanbul Üniversitesi Araştırma Merkezi
İlköğretmen Lisesi
Ergani (Diyarbakır)
Turkey, October 13, 1978

Greetings:

After a six year gap in field work at the prehistoric village site of Çayönü, near the headwaters of the Tigris in Turkey, Linda and I left home in a 1973 VW microbus, loaded down with foot lockers full of field gear, for a Sept. 1 sailing of QE 2. Since she arrived late, she cancelled her Cherbourg landing and we were put off at Southampton and sent on to France by ferry. The new facts of life hit us soon afterwards; to fill up the VW (about 14 1/2 gallons of gas) cost a bit over \$35.00! We indulged ourselves modestly—saw the marvelous delineation of the Norman Conquest on the Bayeux tapestry and made a short detour in northern Italy to see Ravenna and the wonderful church and mosaics of San Vitale. Reached Ancona (on the calf of the Italian boot) in good time for the Turkish auto ferry. It was not at all full for it was past the heavy tourist season.

On landing in Izmir, customs officials swarmed aboard like flies as there is sensitivity to arms smuggling. We've never seen so thorough a search as both Turks and foreigners received. On three previous seasons we've been waved through as tourists, but this time we caught it, although they were perfectly pleasant (and even apologetic) about it. The foot lockers were all sealed and we were allowed to proceed on the ferry to Istanbul, where our Turkish colleague, Prof. Halet Çambel, co-director of our Joint Prehistoric Project, met us along with her customs clearance agent. It took nine days to clear the gear through all the formalities, but we did escape having to pay any duty. Sorting and repacking, including the gear stored in Istanbul, took a few more days, so we were actually in Istanbul for a

fortnight, but happily at home in Halet's lovely old wooden house on the Bosphorus. We then left for Ankara, liquidated our protocol duties there in a day and a half, and drove on here, arriving on Oct. 5.

Both the field house and the site were in remarkably good condition, considering we've not been here since 1972, but a lot of house cleaning was needed on both. The crew consists of ten of Halet's Istanbul University people, either her assistants or her students, four Americans with Mike Davis and Maggie Dittmore besides Linda and me, three German architects and a Norwegian girl as photographer. The senior German is Dr. Wulf Schirmer, professor of architectural history at Karlsruhe University; he and his assistant and a graduate student came at Halet's invitation, she having convinced them that Çayönü yields something really unique in the very early development of architecture, both domestic and more formal. It is already clear that Schirmer & Co. are fascinated and the questions they ask us concerning the architecture we've already exposed certainly fascinate us as well.

Thus, on the third day of digging and a week of shaking down, we anticipate a field season rich in new contributions to knowledge of a time and place where—some 9000 years ago—people began to settle down to a new way of life, based for the first time upon effective agriculture. What will fascinate us most will be the evidence of the many changes in how the Çayönü people responded to the possibilities which a produced—rather than simply a hunted and collected—food supply allowed.

The next time I write, it will be about what we're finding.

Best of Cheer,

Bob Braidwood

HOLIDAY GIFT IDEAS

Indian elephants and tigers, suitable for tree decorations; brassware from Egypt, copperware from Turkey; red, orange, and blue tassels from Afghanistan; all these are now available (at a 10% discount for members!) at the Suq of the Oriental Institute. A special holiday card, featuring the Egyptian "Princess Good-Year," and the full stock of tempting items normally offered at the Suq, make the Institute an attractive shopping spot this season.

You are reminded that two new exhibits at the Museum feature articles for sale: handmade goods

from Damascus and Aleppo, displayed in a recreated Syrian suq, and *Children's Cut-out Toys from Damascus*, including paper designs of animals, bedouin encampments, cowboys, airplanes, and even a do-it-yourself mosque, can be purchased. No discounts will apply in the exhibit sales.

And why not give a friend or relative a gift that can be enjoyed all year, a membership in the Oriental Institute? Gift memberships will be announced by a special card. They are, of course, tax-deductible. Please send your requests to the Membership Office.

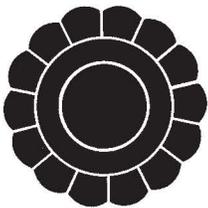
New Publications from the Oriental Institute:

Ancient Egyptian Coregencies (SAOC No. 40)
by William J. Murnane

Nippur II: The North Temple and Sounding E: Excavations of the Joint Expedition to Nippur of the American Schools of Oriental Research and the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago (OIP 97)
by Donald E. McCown, Richard C. Haines, and Robert D. Biggs

Excavations at Nippur: Twelfth Season OIC No. 23)
by McGuire Gibson et al.

Members of the Oriental Institute receive a 20% discount off the list price of these books. Libraries subscribing to a series such as SAOC will also receive a 20% discount. For price lists and further information on these and other Institute publications, write to: Publications Sales Office, Oriental Institute, 1155 E. 58th St., Chicago, Illinois 60637.



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