



THE EDFU PYRAMID PROJECT



ALSO INSIDE:

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- ★ Persian Splendor:
Journey to Ancient Iran
- ★ A Stitch in Time: Textiles
from Ancient Nubia



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NEWS & NOTES

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FROM THE DIRECTOR'S STUDY

One of the most exciting aspects of doing archaeology lies in recognizing patterns in the past. Often it takes years of painstaking work at multiple sites — each one a single data point. Eventually, enough of these observations accumulate to allow us to see that they form a pattern that can explain a fundamental aspect of an ancient civilization. The article by Gregory Marouard and Hratch Papazian in this issue of *News & Notes* describes an exciting new project that is exploring a long known but poorly understood pattern in the past — the series of at least seven small, almost miniature pyramids strung out along the Nile in Middle and Upper Egypt as far south as Elephantine. The Provincial Pyramids project has grown out of the Oriental Institute's Tell Edfu excavations, where one of these small stepped pyramids is located. What was the function of these pyramids, and what explains their location? These small stepped pyramids date to the Fourth or possibly late Third Dynasty and are located in the provinces, far from Memphis, the political capital of the Old Kingdom. They do not seem to have been used for burial. By drawing together the evidence from old excavations combined with their new investigations of the small pyramid at Edfu, Marouard and Papazian have been able to document the shared characteristics of these monuments — and to see the pattern more clearly. The pyramids are contemporaneous, and almost all are located near provincial capitals. Their locations, combined with their canonical form, suggest that these pyramids were used to project royal power southward and maintain ideological control over the outlying areas, most likely through their having served as a ritual focus for a royal cult. Seen in this perspective, these formerly ignored small stepped pyramids suddenly make sense as part of a deliberately constructed “political landscape” — a pattern that helps us understand in a new way how the enormous expanse of Old Kingdom Egypt was knit together into a single, unified state. It took more than a century of discovery to identify the pieces before scholars could recognize the significance of this pattern. This is a wonderful example of the ways that the often slow processes of research and documentation can yield, in the aggregate, new and fascinating results.



Gregory Marouard



COVER ILLUSTRATION:

Views of the step pyramid at Tell Edfu, Egypt

RIGHT:

Men at work at the southeast corner

THE EDFU PYRAMID PROJECT

RECENT INVESTIGATION AT THE LAST PROVINCIAL STEP PYRAMID

Gregory Marouard & Hratch Papazian, Oriental Institute Research Associates¹

The small step pyramid at South Edfu is one of seven such structures from the Old Kingdom to be situated outside of the royal cemeteries (in the Memphis area). It belongs to a group of identical constructions that have been found in close proximity to important settlement sites in Middle Egypt (at Seila and Zawiet al-Meitin) and Upper Egypt (at Sinki-Abydos, Nagada, al-Kula-Hierakonpolis, al-Ghonemiya-Edfu, and Elephantine). Up to now no example of such a provincial pyramid has been found in the Nile Delta region (fig. 1).

This phenomenon of provincial pyramids has been well known since the late nineteenth century, and several monuments were first reported by G. Maspero and H. Naville (al-Kula in 1882 and Sinki in 1883) as well as F. Petrie and J. Quibell (Seila in 1888 and Nagada in 1896). Determined to find a funerary chamber under these monuments, early Egyptologists had cut large trenches or deep tunnels through the faces to no avail, save for contributing to the irreversible degradation of most of the monuments.

However, the location of small step pyramids in considerable distance to the established Old Kingdom royal cemeteries bestows upon these structures the character of non-funerary monuments that did not nor were intended to serve as a burial place of any kind. Using the symbolic form without any trace of a funerary chamber or underground structure, it appears to have acted as

a monument dedicated to the worship of pharaoh.

On a purely architectural plan, these provincial monuments are very similar to the famous step pyramid of Djoser at Saqqara, to the two pyramids at Zawiet el-Aryan, or to the Meïdoum pyramid, all built in the construction method called “accretion layer.” Typical for the reigns of the Third Dynasty, from kings Djoser to Snofru, this method of

construction precedes, from a technical standpoint, the appearance of the “true pyramid” with flat faces.

Based on their shared design, similar dimensions, and construction techniques, the small step pyramids are contemporaneous to one another and date to the very beginning of the Fourth Dynasty, although an earlier date at the end of the Third Dynasty might also be very likely and should not be discarded.

They are traditionally attributed to the reign of Huni or even his successor Snofru (2600–2575 BC).

Discovered in 1909 in the southeastern rubble belonging to the pyramid at Elephantine, an isolated granite block naming the Son of Ra, Huni has provided good evidence in favor of the last ruler of the Third Dynasty. Nevertheless, the excavations led by N. Swelim in 1987–1988 at the pyramid of Seila have also been very significant.² Test trenches dug along two sides of the pyramid indicate a possible offering area or chapel on the eastern face, where two stelae have been discovered, one naming Snofru, the successor of Huni and first king of the Fourth Dynasty.

The seven examples actually known are not quite numerous enough to draw any firm conclusions about the exact date and function, but it is possible to make several observations.

From the earliest phases of the Early Dynastic period (ca. 3000 BC), the celebration of pharaoh’s divinity appears to



Figure 1. Distribution of the provincial step pyramids in Egypt

have taken precedence in the religious realm of Egypt. Being devoid of any funerary function, the ephemeral phenomenon of provincial step pyramids appears congruent with the evolution exhibited by the royal cult in the Old Kingdom, and they may have served as locales for that cult.

This should pertain not only to funerary aspects, but more significantly perhaps to the adoration of the living pharaoh. The tradition of worshipping pharaoh at multiple stand-alone sites across Egypt may have been put into effect as early as the First Dynasty, was expanded during the Second Dynasty, and appears to have made use of the step pyramids.

But perhaps more notably, the cultic function proffers an economic dimension to these pyramids, a characteristic that emphasizes the symbiotic association that existed between the religious and socioeconomic spheres in ancient Egypt. As such, the provincial pyramids may have constituted parts of an elaborate system of cultic domains (some of which may have been connected to agricultural foundations) that represented essential components of the operating system of the local economy and national/royal economic organization.

Six of them are situated in relatively close proximity to large regional settlements of the Predynastic and Early Dynastic periods. The dispersal of these pyramids follows a certain geographical organization being situated near regional capitals in a system of provincial administration under development since the First and Second Dynasties, depending on the location. This geographical distribution cannot be a coincidence, particularly in Upper Egypt, and a connection to the administrative division into nomes seems conceivable, as Stephan Seidlmayer has already suggested.³ Such a hypothesis can be supported in the cases of Elephantine lying at the southern frontier of Egypt and probably established under the reign of Huni, as well as Edfu and Hierakonpolis, all three of which were the respective

capitals of the First, Second, and Third Upper Egyptian nomes.

The construction of these monuments in that case might be essentially attached to the symbolic representation of the royal power, a deliberate political statement through which the king re-affirms the centralization in the Memphite region and his control of the whole country, using in the provinces a visible network of miniature step pyramids, strong symbols of the royal ideology since the reign of Djoser.

HISTORY OF THE DISCOVERY AND GENESIS OF THE FIELDWORK PROGRAM

The Edfu pyramid is located only 5 km south of Tell Edfu, and at 25 km south of the pyramid of al-Kula, which is linked to the major Predynastic site of Hierakonpolis. The pyramid is situated north of the modern village of al-Ghonemiya, between the edge of the desert and the cultivated areas of the Nile Valley (fig. 2).

The first reference to it dates back to 1894, when G. Legrain, who worked on a Predynastic cemetery situated farther south, indicated a “false” pyramid at the entrance of the Edfu–Kharga caravan road. In 1908 H. de Morgan mentions the structure again, and two years later A. Weigall mentions also the presence of this monument in his *Guide to the Antiquities of Upper Egypt from Abydos to the Sudan Frontier*. He recognized its

shape as a step pyramid and gave its correct dimensions but in feet instead of meters, which means that he probably never visited the site himself but deduced this information from a previous description.

The archaeological site is only marked on the 1928 map before it disappears again from later topographic maps. The site then remained largely unknown for decades until the chief inspector of the Edfu area, Mohamed A. Aly, showed the monument to W. Kaiser and G. Dreyer in 1979.⁴ Both included the site in their comprehensive study of the provincial pyramids complementing the previous studies conducted by J.-P. Lauer in 1962 and V. Maragioglio and C. Renaldi in 1963. No methodical excavation or cleaning of the pyramid superstructure was ever carried out before 2011 except for some holes made by the looting and pillaging of stone blocks in order to use them as building material.

Despite the protection by the Egyptian government, the site has become more and more endangered over the past forty years and is rapidly disappearing. Since the construction of the Aswan high dam in 1964, the region of Edfu has evolved significantly, especially the occupation along the desert edge. The al-Ghonemiya village stretches now more than 1.5 km farther north than forty years ago and today is in the immediate vicinity of the pyramid (fig. 2).



Figure 2. Aerial views of Edfu in (left) 1969 (Corona) and (right) 2009 (Google Earth)

During the early 1990s, the construction of a new access road to the desert highway between Cairo and Aswan led to the destruction of the whole southern part of the archaeological site. This road now lies 50 m from the pyramid and is responsible for the continuous deposit of rubbish and waste on the site.

A modern cemetery surrounds the northern part of the site. It has been marked on the maps since 1906 and

has been advancing quickly toward the archaeological area over the past five years, as can be seen on satellite images (fig. 3). The construction of a mosque in 2005 led to a faster development of the cemetery toward the west and the south, and the daily circulation on the site has clearly increased.

In addition, a new gas pipeline will be built along the asphalt road in the next few months, severely threatening the southern part of the site (fig. 4).

These problems encouraged us in 2009 to start a rescue excavation and conservation project in close collaboration with the local antiquities inspectorate in order to protect this last provincial pyramid. The monument at Edfu indeed offers a final opportunity to increase our knowledge about this peculiar phenomenon, to refine the dating, and to verify our hypothesis concerning the potential existence of further related installations that had



Figure 3. Aerial views of the pyramid area in 2005 and 2009 (Google Earth)

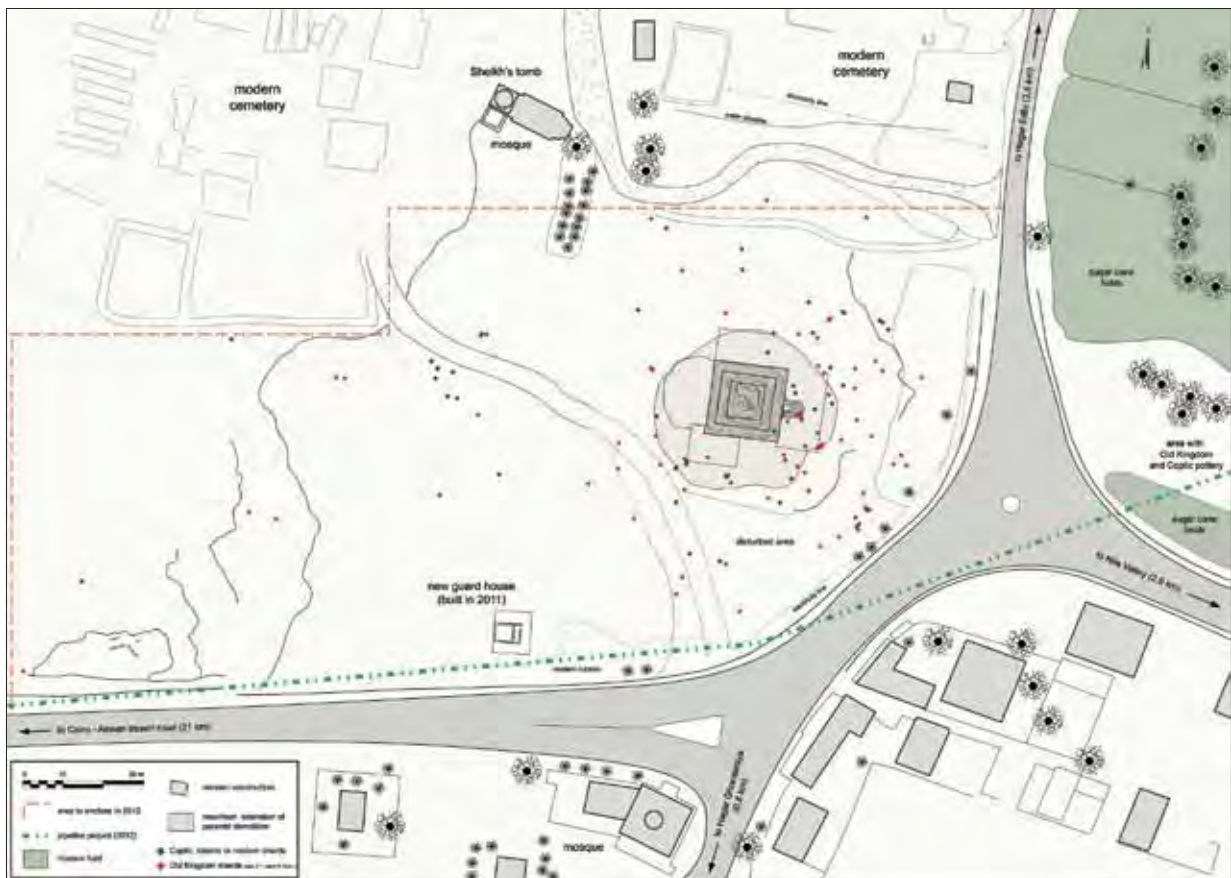


Figure 4. General map of the archaeological area

been built against the monument or in the surrounding area. This project is also closely connected to a new stage of the excavation program at Tell Edfu, which is focusing on the exploration of the Old Kingdom settlement remains and the origins of this town, which certainly dates back to the same time as the pyramid. The presence of a provincial pyramid south of Edfu indicates that the town already played an important role on a regional and national level at the end of the Third Dynasty.

In 2010 a preliminary survey was conducted in order to establish a first contact and to mark our presence on site, as well as to evaluate the state of preservation of the superstructure. A general map was drawn in order to define and to protect more clearly the archaeological zone (fig. 4), now reduced to an area stretching 220 m east–west and 120 m north–south (about 6 acres).

The sand accumulation and the absence of structural remains apart from the pyramid itself permitted a systematic collection of pottery fragments in the whole area to acquire more information about its precise date. Due to the presence of only a few sherds on the surface, it was possible to systematically register their position with a total station (fig. 4).

Sixty-eight percent of the collected surface pottery dates to the Old Kingdom. The identified shapes, mainly large storage vessels or beer jars and fine wares, clearly belong to the tradition of the Third Dynasty and the early Fourth Dynasty. There is no sign of any other pharaonic-period activity, particularly from the Middle or the New Kingdom, an observation that underlines the limited duration of activity at this monument. The remaining 32 percent of sherds date exclusively to the late Coptic and early Islamic periods, when the first plundering of stone material seems to have occurred.

Another important result of the systematic pottery collection is that more than 60 percent of the Old Kingdom sherds were found along the eastern part of the pyramid, which

indicates that this was the side where the cult activities took place and where remnants of simple installations such as an offering area or chapel might have been situated.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL & ARCHITECTURAL RESULTS FROM THE 2011 SEASON

A first season of fieldwork was carried out during fall 2011 with the help of Aurelie Schenk and a team of forty Egyptian workers from Luxor and Edfu. In less than three weeks, it was possible to expose the nearly complete pyramid superstructure, which previously

resembled a kind of tumulus about 30 m in diameter being covered by a thick layer of sand, smaller stone blocks, and demolition debris (fig. 5). Extensive cleaning was also carried out in the entire archaeological area in order to remove the modern rubbish.

The cleaning operation of the pyramid itself revealed the original appearance of the monument (figs. 6–7), much to the astonishment of the locals, who were ignorant of the existence of a pharaonic monument here. Indeed, during the 2010 survey, the collective memory of the local inhabitants still testified to the presence of a sheikh's tomb here, the burial of a local Muslim

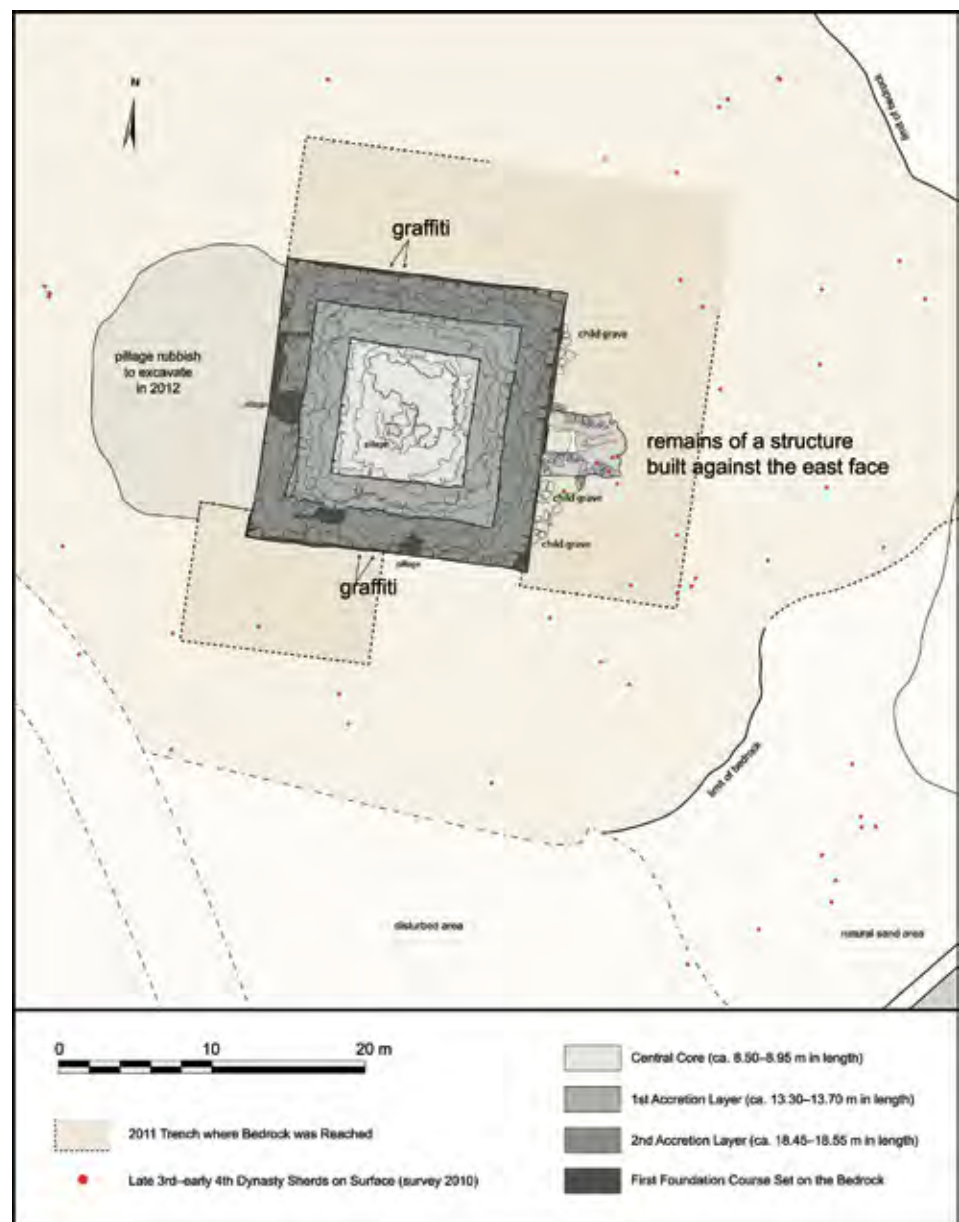


Figure 5. Detailed plan of the pyramid in 2011



Figure 6. Southwest corner of the pyramid (far left) in 2010, before cleaning, and (left) in 2011, after cleaning



Figure 7. North face of the pyramid (right) in 2010, before cleaning, and (far right) in 2011, after cleaning



saint, which is a factor that has certainly contributed to the encroachment of the modern cemetery toward the pyramid. Some child burials identified along the southern and eastern faces of the monument seem also to correspond to its relatively recent assignment as a holy place.

The southern and especially northern sides of the pyramid are the best-preserved areas, with six to seven courses of blocks still visible on the external face. The western and southern sides of the monument as well as its top have seen seven isolated attempts of pillaging; the western face is the most damaged one, and the large pile of rubble on that side could not be removed completely during our first season of work.

The pyramid had been built directly on the sandstone bedrock and was made exclusively of sandstone and some calcareous sandstone blocks. The structure is orientated toward the cardinal points by its faces. It was originally made of three steps, two inclined layers leaning against a central core. Its internal structure and the use of the “accretion layer” technique can be easily seen on

the northern and southern faces (fig. 8). The central core (fig. 9) measures 8.50–8.95 m at its current level of preservation, and the first layer has a length of 13.30–13.70 m. Along its base the monument measures about 18.45–18.50 m, which corresponds to about 35 royal cubits. Except for the case of Seila in the Fayyum Oasis (31 m in length), the other step pyramids show very similar dimensions, which lie between 18.30 m (Zawiet al-Meitin), 18.40 m (Elephantine and Nagada), and 18.60 m (al-Kula and Sinki).

The height reaches only 4.90 m today mainly because of the reuse of the blocks for private construction. With a length of approximately 50 cubits in the diagonal direction through the center, a simple geometrical link between triangles can be used for evaluating the original elevation of the monument, which can be estimated to have been about 13 m (25 royal cubits). This means only less than a third of it remains today.

The dismantling of the structure is difficult to date, but the presence of post-seventh-century AD pottery sherds in the lowest levels of demolition suggests that the dismantling occurred at

a relatively late phase of the life of the monument.

Furthermore, some post-Old Kingdom hieroglyphic graffiti have been found on the northern and southern lower courses (figs. 10 and 11), and



Figure 8. Northeast corner of the pyramid showing the two accretion layers



Figure 9. Aurelie Schenk cleaning the top of the central core



Figure 10. South face elevation and graffiti position

this may indicate that the monument had kept its symbolic form and significance throughout a large part of the pharaonic period.

The construction itself reflects a certain care and a real expertise in the mastery of stone construction, especially for the adjustment of the most important blocks. The stones had been cut roughly into shape by percussion without any further refinement, but they are all relatively similar in size with standardized dimensions of 65–80 cm in length for the upper part. In the lower part, some blocks regularly exceed 1.0–1.5 m in length and more than 2 m for some large slabs of very hard brown sandstone, which was mainly used for the external courses and for producing a solid foundation layer. The blocks are held together by a large amount of clay mortar that contains a considerable amount of river sand.

Five to six varieties of local sandstone can be distinguished and must have been acquired in the close vicinity of the monument. The quarry area has been discovered only 800 m north of the site during an extensive preliminary survey conducted on some of the small hills that mark the desert edge in this area (fig. 12). A more systematic exploration and mapping of this extraction site will be undertaken next season in order to gain more information about the chronology, the organization of the construction work, and the supply of the raw materials for the pyramid.

The most significant detail that appeared this season concerns the clear evidence of an additional installation on the eastern side, maybe an offering place (fig. 13). The 2010 survey revealed the largest concentration of pottery sherds here, and a diagnostic trench was dug in 2011, exposing the remains of two parallel walls surrounding a square negative left by the removal of a kind of structure that was regular in shape and measuring almost 1 sq. m. In all likelihood it marks the position of a totally dismantled installation, and many pieces of fine white limestone (a non-local stone!) have been found in this area.

This could highlight the nature of this construction that had been



Figure 11. Hratch Papazian producing a facsimile of the southern graffiti



Figure 12. Quarry area with the pyramid in the background

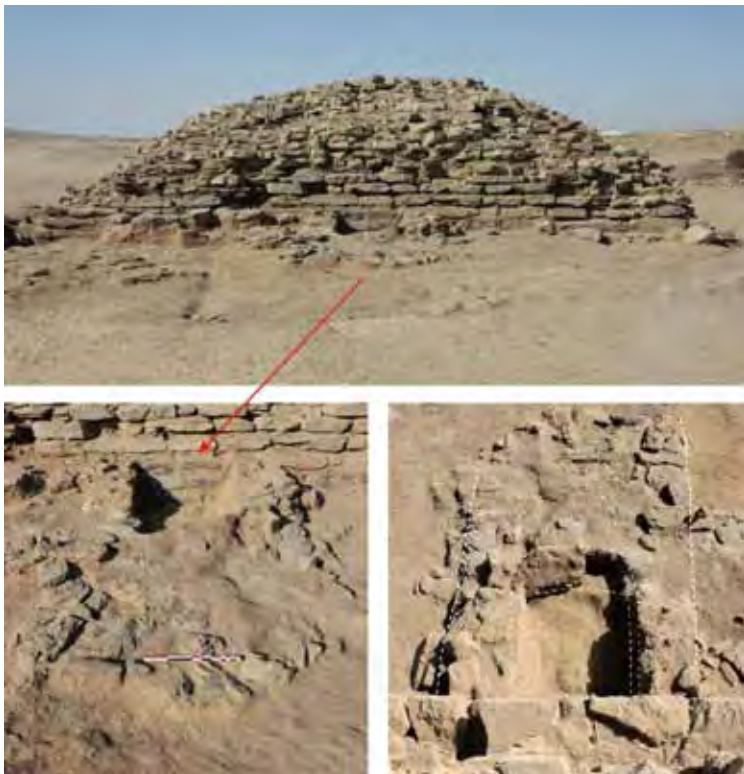


Figure 13. Remains of an installation built against the pyramid's eastern face



Figure 14. Sign in Arabic at the northern entrance of the site



Figure 15. New shed for the guards, built in 2011

originally erected on the bedrock and placed against the center of the eastern face of the pyramid, which under the reign of Snofru became the typical location for the funerary temple attached to the traditional pyramids.

THE SITE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM FOR 2012

The Edfu Pyramid Project is primarily a rescue program, with the principal aim to save and preserve the last monument of this kind from the development of the modern village, the modern cemetery progression, and the construction of a new gas pipeline.

The cleaning operations carried out this year were mainly a first step in this direction, and the future work will focus more on the conservation aspects. In order to protect the site from more looting attempts and to prohibit the daily circulation of people and vehicles through the archaeological area, two temporary panels in Arabic have been placed near the pyramid (fig. 14). We also built a small house last season (fig. 15) for maintaining guards on the site in order to stop the continuous dumping

of trash and to control the work and the traffic during the construction of the planned pipeline.

If funding allows it, the consolidation and conservation of the superstructure will also be started next season, focusing on a minimalist and non-invasive restoration (patching the looting attempts, strengthening the external faces, restoring and maybe reconstructing the “accretion layer” technique). To reduce some problems of water infiltration, particularly harmful for a sandstone construction built on sandstone bedrock, sanitation work and the replacement of some water pipes will be necessary.

The panels will be replaced next season with more complete information boards in both Arabic and English, to provide information for the local inhabitants about their heritage with a proposal to open this site for sightseeing from 2013 onward.

The ultimate goal is to enclose the area, without disfiguring the entire site, with a light but solid barrier providing a sufficiently clear limit to avoid the risks of traffic, illegal dumping, and plundering in the long term.

NOTES

¹ The Edfu Pyramid Project is a side project of the Tell Edfu Project, directed by Dr. Nadine Moeller and funded by a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grant. Support from the Oriental Institute this season permitted us to bring together a team of workers sufficient to ensure the first step of this project. We would like to thank all the US and Egyptian members of the Tell Edfu Project, particularly the participation of Aurelie Schenk (archaeologist, Roman Museum of Avenches, Switzerland). We sincerely thank our inspectors Osama Ismail Ahmed and Alaa Ahmed Kamal for their excellent collaboration. Special thanks go to the Chicago House team and Ray Johnson for their generous hospitality and precious support.

A special award from the ARCE Antiquities Endowment Fund and USAID and the outcome of several ongoing grant applications could help us to continue this site-management project and to support the limited cost of the conservation work. Of course, this project is still available for adoption!

² N. Swelim, “Reconstructions of the Layer Monument of *snfrw* at Seila,” pp. 39-56 of *Echoes of Eternity: Studies Presented to Gaballah Aly Gaballah*, edited by Ola El-Aguizy and Mohamed Sherif Ali (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010).

³ S. Seidlmayer, “Town and State in the Early Old Kingdom: A View from Elephantine,” pp. 108-27 of *Aspects of Early Egypt*, edited by A. Jeffrey Spencer (London: British Museum Press, 1996).

⁴ G. Dreyer and W. Kaiser, “Zu den kleinen Stufenpyramiden Ober- und Mittelägyptens,” *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 36 (1980): 43-59.

This year's December Volunteer Day was a time of special recognition and festivities as we celebrated the forty-fifth anniversary of the Volunteer Program. This highly anticipated program featured a presentation from Chief Curator Jack Green, the introduction of the new volunteer recruits in the class of 2011, and the Volunteer Recognition Awards Ceremony.

The morning program began with a presentation from Jack Green on "The Oriental Institute: First Impressions and Future Direction." His talk was an insightful commentary highlighting his vision and goals for the Museum. He shared with us many of the exciting projects and plans that are already underway.

Immediately after Jack's presentation, we were delighted to introduce the twenty-three new volunteers who joined as the class of 2011:

Mervyn Barenie	Alicia French	Srila Nyak
Michael Begun	Alfia Lambert	Hamdy Oraby
Melissa Bellah	Kate Lieber	Nancy Rose
David Berry	Debra Mack	Wahied Helmy Shahat
Daniel Bloom	Donald McVicker	Jasna Spahovic
Aparupa Chakravarti	Karina Meza	Dee Spiech
Yulia Chmelenko	Marilyn Murray	Robert Treatte
Ginny Clark		James Wolfgang

After the introduction of the class of 2011, we continued with the Recognition Ceremony. This year the following seventeen people were recognized for their years of volunteer service to the Oriental Institute.

5 YEARS

John DeWerd
Alexander Elwyn
Barbara Friedell
Morton Jaffe
Sherry McGuire
Ljubica Sarenac
Mae Simon
Ronald Wideman

10 YEARS

Andrew Buncis
Joan Curry
Lo Luong Lo
Toni Smith

25 YEARS

Margaret Foorman

30 YEARS

Stephen Ritzel

40 YEARS

Peggy Grant

45 YEARS

Carlotta Maher
O. J. Sopranos

VOLUNTEER DAY

December 5, 2011

The ceremony also celebrated an important milestone in the history of the Volunteer Program, the forty-fifth anniversary of its founding.

The recognition ceremony culminated with a special presentation by Gil Stein, director of the Oriental Institute, who offered his congratulations to all the volunteers and presented a letter of recognition written by Chicago mayor Rahm Emanuel to honor Carlotta Maher and O. J. Sopranos on the occasion of their forty-five years of service to the Oriental Institute. Both Carlotta and O. J. were members of the first Oriental Institute volunteer training class founded by Carolyn Livingood in 1966.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, faculty, staff, and volunteers all gathered at the Quadrangle Club for a champagne toast and festive holiday lunch as guests of Gil Stein.

Oriental Institute volunteers are a vital part of the Institute's community, and we thank them for their dedication and friendship throughout the years and for their many contributions past, present, and future. Congratulations to the 2011 Volunteer Recognition Award recipients and to the program for its milestone anniversary celebration!



Gil Stein reads a special letter of recognition written by Chicago mayor Rahm Emanuel to honor Carlotta Maher and O. J. Sopranos on the occasion of their forty-five years of service to the Oriental Institute



2012 Volunteer Recognition Award recipients, from left to right, Stephen Ritzel, Ljubica Sarenac, O. J. Sopranos, Carlotta Maher, Joan Curry, Peggy Grant, Margaret Foorman, Mae Simon, Mort Jaffe, and Ronald Wideman (all photos by Craig Tews)



Gil Stein joins Volunteer Coordinators past and present to celebrate the 45th anniversary of the Volunteer Program.

Left to right: Terry Friedman, Gil Stein, Carlotta Maher, Peggy Grant, Janet Helman, and Cathy Dueñas

TOUR REPORT

VOYAGE THROUGH THE RED SEA

NOVEMBER 6-22, 2011

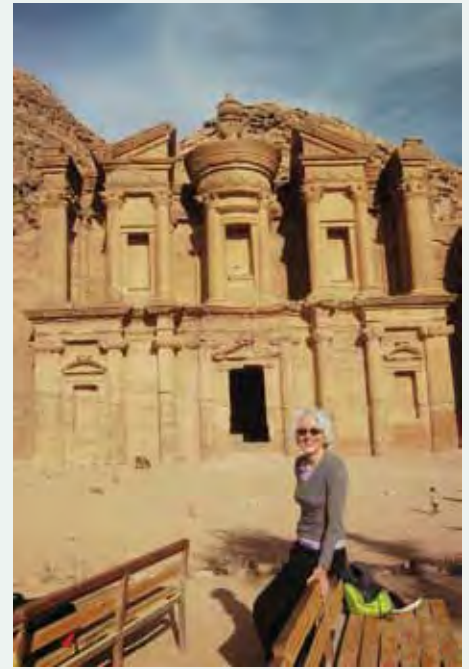
Emily Teeter

A small and very dedicated group, considering the political fallout of the Arab Spring, met in Jordan to begin our journey. We spent four days visiting Amman, seeing Petra by night and again by day, and driving through the sands of Wadi Rum National Park before embarking on the very comfortable *Clipper Odyssey* in Aqaba. From there, it was off to Sinai for Saint Katherine's Monastery. The following days in Luxor were a blur of activity. First we visited Karnak, where John Shearman, associate director of the American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE) for Luxor, showed us their work at the site, especially their conservation work at the Khonsu Temple including the normally locked bark chapels and the impressive ARCE conservation laboratory. The next morning, after most of us went hot-air ballooning over the west bank, we met J. Brett McClain of our Epigraphic Survey at the Small Temple at Medinet Habu, where he told us about the work of the Institute in Thebes over the last eighty-five years. We continued to Deir el-Bahari, where we were greeted by Monika Dolinska (director of the Thutmose III project), and Aleksandra Hallman, a graduate student in Egyptology who is writing her dissertation here at the Oriental

Institute. They escorted us to the third terrace, where we met Franck Pawlicki, who gave us access to the normally closed sanctuary of the temple. Our last stop was the Valley of the Kings, where we had the tombs of Ramesses VI and Tutankhamun completely to ourselves. That evening, we stopped by Chicago House for a brief tour before we headed to the Old Winter Palace for a beautiful dinner in the garden, joined by John Shearman and Brett McClain.

After a day at sea packed with lectures, we arrived at Suakin, once the main port of Sudan. The town is built on an island connected to the shore by a narrow isthmus. Today the coral-block buildings lie in total ruins. We picked our way through the town, noting the rusted Ottoman cannons that still stand before the main government buildings. The small museum was surprisingly good, featuring ethnographic material, photos of the town, and a very interesting tribute to Osman Digna, the leader of the Mahdi armies on the Red Sea. We were charmed by the folkloric group that appeared in front of the museum — the men were dressed in soccer shirts and raffia skirts, with huge horns bound to their heads, and their ankles ornamented with rattles made of small crushed cans. They stomped to create a rhythmic jingle that contrasted with the police whistles they blew. It was really an infectious beat, and even some of the "oh, I never dance" people joined the conga line. Fun, and a completely different experience.

As we approached Eritrea, the State Department warned us not to land due



Oriental Institute Member Elizabeth Holly at the Deir in Petra

to recent tension. So in the middle of the night, we reversed course and headed back to friendly Egypt, where we chartered a plane to fly from Sharim el-Sheikh to Cairo. This was only days before the elections and a period of conflict downtown, but at Giza, only kilometers away, there was absolutely no sign of unrest. So, in the best spirit of expedition travel, we had unexpected tours of the Cairo area before heading for home. It was a great trip and a real adventure.

Join the Members' Travel Program for a fascinating tour through Jordan, Lebanon, and Egypt on our Treasures of Legendary Empires voyage in October 2012. Please contact Membership Department at omembership@uchicago.edu or (773) 834-9777 with any questions.



Left: Members of the tour in the thick of the dancers in Suakin. Left of center, Expedition Director Jeff Gneiser; center, Lewis Gruber

Right: Brett McClain with Emily, discussing the work of the Epigraphic Survey at the Small Temple at Medinet Habu



EDUCATION PROGRAMS REGISTRATION FORM

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Please enroll me in the following Public Programs:

	MEMBERS	NON-MEMBERS	TOTAL
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<input type="checkbox"/> Empires and Art of the Ancient Silk Roads	_____ \$175	_____ \$225	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Cuneiform by Mail	_____ \$255	_____ \$295	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Uncorking the Past	_____ \$20	_____ \$25	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Be an Ancient Egyptian Artist <i>To register, call Lill Street Art Center at (773) 769-4226</i>			

GRAND TOTAL _____

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I would like to become a member of the Oriental Institute. Enclosed is \$50 for an Annual Membership; \$40 for seniors, UC/UCH Faculty & Staff, and National Associates (persons living more than 100 miles from Chicago within the USA). **Please send a separate check for membership.**

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Signature: _____

Name: _____

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Cut out and send form to: The Oriental Institute Education Office, 1155 East 58th Street, Chicago, IL 60637, or register online at oi.uchicago.edu/calendar.

REGISTRATION AND REFUND POLICY

For multi-session on-campus courses, a full refund will be granted to anyone who notifies us about his/her cancellation before the first class meeting. Those who cancel after the first class meeting, but before the second class meeting, will receive a full refund minus a \$50 cancellation fee. After the second class meeting, no refunds will be granted unless the course is canceled by the Education Office. Failure to attend a class does not entitle a registrant to a refund. Some courses require a small materials fee to be paid at the first class meeting.

For single-session programs, where tickets are sold by the Oriental Institute, no refunds will be granted, but if the Education Office is notified of cancellation at least 48 hours before the program begins, a credit voucher will be issued for the full amount. With less than 48 hours notice, a voucher for the full amount, less a \$5 cancellation fee, will be issued. Credit vouchers can be used for any Oriental Institute single-session program for one full calendar year from the date on the voucher. Tickets sold by other organizations for programs held at the Oriental Institute are subject to the cancellation policies of the organization selling the tickets. Only those registered for classes may attend them. The Education Office reserves the right to refuse to retain any student in any class at any time.

SPRING BREAK DAY CAMP FOR CHILDREN

BE AN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ARTIST

Monday, April 2–Friday, April 6

9:00 AM–3:30 PM

Lill Street Art Center

4401 North Ravenswood

Chicago, IL 60640

Calling all Junior Egyptologists! Children ages 8–12 are invited to explore the spectacular arts of ancient Egypt during spring break at this one-week day camp co-sponsored by

the Oriental Institute and the Lill Street Art Center. Let the Egyptian gods inspire you as you create paintings and jewelry like those found in the palaces and tombs of ancient pharaohs. Try your hand at Egyptian metalworking, pottery, and more. The camp, which takes place at the Lill Street Art Center, also includes a one-day visit to the Oriental Institute Museum's Egyptian Gallery.

FEE: \$330. All materials, supplies, and round-trip bus transportation to the Oriental Institute included. Pre-registration required. Call the Lill Street Art Center at (773) 769-4226.

THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE WELCOMES ...



JASON BARCUS

Jason Barcus joined the Oriental Institute in January as the new visitor services and security manager. He fills the role previously held by Adam Lubin, who is now the financial management assistant. Jason is no stranger to the University of Chicago campus, as he worked the previous 4.5 years as an event services coordinator for the Office of the Reynolds Club and Student Activities in their Event Services office. Jason is in charge of the visitor services front-desk attendants, as well as the gallery attendants, and is responsible for the overall security of the Oriental Institute. He is a huge sports fan and spends much of his free time keeping track of the Chicago Bears, Blackhawks, San Antonio Spurs, and Marquette Golden Eagles.

You can reach Jason by e-mail at jbarcus@uchicago.edu, or by phone at (773) 702-5112.



TRACY TAJBL

Tracy Tajbl joins the Oriental Institute as director of development. Tracy brings a national fundraising profile that includes more than seventeen years of leadership experience in development, institutional advancement, and non-profit management. She joins the Oriental Institute after working in the orchestra world for the past four years, serving on the staff of the Baltimore Symphony and the Colorado Symphony. In recent years, Tracy has served as a senior management consultant with Community Counselling Service Co., Inc. (CCS), Campbell and Company, and Graham-Pelton. During her consulting career, she worked with a variety of non-profit clients, including the Nature Conservancy Worldwide Office, Arena Stage (Washington, D.C.), and the CEC/Seabee Historical Foundation. Previously, Tracy directed the Nashville Symphony's highly successful capital and endowment campaign to fund construction of Schermerhorn Symphony Center.

"I am delighted to join the Oriental Institute and the University of Chicago," Tracy commented. "I am impressed with the range of projects the Institute has undertaken to promote understanding of the ancient Near East. The passion that our Visiting Committee, volunteers, and donors have for this unique resource is an inspiration." Tracy graduated from Syracuse University with a degree in art history and comments, "I have always wanted to work in a museum, so the Oriental Institute position is a great match for my skills and passion for arts and culture." Raised in Chicago's northwest suburbs, Tracy is pleased to return to Chicago from the Denver area and is excited about the myriad educational and cultural opportunities that the Oriental Institute and the University offer, along with the numerous resources of the city.

You can reach Tracy by e-mail at ttajbl@uchicago.edu, or by phone at (773) 702-5062.

SPRING 2012 CALENDAR

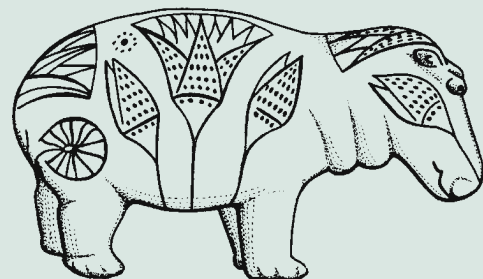
Unless otherwise noted, all programs take place at the Oriental Institute. All programs subject to change.

APRIL

- 1 | SUNDAY** **Cleopatra: Destiny's Queen**
Film
2:00 PM
See page 18 for details
- 2 | MONDAY** **Be an Ancient Egyptian Artist**
Spring Break Day Camp
9:00 AM
See page 12 for details
- 7 | SATURDAY** **Matters of Life, Death, and Afterlife: Burial Customs and Beliefs in the Ancient Middle East**
Adult Education Course
10:00 AM
See page 16 for details
- 11 | WEDNESDAY** **Empires and Art of the Ancient Silk Roads**
Adult Education Course
7:00 PM
See page 16 for details
- 14 | SATURDAY** **Día del Niño**
Family Event
11:00 AM
University of Illinois Pavilion
See page 18 for details
- 15 | SUNDAY** **The Ten Commandments**
Film
2:00 PM
See page 20 for details
- 22 | SUNDAY** **The Egyptian**
Film
2:00 PM
See page 20 for details
- 25 | WEDNESDAY** **Picturing the Past through Photography**
Gallery Tour
12:15 PM
See page 16 for details
- 29 | SUNDAY** **300**
Film
2:00 PM
See page 20 for details

MAY

- 2 | WEDNESDAY** **America Digs Iran**
Members' Lecture
7:00 PM
See page 15 for details
- 6 | SUNDAY** **Children of the Sun**
Film
2:00 PM
See page 18 for details
- 13 | SUNDAY** **Stones and Bones: The Birth of Archaeology**
Film
2:00 PM
See page 18 for details
- 18 | FRIDAY** **Uncorking the Past**
Gallery Tour and Wine Tasting
6:00 PM
See page 26 for details
- 20 | SUNDAY** **Noah's Flood in Context: Legend or History?**
Film
2:00 PM
See page 18 for details
- 21 | MONDAY** **Cuneiform by Mail**
Correspondence Course
See page 19 for details
- 29 | TUESDAY** **Members' Exclusive Suq Sale**
See page 21 for details



SPRING 2012 CALENDAR

JUNE

2 | SATURDAY

Suq Rug Sale

See page 21 for details

3 | SUNDAY

Pioneer to the Past: The Life and Times of James Henry Breasted

Film Series

2:00 PM

See page 18 for details

6 | WEDNESDAY

A Year in Transition

Members' Lecture

7:00 PM

See page 15 for details

10 | SUNDAY

Egypt's Golden Empire, Part 1

Film Series

2:00 PM

See page 18 for details

17 | SUNDAY

Egypt's Golden Empire, Part 2

Film Series

2:00 PM

See page 18 for details

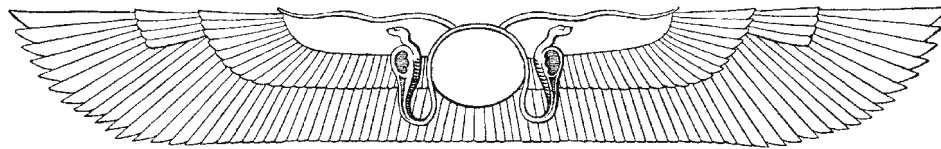
24 | SUNDAY

Mesopotamia: I Have Conquered the River

Film

2:00 PM

See page 18 for details



MEMBERS' LECTURES

The Oriental Institute Members' Lecture Series is a unique opportunity for supporters of the Oriental Institute to learn about the ancient Middle East from world-renowned scholars. Unless specified below, all lectures are held the first Wednesday of every month, October through June, at 7:00 PM in Breasted Hall at the Oriental Institute. These lectures are made possible by the generous support of Oriental Institute Members.

AMERICA DIGS IRAN

Ali Mousavi

Visiting Professor of Iranian Archaeology,
University of California, Los Angeles

May 2, 2012

"America Digs Iran" considers the role of the United States in the archaeological exploration of Iran from 1931 to 1979. This pivotal period in American-Iranian cultural relations has never before been examined from the vantage point of the archaeological record. Objects excavated in Iran, which came to America during this period, not only helped to shape the collecting patterns of various museums, but also had a major impact on the development of Iranian studies at universities and colleges across the United States.

A YEAR IN TRANSITION: CHICAGO HOUSE AND THE EGYPTIAN MINISTRY OF ANTIQUITIES IN POST-REVOLUTION EGYPT

W. Raymond Johnson

Director, The Oriental Institute Epigraphic Survey,
Chicago House, Luxor

June 6, 2012

The Epigraphic Survey, based at Chicago House in Luxor, Egypt, has been documenting the pharaonic monuments in the Luxor area for publication since 1924. In response to changing conditions in Egypt, Chicago House now sponsors conservation and restoration programs as well. Ray Johnson reports on the preservation activities at Chicago House during, and after, the Egyptian Revolution of 2011. Dr. Johnson, who has worked in Luxor since 1978, discusses the implications for current and future archaeological work in Egypt under the newly created Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities.

SPRING ADULT EDUCATION COURSES

The following courses are co-sponsored by the Graham School of General Studies. Each course provides Teacher Recertification CPDUs from the Illinois State Board of Education, and each counts as an elective for the Graham School's non-credit certificate in Arabic Language and Cultures. For more information, call Public Education at (773) 702-9507.

MATTERS OF LIFE, DEATH, AND AFTERLIFE: BURIAL CUSTOMS AND BELIEFS IN THE ANCIENT MIDDLE EAST

Virginia Herrmann & Vincent J. vanExel

Saturdays, April 7 to June 2

10:00 AM–12:00 NOON

Oriental Institute

In the ancient world, death was not the great equalizer. How you were buried and your lot in the afterlife depended on your status and achievements. In this course, we explore how the ancient cultures of the Middle East prepared to meet their ends — their mortuary customs, beliefs, and burial sites that ranged from simple graves to the monumental wonders of the ancient world. Examining cases as varied as the pharaoh's pyramids, Jericho's plastered skulls, and the Royal Tombs of Ur, you'll be fascinated by the many ways ancient people coped with life's inevitable end.

INSTRUCTORS: Virginia Herrmann recently received a PhD in Near Eastern archaeology from the University of Chicago's Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations. She studies mortuary cult in the Levant, Anatolia, and the Assyrian empires and has excavated in Turkey, Syria, Israel, and Egypt. Vincent J. vanExel is a graduate student in Near Eastern archaeology in the University of Chicago's Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations. He has excavated extensively in Syria and Turkey.

CPDUs: 16

REQUIRED TEXT: *Performing Death: Social Analyses of Funerary Traditions in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean*, Nicola Laneri, editor. Oriental Institute Seminars 3. Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 2007.

RECOMMENDED TEXT: *Death and the Afterlife in Ancient Egypt*, by John H. Taylor. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001.

The class meets at the Oriental Institute on Saturday mornings from 10 AM to 12 NOON beginning April 7 and continuing through June 2. There will be no class on Saturday, May 26. Pre-registration is required.

EMPIRES AND ART OF THE ANCIENT SILK ROADS

Kaveh Hemmat

Wednesdays, April 11 to May 16

7:00–9:00 PM

Oriental Institute

The Silk Roads were a system of trade routes whose age and size are unmatched in history. At their peak, they connected Rome, Persia, India, and China as parts of the first global economic system. Great ideas, inventions, and traditions that shaped the world — chivalry, belief in the apocalypse, guns and gunpowder, major world religions — all traveled along the Silk Roads. Learn about the people who made the trade happen and the empires that ruled Asia's vast interior and discover a cultural and artistic tradition stretching back more than two thousand years that still influences us today.

INSTRUCTOR: Kaveh Hemmat is a PhD candidate in Islamic civilization in the University of Chicago's Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations. He studies relations between the Middle East and China during the Middle Ages.

CPDUs: 12

REQUIRED TEXT: *Silk Road: Monks, Warriors, and Merchants*, by Luce Boulnois, translated by Helen Loveday. New York: Norton, 2005.

This class meets at the Oriental Institute from 7 PM to 9 PM on Wednesday evenings beginning April 11 and continuing through May 16. Pre-registration required.



GALLERY TOUR

PICTURING THE PAST THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY

John Larson

Wednesday, April 25

12:15 PM

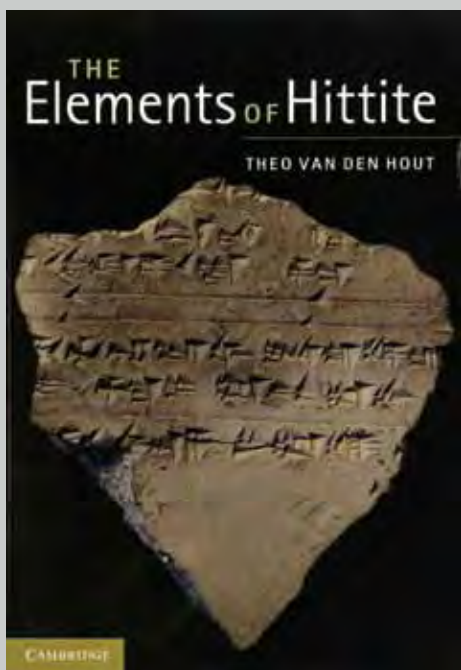
FREE

Archaeology is inherently a destructive process. Join John Larson, museum archivist and co-curator of *Picturing the Past: Imaging and Imagining the Ancient Middle East*, for a unique tour featuring the historical role photography has played in recording archaeological expeditions and discoveries. Also learn about the Oriental Institute's Photographic Archives, which contain more than 100,000 images ranging from the 1890s to the present day.

NEW PUBLICATION

THE ELEMENTS OF HITTITE

By Theo van den Hout



Hittite is the earliest attested Indo-European language and was the language of a state that flourished in Asia Minor in the second millennium BC. This exciting and accessible new introductory course, which can be used in both trimester and semester systems, offers in ten lessons a comprehensive introduction to the grammar of the Hittite language with ample exercises both in transliteration and in cuneiform. It includes a separate section of paradigms, and a grammatical index as well as a list of every cuneiform sign used in the book. A full glossary can be found at the back. The book has been designed so that the cuneiform is not essential and can be left out of any course if so desired. The introduction provides the necessary cultural and historical background, with suggestions for further reading, and explains the principles of the cuneiform writing system.

Purchase this autographed book in the Oriental Institute gift shop, the Suq, on your next visit!



JOIN/RENEW TODAY!

I would like to become a Member of the Oriental Institute / Please renew my Oriental Institute membership

Name: _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Daytime phone: _____ E-mail: _____

- \$50 Annual Member
- \$40 Senior Member (65+)
- \$40 National Associate (US residents 100 miles from Chicago)
- \$75 Overseas Member (residents outside the US)
- \$100 Supporting Associate
- \$500 Sponsoring Associate
- \$1,000 James Henry Breasted Society

I prefer to pay by Check (payable to the Oriental Institute) MasterCard Visa

Account number: _____ Exp. date: _____ 3-digit security code: _____

Signature: _____

You can also renew by calling (773) 834-9777 or visiting us online at oi.uchicago.edu/getinvolved/

Questions? E-mail or call the Membership Office: oi-membership@uchicago.edu / (773) 834-9777

Cut out and send form to: The Oriental Institute Membership Office, 1155 East 58th Street, Chicago, IL 60637

SUNDAY FILMS

Each Sunday afternoon, enjoy the best in documentary and feature films on the ancient Near East at the Oriental Institute. Films begin at 2:00 PM, and running times range from 30 to 50 minutes unless otherwise noted. Except where noted, admission is free. Following the films, museum docents will be available in the galleries to answer questions about our exhibits.

April 1 *Cleopatra: Destiny's Queen* (1994)

This documentary from the A&E Biography series combines rare footage with research material and exclusive interviews to present a biographical portrait of Cleopatra that strives to separate myth from fact.

April 8 Easter Sunday. No film showing.

Special Film Series: Hollywood Pictures the Past.
Admission \$3, payable at door. Free for Oriental Institute Members (see p. 20 for more information)

April 15 *The Ten Commandments* (1923) Silent film. 137 min.

April 22 *The Egyptian* (1954) 139 min.

April 29 *300* (2006) 117 min.

May 6 *Children of the Sun* (2001)

The total solar eclipse that took place in Iran in 1999 inspired Mansoor Saboori, an Iranian filmmaker then living in Chicago, to return home and explore the meaning of the sun in both contemporary and ancient Iranian culture. The documentary she produced contains extraordinary views of modern and ancient sites as well as fascinating commentary by University of Chicago scholars, including several from the Oriental Institute.

May 13 *Stones and Bones: The Birth of Archaeology* (2000)

In the last two and a half centuries, archaeologists have changed the basic understanding of time and human existence. This intriguing film from the Lost Worlds: The Story of Archaeology series looks at the birth of modern archaeology — the unearthing of the ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum. It continues with early excavations in Egypt and England; the classification of the Stone, Bronze, and Iron Ages; discovery of cave paintings in Spain and France; and Mary Leakey's momentous finds in Africa.

May 20 *Noah's Flood in Context: Legend or History?* (2004)

This film uses satellite imagery, declassified intelligence photos, dramatic artwork, and archival footage to consider the scientific plausibility of the Old Testament story of Noah.

May 27 Memorial Day weekend. No film showing.

June 3 *Pioneer to the Past: The Life and Times of James Henry Breasted* (2004)

Part of WTTW's Chicago Stories series, this film presents Chicago-area native James Henry Breasted, founder of the Oriental Institute. Arriving at the University of Chicago in the 1890s as the first American professor of Egyptology, Breasted's scholarly vision, entrepreneurial flair, and unbending determination helped him shape the Oriental Institute into a great academic institution that is still guided by his principles.

The next two Sundays feature *Egypt's Golden Empire* (2001), the two-part PBS series that explores ancient Egypt during its greatest age — the New Kingdom. Discover an era when art, learning, and technology were propelled to new heights, and ancient Egypt became the center of one of the first great empires in history.

This series was underwritten by Janet Johnson and Donald Whitcomb in memory of Egyptologist Frank Yurco.

June 10 *Egypt's Golden Empire, Part 1*. 90 min.

June 17 *Egypt's Golden Empire, Part 2*. 90 min.

June 24 *Mesopotamia: I Have Conquered the River* (2000)

Explore ancient Mesopotamia — today's Iraq — in a film that examines the vital role of waterways in the development of this great ancient civilization. The film features a dramatic computerized re-creation of life along the Euphrates River more than four thousand years ago.

FAMILY EVENT

DIA DEL NIÑO

Saturday, April 14

11:00 AM–4:00 PM

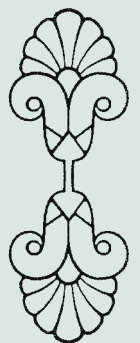
University of Illinois Pavilion

525 South Racine Avenue

Chicago, IL 60607

FREE

Join the Oriental Institute at *Día del Niño*, a celebration honoring the city's children. Sponsored by Chicago's National Museum of Mexican Art, this annual event held at the University of Illinois Pavilion showcases the bilingual services and activities offered by the city's museums. At the Oriental Institute booth, discover our bilingual gallery activity cards and computer interactives that invite you to unlock the mysteries of ancient tombs; find toys, games, and animals from long ago; and dig like an archaeologist to uncover secrets of the past. Then explore the Pavilion to enjoy interactive exhibits and take-home activities from some of Chicago's most popular museums and cultural institutions.





THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE IN THE NEWS



A selection of recent coverage of the Oriental Institute in Chicago and national media sources

ORIENTAL INSTITUTE RESEARCH PROJECTS

UChicago News

October 26, 2011

"Joint Palestinian–American Dig Near Jericho Yields Clues about Early Islamic Culture," by William Harms — (Don Whitcomb's excavation) — <http://news.uchicago.edu/article/2011/10/26/joint-palestinian-american-dig-near-jericho-yields-clues-about-early-islamic-cult>

Archaeology Magazine

January–February, 2012

"The Truth Behind the Tablets" (Persepolis Tablets), by Andrew Lawler

GENERAL COVERAGE OF THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE AND ITS ACTIVITIES

World Book and News

October 29, 2011

"Things To Do in Hyde Park: Concierge Preferred Has the Visitor's Guide to This Great Neighborhood" — <http://www.worldbookandnews.com/life-and-style/food-and-drinkbeverages/194076-Things-to-Do-in-Hyde-Park--Concierge-Preferred-Has-the-Visitors-Guide-to-This-Great-Chicago-Neighborhood.html>

Charlotte Observer

October 30, 2011

"Mummies: Here's the Wrap-Up," by John Bordsen — <http://www.charlotteobserver.com/2011/10/30/2736525/mummies-heres-the-wrapup.html>

Medill Reports, Chicago

January 19, 2012

"Egyptologists Still Digging Up the Past, Even with Uncertain Future," by David Nelson — Impact of current Egyptian political situation on scholarship with comments by Jan Johnson and Emily Teeter — <http://news.medill.northwestern.edu/chicago/news.aspx?id=198836>

The Oriental Institute is on Foursquare!

<https://foursquare.com/v/the-oriental-institute-museum/4b4e0d9ff964a520c0df26e3>

Trip Advisor Tips for Chicago, featuring the Oriental Institute

<http://www.iol.co.za/travel/world/north-america/take-flight-of-fancy-to-ny-chicago-1.1196939>

CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

CUNEIFORM BY MAIL

Monica Phillips & Tytus Mikolajczak

May 21 to September 10

Registration deadline: May 14

The cuneiform script is one of the oldest writing systems in the world. From 3100 BC to AD 75, scribes in the ancient Near East — particularly those in ancient Mesopotamia — used cuneiform to write a wide variety of documents such as law collections, letters, business records, royal inscriptions, myths and epics, and scientific and astronomical observations.

While previous Cuneiform by Mail courses introduced the cuneiform writing system using Akkadian vocabulary from the first millennium BC, this revised course provides an introduction to the Sumerian language, including grammar, vocabulary, and script. Sumerian is one of the languages for which the cuneiform script is best known and was likely created. This class gives students a rich introduction to a language that used cuneiform, to cuneiform as a script, and to the cultures that used the script.

Complete each lesson and return the exercises by e-mail, mail, or fax to your instructors, who will correct the exercises, answer any questions, and return the materials to you.

INSTRUCTORS: Monica Phillips and Tytus Mikolajczak are graduate students in cuneiform studies in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at the University of Chicago. Ms. Phillips' interests include Sumerian grammar, Mesopotamian thought and literature, and the history and culture of Mesopotamia in the second millennium BC. Mr. Mikolajczak works with the Oriental Institute's Persepolis Fortification Archive project.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Konrad Volk. *A Sumerian Reader*. Rome: Editrice Pontificio Biblico, 1999 (available for download at <http://www.scribd.com/doc/49435588/A-Sumerian-Reader-K-Volk>)
C. B. F. Walker. *Cuneiform*. Reading the Past 3. University of California Press and British Museum, 1987 (available at the Suq, the Oriental Institute gift shop)

This course begins on Monday, May 21, and continues for sixteen weeks. Registration deadline: May 4. Pre-registration is required.



SPECIAL FILM SERIES

HOLLYWOOD PICTURES THE PAST

Morag Kersel

Sundays, April 15, 22, and 29

2:00 PM

Oriental Institute Breasted Hall

Admission:

\$3 per film, payable at the door;
free for Oriental Institute Members

Hollywood has created films about the ancient world since the art of movie-making began over 100 years ago. Many of these films were created purely as entertainment, but others have turned to historical and literary sources to convey the power and complexity of life in ancient times. This series offers classic examples of both these approaches and also shows how movies about the ancient world have represented major turning points in film-making history.

Morag Kersel, an Oriental Institute research associate and assistant professor in Anthropology at DePaul University, introduces each film and answers questions following each screening. She routinely uses Hollywood representations of archaeology and ancient history in her teaching.

This program is presented in conjunction with our special exhibit *Picturing the Past: Imaging and Imagining the Ancient Middle East*.

Sunday, April 15

The Ten Commandments
(1923 silent film) 137 min.

Even the earliest films about ancient times were lavish in scope, designed to transport moviegoers to a distant place and time. These years saw the emergence of Cecil B. DeMille, the directorial giant who came to dominate the entire corpus of ancient world films for four decades.

Join us to experience DeMille's 1923 version of *The Ten Commandments*. This milestone in filmmaking featured thousands of extras, some of the most extravagant sets ever built, and research that delved into the history and customs of the period to balance dramatic effectiveness with historical accuracy. The film was also a prime example of how 1920s films paralleled ancient with modern morality: here the story of the Exodus dissolves into the world of modern sin after depicting the revelry around the golden calf.

Sunday, April 22

The Egyptian (1954) 139 min.

Films with ancient themes waned during the Depression and World War II, but competition from television, along with the availability of color and new wide-screen techniques, spurred the movie industry to revive the ancient epic in the 1950s. Join us for *The Egyptian*, which, like many successful films about ancient life, was based on a literary source — the best-selling novel *The Egyptian*, by Mika Waltari.

Set during the New Kingdom, with special emphasis on the reign of Akhenaten and Nefertiti, this film is an epic spectacle. Director Michael Curtiz and producer Daryl Zanuck spent a fortune on a “cast of thousands” and on research, with film critics and historians alike praising atmospheric sets that gave moviegoers a window into the past. Take special note of the headdress worn by the film's Nefertiti, based on the historic fourteenth-century BC bust of the queen. Then visit our *Picturing the Past* special exhibit to see the Oriental Institute's copy of the bust to compare the headdress and make-up with the portrayal of the queen in *The Egyptian*.

Sunday, April 29

300 (2006) 117 min.

Like other ancient film epics, *300* is inspired by a literary source, this time the 1998 comic-book series, or graphic novel, by Frank Miller. The novel tells the story of the 480 BC battle of Thermopylae, where three hundred Spartans lost their lives in an effort to defend Greece against an invasion by the ancient Persian army.

300 received an Eisner Award, sometimes called the Oscar of the comics industry, and one critic acclaimed the film version of *300* as “the *Citizen Kane* of cinematic graphic novels.” A “shot-for-shot” adaptation of the comic book, with post-production handled by a total of ten special-effects companies, the film has been called “breathtakingly beautiful,” “a visual masterpiece,” and an “evolution in virtual cinema.” Others have strongly criticized it for favoring visuals over characterization and for its highly controversial depiction of the ancient Persians. Join us to make your own decision.



PATHWAYS TO POWER CONFERENCE

Between Thursday, November 3, and Saturday, November 5, the Oriental Institute hosted twenty leading international researchers to compare the development of incipient complex societies across the Near East — in Egypt, the southern Levant, Syria, Anatolia, the southern Caucasus, Mesopotamia, and Iran — during the 6th–5th millennia BC. On Thursday evening, conference participants were welcomed to a Persian dinner, catered by Masouleh Restaurant, in the Robert and Deborah Aliber Persian Gallery. On Friday, guests enjoyed breakfast and the first and second sessions of papers. On Friday evening, guests dined at the Quadrangle Club. On Saturday, after breakfast and two more sessions of papers, guests traveled to dinner at Phoenix in Chinatown. The menu included steamed sea bass, shrimp with mixed vegetables, and other Chinese delicacies. A special thank-you goes out to Mariana Perlinac, Gil Stein, Yorke Rowan, and Abbas Alizadeh.



**SUQ
INVENTORY
SALE!**



May 29–
June 10

Everything in the Store
is on SALE!

Members receive 20% off
books and 30% off all
other merchandise

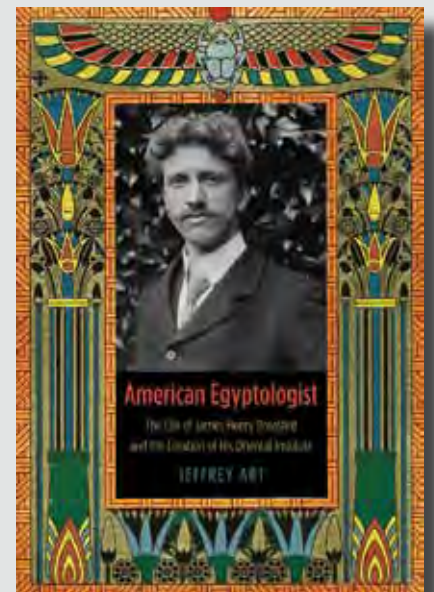
June 2–3

RUGS! RUGS! RUGS!

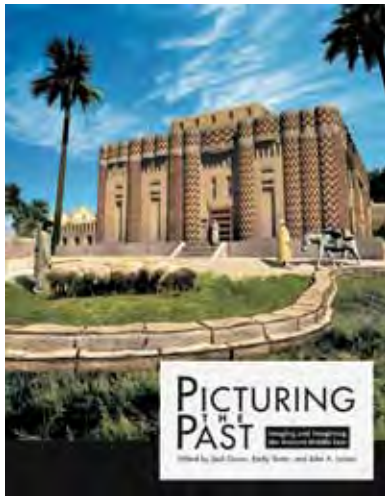
Under a large tent on the
east side of the Oriental
Institute

AMERICAN EGYPTOLOGIST BOOK SIGNING

On December 14, forty Oriental Institute members joined us for a presentation of *American Egyptologist: The Life of James Henry Breasted and the Creation of His Oriental Institute*, by author Jeffrey Abt. A presentation of the book began in Breasted Hall at 7:00 PM. After an introduction by Gil J. Stein, director of the Oriental Institute, Abt discussed James Henry Breasted as an accomplished scholar, academic entrepreneur, and talented author who brought ancient history to life and demystified ancient Egypt for the general public. Following the presentation, guests were treated to a book signing and reception, catered by Amazing Edibles, in the Edgar and Deborah Jannotta Mesopotamian Gallery. A special thank-you goes out to everyone involved who ensured the night's success.



NEW FROM THE PUBLICATIONS OFFICE



Picturing the Past: Imaging and Imagining the Ancient Middle East

Oriental Institute Museum Publications 34

Edited by Jack Green, Emily Teeter, and John A. Larson

This fully illustrated catalog of essays, descriptions, and commentary accompanies the Oriental Institute special exhibit of the same title (on exhibit February 7 through September 2, 2012), which illustrates how the architecture, sites, and artifacts of the ancient Middle East have been documented. It also examines how the publication of those images has shaped our perception of the ancient world, and how some of the more “imaginary” reconstructions have obscured our real understanding of the past.

ISBN-13: 978-1-885923-89-9

Pp. 184; 168 illustrations

\$29.95



Grammatical Case in the Languages of the Middle East and Europe

Acts of the International Colloquium
Variations, concurrence et évolution des cas dans divers domaines linguistiques,
Paris, 2-4 April 2007

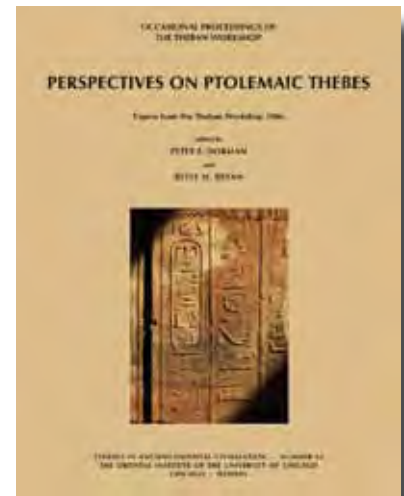
Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization 64
Edited by Michèle Fruyt, Michel Mazoyer,
and Dennis Pardee

This volume contains twenty-eight studies of various aspects of the case systems of Sumerian, Hurrian, Elamite, Eblaite, Ugaritic, Old Aramaic, Biblical Hebrew, Indo-European, the languages of the Bisitun inscription, Hittite, Armenian, Sabellic, Gothic, Latin, Icelandic, Slavic, Russian, Ouralien, Tokharian, and Etruscan. The volume concludes with a paper on future directions.

ISBN-13: 978-1-885923-84-4

Pp. viii + 420; 25 figures, 3 tables

\$45.00



Perspectives on Ptolemaic Thebes

Occasional Proceedings of the Theban Workshop

Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization 65

Edited by Peter F. Dorman and Betsy M. Bryan

The manuscript consists of seven papers presented at the Theban Workshop, 2006. Within the temporal and spatial boundaries indicated by the title, the subjects of the papers are extremely diverse, ranging from models of culture-history, to studies of specific administrative offices, a single statue type, inscriptions in a single temple, and inscriptions of a single king. Nonetheless, all the papers are significant contributions to scholarship, presenting new interpretations and conclusions. Two papers are useful preliminary reports on long-term projects. The cross-references in Arlt and Albersmeier's and in Manning's and Moyer's papers attest to value added by presentation at the workshop.

ISBN-13: 978-1-885923-85-1

Pp. xiv + 146; 77 figures, 5 tables

\$29.95

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VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: CAROLE YOSHIDA

Who makes the Oriental Institute a leader in research on the ancient Middle East? You do! The Oriental Institute has wonderful volunteers who are constantly working with the public as well as behind the scenes on a wide variety of research projects. *News & Notes* has added an ongoing special section to spotlight some of our outstanding volunteers each quarter.

CAROLE YOSHIDA has been a dedicated volunteer at the Oriental Institute since 1983, working as a behind-the-scenes volunteer, a Museum docent and Saturday afternoon co-captain, an outreach volunteer, and an all-round goodwill ambassador who is constantly trying to recruit new docents and volunteers for the program.

A native of Des Moines, Iowa, Carole attended Drake University to study pharmacology. Her professional life as a pharmacist was very demanding and detail-oriented. As an outlet to express her creativity and intellectual curiosity, Carole was drawn to art, art history, and especially travel. Her first trip to the Middle East was to Egypt and Lebanon in 1972. Her fascination with travel has taken her to the far corners of the world, but it is her love for Egypt that really seems to have been her passion. She has been to Egypt nine times over the course of the past four decades.

In 1975, Carole moved from Iowa to Chicago to work for Walgreens. She lived in Hyde Park and was thrilled to be close to the Oriental Institute. She was eager to become a volunteer, but at that time training classes were only offered on weekdays, not on weekends. That policy changed when Joan Barghusen, former head of Museum Education, made weekend training options available to those individuals who worked during the week. Carole jumped at the opportunity and began her life as an

Oriental Institute docent and volunteer.

Over the course of nearly three decades, Carole has been a valued member of the volunteer corps, serving the Institute in a variety of capacities. Despite a demanding work schedule, Carole managed to devote two to three days a week to the Oriental Institute throughout the years. If she is not giving tours to museum visitors, she is in the basement working with John Larson, the museum archivist. She is pleased that recently she was able to complete a major project. Over the past fourteen years, Carole has meticulously cleaned, remounted, and relabeled over 10,000 glass slides to be scanned and packed for archival storage. What is even more remarkable, due to the delicate nature of each slide, the entire labeling project was done on a manual typewriter!

As a Museum docent, Carole's enthusiasm and pride in the collection truly shine through. She enjoys giving tours to museum visitors of all ages and has mentored scores of new docent trainees. Carole has also developed and presented intriguing hands-on activities that engage hundreds of children and their parents at the annual "Mummies Night" each October.

When Carole is not at the Oriental Institute, she devotes her time to the South Suburban Archaeological Society and is currently serving as its programming director. Carole is responsible for finding speakers on the most current research and discoveries for the society's monthly membership meetings.

Carole takes great pride in all that she has accomplished as a docent and volunteer at the Oriental Institute and



looks forward to finding more new projects. When reflecting upon her years of service, Carole stated, "I realized that the most compelling reason for my longevity at the Oriental Institute is that studying history is like reading a great mystery story that unfolds as the 'evidence' literally emerges from the ground and perhaps solves a mystery or leaves us with another conundrum. The Museum has a lot of 'evidence,' and it is rewarding to be able to tell visitors about the ancient Near East and the wonderful Oriental Institute collection."

Do you have an inquiring mind? Enjoy meeting interesting people? Become a part of the Oriental Institute Volunteer Program. Explore the many options available at oi.uchicago.edu/getinvolved/volunteer.



THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE TRAVEL PROGRAM PRESENTS

PERSIAN SPLENDOR: JOURNEY TO ANCIENT IRAN

Escorted by Dr. Abbas Alizadeh • September 13–28, 2012

Dear Members of the Oriental Institute,

I want to invite you to join Abbas Alizadeh in exploring one of the most magnificent civilizations of the Near East. The Oriental Institute has long been a pioneer in the discovery of ancient Persia. It was the first American research institution to conduct excavations in Iran with groundbreaking work at Persepolis that revealed the impressive Apadana reliefs and an archive of administrative tablets that recorded the daily life of the Achaemenid Empire (550–330 BC). Subsequent projects over the last eight decades uncovered one of the most complete sequences of prehistoric and historic cultures in ancient Iran.

Dr. Abbas Alizadeh has been critical to the success of the Oriental Institute's research into Iranian prehistory. Combined with his intimate knowledge of local history, art, and culture, guests will be able to develop a deep appreciation of Iran's antiquity and the tremendous changes it has experienced through the centuries.



Gil J. Stein
Director, Oriental Institute
Professor of Near Eastern Archaeology

Thursday–Friday, September 13–14 | Chicago to Tehran

Our group flies KLM from Chicago to Tehran via Amsterdam to arrive in the late evening (11:10 PM). Transfer to the five-star Espinas Hotel.

Saturday, September 15 | Tehran

Today, we discover the masterpieces of Iranian artwork in Tehran's museums. Iran's wealth is visible in silk carpets and priceless crown jewels. Its diverse cultural heritage shines in its collection of calligraphy, ceramics, and sculpture. A great day for art lovers.

Sunday, September 16 | Day in Tehran with overnight train to Ahwaz

Dr. Alizadeh explains the highlights of Iranian art and culture from its humble beginnings to the beautiful artifacts of bygone empires at the Archaeological Museum. Then enjoy the traditional life in Iran at the exhibits of Golestan Palace before enjoying a classic Persian meal, Dizi, or "twice-over" soup. Tonight, we transfer to Ahwaz via train.

Monday, September 17 | Ahwaz

Explore ancient Shustar, whose 1,800-year-old mills and bridges symbolize the dramatic changes to Iran's



ancient economy that ushered in a new golden era. Lunch is served beside the Karun River, a perfect vantage point to enjoy the archaeology. Sleep at the beautiful Fajr Hotel.

Tuesday, September 18 | Ahwaz

Discover the origins of Iran's oldest civilization, Elam, with a morning visit to Susa. We enjoy a morning picnic at the Elamite sanctuary of Haft Tepe before visiting the grand ziggurat at Chogha Zanbil. Evening at leisure.

Wednesday, September 19 | Shiraz

The drive to Shiraz follows the ancient route into the highlands. The major

site is Shapur I's (AD 240–272) grand city of Bishapur. See the nearby reliefs at Tang-e Chogan, which tell the story of Iran's rivalry with ancient Rome. Then, after lunch, explore the ruins of Shapur's city. Transfer to the five-star Homa Hotel in Shiraz.

Thursday, September 20 | Shiraz

Wake up in Shiraz, the City of Roses and Nightingales. Today's program is a tour of Shiraz's cultural side, including the garden fortress of Karim Khan, the tombs of renowned poets Sa'adi and Hafez, and the Pars Museum. In between,

learn about traditional bread-making, and shop for souvenirs in the old bazaar.

Friday, September 21 | Shiraz

Ancient Persia comes alive with Persepolis, the grand monumental platform of the Achaemenid kings (550–330 BC). Learn how the Oriental Institute helped uncover the famed reliefs of the Apadana, and decipher the archives of the first Persian empire. Afterward, visit the royal tombs at Naqsh-e Rostam before lunch under the vines at Laleh Tavoos. Dinner is at Shatar Abbas, one of Shiraz's best traditional restaurants.

Saturday, September 22 | Yazd

Cyrus the Great's legacy is preserved at his royal capital, Pasargad. Visit the Pasargad Cultural Center and explore Cyrus' tomb, palaces, and royal gardens before a picnic lunch at a private orchard. Discover how Iranians made ice in the desert before arriving at the Da'ad Hotel in Yazd.

Sunday, September 23 | Yazd

Yazd was an important center of Zoroastrian religion, so we start at the fire temple and then enjoy Yazd's old quarter with a walk from the Friday Mosque through its windy streets to lunch in a traditional house. In the afternoon, we discover Cham with its 800-year-old Zoroastrian shrine and finish with the Towers of Silence, where generations of believers were exposed upon death.

Monday, September 24 | Esfahan

Today is about immersion into Iran's traditional society. Guests learn about Ziloo carpets at Meibod citadel and then discover the underground textile workshops at Mohammadiyah. After lunch, Dr. Alizadeh explains the architecture of a 1,000-year-old mosque at Na'in. Stay at the five-star Kowsar Hotel.

Tuesday, September 25 | Esfahan

In its heyday under the Safavid king Shah Abbas I (AD 1587–1629), Esfahan was considered "half the world." We start the day at Chehel Sotun, a magnificent Safavid private palace. Then we arrive at Esfahan's grand square with the royal shrine, mosque, bazaar, and government building. After lunch at the square, we visit the home of a master miniaturist painter before enjoying some of Esfahan's historic bridges.

**Wednesday, September 26 | Esfahan**

Esfahan's Jameh Mosque is a veritable encyclopedia of architecture that has been under renovation for over 1,000 years. In the afternoon, we explore Esfahan's Armenian side at the Vank Cathedral before dinner at the extravagant royal caravanserai.

Thursday, September 27 | Tehran

On the morning of the last day we visit the 700-year-old shrine at Natanz. We then continue to Kashan, an oasis in the desert with a historic bathhouse and gardens. After lunch, guests go inside the private house of one of Kashan's wealthy merchants and learn about the importance of herbal essences in Iranian cuisine and medicine. Evening in the Espinas Hotel.

Friday, September 28 | Tehran to Chicago

Your flight departs early in the morning with a stopover in Amsterdam before arriving in Chicago in the afternoon (2:10 PM), full of stories, pictures, and an unforgettable experience in Iran.

COST OF THE TOUR:

\$5,950 (land only)
\$7,450 (includes airfare from Chicago)
\$900 single supplement
(see tariff for conditions)

ON THIS VOYAGE, VIRTUALLY EVERYTHING IS INCLUDED IN THE COST OF YOUR TRIP:

- * Accommodations in 4- or 5-star hotels
- * All meals
- * All gratuities to tour escorts, guides, drivers, and porters
- * A \$600 contribution to the Oriental Institute
- * All transport within Iran and airport transfer when you use the recommended KLM flight
- * All fees for museums or sites while on tour
- * Comprehensive pre-departure guide and notes to help you get ready for your trip.
- * Guaranteed price on economy return ticket is optional

THE TOUR RATE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

Passport and visa fees; travel Insurance; excess baggage charges; transfer to and from the US airport; personal expenses; additional fares from other cities will be quoted as needed. All rates are per person, quoted in US dollars, and must be paid in US dollars. Rates and itineraries are subject to change.



During the next few months, you can follow a virtual tour of Iran online at culturalcache.com/destinations/iran. Please contact the Oriental Institute Membership Office at oi-membership@uchicago.edu or Cultural Cache Tours at info@culturalcache.com for more information or to book your trip.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

This tour should be considered moderately strenuous. It requires walking over rough, uneven terrain, step climbing, and some long driving days. All participants are expected to be physically active and able to walk independently throughout the day.

To register for Persian Splendor, please contact the Membership Office at oi-membership@uchicago.edu or call (773) 834-9777.

DEPOSITS AND PAYMENTS:

A \$1,000 per-person deposit is required to book. Final payment is due 60 days before departure (July 13, 2012).

INSURANCE:

Purchasing comprehensive travel insurance that includes trip cancellation coverage is highly recommended. By purchasing comprehensive travel insurance within seven days of your initial deposit, Travelguard will waive the unusual exclusion of pre-existing medical conditions.

TARIFF:

These prices are based on foreign exchange rates in effect on December 2011 and with a minimum of ten participants. Airfare price guarantee only applies until 60 days before the scheduled departure (July 13, 2012) when using KLM. The guaranteed rate only applies to the recommended KLM flight.



ABBAS ALIZADEH is a senior researcher at the Oriental Institute Museum and director of the Iranian Prehistoric Project. During the last twenty years, Dr. Alizadeh has provided a vital link between archaeologists in Chicago and Iran, leading important collaborative projects at the National Archaeological Museum and in the field. The result will be a mix of academic and cultural insights that only a professional archaeologist of Dr. Alizadeh's caliber can bring.

GALLERY TOUR & WINE TASTING

UNCORKING THE PAST

Friday, May 18

6:00–8:00 PM

Emily Teeter

Raise a glass to the ancients who invented wine on a special museum tour and wine reception at the Oriental Institute Museum. Explore the galleries with Emily Teeter, Egyptologist and special exhibits coordinator, and Tate Paulette, PhD candidate in ancient Near Eastern archaeology, to discover ancient wine-making and drinking practices, as well as the cultural significance of wine and other alcoholic beverages in the ancient Middle East. Then join us to sample some contemporary Middle Eastern wines and light refreshments.

FEE: \$20 Oriental Institute members; \$25 non-members. Includes tour and reception.

SPOTLIGHT ON MEMBERS' EVENT

by Amy Weber

CLEOPATRA: THE SEARCH FOR THE LAST QUEEN OF EGYPT AT THE MILWAUKEE PUBLIC MUSEUM

Thank you to the twenty-nine Oriental Institute members who braved the snow and chill to meet Dr. Robert K. Ritner at the Milwaukee Public Museum on January 21st. The afternoon started with a delicious Egyptian-themed lunch served in the Garden Gallery. Afterward, we were bewitched by Dr. Ritner as he guided the group through the House of Ptolemy. Armed with the newfound knowledge of Ptolemys, Bernices, and Cleopatras we headed up to the National Geographic exhibit, *Cleopatra: The Search for the Last Queen of Egypt*. Under the soft blue lights and ocean-themed soundtrack, we explored the new discoveries of the last Cleopatra. The exhibit highlights included a scroll signed by Cleopatra, jewelry, and coins with family portraits that went as far back as Ptolemy I. Thank you to Robert Ritner for an enchanting and educating lecture and to Tracy Tajbl for participating in this event. Please join us on our next Members' Travel Program adventure.

FOCUS ON PICTURING THE PAST

Emily Teeter, Research Associate and Co-curator of Picturing the Past

The exhibit *Picturing the Past: Imaging and Imagining the Ancient Middle East* has given the curators — Jack Green, John Larson, and me — the opportunity to explore a wide range of themes about the documentation and presentation of the past, and the very important role that the Oriental Institute has played and continues to play in its visualization. Of the many wonderful paintings, drawings, and models in the exhibit, one particular group especially appeals to me because the objects so vividly illustrate the story of the origins of the Institute's role in documentation: James Henry Breasted's camera, a pair of his notebooks, and an annotated photo (figs. 1-3). All these speak to Breasted's transformation from potential clergyman to Egyptologist. The story has been told many times — while studying for the ministry, he noted the major discrepancies between the Hebrew texts and the published King James Bible. He declared to his mother,

"I've decided that I cannot be a minister ..." He read aloud the translation he had just made of the Hebrew passage. "What I've just read is correct. Now listen to this," and he read the King James rendering of the same passage. "Do you see it is full of mistakes which convey a meaning quite different than the original? ... I could never be satisfied to preach on the basis of texts I know to be full of mistranslations."¹

This recognition of the importance of having accurate copies of texts from which to write accurate translations in order to write uncorrupted history was a guiding principle of Breasted's scholarship for the rest of his life. As recounted by his son, Breasted avowed, "I am now laying plans to copy not merely the historical, but *all* the inscriptions of Egypt and publish them."² That is the quest that the camera and notebooks in the exhibit reflect. In

1894–1895, Breasted was in Egypt on his honeymoon — his first visit to the Nile Valley. As he and his wife traveled through Egypt, he made copies of texts. This fieldwork was valuable experience, for he was faced with the practical difficulties of working in the field. Some inscriptions were visible only from scaffolds, and he was also confronted with others that had been vandalized,³ damage that only reinforced in him the importance of making accurate transcriptions. He filled notebooks with copies of texts (fig. 1). But he expressed frustration at the rate at which he could work. Much later, he wrote, "The ideal recording system ... must unite in one record three things: the speed and accuracy of the camera, the reading ability of the experienced orientalist, and the drawing skill of the accurate draftsman."⁴ He decided that photography was to play a central role in the recording process.

In 1899, while working in museums, he carried a small camera, but he expressed frustration that he could load

only twenty sheets of film into the holders at a time before having to process and refill them.⁵ By 1905, when he led the university's first epigraphic expedition to Nubia, he was accompanied by a professional photographer (fig. 4). Once a section of a wall had been photographed and the image developed and printed, Breasted compared the two. Inevitably, there were details visible to the human eye that were indistinct or totally imperceptible on the photo. Breasted recounted, "As fast as



Figure 1. Breasted's notebooks with copies of inscriptions from the Louvre and the Gizeh Musuem (Cairo), ca. 1899 (photos by Anna Ressman, D. 17463)

he [the photographer] can furnish me the blueprints I collate them with the wall and add what readings I can make out (beyond the record of the camera), inserting them directly on the blueprint"⁶ (fig. 2).

Thus was born the basic process of the Chicago House method of epigraphy that combines the speed of photography with the trained eye of the Egyptologist and artist to make a definitive record of texts and reliefs. The full process used by our Epigraphic Survey is shown in the exhibition by a sequence consisting of initial photograph, drawing, blueprint, and collation sheets, to the final published drawing. This painstaking process is still regarded as the most accurate method in use for recording in the Nile Valley.

These few objects in the exhibit record a seminal point in the development of Breasted's research agenda, one that would direct his and Oriental Institute work in Egypt down to this day. As you explore the exhibit, the paintings, drawings, and models all reflect different ideas of how the past can be pictured and the contributions of the Oriental Institute to that goal.



Figure 4. Friederich Koch taking photographs in the temple of Ramesses II at Abu Simbel, 1906 (P. 2403)



Figure 2. Photo print annotated in red ink with details that Breasted noted as he compared the photo to the wall surface, 1906 (D. 17464)



Figure 3. Breasted's RB Cycle Graphic camera, case, and film holders. Oriental Institute photographer Anna Ressman determined that it was acquired in about 1920 (photo by Anna Ressman, D. 17490)

NOTES

¹ Charles Breasted, *Pioneer to the Past* (New York: Scribners Sons, 1943), p. 22.

² C. Breasted. *Pioneer*, p. 110.

³ Jeffrey Abt, *American Egyptologist: The Life of James Henry Breasted and the Creation of His Oriental Institute* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), pp. 48–49.

⁴ The Sakkarah Expedition, *The Mastaba of Mereruka*, Part 1, p. xviii (Oriental Institute

Publications 31. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938).

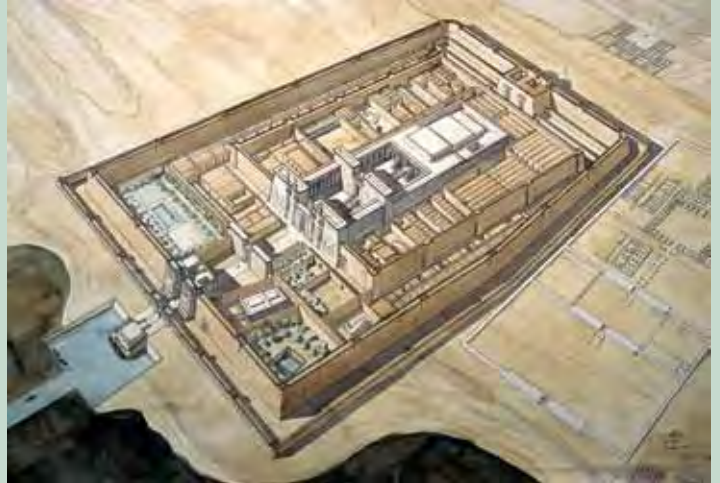
⁵ Abt, *American Egyptologist*, pp. 76–77

⁶ Abt, *American Egyptologist*, p. 131. The "blueprints" were cyanotypes, an early process of printing photographs. According to Abt, only several weeks into the expedition, Breasted switched to silver-gelatin prints such as the one in the exhibit.

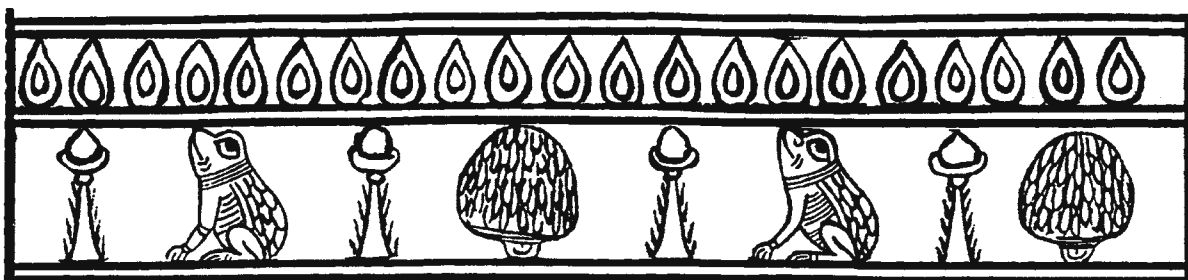
Picturing the Past includes several notable works of art from other collections. We are thrilled to have two original watercolors by Jean-Claude Golvin; "Medinet Habu and the Mountains of Western Thebes" and "Medinet Habu." Dr. Golvin is a very noted Egyptologist and artist whose reconstructions of buildings and entire cities in the ancient Middle East, North Africa, and Europe have appeared in books, exhibit catalogs, and magazines throughout the world. His meticulous watercolors are based upon archaeological remains, textual references, and some hypothetical elements. Because of the fragile nature of the works, the two watercolors will be shown alternately, each for three months. We are very grateful to

Dr. Golvin and to Alain Charron, the Director of the Arles Museum of Antiquity, France, for all they did to facilitate this loan, and also to our registrar, Helen McDonald, who handled the paperwork. This is probably the first time that original Golvin watercolors have been exhibited in the United States.

Another painting in the exhibit, "View of Nippur," by Chicago artist Peggy Sanders is from the collection of Peggy and her husband, John, both of whom worked on the Oriental Institute excavations at Nippur. We thank them for allowing the work to be shown in our gallery.



Clockwise from left: Jean-Claude Golvin, "Medinet Habu and the Mountains of Western Thebes"; Jean-Claude Golvin, "Medinet Habu"; Peggy Sanders, "View of Nippur," 1982 (photo by Anna Ressman)



A STITCH IN TIME

Textiles from Meroitic Nubia at the Oriental Institute

By Bruce Williams, Research Associate,
Oriental Institute

Archaeology often seems preoccupied with the “hard parts” of a civilization, focusing on things that get preserved in a recognizable way. Museums can be more selective, and small, unglamorous things that are not easy to interpret often get passed over by visitors. So some artifacts that received much attention in ancient daily life can hardly be seen in modern display collections. This has been changing, of course, and one of the interesting by-products of the Oriental Institute’s renovation of the late 1990s was that new climate controls permit the display of organic remains, including leather and textiles. This restores a small bit of balance to understanding life in the past, because I am sure that ancient people, like us, were concerned more with their clothes than their crockery.

The great opportunity to display textiles from ancient Nubia, however, is not without its constraints. Even with climate control and low lighting, dyes fade over time, and sensitive materials need to be rotated out and be given a chance to “rest.” So, spectacular as it is, time is long past to bid the colorful carpet¹ adieu and put it into storage. This carpet came from the tomb of a man who was armed with bow, quiver, and spear, thus a warrior in the service of the great rulers of Nobatia buried at Qustul in the late fourth century AD (ca. 375–400). One of the best-dated and most colorful early carpets from Nubia, this was one of several important textiles from this tomb.

In its place, Chief Curator Jack Green decided to put not just textiles, but various items a person would have worn in late Meroitic Nubia, that is, around AD 250. The centerpieces are the textiles, but jewelry and even sandals were also added to the mix.

An important factor here is that the textiles were archaeologically provenanced, providing additional information on context and dating. During its two seasons (1962/63 and 1963/64) in the area between Abu Simbel and the Sudan border, the Oriental Institute Nubian Expedition directed by Professor Keith C. Seele² unearthed large numbers of textiles. Overwhelmingly, these belonged to the late Meroitic (ca. AD 100–300), X-Group or Post-Meroitic (ca. AD 350–550), and Christian (ca. AD 550–1400/1500) periods. There was such a large number that the Art Institute’s curator of textiles,

Christa C. Mayer Thurman, undertook a major effort to conserve, study, exhibit, and publish them, with the participation of the Oriental Institute and me. After the exhibition in 1979 and the associated publication *Ancient Textiles from Nubia*,³ the textiles remained on loan to the Art Institute of Chicago and returned to the Oriental Institute in 2002.

When the permanent exhibit of Nubia at the Oriental Institute was in the planning stage, the choice of the multi-colored carpet was clear, but when it came time for it to be retired, the next choices were less obvious. Some of the more impressive pieces were imports from Egypt, but we wanted to use this display to exhibit aspects of Nubian culture. In the end, a variety of pieces were examined, and a few selected, all from late Meroitic times, roughly the third century AD. Unlike the carpet, however, the pieces selected were hardly self-explanatory, and we decided to augment the textiles with some other things that had been used to clothe and decorate the body (also found in graves) and provide supporting images on a graphic panel as interpretation aids. The idea is to give some idea of things worn on the body, not just a piece of leather here, a piece of cloth there, or some jewelry elsewhere. Because of poor preservation, it is not always certain whether the dead were dressed or shrouded. Although some bodies were wrapped in Meroitic times, others were buried in clothes in later periods.

The opportunity to redisplay some of these fragments brought with it a surprise, or perhaps a surprise we should have expected. It is often assumed that a publication is somehow final, but that is hardly ever true. What we produce are research instruments that often support new inquiries in directions we did not anticipate. The Nubian textiles volume was a case in point. For years, it appeared in bibliographies, and was used as a comparative resource, but incrementally. Then, suddenly, about five years ago, Dorian Fuller, a specialist in agricultural economy at University College, London, noticed that *Ancient Textiles from Nubia* was the best-documented collection of textiles that spanned the time from the Meroitic to the X-Group period.⁴ The fibers identified originally by Nobuko Kajetani of the Metropolitan Museum of Art had become the basis for a new reconstruction of economic changes in Nubia. These included the the cotton-based textiles of Meroitic times, to the animal-based (woollens, camel, and goat hair) textiles of the X-Group and later. The textiles economy was not based on linen imports from Egypt, but was rather a seemingly independent local development, and one that may have established an economic foundation for the new Nobatian state about AD 370.

With this in mind, we took another look at the textiles to be displayed. One of the two decorated belts or tapes has an obvious Meroitic design (fig. 1), an ankh with an almost circular loop at the top and splayed arms and base like a kind of Maltese cross. This peculiar shape is well known from Meroitic painted pottery. The second piece is even more interesting (fig. 2). The simple panels of lozenges alternate with panels



Figure 1. Tape or belt. Cotton. OIM A22762 (photo by Anna Ressman)



Figure 2. Tape or belt. Cotton. OIM A22769 (photo by Anna Ressman)

of very unusual and complex shapes. They are difficult to describe, but comparison with some other Meroitic shapes shows an identification. A peculiarity of the culture is a kind of altar motif, with an altar or offering table supporting some object in the center, generally flanked by two was-scepters, the ancient pharaonic symbol for divine power. These appear scratched on pottery, as relief or incised on metal objects, and in rock art, and they have been the subject of special studies. Sometimes, they are highly, perhaps even playfully, stylized, a rather sportive feature of Meroitic iconography. What has happened here is unique. The altars are stacked one on top of the other to produce a panel of altar-columns. We do not know exactly how these belts or tapes were worn on the body, but a Meroitic statue published over a century ago (fig. 3) shows bands attached around the sleeves at the wrists, which may resemble the textile strips. Another fragment, unfortunately too fragile for display consists of a checkerboard pattern, and perhaps comes from a colorful tunic.

So, what started as a routine exhibit rotation became a small, but interesting research project. Meroe's technical and cultural relationship with Egypt and the Mediterranean world have always been problems of interest, part of an ongoing contest between those who would look at Meroitic civilization as fundamentally dependent and those who would take a more Meroe-centered point of view. These two little pieces are a reminder that Meroitic culture was deeply infused through its most complex crafts.



Figure 3. Restored image of a *Ba* statue of a Meroitic viceroy of Lower Nubia, ca. AD 250 (courtesy of the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology)

The exhibit is now in place, installed in December. Putting together even a small exhibit such as this requires a team effort, and thanks are due to all the staff of the Oriental Institute Museum and reviewers who read the draft panel text. We think that those who see this temporary display, and relate it to other displays in the Robert F. Pickens Family Nubia Gallery, will come away with a little better idea of what this civilization was all about. We came away with something also; research is a never-ending process, and everything is worth a second look.

NOTES

¹ OIM 20178D.

² As published in volumes 3-9 of the series *Oriental Institute Nubian Expedition*, available online at <http://oi.uchicago.edu/research/pubs/catalog/oine/>

³ Christa C. Mayer Thurman and Bruce Williams, *Ancient Textiles from Nubia* (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago and the University of Chicago, 1979). Available online at <http://oi.uchicago.edu/pdf/textiles.pdf>.

⁴ Dorian Q. Fuller, "The Economic Basis of the Qustul Splinter State: Cash Crops, Subsistence Shifts and Labour Demands in the Meroitic to Post-Meroitic Transition." Paper given at the eleventh International Conference for Meroitic Studies. Vienna, 2008.

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NOTECARDS

Set of eight (4" x 6") notecards of images taken from the Oriental Institute's special exhibit *Picturing the Past: Imaging and Imagining the Ancient Middle East*, with envelopes.

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