



THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE

NEWS & NOTES NO. 133 SPRING 1992 ©THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



Tell Asmar, 1931. Thorkild Jacobsen.

*“Then I felt like some
watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims
into his ken
Or like stout Cortez when
with eagle eyes
He stared at the
Pacific...”*

Percy Bysshe Shelley

CRUSADING TO THE PAST

by Thorkild Jacobsen, Former Director, The Oriental Institute

The new planet that swam into my ken was the brand new Oriental Institute. The moment was long ago indeed, sometime in the middle twenties, and the place was not in Darien but a streetcar in Copenhagen.

My wonderful teacher, O.E. Ravn, held his small classes in his home which was in a suburb, so I had a streetcar ride of about half an hour to get there. I used to take a volume of a current journal along to read on the way. That day it was the American Journal of Semitic Languages, and in it was an article about the Institute by [James Henry] Breasted.

Breasted's vision of the role of the Orientalist was enough to take one's breath away.

“We have on the one hand the paleontologist with his picture of the dawn-man enveloped in clouds of archaic savagery, and on the other hand the historian with his reconstruction of the career of civilized man in Europe. Between these two stand we Orientalists endeavoring to bridge the gap. It is in that gap that man's primitive advance passed from merely physical evolution to an evolution of his soul, a social and spiritual

development which transcends the merely biological.”

In the article was the Institute's program for achieving this great goal, the excavations all over the “Fertile Crescent”, the preservation of threatened monuments and—best of all—the plan for the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary. In a work of that magnitude there was sure to be a use for a young scholar to do chores...

So in 1927 I was fortunate enough to be awarded a Fellowship of \$1000 to study in America. I obtained my degree from the University of Copenhagen; the week after that I married; and the week after that we left for Chicago.

As you may have realized this was in the Capone years, so it will not surprise you that when we checked in at the desk in Hotel Morrison in the Loop we were told not to go out after dark, as the North Side and the South Side gangs were fighting it out in the Loop and the police did not interfere. The more the gangsters killed other gangsters, the better for the police.

We were assigned a lovely room on the thirteenth floor with a marvelous

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view of Chicago. There was also a large poster welcoming us on the wall. As I remember it said:

“My dear friend, we realize that you may feel lonely and sad away from your loved ones but the management of this hotel wants you to know that we care and will do all we can to make you feel this hotel is your home, to which you can come back always.

For the safety and convenience of our guests, we wish to point out that all doors in this hotel are bullet proof. Moreover, there is a periscope arrangement in the door so you can look out at visitors without being in the direct line of fire”.

We then looked at our map and decided a walk to the Institute would be nice. So we set out and walked and walked without seemingly getting anywhere—we had not realized that the map showed only every tenth street. When we finally, by boarding a streetcar, reached the University, Chicago seemed so busy with its own affairs that one despaired of finding anything like The Oriental Institute there. Relief came at the gate of Haskell, for though the building was closed, there was a plaque which actually said *Ex Oriente Lux*.

The Institute homestaff in 1927 was a small affair with an almost family air. There were three professors, Sprengling, Graham, and Powis Smith. Breasted was there but tucked away in a remote office and rarely seen. The fieldwork was already well underway, the prehistoric survey in



Tell Asmar, 1931. Dining room, expedition house.

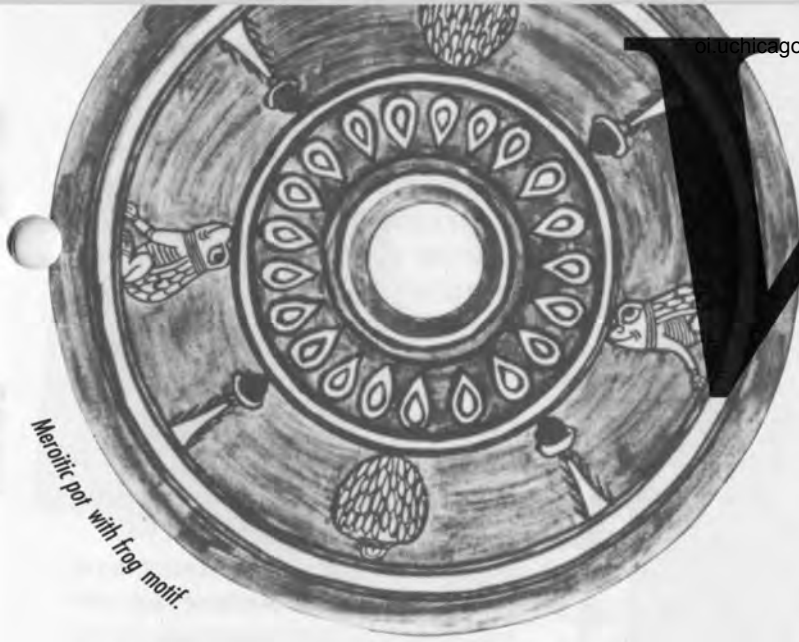
Egypt, Luxor, Megiddo, and the Anatolian-Hittite expeditions were all functioning but one was hardly aware of them. Fieldstaff and Homestaff occupied separate sealed-off compartments and did not mix. That remained true for a long time. When I came back in 1937, having been with the Institute for a full decade, I was considered a rank newcomer by the home people.

On my first day in Haskell I paid a visit to Breasted, who was gracious, but I learned to my dismay of Luckenbill's sudden death in London. Professor Chiera had been appointed in his stead, but was at the moment occupied with excavations at Nuzi

and Khorsabad. That left me stranded, but since I was here I decided to use the time to learn a Semitic language I had not had in Copenhagen, Syriac.

Syriac was really the province of Professor Graham, who was in charge of the vast Bar Hebraeus project. However, by that time he seemed already to have tired of it and Professor Sprengling—tiring of his equally vast Kalila-wa-Dimna project—had taken over. Sprengling was very good to me. He got me a stipend, ordered photos of manuscripts I needed, and got me started on a thesis. He was a very unusual person. He told me once that some years back he had had to choose whether to become a professor of Arabic or a baseball coach. He had chosen the former but was not sure he had chosen right. He was certainly very learned and full of enthusiasm, and he apparently assumed that anybody he talked with knew as much as he did. That was frightening until I discovered that all you had to do was say “yes” or “really” at the right times, and your own ignorance was never exposed. A curious quirk in Sprengling was that as soon as he really mastered a field of scholarship he tired of it and moved on to something else. From Arabic to





W ANISHED KINGDOMS OF THE NILE: THE REDISCOVERY OF ANCIENT NUBIA

Artifacts from the ancient black African civilization of Nubia, an area which now encompasses the Sudan and southern Egypt, went on display February 4 at The Oriental Institute. The exhibit marks the first time that many of one hundred masterpieces and other works from Nubia will be on view to the public. The materials were rescued during archaeological excavations conducted by The Oriental Institute in the 1960s when the Aswan Dam was built on the Nile.

The exhibit will run through December 31, 1992. For program information, please call The Oriental Institute Museum at 312/702-9521.

Syriac, from here to the origin of the alphabet, and then on to Persian. He was most unconventional. Some years before his retirement he bought a farm and brought daily huge crates with fresh eggs to his office, where he sold the eggs to the Institute personnel at a moderate price.

Such time as I could spare from Syriac I spent, of course, in the dictionary room with Geers, who was then in his early forties. He, too, was in many ways a remarkable person. He had been a student of Luckenbill, had then left the field to work on the railroads, had come back to work on the dictionary, which he did during the day. At night, in those years, he worked as night-clerk in an apartment building, which gave him time and quiet for study. He was a very learned but very modest man, extremely considerate, generous, and kind. He also had an unconquerable aversion to publishing. I remember one morning when I came in and found him cleaning out his desk, throwing numerous scraps of paper into the wastebasket. I asked him what the scraps were and he said they were notations of joins of tablets, new sign-values, and other such things but his notations were so brief that he probably could not decipher them. I was horrified, dived into the waste

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SUNDAY FILMS

All films are shown at 2:00 p.m. in Breasted Hall and are free of charge. Each lasts approximately 30 minutes; a tour of the galleries will be offered immediately following the program.

MARCH	1	Egypt's Pyramids
	8	Champollion: Egyptian Hieroglyphs Deciphered
	15	Rivers of Time
	22	Of Time, Tombs and Treasure: The Treasures of Tutankhamun
	29	The Egyptologists

Tell Asmar, 1931-32. Seton Lloyd, left, and Thorkild Jacobsen, by an exposed pivot-stone in the Gimilisin temple.



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paper basket and after much persuasion got him to agree to let me have his new values to add to some of my own in a joint article. Penned, I need hardly say, by me. Years later Gelb and I almost had to use force to make him put his important "Geers' Law" into writing so that he could get a long-deserved promotion to tenure. His unpublished copies made year after year in The British Museum are a goldmine for Assyriologists the world over. They are fortunately available in xerox copies in the Institute.

In 1928 Chiera took up his duties as head of the dictionary and things began to happen.

Chiera was a born leader, alive, vigorous, and inspiring. Also very kind and thoughtful, open to sugges-

tions and with a gift for cutting at once to the heart of any problem. He very kindly got me moved from Syriac to the dictionary, though Sprengling insisted I complete my doctorate in Syriac, which I did. It was on The Commentary of Bar Salibi to the Book of Job.

Looking over the dictionary files Chiera was not impressed. The mimeographed cards were missing, sometimes so faint as to be almost unreadable. Their translations were often well below what one could have wished, and certainly not up to international standards.

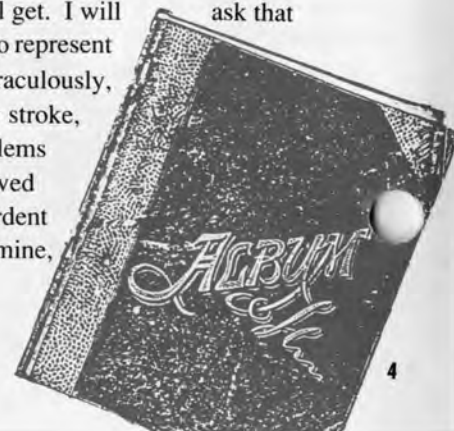
Chiera saw this at once and came up with a brilliant plan: to assign the various types of materials—myths and epics, omens, incantations, letters, and so on—to those scholars through-

out the world who had made themselves authorities in one of these various branches of the field. The dollar was high and it was possible to offer an attractive emolument. Thus Chiera made the dictionary international and placed it on the highest level of scholarship of its time. It became an entirely different thing from what it was when he took over and he is actually, far more than Luckenbill, the real founder of it.

My assignment was to draw up a list of prospective contributors and it was a heady feeling for a young scholar to participate in an undertaking of such magnitude and importance. I was well read and I think my recommendations were all accepted, with very minor changes.

Life was good, but all good things come to an end eventually, and things began to close in on me. I was in the States on a student visa and soon, with my Ph.D., I would no longer be a student. My wife, Rigmor, was here on a visitor's visa which could not be renewed, so our prospects were dim: to return to Denmark and live off our parents, a prospect which we did not relish one bit.

But then one morning as I sat working at my desk in the Dictionary room, Dr. Chiera came in, walking very rapidly, and as he passed my desk he said "Jacobsen, would you like to go on a dig in Mesopotamia?" To which I said "Yes, Dr. Chiera". At that he turned around, furious. "God damn! I was not joking!" "Dr. Chiera, I was not joking either". "Good", he said. "Then you shall go. I have just lost my fight to direct the Institute's Iraq expedition and any little thing I ask for I will get. I will ask that you go to represent us". Miraculously, with one stroke, our problems were solved and an ardent wish of mine,



and a romantic one at that—a thing which it surely is not nowadays. The Near East—or if you prefer, the Middle East—of those years was romantic. One thought of it in terms of Lawrence of Arabia and Gertrude Bell's letters, with the Arabian Nights somewhere in the back of one's mind.

The other thing that is most difficult to convey is the radically different sense of distance one had in the Thirties. The aeroplane has changed us. In the Thirties Mesopotamia was really one of Bing Crosby's "far away places with the strange-sounding names, calling, calling me": Istanbul, Aleppo, Damascus, Baghdad.

To go from Copenhagen to Baghdad took in 1930 the best part of a week. By train through Germany and Austria, joining the famous Orient Express through the Balkans to a night in the Pera Palas in Istanbul with one's first view of minarets, turbans, and flowing robes. Then on over the highlands of Anatolia to Adana, Aleppo to Damascus with the "Grand Hotel d'Orient", the covered Bazaar and "the street called Straight" in which the apostle Paul lived, and about which Mark Twain said that it was straight -- the way a corkscrew may be said to be straight.

In Damascus one waited for a Nairn convoy across the desert. In 1930 it consisted of a number of open touring cars escorted by an armed car that led the way well ahead, so that potential bandits would only have to let it pass to have the convoy to themselves. There was a stop overnight at Rutba Wells and the next day around noon one arrived in Baghdad.

Baghdad, it must be admitted, was not as glamorous in reality as it had been in the film "The Thief of Baghdad" with Douglas Fairbanks, which I had seen in Chicago. Rather, one slogged through mud everywhere, and yet the narrow streets with all the houses turning inward with their backs to you had oriental mystery about them and the bazaar, the suq with its copper-smiths, precious carpets, silverworks and what not was right out of the Middle Ages. The cheap plastic junk and other modern horrors had not yet invaded it.

In Baghdad I joined [Pinhas] Delougaz, Seton Lloyd, Gordon Loud -- and [Henri] Frankfort.

I ask myself "How can one convey even a hint of what he was like?" Perhaps the best way is to quote Seton's account of meeting him in Egypt. He says: "For my own part it took no more than a few days to realize that I had the privilege of being associated with a great scholar and one of the most engaging personalities it would be possible to meet".

I would add that Frankfort was, I think, the most truly cultured person I have ever met, equally at home in literature, art and music, with great and discriminating appreciation of them. He was, too, deeply committed to scholarly values and was quick to rise in defense of them when they were neglected through ignorance, indifference or insincerity. He would speak out clearly, impatiently, and succinctly, a brisk wind cutting through fog. Where he found sincerity he was infinitely thoughtful.

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to go excavating, which I never thought could possibly be realized, had come true.

Before I left for the field I had an audience with Breasted to speed me on my way. His office was located on the first floor of Haskell behind the Museum which was then not open. All exhibition cases were covered with sheets and it was an eerie and rather daunting progress to the inner sanctum.

When I entered the office Breasted was busy writing but he graciously stopped and gave a little speech, of which the part I remember most vividly ran as follows:

"Mr. Jacobsen, you are going to far-away wild countries. There may be dangers, anything can happen, you might be abducted by robbers. If that should happen the Institute will of course stand back of you. Just ask the bandits to take you before their leader and tell him to cable *Orinst.Chicago*, but be sure to have him cable 'deferred rate', for the Institute has saved a great deal of money that way".

I can only say that my mouth fell open. Later I realized that the part about "deferred rate" must have come as an almost Pavlovian reflex anytime "cable" was mentioned. Breasted's son Charles wrote the longest and wordiest cables I have ever seen.

So I was on my way—and here the first thing to be said is that going out to excavate then was an adventure,

kind, and patient. One never worked under him, always with him. He was unique.

Our first season was in Khorsabad near Mosul. There we continued Chiera's work, which had produced the great humanheaded bull in the Museum. We cleared the throneroom of Sargon's palace and a city-gate. The inscriptions found were almost all duplicates of well-known ones, so there was little for me to do as an Assyriologist. My chance came, though, one day when Frankfort mentioned at dinner that he was in a quandary. He had been offered to buy a gold tablet with a building inscription, but he was not authorized to make such a purchase, nor could he ask permission from Breasted, for any telegram he sent or received would immediately be known all over Mosul and the price would skyrocket. My suggestion was that I write out a cable in Assyrian and send it to Professor Chiera. So we did that and Chiera, after consulting Breasted, cabled back to go ahead—also in Assyrian.

Since there was little to do on the inscriptions I did my stint supervising the digging and learning how to trace mud-brick walls from the similar fallen brickwork in which they were normally imbedded. I also had been put in charge of two routine jobs, the *hastihana* or "hospital", and the accounting. The first of these was actually very rewarding. The workmen, relatives, and friends were afraid of going to the proper hospitals in town, even though treatments were free, because they feared they might be detained there. But they were not afraid of us. So they came in droves to be treated. Eye infection I treated by having the patients lie down on their backs, five or six in a row, and then going from one to the other administering antiseptic eyedrops. Burns were serious. I had children with infected burns, covering their whole back with pus. I used peroxide to clean the wounds and bandaged

them; the healing power of these sturdy people was incredible. My most serious case was our foreman, who was bitten in the hand by a scorpion and was in great pain. It was then assumed that alcohol was an effective antidote for scorpion and snakebites, so under the guise of "medicine"—he was a proper abstinent Muslim—I managed to get about a pint of neat whiskey into him, but to my dismay it did not seem to do much good. In fact, he grew weaker and weaker, so I put him in a car so that he could die in his village among friends.

Great was my relief, therefore, next morning when I found him well and back at work. I congratulated him and pointed out how powerful the "medicine" had been. To which he said "Yes, Beg, the hand is all right now, but the pain is still there, now it is in my head, it feels very sore."

The other task I had, keeping accounts, made my head very sore. I never was much good with figures and here was payday for a hundred men, rewards for finds ("baksheesh"), kitchen purchases and so on. To this came the fact that Frankfort used to pay the daily expenses from his office and note the amounts down on slips of paper. The door was always open, and the wind was no help.

However, I struggled along, trying to make those recalcitrant figures balance, and the last night before we closed to go home I sat up all night figuring. At 3 o'clock in the morning, the door opened and there was Frankfort in his pyjamas. He did not say anything, just sat down, took a sheet and began adding. We continued all night and in the train the next day and finally made the accounts balance, mostly by means of a mammoth column headed "incidentals". It was not admired, I am told, at the home office.

That spring we had a long period of

rain so that work on the dig was impossible. The two architects, Loud and Lloyd, spent the time designing the expedition house for Tell Asmar, where we were to move later in the year. It consisted in plan of two rectangles overlapping at one corner. One of these rectangles had the servants' court and the work court, the other had living quarters for the members of the expedition. In the rooms surrounding the servants' court were living quarters for the servants, kitchen, garages, generators and furnaces, one for hot water, one for baking tablets. They were economically constructed by Delougaz out of two iron oil barrels.

The work court had a chemical laboratory, photographic studio and darkroom, drafting room for the architects, tablet room, magazine for other objects found, and a library. It also had Frankfort's study. It happened that occasionally we came upon the skeleton of a bedouin buried on the mound a good many years ago but clearly of the Islamic period and so, in order not to upset the workmen we always treated such finds as if they were truly ancient and brought the bones into the magazine. Occasionally we had visitors from Baghdad and naturally we would show them the magazine and our finds. I remember one visitor brought a particularly obnoxious little boy. The only thing that interested him was a cranium sitting on a shelf in a corner. He asked what it was and I told him it was an old Mesopotamian who had lived here some time around 1700 B.C. "Oh!" he said. "Then why does he have that hole?" And, annoyingly, the skull had a neat round bullet hole right through its forehead.

In the living court the unit was two rooms with a bathroom in between and each such unit was cared for by a servant. The servants came from a village up north and had no experience whatsoever for their new jobs. The first morning my wife found our

servant, Ali, standing in the middle of the room crying. He had never seen a western bed and did not know what to do about it, how to make it up.

One whole wing was given over to common rooms, a living room and a dining room. Our routine when we came back dusty and tired after the day's work on the dig was to get into a hot bath to relax, have a drink, change into fresh clothes and join the others for cocktails in the living room. This was a large attractive room with a fireplace, easy chairs, a good gramophone and a small side table that served as a cocktail bar. We were always well supplied with classical music and our American architects kept us up on the latest from Tin Pan Alley, which was at its very best those years. "Night and Day", "You're the Tops", and "You and the Night and the Moonlight" will always bring back Tell Asmar for me. For festive occasions like Christmas and New Year's we would dress for dinner in tuxedo and black tie. At the dinner table our servants would stand



Tell Asmar, 1931-32. Thorkild Jacobsen, left, and Pinhas P. Delougaz extract a tablet from its matrix.



The Khorsabad party, 1930-31. From left, Conrad Preusser, Pinhas P. Delougaz, Henri Frankfort, Thorkild Jacobsen, Seton Lloyd.

behind our chairs, removing empty plates and bringing new ones. Our food was good and varied. Seton was an excellent shot, so we often had game: sand grouse, hare, or gazelle. One time our driver accidentally ran into a boar at night and killed it, but we had great trouble persuading our cook to serve it. He insisted that it was most unhealthy. In the end, though, we prevailed upon him and

we had it for dinner. I therefore now know how wild boar tastes: it tastes distinctly and antiseptically of carbolic acid.

One aspect of life in the desert should be mentioned: the dust storms. The sky would redden and close down on you, soon breathing would become difficult and you might run a fever. Everything indoors, even though

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doors and windows were closed tight, would be covered with inches of fine dust. One year Frankfort brought out industrial masks that looked like gas masks. Most of them were silent, but two or three older models made an unpleasant click as you breathed. He had hardly finished explaining when my good friend Hal Hill immediately asked for one of the old models. I was astonished and asked him later on why. "Oh", he said, "I want to be sure others know if I am still breathing".

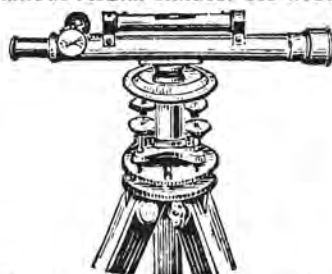
Some of us had horses which we had bought and maintained ourselves. Seton, in a letter to his mother, writes of one such evening ride:

"We ride just before the sun sets, when the desert's cooling off sufficiently for the horses to be energetic. You wouldn't believe how that depressing expanse of dried mud could become so refreshingly beautiful for a few minutes in the evening of these first spring days. About half a mile behind the house there is a dried-up swamp which has become a field of flowers and from a distance makes a haze of color almost like a bluebell wood at home. We gallop up and plunge into it almost as if it were water".

It was a most remarkable and privileged life, in many ways comparable to that of landed gentry. So, you may ask, when we were not busy with high living what did we do with our time? And the truth is that we worked extremely hard and conscientiously. Up with the sun and out on the dig all day, except for meals and then after dinner recording or drafting until late. Even at meals problems of the dig were what we talked about.

So this may be the place to say a few words about our frame of mind. Breasted, at one time, spoke of the Institute's program as a "Crusade to the Past", and in many ways that was what it felt like. We had a total commitment such as nowadays you

find mainly in people who go in for a cause. We were explorers. Before us—or rather, under our feet—lay evidence of unknown millennia and it was up to us to bring it to light and, very importantly, to do it right. Precious evidence could so easily be lost forever through ignorance or carelessness. At Tello at that time an Assyriologist was systematically destroying the walls and foundations of Gudea's famed Temple Eninnu, not knowing what he was doing, and when he found copper foundation figurines he failed to record the findspots, so even the possibility of a rough estimate of size was lost. We felt this responsibility keenly, and again I can quote Seton in a letter to his mother after he had found the famous Asmar statues. He wrote:



"Personally, it will take me a long time to forget the intense excitement of lying on my tummy for almost two days, extracting one priceless antiquity after another from a hole in the ground, always with the feeling of awful responsibility knowing, especially in the case of the half-life-size pair, which are apparently a god and goddess, that one is, in a sense, making history".

Seton's feeling of "awful responsibility" was shared by all of us and it took in all evidence, not only the spectacular, but mud walls, potsherds, and figurines.

The degree of ignorance in 1930 is difficult to grasp now. Dating by pottery was new. It had been introduced by Frankfort only a few years earlier and little had been done, so the Institute's Iraq Expedition had to establish the series of pottery forms from Early Dynastic I down to Neo-Babylonian from scratch, and we did

so. Cuneiform tablets were then published without any reference to findspot, if indeed one had been recorded. We began recording tablets at the dig with the findspot and level and so were able to build up the series of rulers of Eshnunna from the time of Hammurabi back into Ur III. We also introduced the baking of tablets in the field, which protected them from harm, and when one found badly broken tablets in the ground, taking up a large lump and baking it made it possible to extract the tablet splinters unharmed. Cylinder seals were well known and appreciated for their beauty, but where an individual seal belonged in time was a mystery. Frankfort changed that and set up the sequence of styles through time, bringing order out of chaos. It is odd to think back and realize that there were then no Early Dynastic periods I, II and II, only a hazy dark age in which the Sumerians were supposed to have invaded the country. We established the period and its subdivisions with their characteristic features. Of particular interest was the establishing of the Sumerian temple plan, which was then known in only one exemplar from Assur, and was thought to be an exclusively northern feature. We also established the plan of the larger temple complex, the Oval at Khafaje and El-Obeid. It was then a completely new and unexpected feature. We were also able to trace its later development into the form it took in the Kititum temple in Ischali in Old Babylonian times, a form found also in the earlier Ur III temples of Enlil in Nippur and of the Moongod Nanna in Ur. Lastly, at the very end of our work in the Diyala Region we introduced the method of systematic surface survey and showed that by means of it one could recover the ancient system of rivers and canals, that is, the system of settlement and ways of communication within which Mesopotamian history evolved.

In spite of Breasted's send-off, one thing that certainly never occurred to

MEMBERS' COURSES

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

The Dead Sea scrolls, found in caves near the site of Khirbet Qumran, are a vitally important resource in understanding intertestamental Judaism and the religious context in which Christianity arose. Recent events affecting the access to these scrolls have renewed interest in them and have provided the opportunity for new perspectives on their historical and religious contexts.

This course will offer an introduction to the texts and the ideas contained in them. After a survey of events surrounding the discovery of the scrolls and the history of their interpretation, alternative views about the relationship of the scrolls to the site of Khirbet Qumran will be explored. A large portion of the course will then be devoted to reading and discussion of the scrolls themselves. The importance of these beliefs and practices for later developments in Judaism and Christianity will also be considered.

Required text: Vermes, G. *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, 3rd ed., Penguin, 1988

Instructor: Stuart Creason is a Ph.D. candidate in the University of Chicago Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations and specializes in the study of Northwest Semitic languages, specifically Biblical Hebrew.

Class will meet at The Oriental Institute from 10 a.m. till noon on Saturdays, beginning April 4 and continuing through May 30 (no class on May 23). Tuition is \$65 plus \$30 for annual membership in The Oriental Institute if you are not already a member.



VALLEY OF THE KINGS: A Survey of Archaeological Work in the Royal Necropolis at Thebes

The Valley of the Tombs of the Kings is one of the most fascinating archaeological sites in the world. During Egypt's New Kingdom period, a Golden Age that lasted from about 1570 to 1070 B.C., the forbidding desert canyon on the West Bank of the Nile River—opposite the modern town of Luxor—served as the final resting place for most of the

ancient Egyptian kings of Dynasties 18-20. The eight-week course will include a survey of the history of archaeological investigations in the Valley of the Kings and will highlight the activities of many explorers and patrons who have worked in the area.

Recommended reading: *Valley of the Kings* (1981), by John Romer.

Instructor: John A. Larson is the Museum Archivist of The Oriental Institute of The University of Chicago. He specializes in ancient Egyptian art and the history of Egyptology.

Class will meet at The Oriental Institute from 7 p.m. - 9 p.m. on Wednesdays, beginning April 1 and continuing through May 20.

Tuition is \$65 plus \$30 for annual membership in The Oriental Institute if you are not already a member. For further information, call the Education Office at The Oriental Institute (312) 702-9507.



Please enroll me in the following course:

Dead Sea Scrolls Valley of the Kings

I am a member and enclose \$65 for tuition

I am not a member, and enclose a SEPARATE \$30 check for an annual membership

TOTAL

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Daytime phone _____



NUBIA

A BRIEF HISTORY

by Emily Teeter, Assistant Curator, The Oriental Institute Museum



Christian period dove plaque, Adindan, 6th - 12th centuries A.D.

After a nearly twenty year hiatus, objects from Nubia are again on view at The Oriental Institute. "Vanished Kingdoms of the Nile: The Rediscovery of Ancient Nubia," presented in conjunction with The University of Chicago centennial, can be seen through 1992.

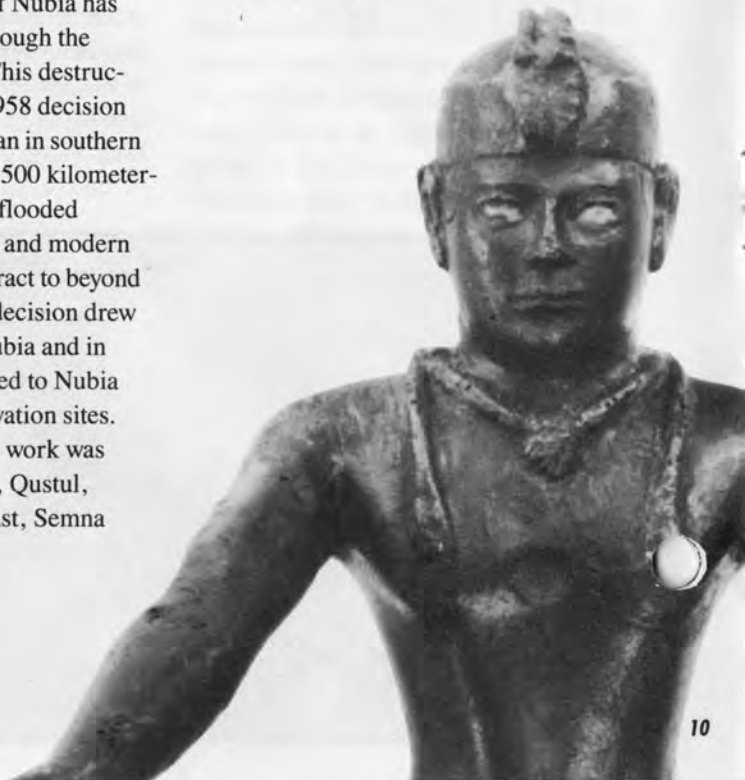
The exhibit title "Vanished Kingdoms of the Nile" refers to several important features. First, that much of Nubia has truly vanished, not only through the millennia, but physically. This destruction of Nubia dates to the 1958 decision to build a High Dam at Aswan in southern Egypt. The dam created a 500 kilometer-long lake which ultimately flooded tombs, temples and ancient and modern villages from the First Cataract to beyond the Second Cataract. This decision drew The Oriental Institute to Nubia and in 1960, Keith C. Seele travelled to Nubia to conduct a survey of excavation sites. Within the next eight years, work was conducted at Bab Kalabsha, Qustul, Ballana, Adindan, Serra East, Semna

South, Kasr el Wizz and Dorginarti. The field directors of the excavations were Seele (1960-1, 1962-4), George R. Hughes (1961-2), and Louis V. Zabkar (1966-8).

The title "Vanished Kingdoms" also alludes to the fact that the history of Nubia is not, like Egypt, that of a single culture. Rather, Nubian history is made up of a progression of successive cultures, which were, in some cases, restricted to certain areas of the country, and whose relationship to each other is not always clear.

EARLIEST NUBIA

The A-Group, (ca. 3800-3100 B.C.) is the earliest of the Nubian cultures. Until recently, it was assumed that the people of the A-Group were semi-nomadic herders who were organized into simple tribes. However, the research of Keith Seele, continued and elaborated upon by Bruce Williams, author of nine volumes of Oriental Institute Nubian Expedition studies, suggests that a line of kings lived at Qustul, and that these kings may be contemporary to, or even earlier





A-Group pit grave.

than, the Egyptian kings at Abydos and Hierakonpolis. This proposal has a dramatic impact upon Nubian studies, for it has traditionally been assumed that kingship initially developed in Egypt. As a result, there has been a tendency to view Nubia as being reliant upon Egypt for much of her cultural development. To the Egyptians, A-Group Nubia was known as "Ta Seti," the "Land of the Bow." Archery continued to be an important feature of Nubia for the next four thousand years.

The A-Group was succeeded by the C-Group (ca. 2300-1550 B.C.), which also flourished in Lower Nubia. Egyptian records, such as the biography of Harkhuf (Dynasty 6, ca. 2360 B.C.), mentions Nubian kings in the lands of Irtjet, Setju, Wawat and Yam. Among the finest of the C-Group industries are the incised or buff-colored pottery, hair ornaments and stone jewelry. The graves at many C-Group sites included stelae and pottery incised with representations of cows (such as the Chicago Cattle Bowl, illustrated to the right), suggesting that bovines had a special mythological or societal significance.

By 2000 B.C., the Kerma Culture (ca. 2000-1550 B.C.) appeared in Egyptian records. Located above the Third Cataract, this kingdom, which may be identified with one of the C-Group kingdoms mentioned in Old Kingdom, was known to the Egyptians as "Kush." George Reisner's excavations on behalf

Meroitic Ba (spirit) statue, Ballana, 2nd-3rd centuries A.D.



of Harvard and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston early in this century, revealed the tumulus burials of the kings of Kerma. These mounds, some 300 feet in diameter, protected the royal body which was laid upon a wooded bed, its footboard inlaid with copper and ivory figures. Hundreds of sacrificed retainers accompanied the ruler to the afterlife.

EGYPTIAN DOMINATION OF NUBIA

With the rise of the New Kingdom, Nubia was brought under the political and cultural domination of Egypt. By the reign of Amunhotep I, Nubia was administered as a province of the Egyptian empire, by an official called the "King's son of Kush." This system continued until the Egyptian grip upon Nubia was loosened in the Third Intermediate Period (ca. 1069 B.C.) and Egypt entered a period of disunity.

The New Kingdom saw the assimilation of Egyptian and Nubian culture among the Nubian elite. Texts which record this period are written in the Egyptian hieroglyphic script, and most of the pictorial representations reflect a very strong sense of Egyptian cultural superiority, making it difficult to understand the real nature of the Egyptian-Nubian relationship. However it is clear that trade with Nubia made a tremendous impact upon the material legacy of Egypt's "Golden Age," for it was from the gold, ebony, ivory, gums, incense, spice, exotic skins and feathers of Nubia that the treasures of the Egyptian New Kingdom were fashioned.

THE NUBIAN VICTORY AND THE KINGS OF NAPATA

Events in Nubia during the time of Egypt's Dynasties 20 to 24 are not well

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C-Group "cattle bowl", Abindan, ca. 1900-1650 B.C.



Nubian king, ca. 700 B.C.

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recorded. Egyptian domination of the south in this time was tentative at best, and was reflected mainly by the traditional propagandistic scenes which decorate Egyptian monuments. By Dynasty 22, (ca. 945 B.C.), Egypt fragmented into rival states. When Thebes and her allies in Middle Egypt were threatened from the north, the Theban officials appealed to the Kushite kings at Napata who styled themselves the "protectors of the god Amun." In 747 B.C., Nubian troops led by king Piye (Piankhy) marched to Thebes and thereafter, they moved northward, conquering Memphis and restoring unity to Egypt. This period of Nubian rule in Egypt is referred to as Dynasty 25. With few exceptions, the kings resided at Napata, leaving the administration of Egypt to their sisters and daughters. These God's Wives of Amun dwelled in Thebes, and assisted by Egyptian administrators, they served as the theocratic rulers of Egypt. A century after the Nubian conquest, the Assyrian armies of king Ashurbanipal brought Kushite rule to an end and banished the kings of Napata to the south.

The later Nubian kings flourished at Napata. Their burials at el-Kurru, Nuri and Meroe indicate the influence of Egyptian culture in Nubia, for the Kushite kings were buried in steep-sided pyramid tombs, their bodies mummified in Egyptian fashion, and encased in great stone sarcophaguses.

THE MEROITIC AND X-GROUP PERIODS

By the 3rd century B.C., the center of Nubian civilization moved south to Meroe. The richness of Meroitic civilization (ca. 200 B.C.-A.D. 300) is documented by the temples at Musawwarat es Sufra, Naga and Meroe, as well as by the royal pyramid tombs. Accounts of interaction between the Meroites and the Romans are preserved in the writings of Pliny, Diodorus Siculus and Seneca. Although aspects of Egyptian culture were retained, such as the veneration of Amun and Isis and the use of pyramid tombs, Meroitic culture was largely an amalgam of African and Classical culture.

The succeeding Ballana or X-Group culture (ca. A.D. 250-550) was located in Lower Nubia. The great tumulus burials of the kings of Ballana were excavated in the 1930s, and thirty years later, the work of The Oriental Institute refined the knowledge of these tomb complexes, establishing the association between the mounds, chapels and animal burial pits. Among the glories of X-Group civilization are remains of archer's equipment including embossed and cut-work leather quivers, bronze and iron arrow points, flexible saddles and horse trappings, all used by the famed Nubian archers. It is due to these military skills that Nubia was able to forestall conversion to Islam longer than any other region in Africa. After the slaughter of Egyptian Muslims at Dongola in A.D. 651-2, the Coptic faith of Nubia was ensured by a treaty that was to last for another 800 years.



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us was that we might be in danger from robbers, and yet there was one incident that could have been very nasty. I was standing on a table I had dragged outside our rooms one evening before dinner trying to reach up to change an electric bulb when Betty McEwan came into the court. That was no surprise for she, her husband Cal, Delougaz, and the architect Ham Darby were expected home for dinner from Khafaje. What did floor me was that she said "Jake, can you get me a drink, we have been shot at". I said "Betty, are you joking? but I can certainly get you a drink", which I did. But she was not joking. On their way back from Khafaje they had come upon an Arab sitting in the road and Mac, who was driving, had slowed down thinking he needed help, when instead he opened fire at them. Mac, crouching down, went full speed ahead, but the man kept firing at them until they were out of range. Miraculously, none of them was hit, truly miraculous, for the car looked like a sieve. The next day I took it to Khafaje to supervise the dig there so they could have a day of rest at Asmar and recover from the shock. When I arrived at Khafaje the workmen crowded around, particularly the expert wall tracers whom Delougaz had brought from a mountain village near Kerkuk and who undoubtedly had done a bit of armed robbery themselves in their younger days. Anyway, they were full of admiration: "Good shot", one of them said, pointing to a hole in the windshield, "Straight for the driver".

Some years ago I had occasion to tell of this shooting in a talk about excavation in the Thirties to a group of colleagues. After the talk one of my fellow archaeologists came up to me and said: "Do you know what fascinated me most in your talk? That you were changing a light bulb!" So that brings me back to the Asmar house. With its electricity, running hot water, private bathrooms and one thing and another it was—perhaps



unavoidably—widely criticized as a case of unnecessary and therefore unpardonable luxury. As the remark I mentioned shows, this attitude still seems to persist, so let me say a few words about it.

The house was unquestionably comfortable, but the comfort was achieved at very moderate cost. It was built of mud bricks made at the spot. Everything else, steel beams, doors, tightly closing iron windows, furniture and, I think, even the floor tiles, were sold at the end of our last season at very favorable prices, which covered a good deal of the original cost. Sold also was the generator to make electricity, but not the furnace for heating, which returned to being an old oil barrel as it was before Delougaz converted it. So considering the house served for five years it was undoubtedly a good investment. The most important thing about the house, though, was never understood by the critics. Breasted's aim was not planning for a campaign or two with shifting personnel. He was financially able to take the long view and he wanted to develop a staff of professionals, people who worked well together, had been with the dig from the beginning and so knew about earlier years' work and developed the depth of knowledge of the site and its possibilities that only personal experience can give. For such people for whom field excavation was their life's work, livable quarters would be important and would help to prevent growing irritation at small but constant discomforts.

I have mentioned that the house had a tablet room for me to work in. Here in the first two seasons I cleaned, catalogued, and copied the tablets as they turned up. The light for copying was the best I have ever known, and I almost had enough copies to form a volume when word came from Chicago that I was not allowed to copy. All tablets were to be kept to

the end of the excavations when Dr. Poebel and Dr. Chiera would assign them. Then I might possibly be given some less important ones to publish. That certainly was a blow. It would have left me utterly frustrated if Frankfort had not saved the day. He said "Thorkild, since you now cannot copy would you like to take over one of the excavations?" That I would very much, so together with Hal Hill as architect I dug first the private houses of the Akkade Period and later the Kititum temple complex at Ischali.



In the meantime Gordon Loud had moved back to Khorsabad to continue work there so every spring, when Asmar closed down I went up there to read inscriptions. The great find was the Assyrian King List, which I identified and copied and which Poebel then sat on for so many years, holding up all work on Assyrian history.

A very enjoyable and very worthwhile venture grew out of such a visit to Khorsabad. One of our foremen told me of a village in the mountains, Jerwan, where there were blocks with Assyrian inscriptions lying in the street. He showed me a sketch of some signs so I went up with him in a car. Right enough, there were stone blocks with enough writing on them for one to recognize the name of Sennacherib. We were treated to tea in the guesthouse and as we talked there the villagers told about a place where there were a lot of such blocks side by side. They readily cleared it and with great inner excitement I read the words "I spanned a bridge". I was

standing at the oldest known bridge in the world. Hitherto a single pier remaining of a Neo-Babylonian bridge in Babylon had been the oldest. Now this, apparently fairly well-preserved one, took the place of honour.

The following spring, armed with a one month permit to dig, Seton and I and our wives left for the north when Asmar closed down. As we cleared the structure more of the inscription became available and we found that it ended with the words "those waters I caused to go over on it", so our bridge was no ordinary bridge but an aqueduct carrying a canal over a mountain valley and its stream. The old canal could still be traced on the ground by color difference and the next year we came back to trace its course from its intake at the Gomel River at the Bavian relief and down to Nineveh. By combining information given at Sennacherib's inscriptions with the findings on the ground, we were able to reconstruct in detail the great engineering project by which Sennacherib was able to supply his new capital Nineveh with fresh mountain water.



There is a great deal that I remember with a smile from our days at Jerwan and the neighboring town of Ain-Sifni where we lived, but time is getting short so I shall tell only two such memories.

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Jerwan, 1933-34. Thorkild Jacobsen collates an Assyrian inscription while hanging from a cliff in the Gornel Gorge.

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When we arrived at Ain-Sifni I found it appropriate as leader of the expedition to make a courtesy call on the officials of the town, the Kaimakam and chief of police, and did so. As we had a drink before dinner, I mentioned it, at which Seton looked up and said "So did I". For a moment none of us said anything and then we both burst into laughter. Frankfort, wisely, had not said who was to be in charge and so we both thought we were. Our laughter settled it. We simply went back to work happily and enjoyably hand in hand.

One day Seton caught a cold and had to go to bed with a fever, so I went out to the dig alone. When I arrived I found the workmen sitting down doing nothing. They wanted more pay, otherwise they would leave. They also wanted to be paid for the time they had sat doing nothing. I told them no to both points and so they all left, except some four or five skilled workers we had brought up from Tell Asmar. From them I learned that the headman of the village disliked the bustle of the excavation and to get rid of us had told the men that they could double

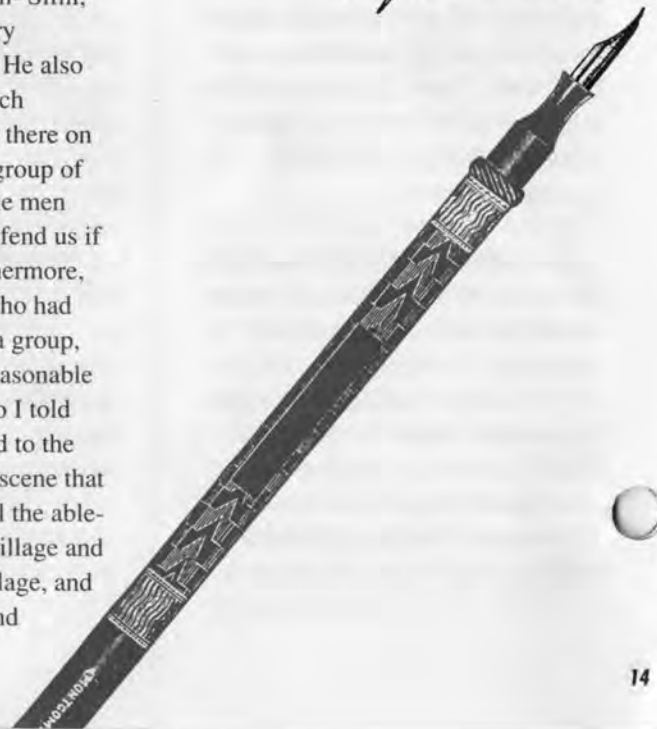
their pay by simply striking. Up to then we had been careful, since the people of Jerwan were Jezidis, the so-called Devil-worshippers, to hire only Jezidi workmen. Now, that was no longer possible, so I told our foreman to send for workers to an Arab village further up in the mountains and to the village of Hodeda, a marvelous old bandit who had been feuding with Jerwan. He told me later "When your messenger came we were sitting at tea and I yelled "Up! All of you, run!". The headman I took in to Ain-Sifni, where the chief of police very helpfully put him in prison. He also told me that he had been much worried about our safety out there on the dig, we ought to have a group of some forty absolutely reliable men who could close rank and defend us if there was any trouble. Furthermore, there was only one person who had the experience to pick such a group, he himself. That sounded reasonable and I needed workers fast, so I told him to go ahead and returned to the dig. I shall never forget the scene that met my eyes. There were all the able-bodied men from the Arab village and everyone from Hodeda's village, and all the strikers had had second

thoughts after going a short distance, and had come back. There must have been some 500 men, and those of the chief of police were still to come. Fortunately, the character of the dig, and the long, wide aqueduct, made it easy to use that many men to advantage.

The story has a sequel. Some days later as we were having our drink before dinner there was a knocking on the door and outside was the chief of police. So we invited him in and gave him a drink, but he was oddly not his jovial self. We could not understand what was the matter and plied him with more drinks. Finally it came out: "He had been so careful, he could not understand how it could have happened, but somehow among the group of utterly reliable people three convicted murderers had slipped in". We told him not to worry, and nothing untoward happened.

As all old men reminiscing, I could go on forever, but this must be enough for now. Only one more word in conclusion. The Oriental Institute was created for a Crusade to the Past. It continues to be so, and it is both a privilege and an honor to have been one of its crusaders.

The End



SECOND DEPARTURE FOR EASTERN TURKEY!

16-31 May, 1992 (16 days)

Eastern Turkey is home to an amazing legacy of vanished civilizations, yet this area is still largely unknown to even the most adventurous traveller. This tour, specially designed for The Oriental Institute, will take you to Cappadocia, Bogözköy, Nemrut Dağı, Lake Van, and Istanbul in the expert care of Emily Teeter, Ph.D., Assistant Curator of The Oriental Institute Museum.

Cost: \$3380.00 per person, double occupancy

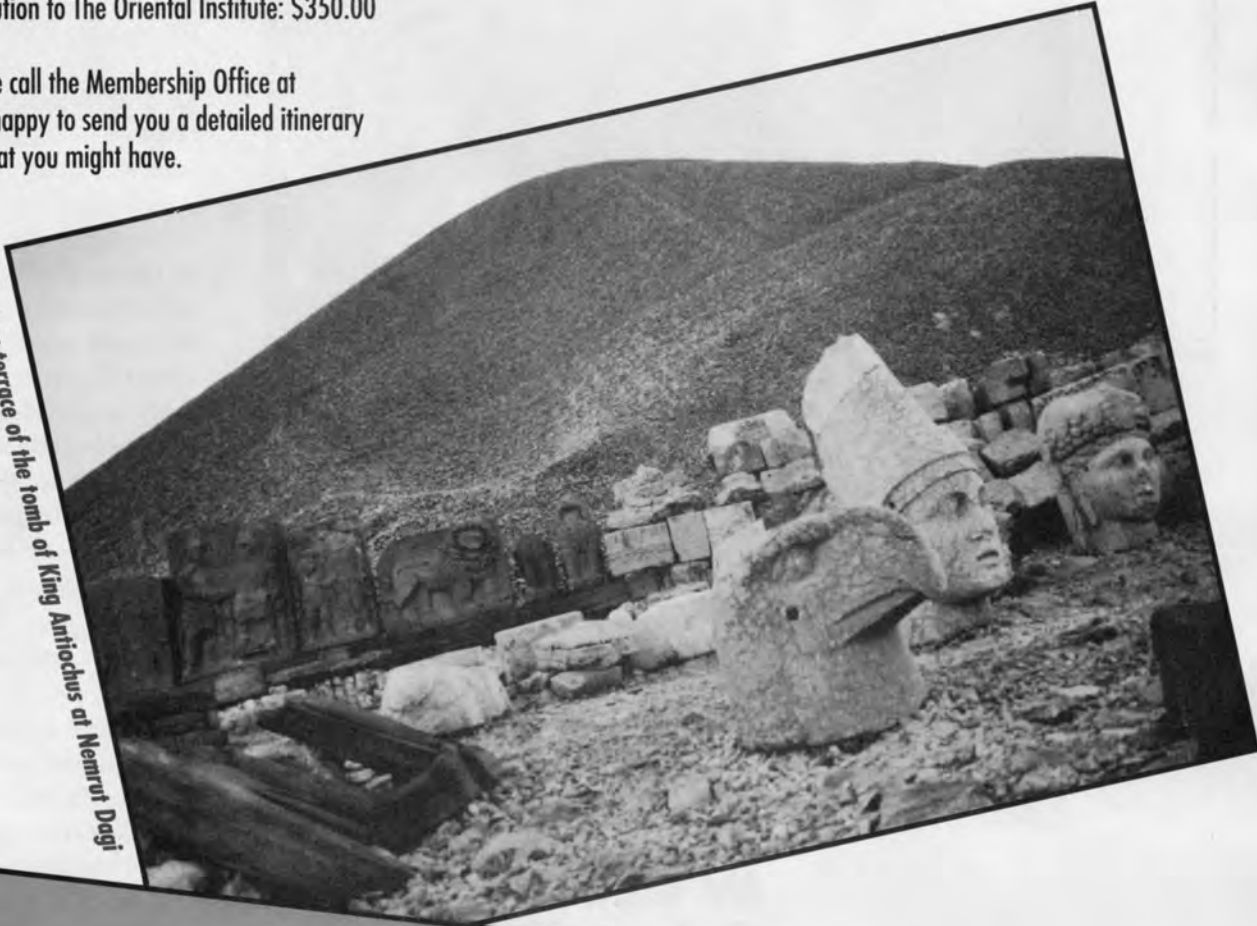
Single supplement, \$470.00

Round trip air fare, Chicago/Istanbul/Chicago: \$1508.00

Tax deductible contribution to The Oriental Institute: \$350.00

For more information, please call the Membership Office at 312/702-1677. We will be happy to send you a detailed itinerary and answer any questions that you might have.

Western terrace of the tomb of King Antiochus at Nemrut Dağı



The Armenian Church of the Holy Cross, on the island of Akdamar near Van.





IN MEMORIAM Robert H. Hanson 1908-1992

Bob Hanson came to work at The Oriental Institute as an assistant preparator in 1933; the building was new and James Henry Breasted was director. He retired as Museum preparator seven directors later under John A. Brinkman in 1975. Early Saturday morning, December 14, 1991, he passed away. For more than forty years there was little that went on in the Museum or in the Institute which did not owe something to his care and skill.

In the early years he was a member of a team which included Bastiani, Bardin, Burtch, and Timashevski; under their hands the galleries took shape. Later on as the staff contracted he became virtually the whole team, assisted by

people like Honorio Torres and me. When artifacts came in from the field, he unpacked them; if they were broken he repaired, conserved, and restored them; when it came time to display them he built the exhibits, crafted the object mounts, planned the lighting, and printed the labels on the Institute's own printing press. He quietly passed on his skills to any who were willing to learn. He taught Mrs. Theodore Tiekens to mend pottery and taught me to use a table saw. He made life-long friends of us in the process.

Of all of his installations Bob Hanson was most proud of his restoration of the bronze band from Khorsabad, now on display in the Assyrian hall. However, I have always admired most the work he did on the Nespekishuti relief in the Egyptian hall. Here he reassembled a sadly broken jumble of fragments, carved figures in plaster to replace what was missing, and brought back to life for public appreciation a masterpiece of ancient Egyptian art. He was also the building's memory; he knew how things worked and he could make them work again. In an institute of scholars, he was the craftsman and technician; they wrote articles, he built object mounts and restored statuary. They signed their names to their work; his work was usually anonymous.

Bob Hanson was also an airplane enthusiast. As a boy he started collecting photographs of planes not long after the Wright brothers learned to fly. He took leave of the Institute for a while during World War II to build planes for Bell Aircraft. And then at age sixty, he began building his own plane. This little project took him some sixteen years, but when he was finished, his little single-engine two-seater was superbly crafted and flew beautifully.

I had thought to end with the epitaph of Sir Christopher Wren in St. Paul's Cathedral, "If you would seek his monument, look around you", but Jean Grant gave me a better, simpler line, "Bob has new wings".

-Raymond D. Tindel, Registrar



THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE LECTURE AND EVENTS SCHEDULE

March - June 1992

MEMBERS' LECTURES

Thursday, March 19

Members' Lecture, Breasted Hall, 7:00 p.m.

Norman Golb, Professor, NELC and The Oriental Institute

Michael O. Wise, Assistant Professor, NELC

"Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls: A First Look at the New Texts and a Further Consideration of the Site"

Members' Reception 8:30 - 9:15 p.m., Egyptian Gallery

Monday, April 6

Members' Lecture, Breasted Hall, 7:00 p.m.

John Baines, Oxford University

"The Dawn of the Amarna Age"

Members' Reception 8:00 - 8:45 p.m., Egyptian Gallery

Monday, May 13

Members' Lecture, Breasted Hall, 7:00 p.m.

Thomas Holland, Publications Coordinator and Research Associate,
The Oriental Institute

"Recent Excavations at Tell Es-Sweyhat, Syria"

Members' Reception 8:00 - 8:45 p.m., Egyptian Gallery

GALLERY TOURS

Wednesday, April 22

Professional Secretaries' Day Gallery tour, 6:30 p.m.

"Scribes and Secretaries in Ancient Egypt"

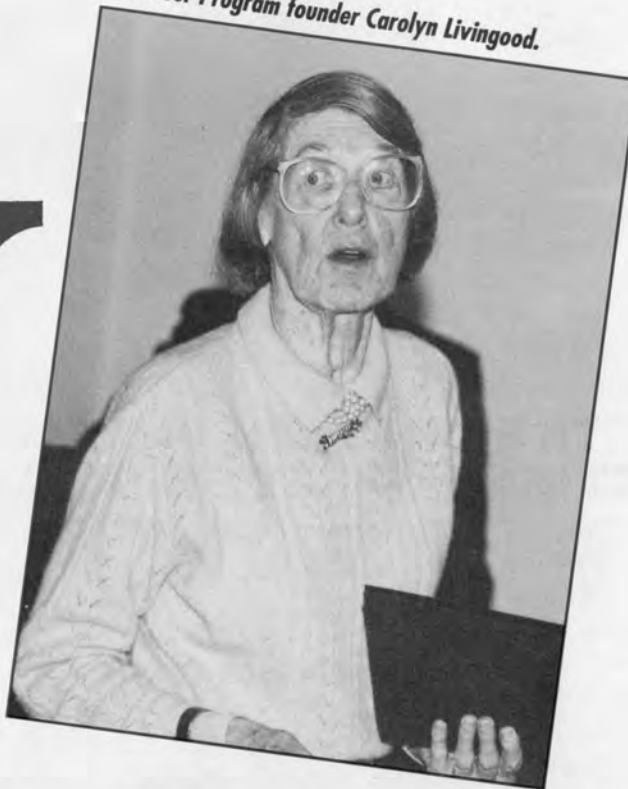
Lanny Bell, Associate Professor, NELC and The Oriental Institute

Reception in Institute Lobby 6:00 p.m.

Monday, June 1

THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE ANNUAL DINNER

Volunteer Program founder Carolyn Livingood.



V

olunteer Program Celebrates Twenty-Fifth Year

On Monday, December 9, The Oriental Institute celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Volunteer Program with a holiday luncheon in the Egyptian Gallery. Organized by docent and Visiting Committee member Terry Friedman, the annual luncheon preceded an awards ceremony honoring Volunteer Program founder Carolyn Livingood and her successors Carlotta Maher, Peggy Grant, and Janet Helman. Service awards were given to docents and volunteers at the five-, ten-, fifteen-, twenty-, and twenty-five year levels. The Volunteer Program received a commendation from University of Chicago President Hanna H. Gray, and in recognition of twenty-five years of service to the Institute, December 9 was declared "Carolyn Livingood Day" by the City of Chicago.



Ida DePencier and Mary Shea



from left: Mary Jo Khuri, Teresa Hintzke, Alice Rubash, Marsha Holden, William Boone, Norman Rubash, Mary Shea, Mary Grimshaw, and Joan Rosenberg.

Five years
Marilyn Fellows
Alice Rubash

Ten years
Helen Glennon
Joan Mitchell
Stephen Ritzel

Fifteen years
Mary Jo Khuri
Georgie Maynard
Rochelle Rossin
Mary Schulman

Twenty years
Laurie Fish
Joan Rosenberg
Peggy Grant

Twenty-five years
Albert Haas

Museum volunteers
Irving Diamond
Lilla Fano
Kay Ginther
Diana Grodzins
Peggy Wick
Sally Zimmerman

Volunteer Program Chairman Janet Helman.



Visiting Committee members Joan Rosenberg and Terry Friedman, and Volunteer Mary Jo Khuri



Thursday morning docents, from left: Judy Licata, Rita Picken, Cathy Duenas, Christal Betz, Dorothy Mozinski, Kay Matsumoto.

News & Notes

A quarterly publication of
The Oriental Institute
1155 East 58th Street,
Chicago, Illinois 60637
Editor: Melanie Jansen Marhefka
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Telefax: 312/702-9853

All inquiries, comments, and suggestions are welcome.

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SOON TO BE RELEASED

The Oriental Institute -A videotape cassette-

The Oriental Institute Museum Education Office is pleased to announce the upcoming release of a videotape cassette featuring the collection and the work of The Oriental Institute. Based on still photographs of artifacts on display in the museum galleries, *The Oriental Institute* is a thirty minute production which provides an overview of ancient Near Eastern history as it can be seen in the Institute collection. Photographs taken at the sites of excavations feature the archaeological work of the Institute and provide a context for many of the artifacts discussed. Mention is made of ongoing field work as well as of the several dictionary projects of the Institute.

The videocassette was developed as an educational project for use by school groups, but it will be of interest to anyone who wishes to learn about the The Oriental Institute, to be introduced to the history of the ancient Near East, or to view images of the art and culture of ancient Near Eastern peoples. The images selected include artifacts from the ancient Egyptians, Sumerians, Akkadians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Persians and Canaanites; computer-animated maps locate the regions in which these peoples lived.

Development of this project was funded by a gift from Mr. and Mrs. Howard Haas in commemoration of the 50th wedding anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. Albert Haas. The videocassettes will be available for purchase in the near future. For prices and release date, or further information about the program itself, call the Education Office at 312/702-9507.