



CATASTROPHE!

THE LOOTING AND DESTRUCTION OF IRAQ'S PAST



PLUS

**RESEARCH ARCHIVES &
SYRIAC MANUSCRIPT PROJECT**

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NEWS & NOTES

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FROM THE DIRECTOR'S STUDY

Whether we like it or not, archaeologists and researchers of ancient texts find themselves increasingly involved in issues of politics and policy that have enormous implications for the record of human civil and cultural development. The physical traces of ancient and historic Near Eastern civilizations are threatened as never before by factors such as war, looting, development, and environmental degradation. April 2008 marks the fifth anniversary of one of the greatest tragedies in Near Eastern archaeology — the looting of the Iraq National Museum in Baghdad. The Oriental Institute is commemorating this event with the special exhibit in our museum titled Catastrophe! The Looting and Destruction of Iraq's Past, co-curated by McGuire Gibson and Katharyn Hanson. Professor Gibson's article in this issue of *News & Notes* vividly describes the events that culminated in the looting of 15,000 irreplaceable artifacts from the Iraq Museum. Many of these pieces were originally excavated by the Oriental Institute and have sister pieces in our own museum.

However, as tragic as it was, the looting of the Iraq Museum is just one small facet of a much more widespread problem. In the current dangerous conditions of Iraq, the looting of archaeological sites has reached epidemic proportions. Well-armed and well-financed gangs of looters have been plundering the mounds that form the remains of the world's first cities in Sumer, or southern Iraq. The damage to these sites, and the loss of our common human heritage, is almost beyond estimation. Our exhibit aims to document this destruction in the hopes that an informed public can encourage legislators to pass stricter laws to stop the international trade in illegal antiquities.

The Oriental Institute is playing an active and increasing role in the protection of cultural heritage from the range of threats to its integrity. After the looting of the Iraq Museum, Professor Gibson and Clemens Reichel, Oriental Institute Research Associate, established a Web site to document the stolen artifacts as a way to help the international law enforcement community in its efforts to recover these treasures. The Oriental Institute has also trained archaeological conservators from Middle Eastern countries so that they have the modern scientific expertise needed to preserve those objects already in museum collections of their home countries. Finally, we are attempting to be proactive in documenting fragile cultural resources to insure that, no matter what might happen in the future, their historical information will survive. Stuart Creason's article on the Syriac Manuscript Project explains how he and Abdul-Massih Saadi are working to digitize and catalog the Vööbus photographic archive manuscripts. This Aramaic dialect is the language of one of the oldest surviving Middle Eastern Christian communities, spanning from the sixth century AD to the present. These examples should remind us that there actually *are* positive steps that researchers and citizens can take that will make a difference in preserving our past before it is lost forever.



Gil J. Stein

Gil J. Stein
Director, Oriental Institute

CATASTROPHE!

THE LOOTING OF IRAQI CULTURAL HERITAGE

McGuire Gibson, Professor of Mesopotamian Archaeology

April 10, 2008, will be the fifth anniversary of the beginning of the looting of the Iraq National Museum. To mark this event, the Oriental Institute Museum is opening the special exhibit *Catastrophe! The Looting and Destruction of Iraq's Past* with a special evening opening ceremony, followed by a daylong symposium to be held on Saturday, April 12. Participants in Saturday's symposium include Dr. Donny George, former president of the Iraqi State Board of Antiquities and Heritage (SBAH), and others who have been active in trying to restore and preserve Iraq's heritage.

Very few people were aware that the Iraq National Museum and the attached offices of the SBAH were being looted on the 10th of April 2003. On April 8, as the United States Army reached the area of the museum, Dr. Jabber Khalil Ibrahim, then president of the SBAH, and Donny George, then the Director General for

Research, were the only officials left in the 11 acre complex of buildings. With them were one guard and an employee named Muhsin, as well as Muhsin's son. The rest of the guards had abandoned their uniforms and fled. With the sounds of weapons getting closer, and with helicopters overhead, it was clear that the area of the antiquities complex was about to be involved in the fighting. When Dr. Jabber saw four or five black-clad men leap over the museum's front fence, he decided that the staff should leave and come back when the fighting died down. Only Muhsin and his son stayed on the grounds, in the house where they lived behind the museum.

Little is certain about the "battle at the museum," but it could not have been very severe, since not one window of the complex was broken, and almost no bullet holes were to be seen in the walls. Only a large hole from a tank shell near the top of the reconstructed

Assyrian gate at the main entrance to the children's museum gave evidence of anything serious (fig. 1).

On April 9, nothing happened. Like the rest of Baghdad, the museum area was quiet. Iraqis, from repeated experience of wars, coups, and other emergencies, knew what to do — they stayed in their houses, expecting martial law. Had even one squad of troops arrived at the antiquities complex, no looting would have taken place. As it was, although a tank took up position in the intersection 50 meters from the museum entrance, and another was at a different intersection 150 meters to the east, there were no orders to secure the museum. On April 10, when it became clear that the American occupiers did not care if people left their houses, people went out and immediately began to loot government buildings, including the museum and the 120 offices of the administrative wing of the SBAH. Muhsin went out to the tank to



Figure 1. View of a U.S. tank outside a reconstructed Assyrian gate at the entrance to the children's section of the Iraq National Museum. The gaping hole in its facade was made by a U.S. tank round. Photo courtesy of Joanne Farchakh-Bajjalay



Figure 2. Museum officials attempted to secure the basement by blocking the doorway with a wall of cinder blocks. However, sometime between April 10 and 12, 2003, looters breached the doorway, allowing them access to areas in which some of the most precious artifacts were stored. Photo courtesy of McGuire Gibson

ask that it be shifted to close off the gate to the museum, thereby stopping the looters. The tank commander phoned his superior and was told to stay where he was.

From the 10th until the 12th of April, the complex was looted. Later investigation showed that there were two kinds of looters. One was a group of professionals, working with some degree of familiarity with the museum. This group broke in through a sealed back window, went to a particular corner of a gallery, broke through a steel grate, went downstairs, and broke open a steel door. They must have been shocked to find a wall newly built within the jamb of the door, but it did not deter them. They broke through it and went down another flight of stairs into the basement storerooms (fig. 2). Even without electricity, they were able to find their way back through two storerooms until they reached a group of safes, where some of the museum's most precious objects were kept. Here was a great collection of gold Islamic coins, ancient jewelry, and thousands of Mesopotamian cylinder seals. They knew where to find the keys for the safes and would have



Figure 3. One of the most devastating blows to the future understanding of archaeology in Iraq was the vandalism, and in some cases destruction, of the museum's archives. It will take years to restore the museum's institutional memory. Photo courtesy of Joanne Farchakh-Bajjalay

stripped them but for the fact that they first opened some plastic boxes on top of the safes and found cylinder seals and pieces of jewelry in them. These items had been on loan to special exhibitions in other countries and had not yet been returned to the safes. In rifling through the boxes, the thieves lost the keys and, probably because they had almost no light, did not find them again. Although they did not get into the safes, those items specially chosen for exhibitions abroad were stolen.

The second group of looters was made up of ordinary people from the immediate neighborhood, with only a limited idea of what was valuable. Luckily, they were more interested in chairs, tables, computers, light fixtures, fans, and even the building's electrical wiring. Their worst effect in the offices was the destruction of the institutional memory of the antiquities service (fig. 3). Here were stored the records of every archaeological dig and survey done in Iraq since 1921. Here were the photographs taken by all Iraqi and foreign expeditions. Here were maps, plans, and drawings. Here were also the personnel records and financial reports for the institution.

The second group did make it into the museum's public galleries, where they took forty items that had been left in the halls because they were affixed to the walls or were too heavy to be moved (fig. 4). They also entered one storeroom on the ground floor, where they swept up thousands of objects at random.

I knew that many of the important artifacts had been moved from the museum to the vaults of the Central Bank in 1991, and that they were still there. I also knew that the museum staff would work to remove as much as they could from the public galleries into storerooms, as they had in the 1991 war. As it happened, they did move thousands of items to a secret storeroom, but they could not remove all the heavier pieces. The looters were able to take some of them, despite the weight. There is a marble staircase in the museum which had every step cracked by the weight of



Figure 4. When looters stole the Warka vase they toppled the display case and hacked the ancient vessel away from its reconstructed base. Photo courtesy of McGuire Gibson



Figure 5. Staircase leading from the upper story of the Iraq Museum, its steps chipped by the weight of dragging a heavy statue from the gallery. Photo courtesy of McGuire Gibson

an object that the looters had dragged down from the second floor (fig. 5). I think that it was a copper statue base weighing more than 300 pounds that broke those stairs.

Having warned the Pentagon and the State Department that there would be looting of the museum, if the chance occurred, and that there would also be looting of archaeological sites, I thought that steps would have been taken to secure at least the museum. In fact, there was a list of eighty buildings to be secured in Baghdad; the Central Bank

was No. 1 and the museum was No. 2. Reaching Baghdad with too few troops, the military decided to secure only the Ministry of Oil, No. 13.

The world first learned of the looting of the museum on April 12, when print reporters and TV cameramen recorded the looters in the public galleries. That day, some museum employees who lived in the neighborhood went to the antiquities complex and chased out the looters, closed the doors, and hung a large sign saying that the United States was in charge. Drs. Jabber and Donny George, who had been unable to make it back across the bridges on the 8th, finally arrived on the 14th. It was not until the 16th, however, that a tank group showed up and finally secured the museum. On the 21st, Colonel Matthew Bogdanos arrived with a group of uniformed reservists, including policemen and FBI agents, who were to investigate what had occurred at the museum.

On May 8, I arrived in Baghdad with a group sent by *National Geographic* magazine. We were not only to document the damage to sites all over the country, but also to pay attention to the museum. The *Geographic* had its own special interest in finding out what had happened to the objects in the vaults of the Central Bank. There had been stories in the 1990s that Saddam Hussein had given the crowns from the Queens' Tombs of Nimrud to his mistress, but after the *Geographic* paid to pump fifty feet of water out of the bank's basement,

Bogdanos and the museum staff went in to open the vaults and found the objects all there, but some badly damaged by water.

I traveled south with half the team and got as far as Nippur, when I returned to Baghdad to join a special fact-finding mission from UNESCO. The rest of that mission was very restricted in its movement and had to live in tents at the United Nations compound (which was later blown up), while I stayed in a very comfortable hotel (with its own generator) and could go around the city to visit friends at will. After the mission left, I stayed about a week longer, getting a helicopter ride to inspect more than twenty sites in the south. We would record active looting on many of them, with up to 300 men working (fig. 6). From being a country that had an outstanding record of protecting sites, Iraq had become a prime source of illegal antiquities for the international market.

Although the museum was secure by late April 2003, the sites in the countryside were not. Even now, illegal digging is going on every day in southern Iraq, and with antiquities now becoming a "hot" field for investing, the pace will continue until the country again has some kind of government and can police itself.

An inventory of the museum's storerooms showed that more than 15,000 artifacts had been stolen. So far, about half have been recovered (fig. 7), including some major pieces that were



Figure 7. Box of small antiquities, including cylinder seals and mace-heads, some with IM (Iraq Museum) registration numbers. These artifacts were being offered for sale in a Baghdad market. Photo courtesy of Donny George

just too hot for the dealers to handle. But, any given week, probably more than 15,000 objects are ripped out of their context at archaeological sites and sent into the international market. Despite governmental bans in the United States and Britain on dealing in Iraqi antiquities, the market is still brisk in the rest of Europe and elsewhere. For every object that goes into the market, probably hundreds more are destroyed by the diggers. But the biggest loss is the information that might have been obtained if an archaeologist had found the objects in their original findspots. An object can tell you something just from its material and form, but that same object found in context can add many times to the information. Many of the sites being looted are early Sumerian cities and towns, where the world's first civilization began. Important capitals are now riddled with robbers' holes, and tunnels run underground in all directions. Whether archaeologists in the future will try to excavate these sites, or will judge that the damage is too severe to justify the expense of time and effort, is a question that must wait until work can resume in Iraq.

The losses to Iraq's and the world's heritage are immense. The Oriental Institute exhibition and symposium on April 12 addresses a range of issues related to the situation in Iraq, including the legal aspects of international agreements on conduct in time of warfare.



Figure 6. This photo of Isin was shot from a helicopter surveillance flight taken in January 2004. Near the edge of the looters' pits, looters themselves walk toward their vehicles, deterred briefly by the helicopter's arrival. Photo courtesy of Carabinieri T.P.C., Italia

RECOVERING THE LOST STORY OF THE RISE OF MAN: THE RESEARCH ARCHIVES OF THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE

Foy Scalf, Head of Research Archives

James Henry Breasted, founder of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, summarized the goal of the Institute as “an organized endeavor to recover the lost story of the rise of man.”¹ Part of this goal is fulfilled by the Oriental Institute Museum, which houses one of the premier collections of ancient Near Eastern artifacts in the United States. Another part is fulfilled by the scholars toiling away to interpret this bountiful material here at the Oriental Institute and worldwide. Each generation of scholars laboring to fulfill this lofty mission rests upon the shoulders of their predecessors and the work they have left behind. It is this voluminous work, published in an ever-increasing number of pages, that places the library at the very heart of every academic discipline. For ancient Near Eastern studies, the Research Archives of the Oriental Institute holds one of the most significant collections of research materials in the Western Hemisphere.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE RESEARCH ARCHIVES

The Research Archives is the scholarly library for the faculty, staff, and members of the Oriental Institute as well as the graduate students in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations of the University of Chicago. While especially rich in the areas of Assyriology and Egyptology, the aim of the Oriental Institute has always been to build a comprehensive collection of materials covering all aspects concerned with the study of the ancient Near East including history, archaeology, and philology. Founded in 1919 as the Oriental Institute Library, the original development of these facilities owed a great deal

to Johanne Vindenas, librarian for the Oriental Institute from 1924 to 1964. Her meticulous cataloging is renowned in library circles² and can be found on display in the sixteen volumes of the *Catalog of the Oriental Institute Library, University of Chicago*, published in 1970 under the supervision of Johanne’s successor as Oriental Institute Librarian, Shirley A. Lyon. This catalog documents the holdings of the Oriental Institute Library before the 1970 consolidation with the University library system in the newly built Joseph Regenstein Library. The magnitude of this work is overwhelming, with its 284,400 index cards covering over 50,000 volumes. Only after twenty years of acquisitions and electronic cataloging are we once again nearing similar numbers.



Johanne Vindenas, Oriental Institute Librarian 1924–1964

The current incarnation of the Oriental Institute library facilities, the Research Archives, was founded in 1972 under the directorship of Dr. John Brinkman at the request of scholars who needed immediate access to research

materials for the various projects being conducted at the Institute. Traveling to the Regenstein Library to check references was terribly inconvenient, further delaying projects already fifty years old. A non-circulating library would be a necessity within the Oriental Institute. Among the projects for which such a library was necessary was the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*, initiated in 1921. Checking references for the dictionary projects of the Oriental Institute would be greatly facilitated with an in-house archives. Those working on the dictionary, humorously referred to as “dictionary slaves,” had enough to frustrate them. Erica Reiner captured the arduous journey and scholarly wrestling matches of the Assyrian Dictionary staff in her book *An Adventure of Great Dimension*. Any added aggravation could only delay their work further. Thus, the Research Archives became their home away from the Assyrian Dictionary office.

Initially, the Research Archives collection consisted of the personal libraries of several illustrious scholars, including James Henry Breasted, Keith C. Seele, and William F. Edgerton. Since its outset in 1972, the Research Archives has made an attempt to comprehensively acquire materials, both new and old, relevant to the study of the ancient Near East through purchases and donations. Current acquisitions lists are circulated informally to Oriental Institute faculty, staff, and students, but these will soon appear on the Research Archives Web site (<http://oi.uchicago.edu/research/library/>).

Today there are roughly 50,000 volumes in the collection of the Research Archives, covering all fields within ancient Near Eastern studies. The library

continues to grow by approximately 1,500 volumes per year. Generous donations from the personal libraries of Gregory Areshian and Erica Reiner have added 2,000 volumes to the collection in the last year. These scholarly donations are crucial for the continued vitality of our disciplines by making available priceless scholarly works to future generations of researchers. Being both founded and expanded by such donations, the Research Archives continues to grow, providing its users with extensive coverage of the ancient Near East.

MAKING THE MOST OF THE RESEARCH ARCHIVES

All the publications acquired by the Research Archives after 1990 have been entered into a database that is publicly accessible online (<http://oilib.uchicago.edu>). The collection is cataloged and housed based on a unique call-number system: Journals (call number J/), Serials (call number S/), Monographs (call number = author's last name), Pamphlets (call number pam), and Reference (call number ref). In December 2007, at a reception honoring the generous donation of Dr. Gregory Areshian, the Research Archives inaugurated the Gregory Areshian Collection (call number GAC), a special collection of 1,500 books on the archaeology and history of central Asia, now housed in a separate room for individual study. In addition, the Online Catalog contains over 44,000 links to articles available from all over the world over the Web. Just look for the link called "Online Publication."

We are currently in the process of retrospectively cataloging the entire collection of the Research Archives. All serials have been cataloged, with 65 percent of the monographs and 35 percent of the journals remaining. Material not currently accessible in the Online Catalog can be

searched using the card catalog in the Research Archives. Through our cataloging initiatives, the Online Catalog of the Research Archives has become "an indispensable tool for all research workers in the field of the Near East," as James Henry Breasted described the original card catalog. In addition to the standard library information and following the trend-setting vision of James Henry Breasted, all volumes are analyzed in their entirety, including journal articles and independently authored chapters of monographs and series, producing a nearly comprehensive index of ancient Near Eastern studies.³ The database currently has over 260,000 individual records and will easily contain over 500,000 when the retrospective cataloging is completed over the course of the next few years.

The online catalog of the Research Archives is freely accessible to the public and, as an index to ancient Near Eastern studies, users may search the catalog using their preferred criteria. The results, containing full bibliographic data, acts as an indicator of the work done on a specific topic and the researchers who have tackled the subject. Users may also save individual records using the briefcase function and export them to build their own bibliographies on topics of their choosing. In the future, the Research Archives plans on moving to a more robust

database software environment that will provide users with further sorting flexibility and a more powerful search engine. Information on past and future library projects can be found in the pages of the Oriental Institute Annual Report, editions of which can be viewed on the Web (<http://oi.uchicago.edu/research/library/annualreports.html>).

HOW YOU CAN HELP

There are several ways you can help the Research Archives fulfill its mission. We welcome relevant book donations and volunteer help. Please send all book donation and volunteer inquiries to the Head of the Research Archives Foy Scalf (scalffd@uchicago.edu, (773) 702-9537). Financial donations help as part of the Oriental Institutes Research Endowment Campaign and can be made to the Research Archives in several ways. A simple monetary donation is greatly appreciated, but we also offer potential donors the option to "Adopt a Journal." By helping the Research Archives subscribe to a scholarly journal, you will have your donation commemorated by a book plate permanently placed inside your journal. For further information on making a financial donation or adopting a journal, please contact Development Director Monica Witczak (mwitczak@uchicago.edu, (773) 834-9775).

Notes

¹ James Henry Breasted, *The Oriental Institute. The University of Chicago Survey* 12, p. w. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1933. Italics in the original.

² Robert Wadsworth, "Johanne Vindenas Remembered," *Access* 36, No. 23, November 11, 1988: 2-3.

³ Breasted realized immediately the value of indexing the content of periodicals. Already in 1933, the card catalog of the Research Archives was "becoming more and more an indispensable tool for all research workers in the field of the Near East" (Breasted, *Oriental Institute*, p. 403).



The Elizabeth Morse Genius reading room of the Research Archives circa 1931. James Henry Breasted called it the "most beautiful room in the building"

THE SYRIAC MANUSCRIPT PROJECT PRESERVING TEXTS, PRESERVING CULTURE

Stuart Creason, Research Associate



The Mar Gabriel monastery in Tur Abdin, Turkey. Photo by A.-M. Saadi

The backlight completes its journey across the scanning bed, an image file appears on the computer desktop, and another small piece of humanity's literary and cultural heritage is preserved in digital form. In the case of the Syriac Manuscript Project, this piece of humanity's heritage is an image of two pages of a manuscript written in the Syriac language (a form of Aramaic), and it comes from a Syriac-speaking community located somewhere in the Middle East, one of the many communities where manuscripts such as this one have been patiently copied and carefully preserved for a millennium or more. And like so much in the modern Middle East, the future of this piece of humanity's heritage is in danger, and for reasons that are all too familiar.

The various Syriac-speaking communities that produced these manuscripts, and the thousands of others like them, are spread across modern Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, and Iraq, and in each of these countries they exist as minority communities, subject to all the misfortunes and depredations to which minority communities throughout the world have always been vulnerable. One recent example of this occurred in the autumn of 2003, when the Chaldean Patriarchal Library in Baghdad was burned, resulting in the

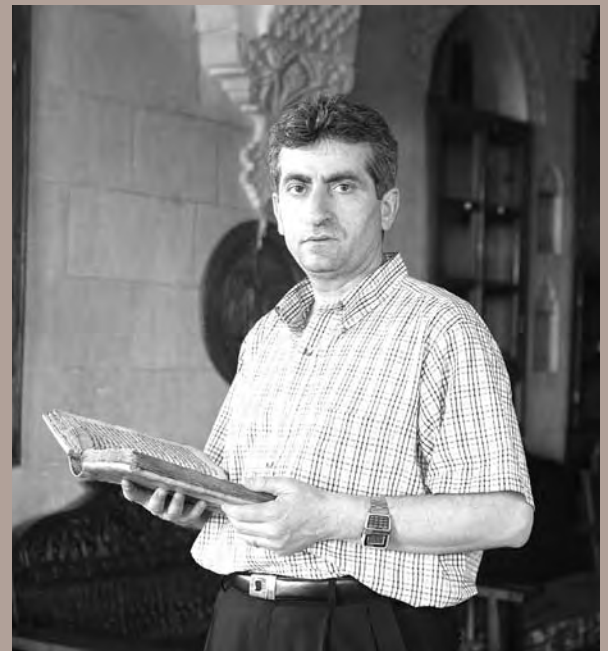
loss of all the manuscripts stored there. Other manuscripts produced by these communities remain in existence, but have fallen into private hands, usually with the intent of preserving them, but always with the result that these manuscripts have become lost not only to scholars but also to the members of these communities themselves.

In response to this situation, the Syriac Manuscript Project is creating an electronic archive of digital images of manuscripts from these communities and is working toward this goal in two different ways: first, by scanning the manuscripts pictured in an already existing photographic archive, and second, by photographing Syriac manuscripts still found in churches and monasteries at several locations in Syria and Turkey. This work is being performed under the direction of Stuart Creason, Ph.D., and Abdul-Massih Saadi, Ph.D., Co-Directors of the Project, both of whom have extensive experience teaching the Syriac language and working with Syriac manuscripts.

One part of the project's efforts began in the summer of 2005, when the

Oriental Institute acquired the rights to the Professor Arthur Vööbus Collection of Syriac Manuscripts on Film, a photographic archive of approximately 70,000 images found on nearly 2,600 strips and rolls of black-and-white 35 mm film that are contained in over 2,000 boxes and stored in the library at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, the owners of the collection and the institution at which Professor Vööbus served as Professor of New Testament and Early Church History until his death in 1988.

Beginning in the 1930s and continuing into the 1980s, Professor Vööbus regularly traveled to churches and monasteries in twenty-three different locations in the Middle East, including the major cities of Istanbul, Jerusalem, Damascus, and Baghdad; eight locations in northern and central Iraq (Alqosh, Tel Keph, Bartelli, Mar Mattai, Mar Behnam, Qaraqosh, Mosul, and Kerkuk), another eight in southwestern Turkey (Diyarbakir, Midyat, Bote, Anhel, Hah, Zaferan, Qartmin Mar Gabriel, and Mardin), two in Lebanon (Atshaneh and Sharfeh), and one in India (Pampakuda). During these



Abdul-Massih Saadi holding manuscript Mardin 259 in the main lounge of the former, historical see of the Syriac Patriarchate in Mardin, Turkey. Photo by Matthew Akyuz



Arthur Vööbus examining a manuscript on the balcony of the former, historical see of the Syriac Patriarchate in Mardin, Turkey. Photo from the Vööbus Collection



Bill Pickut working at the scanner in the Syriac Manuscript Project office. Photo by Gil Stein

travels, Vööbus photographed all or part of 695 manuscripts, some of which are quite small, containing fewer than fifty pages and photographed using a single piece of film, while others are surprisingly large, containing more than 500 pages and spread across many pieces of film.

The texts found in these manuscripts date from the sixth to the nineteenth centuries AD and encompass a broad range of topics, including history, law, science, theology, and biblical interpretation. Many of these texts are otherwise unknown to the outside world, being found only on the manuscript that Vööbus photographed, and some of them are found on manuscripts that have since been destroyed, including several that were located at the Chaldean Patriarchal Library in Baghdad. The film found in the Vööbus Collection now stands as the only remaining record of these writings.

Over the past two and a half years, the Syriac Manuscript Project has begun to scan and to catalog this collection, thereby ensuring its continued preservation and enhancing its accessibility to scholars and other interested individuals. Progress on these two tasks has been slow, in part because of the amount of preparatory work that first had to be performed

and in part because of the difficulty in securing the necessary financial support for the project. However, as of February 1, 2008, 4,605 images on 227 pieces of film depicting portions of sixty-two manuscripts from fourteen different locations had been scanned, and about 1,500 of them had been cataloged. Though this is a good start, it is critically important that the pace of the work be increased over the coming months and years, because some of the film (about ten percent) is in rather poor condition and must be scanned before it deteriorates further (see photo below).

The other part of these efforts began in the summer of 2003, during which time Dr. Saadi first traveled to churches and monasteries in eastern Syria and southeastern Turkey. The number of manuscripts in these churches and monasteries numbers in the tens of thousands and the number of pages contained within these manuscripts in the millions. Since that time three more

trips have been taken, the latest of which was in the summer of 2007, and during these four trips Dr. Saadi has taken 4,645 digital photographs, which represents a complete or partial photographic record of twenty-nine different manuscripts found at two locations: Mardin, Turkey, and Qamishli, Syria.

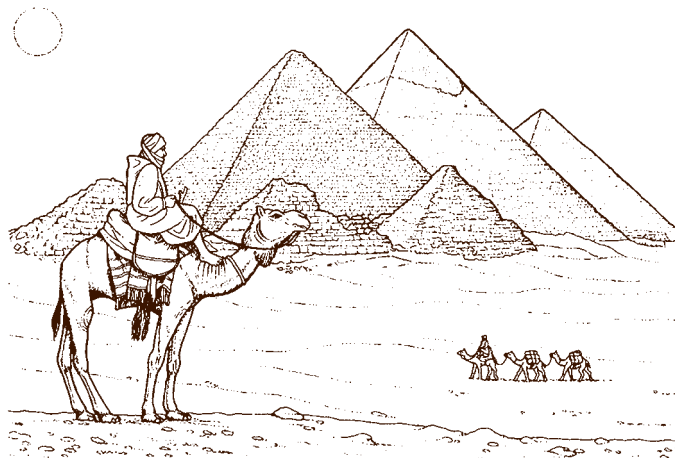
These two efforts have resulted in an electronic archive that currently stands at more than 9,000 digital images (18,000 manuscript pages). But this figure represents just a tiny fraction of the material that needs to be preserved. Much more needs to be done, and so the just-scanned image is moved into a folder, the scanning software moves on to the next frame of film, and the backlight once again begins its journey across the scanning bed.



Digital image of two pages from a manuscript photographed at Hah, Turkey. The emulsion on the piece of film from which this image was scanned has begun to deteriorate and break down, darkening the negative and producing the lighter bands across the image (also notice the fuzzy hands at upper left). Photo by Arthur Vööbus

TRAVEL PROGRAM 2009

The Oriental Institute is planning new and exciting itineraries to locations across the Middle East for 2009 and 2010. Featuring exclusive site visits and on-site learning, Oriental Institute Travel Programs are escorted by our own world-renowned scholars and researchers, and are accompanied by local guides to give you the most in-depth experience of the ancient world in a modern context. Look for destination and itinerary announcements in summer 2008. For questions about the Oriental Institute Travel Program, visit us online at <http://oi.uchicago.edu/getinvolved/member/travel.html> or contact Sarah Sapperstein, Membership Coordinator, (773) 834-9777 or e-mail: oi-membership@uchicago.edu



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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, no refunds will be granted, but if the Museum 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. Only those registered for classes may attend them. The Museum Education Office reserves the right to refuse to retain any student in any class at any time.

SPRING 2008 CALENDAR

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

APRIL

- 2 | WEDNESDAY** **Excavations at Edfu, Egypt**
Members' Lecture
7:00 PM
See page 18 for details
- 6 | SUNDAY** **Iran: Seven Faces of a Civilization**
Film
2:00 PM
See page 13 for details
- 7 | MONDAY** **Stolen History: The Looting of Iraq's Past**
Adult Education Course
Mondays, April 7–June 2
7:00–9:00 PM
See page 16 for details
- 8 | TUESDAY** **Arts and Letters of the Achaemenid Persian World**
Special Lectures
6:00 PM
See page 17 for details
- 9 | WEDNESDAY** **You Say *Watar*, I Say Water: In Search of Indo-Europeans**
Adult Education Course
Wednesdays, April 9–May 28
7:00–9:00 PM
See page 16 for details
- 10 | THURSDAY** **Catastrophe! The Looting and Destruction of Iraq's Past**
Special Exhibit Opening Event
5:30–8:30 PM
See page 15 for details
- 12 | SATURDAY** **Looting the Cradle of Civilization: The Loss of History in Iraq**
An Oriental Institute/Graham School of General Studies Symposium
9:30 AM–4:00 PM, Reception follows
See page 14 for details
- 13 | SUNDAY** **Mesopotamia: I Have Conquered the River**
Film
2:00 PM
See page 13 for details
- 14 | MONDAY** **Cuneiform by Mail**
Adult Education
Correspondence Course
April 14–August 4
See page 15 for details
- 20 | SUNDAY** **Egypt: Journey to the Global Civilization**
Film
2:00 PM
See page 13 for details
- 27 | SUNDAY** **Nubia and the Mysteries of Kush**
Film
2:00 PM
See page 13 for details
- Idols and Iconography**
Oriental Institute/Smart Museum of Art Cross-Campus Tour
2:00–4:00 PM
See page 18 for details

MAY

- 3 | SATURDAY** **Mayor Daley's Kids and Kites Festival**
Family Event
10:00 AM–3:00 PM
See page 13 for details
- 4 | SUNDAY** **Egypt's Golden Empire, Part 1**
Film
2:00 PM
See page 13 for details
- Cuisine and Cookery of the Near East**
The Cuisine of Afghanistan
Kabul House Restaurant
7:00 PM
See page 17 for details
- 7 | WEDNESDAY** **Excavating Ashkelon, Seaport of the Philistines**
Members' Lecture
7:00 PM
See page 18 for details
- 11 | SUNDAY** **Egypt's Golden Empire, Part 2**
Film
2:00 PM
See page 13 for details

SPRING 2008 CALENDAR

MAY

- 14 | WEDNESDAY **Catastrophe! The Looting and Destruction of Iraq's Past**
Gallery Tour
12:15 PM
See page 15 for details
- 17 | SATURDAY **Middle East on the Prairie: An Architectural Tour of the Oriental Institute**
Tour
1:30–2:30 PM
See page 16 for details
- 18 | SUNDAY **Out of the Fiery Furnace: From Stone to Bronze**
Film
2:00 PM
See page 13 for details
- 22 | THURSDAY **"After Reading Shakespeare"**
Special Concert Event
6:30 PM
Yelda Khorsabad Court
See below for details
- 25 | SUNDAY **Out of the Fiery Furnace: From Swords to Ploughshares**
Film
2:00 PM
See page 13 for details

JUNE

- 1 | SUNDAY **Pioneer to the Past: The Life and Times of James Henry Breasted**
Film
2:00 PM
See page 13 for details
- 4 | WEDNESDAY **Death at Tombos: Pyramids, Iron, and the Rise of the Nubian Dynasty**
Members' Lecture
7:00 PM
See page 18 for details
- 8 | SUNDAY **Cleopatra's Palace: In Search of a Legend**
Film
2:00 PM
See page 13 for details
- 11 | WEDNESDAY **Passport to the Middle East: Desserts in the Desert**
Gallery Reception
7:00 PM
See page 19 for details
- 15 | SUNDAY **The Dead Sea Scrolls: Secrets of the Caves**
Film
2:00 PM
See page 13 for details

SPECIAL CONCERT

"AFTER READING SHAKESPEARE"

Matt Haimovitz, Cello

Thursday, May 22

6:30 PM

Yelda Khorsabad Court

Reception follows

The Oriental Institute and University of Chicago Presents invite you to a special concert featuring cellist Matt Haimovitz, one of today's most exciting and adventurous young musicians. Held amidst the treasures of the Yelda Khorsabad Court, this concert includes both classical and newly composed works with literary themes that highlight authors ranging from Shakespeare to Mark Twain. Enjoy great music in a magnificent setting and then meet the artist himself at a post-concert reception.

Special Guest: The concert is introduced by David Bevington, Phyllis Fay Horton Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus in Humanities and Professor Emeritus in English Language and Literature and Comparative Literature.

TICKET PRICE: \$25 per person, including reception. Advance purchase is encouraged; space is limited. For tickets, call University of Chicago Presents at (773) 702-8068, or e-mail: concert-office@uchicago.edu

Matt
Haimovitz,
cellist



SUNDAY FILMS

Each Sunday afternoon, enjoy the best in documentary or feature films on the ancient Near East at the Oriental Institute. Films begin at 2:00 PM and are free. Unless otherwise noted, running times range from thirty to fifty minutes. Following the films, museum docents will be available in the galleries to answer questions about our exhibits.

April 6 *Iran: Seven Faces of a Civilization (2007)*

This major new documentary uses the latest technology to showcase the celebrated art and archaeology of Iran over 7,000 years. A cinematic adventure that features spectacular graphic reconstructions superimposed on images of actual architectural remains, the film brilliantly recaptures the ancient treasures of Iran in ways never before possible.

April 13 *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 recreation of life along the Euphrates River more than 4,000 years ago.

April 20 *Egypt: Journey to the Global Civilization (2000)*

The disciplines of archaeology, anthropology, engineering, and climatology contribute to a thought-provoking examination of this great ancient civilization and its contributions to world culture.

April 27 *Nubia and the Mysteries of Kush (2001)*

This film highlights the splendors of an ancient kingdom in what is now the country of Sudan. Footage includes visits to several archaeological sites, focusing on the discoveries and preservation efforts underway. Created by Emmy Award-winning producer Judith McCrae, the film also explores the natural beauty of the region, accompanied by an original musical score composed by Nubian artist Hamza El Din.

Our May showings begin with *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.

May 4 *Egypt's Golden Empire. Part 1.* 90 minutes

May 11 *Egypt's Golden Empire. Part 2.* 90 minutes

May 18 *Out of the Fiery Furnace: From Stone to Bronze (1984)*

This episode from a PBS series on the discovery and use of metal resources highlights bronze, the first high-tech metal of ancient times.

May 25 *Out of the Fiery Furnace: From Swords to Ploughshares (1984)*

This episode traces the transition from bronze to iron, and the impact of this change on human history.

June 1 *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.

June 8 *Cleopatra's Palace: In Search of a Legend (1999)*

Narrated by Omar Sharif, this film tells the story of the underwater excavations that led to the discovery of the remains of Cleopatra's palace in the harbor at Alexandria in Egypt.

June 15 *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Secrets of the Caves (1993)*

This film tells the remarkable story of the discovery and acquisition of the thousands of fragments and manuscripts known as the Dead Sea Scrolls.

FAMILY EVENT

MAYOR DALEY'S KIDS AND KITES FESTIVAL

Saturday, May 3

10:00 AM–3:00 PM

The Museum of Science and Industry

57th Street & Lake Shore Drive

Free

Come fly a kite with the Oriental Institute Museum at Mayor Daley's Kids and Kites Festival! Watch professional kite-flying demonstrations and decorate and fly your own kite at this outdoor fest. Visit the Oriental Institute Museum booth for special ancient Egyptian-inspired activities.

This program is co-sponsored by the Mayor's Office of Special Events.

ORIENTAL INSTITUTE/GRAHAM SCHOOL OF GENERAL STUDIES SYMPOSIUM

LOOTING THE CRADLE OF CIVILIZATION

THE LOSS OF HISTORY IN IRAQ

The looting of the Iraq National Museum in Baghdad stunned the world in 2003. Much less well known is the ongoing looting of archaeological sites throughout Iraq, which poses an even greater threat to the history of the land that gave the world its earliest writing system, its first cities, and the concept of the rule of law. Mesopotamia — modern-day Iraq — is quite literally the cradle of civilization, making the disappearance of its cultural patrimony a loss for all humanity.

This symposium offers the unparalleled opportunity to examine the archaeological tragedy taking place in Iraq with scholars and experts who have experienced the situation first hand. Hear the latest information on the looting of the Iraq Museum, what has been lost and what has been recovered. See how illicit digging takes place at sites throughout Iraq, and the ways looted artifacts move from Iraq to art markets around the world. Discover how scholars are attempting to work with the United States military and the Iraqi government to protect Iraq's threatened archaeological sites. Learn about the laws safeguarding cultural property during wartime and the challenges these laws are facing in Iraq.

— SYMPOSIUM PRESENTERS INCLUDE —

DONNY GEORGE

Former Director of the Iraq National Museum in Baghdad

PATTY GERSTENBLITH

Professor, College of Law, DePaul University, Chicago,
and Director of DePaul's Program on Cultural Heritage Law

MCGUIRE GIBSON

Professor of Mesopotamian Archaeology, University of Chicago

ABDULAMIR HAMDANI

Director of Antiquities, Nasiriya Province in Southern Iraq

JOHN RUSSELL

Professor of Art, Massachusetts College, and former Deputy Advisor
to the Iraqi Minister of Culture and the Coalition Provisional Authority

ELIZABETH STONE

Professor of Mesopotamian Archaeology, SUNY Stony Brook University, New York

Offered in conjunction with the special Oriental Institute exhibit *Catastrophe! The Looting and Destruction of Iraq's Past*, this symposium also includes a viewing of the exhibit and the world-renowned collection of ancient art and artifacts on display in the Oriental Institute Museum's Edgar and Deborah Jannotta Mesopotamian Gallery.

Fee: \$65 for Oriental Institute members; \$75 for non-members. Includes packet of materials, morning coffee, exhibit viewing, and closing reception. Pre-registration required. Optional box lunches available upon registration; see page 10. CPDUs: 6

SATURDAY, APRIL 12, 2008 • 9:30 AM TO 4:00 PM
RECEPTION FOLLOWS • ORIENTAL INSTITUTE

SPECIAL EXHIBIT EVENTS

CATASTROPHE!

THE LOOTING AND DESTRUCTION OF IRAQ'S PAST

EXHIBIT OPENING/VIGIL

Thursday, April 10 • 5:30 PM–8:30 PM • Free

Join us for a very special evening highlighting the opening of the exhibit *Catastrophe! The Looting and Destruction of Iraq's Past*. This event, which takes place on the fifth anniversary of the looting of the Iraq National Museum in Baghdad, includes:

5:30–6:30 PM • Members' Reception • Oriental Institute Research Archives

Join Oriental Institute researchers and curators for an exclusive reception before the evening's public programming. This portion of the evening's activities is open only to Oriental Institute members, donors, and friends, and their guests.

6:30 PM • Public Lecture: "The Destruction of Iraq's Cultural Heritage: The View from Five Years On" • Breasted Hall

McGuire Gibson, Professor of Mesopotamian Archaeology and Co-Curator of the special exhibit, *Catastrophe! The Looting and Destruction of Iraq's Past*.

7:15 PM • Exhibit Viewing • Marshall and Doris Holleb Family Special Exhibits Gallery

8:00 PM • Vigil • Yelda Khorsabad Court

Organized in conjunction with SAFE/Saving Antiquities for Everyone. Vigils are taking place at universities, museums, public and private schools, and other venues around the world to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the looting of the Iraq National Museum in Baghdad.

GALLERY TOUR

Katharyn Hanson

Wednesday, May 14

12:15 PM

Free

Meet in Museum Lobby

Discuss the archaeological devastation taking place in Iraq during this lunchtime tour of the exhibit led by Co-Curator Katharyn Hanson.

CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

CUNEIFORM BY MAIL

Dennis Campbell

April 14–August 4

Registration Deadline: April 4

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 who wrote texts in the Akkadian language — used cuneiform to write a wide variety of documents such as law collections, private and official letters, business records, royal inscriptions, myths and epics, and scientific and astronomical observations. This eight-lesson course familiarizes students with the development and history of the cuneiform script in the ancient Near East while teaching them 110 frequently used cuneiform signs and providing an introduction to the Akkadian language.

Complete each lesson and return the exercises by mail or fax to the instructor, who corrects the exercises, answers any questions, and returns the materials to you. This course begins on Monday, April 14, and continues for 16 weeks. Registration deadline: April 4. Pre-registration is required.

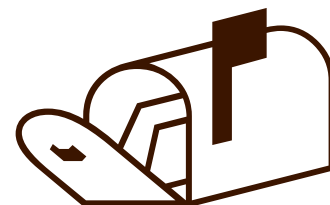
INSTRUCTOR: Dennis Campbell graduated from the University of Chicago's Department of Near Eastern Languages in Civilizations with a Ph.D. in Hittitology. A member of the Chicago Hittite Dictionary project, his areas of interest are the peoples, cultures, and languages of ancient Anatolia and Syria.

CPDUs: 16

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Snell, Daniel C. *A Workbook of Cuneiform Signs. Aids and Research Tools in Ancient Near Eastern Studies* 5. Malibu: Undena Publications, 1979.

Walker, C. B. F. *Cuneiform. Reading the Past* 3. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press and the British Museum, 1987.



ADULT EDUCATION COURSES

The following two courses are co-sponsored by the Graham School of General Studies. Each course offers Teacher Recertification CPDUs from the Illinois State Board of Education. For more information, call Museum Education at (773) 702-9507.

STOLEN HISTORY: THE LOOTING OF IRAQ'S PAST

Katharyn Hanson

Mondays, April 7–June 2

7:00–9:00 PM

At the Gleacher Center, 450 Cityfront Drive

In April 2003, the world was shocked by reports of the looted Iraq National Museum in Baghdad. Since 2003, the ongoing looting of Iraq's archaeological sites has been sporadically reported in the mainstream media. Yet the true story of Iraq's lost cultural heritage is rarely discussed. Why are archaeological sites and museums looted? Who profits from this plunder? Where have the looted artifacts from Iraq gone? What has been done in the past to stop looting and what can we do in the future? This course examines these questions with current examples from Iraq. Designed in connection with the Oriental Institute Museum's special exhibit *Catastrophe! The Looting and Destruction of Iraq's Past*, class sessions focus on the looting of Iraq's museums and archaeological sites and detail the archaeological significance of these stolen artifacts. Discussion also includes more general issues involved in the protection of cultural heritage, such as the relationship between looting and the illicit antiquities trade, as well as efforts to curb looting through U.S. domestic and international laws.

One course session takes place at the Oriental Institute to examine relevant artifacts from the museum's world-renowned collection on ancient Iraq and to tour the special exhibit *Catastrophe! The Looting and Destruction of Iraq's Past*.

INSTRUCTOR: Katharyn Hanson is a graduate student in Mesopotamian Archaeology in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at the University of Chicago. She is also Co-Curator of the exhibit *Catastrophe! The Looting and Destruction of Iraq's Past*.

CPDUs: 16

REQUIRED TEXT:

The instructor will provide a packet of reading materials at the first course session.

This class meets at the Gleacher Center from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM on Monday evenings beginning April 7 and continuing through June 2. There will be no class on Memorial Day, May 26. Pre-registration is required.

ORIENTAL INSTITUTE TOUR

THE MIDDLE EAST ON THE PRAIRIE: AN ARCHITECTURAL TOUR OF THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE

Saturday, May 17

1:30–2:30 PM

Free

Join Egyptologist Emily Teeter for an architectural tour of the exuberant neo-Middle Eastern ornamentation of the Oriental Institute building designed by Mayers, Murray & Phillip. During the tour, discover exterior plaques that represent Babylonian genies, Phoenician boats, and Egyptian gods; the magnificent entry showing a scientist inheriting wisdom from a pharaoh, the main stairway with balustrades fashioned after Assyrian lions, ceiling lamps in the form of ancient pottery, and many other features.

YOU SAY *WATAR*, I SAY WATER: IN SEARCH OF INDO-EUROPEANS

Ilya Yakubovich

Wednesdays, April 9–May 28

7:00–9:00 PM

At the Oriental Institute

What do people in today's America and the Hittites of ancient Turkey have in common? The answer is language! Both spoken English and Hittite developed from a common language called Proto-Indo-European. This connection can be seen in similar words: ancient Hittites said *watar*, while we say "water."

About one half of the world's current population speaks various Indo-European languages. But what prompted a group of Indo-European tribes, who occupied a compact territory somewhere near the Black Sea about 4000 BC, to begin moving across the globe, incorporating new peoples into their own? Can we say anything about the landscape they inhabited, the foods they ate, or the gods they worshipped, based on an understanding of their language?

Linguists who specialize in the study of ancient languages believe we can. This class explores ways linguists reconstruct an original language from its descendants, and how cultural discoveries can emerge from this reconstruction. We then follow the destinies of various Indo-European peoples as they began their wanderings across Eurasia. Special emphasis is placed on such Indo-European-speaking peoples as the Hittites, Persians, and Armenians, who once lived or still reside in the Middle East.

INSTRUCTOR: Ilya Yakubovich is a Ph.D. candidate in the University of Chicago's Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations. He specializes in the Indo-European languages of the ancient Near East and is the author of numerous publications; most are devoted to Iranian and Anatolian philology and Indo-European linguistics.

CPDUs: 16

REQUIRED TEXT:

Mallory, J. P. *In Search of the Indo-Europeans: Language, Archaeology, and Myth*. New York: Thames & Hudson, 1989.

RECOMMENDED TEXT:

Fortson, B. W. *Indo-European Language and Culture: An Introduction*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004.

This class meets at the Oriental Institute from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM on Wednesday evenings beginning April 9 and continuing through May 28. Pre-registration is required.



CUISINE AND COOKERY OF THE NEAR EAST

THE CUISINE OF AFGHANISTAN

Sunday, May 4

7:00 PM

Kabul House Restaurant

3320 Dempster Avenue

Skokie, IL 60076

The Oriental Institute continues its special series of dining experiences focusing on the cuisine and cookery of the Near East. Join us to expand your culinary knowledge and recipe repertoire at Kabul House Restaurant, where owner and master chef Abdul Qazi introduces you to traditional Afghani dishes from his homeland. The unique cuisine of Afghanistan features sumptuous dishes of fresh meats, aromatic spices, savory vegetables, nuts, and fruits, all accompanied by a specially seasoned long grain rice that the restaurant imports from Afghanistan. Enjoy a complete meal that includes Kabul House's signature appetizers and salads, an array of entrees and desserts, and a choice of beverages. The chef explains the preparation and history of each dish and provides a copy of his favorite recipe for you to try at home. Don't miss this evening at a restaurant that Zagat Survey calls a "North suburban gem" and that guests on WTTW's Check Please! praised as "a wonderful dining experience."

Sunday evening, May 4, 7:00 PM. Meet at Kabul House Restaurant, 3320 Dempster Avenue, Skokie, IL 60076. Parking is available in a lot directly in front of the restaurant.

PROGRAM FEE: \$39 for Oriental Institute members; \$45 for non-members. Fee includes full meal, tax, gratuity, and recipes to take home. Wine provided compliments of the Oriental Institute. Pre-registration required.

FOCUS ON ANCIENT PERSIA

ARTS AND LETTERS OF THE ACHAEMENID PERSIAN WORLD: SEEING THEM, UNDERSTANDING THEM, AND SAVING THEM WITH DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

Join us for two special presentations on the preservation of Achaemenid cultural heritage. This event is free and open to the public. Reception to follow.

Tuesday, April 8 • 6:00 PM
Oriental Institute • Breasted Hall

HOUSING ACHAEMENID ARTIFACTS AND MAKING THEM AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET: A VIRTUAL MUSEUM FOR VISIT AND STUDY

Dr. Pierre Briant
Professeur d'histoire et civilisation du monde achéménide et de l'empire d'Alexandre
Collège de France, Paris

MAVI, the Interactive Virtual Achaemenid Museum, came online in September 2006, after five years of research and construction. Initiated and directed by Professor Briant at the Collège de France, Paris, the Web site, achemenet.com, has already become the hub of international scholarship on the Achaemenid Persian empire. The aim of the new MAVI site is to assemble and arrange high-quality images of the vast cultural heritage of the Achaemenid empire and to make them available to the entire online world in a way that enables both the pleasure of browsing a museum and the craft of exact examination and study. Professor Briant demonstrates the site and discusses its capabilities.

SAVING AND SHARING THE PERSEPOLIS FORTIFICATION TABLETS: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Dr. Matthew W. Stolper
John A. Wilson Professor of Oriental Studies,
University of Chicago, and Director of the
Persepolis Fortification Archive Project

The Oriental Institute discovered tens of thousands of clay tablets and fragments in 1933, during excavations at the Achaemenid Persian capital of Persepolis. They were all pieces of one thing, the Persepolis Fortification Archive. After decades of study, this unique archive has proved to be the largest, most complex, and most consequential documentary source of any kind from within the Achaemenid Persian empire, and it continues to produce a stream of new data and occasional complete surprises. Having survived the burning of the Persian capital by Alexander the Great in 329–330 BC, the tablets now face a second threat — a legal battle that could lead to the dismemberment of this unique archive if it is seized and auctioned off piecemeal. Professor Stolper speaks on his team's race to document the Persepolis Tablets and distribute the results to the online world.

For inquiries or to RSVP, please contact Kaye Oberhausen • telephone: (773) 702-5044 • e-mail: oberhausen@uchicago.edu

MEMBERS' LECTURES

Lectures are held Wednesday evenings at 7:00 PM in Breasted Hall at the Oriental Institute. Lectures are free and open to the public with receptions to follow.

EXCAVATIONS AT EDFU, EGYPT

Nadine Moeller, Assistant Professor of Egyptian Archaeology, Oriental Institute

Wednesday, April 2

7:00 PM

We are pleased to introduce Dr. Nadine Moeller as the newest member of the Oriental Institute faculty. Dr. Moeller earned her Ph.D. at Cambridge and is currently director of excavations at Tell Edfu, Egypt, one of the most important sites in the development of ancient Egyptian and Near Eastern civilization. This lecture presents not only the history of this site, but also recent developments in its excavation and research.

EXCAVATING ASHEKLON, SEAPORT OF THE PHILISTINES

Larry Stager, Harvard University

Wednesday, May 7

7:00 PM

We once knew about the mysterious Philistines mainly from the Hebrew Bible, as they were portrayed by their archenemies, the Israelites. Through the recent archaeological discoveries at three of the five main cities of the Philistines — Ashdod, Ashkelon, and Ekron — the Philistines are beginning to speak for themselves... and their self-portrait is quite different from the stereotypical one. The vernacular architecture and furnishings, pottery, eating and drinking preferences of the Philistines reflect those of the Aegean rather than the Semitic world. Recent discoveries at Ashkelon reveal for the first time that some Philistines could read and write, using an Aegean script. Our excavations shed new light on Philistine relationships with Egyptians, Canaanites, and Israelites in the early Iron Age.

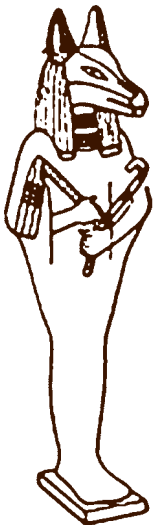
DEATH AT TOMBOS: PYRAMIDS, IRON, AND THE RISE OF THE NUBIAN DYNASTY

Stuart Tyson Smith, University of California at Santa Barbara

Wednesday, June 4

7:00 PM

Upon their assumption of the Egyptian throne in 750 BC, the Nubian pharaohs of Egypt's Twenty-fifth Dynasty appear to be more Egyptian than the Egyptians they conquered. Just three hundred years before, these same people were the leaders of "Wretched Kush," subjects of Egypt's New Kingdom empire (ca. 1500–1070 BC). Did descendants of Egyptian colonists guide this radical transformation from subordinate to conqueror, or did Nubians seize control over their own destiny? The combination of Egyptian and Nubian cemeteries at Tombos provides a unique opportunity to assess the legacy of Egypt's colonial occupation and its contribution to the emergence of one of Africa's earliest states.



ORIENTAL INSTITUTE/ SMART MUSEUM OF ART CROSS-CAMPUS TOUR

IDOLS AND ICONOGRAPHY

Smart Museum of Art • 5550 South Greenwood Avenue

Oriental Institute • 1155 East 58th Street

Sunday, April 27

2:00–4:00 PM

FREE

Join the Oriental Institute and the Smart Museum of Art for a collaborative guided tour that explores the complex relationships between objects of worship, their makers, and their audiences. Begin at the Smart Museum at 2:00 PM with a docent-led tour of the exhibition *Idol Anxiety* to examine how idols and iconography are used in various religious and cultural contexts. Then walk to the Oriental Institute to view and discuss objects of worship that span eras and cultures ranging from ancient Egypt and Israel to Anatolia and Mesopotamia.

The tour is free, but space is limited and advanced registration is required. Contact the Oriental Institute's Museum Education Office at (773) 702-9507 to register or for more information.

THANK YOU

for making the 2007–2008 Members' Lecture Series a great success! We look forward to bringing you the latest developments in ancient Near Eastern archaeology, philology, history, and culture in our upcoming 2008–2009 Members' Lecture Series, presented by world-renowned scholars.



The Members' Lecture Series at the Oriental Institute resumes in autumn 2008.

SAVE THE DATE
— Passport to the Middle East —
Desserts in the Desert
A WINE-AND-DESSERT EXPERIENCE

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11, 2008 AT 7:00 PM

For more Information, contact
 Kaye Oberhausen

(773) 702-5044 or oberhausen@uchicago.edu



Betsy Means as Gertrude Bell
 Photo by Anna Ressler

SPOTLIGHT ON ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

On December 13, 2007, eighty of our Associate Members had the privilege of joining Ms. Gertrude Bell in her Baghdad garden in the year 1919.

Ms. Betsey Means, a Chicagoland actress and founder of WomanLore, presented our members with a performance based on Ms. Bell's own writings, providing a first-hand account of the experiences, international politics, and Ms. Bell's personal perspective in the formation of the state of Iraq. The Yelda Khorsabad Court of the Oriental Institute Museum proved a dramatic backdrop to the one-woman show. Ms. Means then fielded questions from the audience and joined us for an early twentieth-century English-style tea reception.

Associate Members (\$100+ annually) at the Oriental Institute enjoy exclusive programming and unique opportunities to learn about and experience the ancient Near East. Along with the benefits of Annual Family membership, Associate Members enjoy enrollment in the North American Reciprocal Museums (NARM)

program, entitling them to members' benefits at over 250 museums and cultural attractions across the North American continent during their visits to those institutions. Associate Members may also take advantage of special offers at other Chicagoland cultural events, such as ticket specials on world music concerts at the Chicago Symphony. Breasted Society Members also enjoy Associate level benefits.

For more information about the benefits of Associate level membership at the Oriental Institute, please contact Sarah Sapperstein, Membership Coordinator, at (773) 834-9777, or e-mail: oi-membership@uchicago.edu

To learn more about WomanLore performances of famous women in history, visit <http://www.womanlore.com>

THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE

The University of Chicago

1155 East 58th Street • Chicago, Illinois • 60637

(773) 702-9514

THE SUQ CORNER

NEW AT THE SUQ

CATASTROPHE! The Looting and Destruction of Iraq's Past

Edited by Geoff Emberling and Katharyn Hanson

With an introduction by Professor McGuire Gibson, this up-to-date account describes the state of the Iraq National Museum in Baghdad and chronicles the damage done to archaeological sites by illicit digging.

Contributors include Donny George, John M. Russell, Katharyn Hanson, Clemens Reichel, Elizabeth C. Stone, and Patty Gerstenblith.

Published in conjunction with the exhibit of the same name opening at the Oriental Institute April 10, 2008, this book commemorates the fifth anniversary of the looting of the Iraq National Museum.

Available April 10 in The Suq and online: <https://oi.uchicago.edu/order/suq/>

