



# News & Notes

DIRECTOR'S LIBRARY  
ORIENTAL INSTITUTE  
UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

The Oriental Institute

Issued confidentially to members and friends

Not for publication

No. 64: October, 1980

## Kurban Höyük, Mound of Sacrifice, Explored In Turkey

August 11, 1980

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

As I write this letter, I am in effect taking advantage of the first quiet, peaceful moment we have had in the whirlwind of activity that began in mid-June. We are the six foreign (Western) team members of the Oriental Institute archaeological expedition to the proposed Karababa dam area on the Euphrates River in southeastern Turkey. Shortly after Elda Maynard wrote a newsletter article on our then-forthcoming excavation at the site of Kurban Höyük, permission was received from the Turkish authorities to begin our work.

And what work it has been! In the short span of time available to us, excavation supplies and equipment were purchased in three countries in three weeks, the team was assembled via phone, cable and train communications across four countries in three continents (only I was in Chicago at the time), and finally on July 10, we left Ankara for Urfa, the nearest major town to our site. We established a camp in the village of Cümcüme, a bare two kilometers from Kurban on July 18, living in three tents, one rented room in a mudbrick house, and with work areas and kitchen in the local school-house. On July 20, we began excavating although camp organization was still being set up. Why the hurry? We had to bring the excavation to an end and return to Ankara before August 12, the beginning of *bayram*, the festival—something like Christmas—marking the end of the holy Moslem month of Ramajan, after which many of us had stateside obligations to return to.

We were lucky; despite numerous potential difficulties—language barriers, the summer heat of 110-120° F., the unavailability of workers during the month of fasting and threshing, and the pressing schedule—we were able to exceed my most liberal hopes and goals, thanks mainly to the remarkable kindness of both Turks and foreigners and the conscientious hard work of the staff. We kept on schedule, found more workers than we needed, survived the weather without major illnesses, managed to communicate, found accommodations for this and the coming years (as well as a postal box!), formed a corps of local workers, including a cook, a foreman, driver, a guard, and other diggers, and most of all, dug far more than I had anticipated. In all, we cleared more than 300 m<sup>2</sup> in fourteen days, and worked out a system for processing finds and logistical support back at camp.

Kurban Höyük—which in Turkish means the mound of sacrifice (but for still unknown reasons)—is a fairly extensive double mound roughly 320 x 210 m in area, ten m in height



Urfa Wall. (Photo by A.M. Stratigos)

on the larger mound, and four m on the lower mound. We excavated on the slopes of the large mound, on top of the small mound, and in the low saddle between the mounds. What we found demonstrated that the site had been abandoned in the latter part of the Early Bronze Age, ca. 2300-2200 B.C., and had never been reoccupied or disturbed in later periods. Consequently, what we have is a site that is ideal for a broad exposure of remains dating precisely to the period of the Ebla archives. Indeed, architectural remains of this time period were found in all our trenches barely 10-30 centimeters beneath the surface. So far, we have recovered in one area a complex of rooms flanking a cobbled street. In another, monumental stone and mudbrick walls as well as plastered floors and a hearth indicate well preserved, free-

(Cont'd. on page 2)







## DID YOU KNOW?

A mountainous, continent-like feature in Venus's northern hemisphere is being named for Ishtar, the Babylonian goddess of love and war. A feature with smoother terrain near the equator will carry the name Aphrodite, the Greek Goddess of love, whose Roman name was Venus.

High policy on planetary names is made by the working group of Planetary Nomenclature of the International Astronomical Union, which has members from the U.S., the Soviet Union and Canada. The two new Venus names were proposed by U.S. scientists who've been analyzing the incoming Venus satellite data. The general rule is that major features will be named for goddesses and other mythical female figures, while small circular features will be named for famous women who are dead.

Under the rule, craters on the moon are named after deceased scientists. The same rule has been extended to craters and other features on the planet Mars. That has led to some overlap: the Polish astronomer Copernicus, for example, is honored by craters on both the moon and Mars.

Bud Haas  
Oriental Institute  
Visiting Committee

---

### Comments To The Editor: (Cont'd. from page 2)

too narrow number of similarities) it would only have shown that the pre-Hittite population of Anatolia was somehow akin (linguistically) to peoples known from the Caucasus in medieval to modern times. This, in itself, would not be impossible, although there is no proof. But not even Mészáros claimed that his "discovery" shed any light on the Hittite language!

And one omission: Why did you omit Tell Tayinat from the sites dug by the Syrian Expedition? We have that big column base from there, and other sculptures, though in the Antioch museum, were found by the O.I.

Sincerely yours,  
Hans G. Güterbock

Dr. Güterbock is Tiffany and Margaret Blake, Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus of Hittitology, The Oriental Institute. We are honored to have these erudite comments to share with our readers.

Dear Elda:

Your, "Breasted: Commander of An Empire, in the June issue of News and Notes, seems like something from the hand of Dr. Breasted or of our late friend and scholar, John A. Wilson. It has that magic spark. Like they, you have it!

I shall always be grateful to Dr. Wilson for many things; one of which, he introduced me to Dr. Breasted one bright May day, 1924, in his office in Haskell Hall. I can see that gentleman at his desk by a Gothic window overlooking the Quadrangle, the sunlight being reflected by his gold-rimmed glasses. Dr. Breasted was never idle.

Like John Wilson once wrote me, "You see you are a disciple of A.A. Stagg while I am a disciple of James Breasted." Hardly, I was a camp follower of all three of them. Who isn't?

Regards and Cheers,  
Just Tom Griffiths

Thanks to Mr. Griffiths, who writes from Palos Verdes, California, and is the author of "Life & Letters of John A. Wilson, Ph.D., L.L.D., L.H.D., Tom Griffiths," in Special Collections, Marietta (Ohio) College Lib., 1977.

-Elda Maynard, Editor

## From The Membership Office

This year's programs are quickly getting underway and first off is Members' Day. It will be held on Sunday, November 2, 1-5:00 P.M. Refreshments will be served.

Included in the activities will be tours of the basement and also, tours of the museum galleries led by our docent volunteers. In Breasted Hall there will be three movies: "Megiddo: City of Destruction"; "Iraq, Stairway to the Gods", and "Egypt, Gift of the Nile".

Joan Barghusen has scheduled special activities for children, so bring along the kids. Faculty and staff will be in their offices to show you their current research projects and archaeological expedition work. There will also be a table where your name can be written in hieroglyphs and cuneiform. A complete list of the day's activities will be available at the door. Please R.S.V.P. (753-2389).

\*\*\*\*\*

Please note that the November members' lecture "Ebla and the Bible" is TUESDAY, November 11, 8:00 P.M. in Breasted Hall and not Monday as earlier announced in the program schedule. Sorry for the confusion.

\*\*\*\*\*

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Zopolis of Evergreen Park were extremely pleased with the receptions held after the members' lectures last year. This summer they donated \$50 to the Institute in order to help us continue serving refreshments after the lectures. We wish to publicly thank Mr. and Mrs. Zopolis, and will welcome any and all contributions to help underwrite the cost of the food and beverages.

\*\*\*\*\*

A film "The Royal Archives of Ebla" which stars the Institute's own Profs. Robert Biggs and Ignace J. Gelb will be shown on PBS (Channel 11) on November 2 at 7:00 P.M. The movie was previewed by staff and faculty this summer, and received mixed reviews.

\*\*\*\*\*

Members in the suburbs who would be interested in helping to revive (or start) a suburban affiliate are asked to write me at their convenience. Several members have mentioned to me that it sometimes is inconvenient to travel to the Institute, but they want to keep in touch with our programs. If there is enough interest, we can plan lectures and discussion groups.

\*\*\*\*\*

Please note that the December members' lecture will be downtown at the Chicago Public Library Cultural Center (Michigan and Randolph) in the Theater (2nd Floor). Time: 6:00 P.M. The reception will precede the lecture at 5:00. Prof. Stager will speak on "Carthage: Port of the Mediterranean".

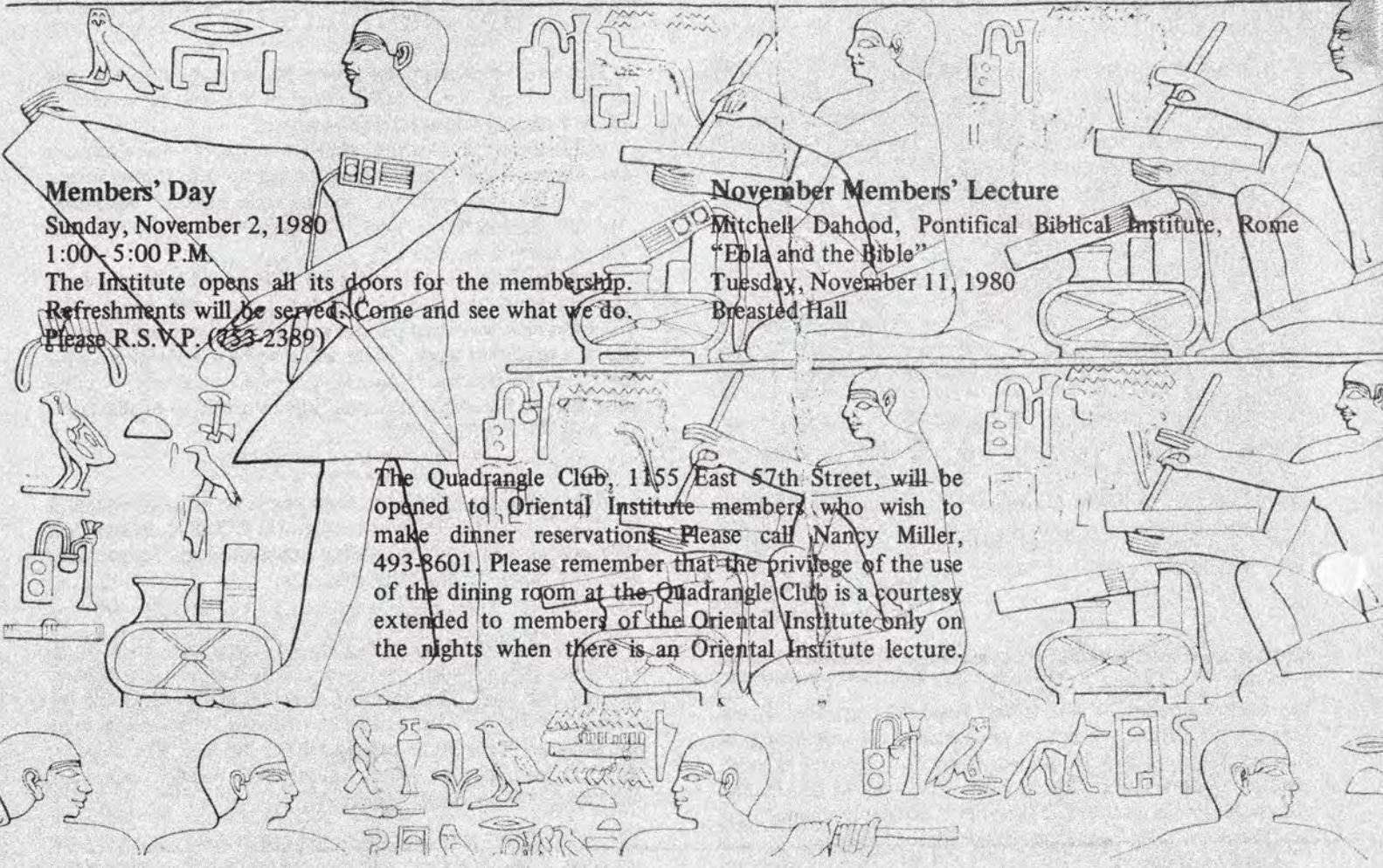
\*\*\*\*\*

A member who resides in Hyde Park has asked me for help to get rides to the members' lectures. If you can help, let me know.

The Membership Office phone number is 753-2389.  
More news next month.

Eugene Cruz-Uribe  
Membership Secretary





**Members' Day**

Sunday, November 2, 1980

1:00 - 5:00 P.M.

The Institute opens all its doors for the membership.

Refreshments will be served. Come and see what we do.

Please R.S.V.P. (733-2389)

**November Members' Lecture**

Mitchell Dahood, Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome

"Ebla and the Bible"

Tuesday, November 11, 1980

Breasted Hall

The Quadrangle Club, 1155 East 57th Street, will be opened to Oriental Institute members who wish to make dinner reservations. Please call Nancy Miller, 493-8601. Please remember that the privilege of the use of the dining room at the Quadrangle Club is a courtesy extended to members of the Oriental Institute only on the nights when there is an Oriental Institute lecture.



**The Oriental Institute**

The University of Chicago

1155 East 58th Street · Chicago, Illinois · 60637

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
BULK RATE  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS  
PERMIT NO. 1504

Dated Material

ORIENTAL INSTITUTE  
UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
DIRECTOR'S LIBRARY

Returned Postage Guaranteed