

# To the Members and Friends of the Oriental Institute

The Oriental Institute marks its sixtieth anniversary in 1979. After six decades of research into the history of early mankind, it is fitting that we pause for a glance over our past work and for a brief preview of things to come.

Since 1919 the Institute has been engaged in a variety of activities. More than twenty archeological expeditions have excavated or conducted areal surveys in countries of northern Africa and western Asia: Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Turkey, Syria, Palestine, Israel, Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and North Yemen. Philologists and lexicographers have worked with many languages, including Akkadian, Arabic, Aramaic, Coptic, Egyptian, Elamite, Ethiopic, Greek, Hebrew, Hittite, Old Persian, Pahlavi, Sumerian, and Syriac. Historians—both social scientists and humanists—have studied the ancient civilizations of the same areas. These labors of research and interpretation have produced more than two hundred and fifty published volumes of excavation reports and text editions, archeological syntheses and dictionaries, cultural essays and histories representing the Institute's most tangible contribution to ongoing scholarship in the field.

Less tangible but perhaps of even greater significance are the Institute's uncatalogued assets: its faculty and staff, past and present; its pioneering in archeological, historical, and linguistic techniques; its training of generations of students. From these assets issue its hopes for the future.

The next sixty years will offer challenges and opportunities in unexpected areas and dimensions. Although the Institute will remain committed to such long-term projects as the Assyrian Dictionary and the Epigraphic Survey, most of its energies will continue to be channeled into the research directions chosen by its individual members. What questions should be asked? What

corners or highways of antiquity should be illuminated? Individual competence, combined with research flexibility, will enable the Institute to tackle the challenges of the future with high standards of excellence and with enthusiasm.

This year's Annual Report will chronicle the events of 1978/79. Our archeologists have gone out to Iraq (Üç Tepe), Tunisia (Carthage), Turkey (Çayönü), and North Yemen. The Demotic Dictionary project has come of age with the advent of a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The first fascicle of the Hittite Dictionary is scheduled to go to press within a few weeks. The Epigraphic Survey and the Assyrian Dictionary continue their monumental progress. The Museum, under the assistance of a grant from the Institute of Museum Services, has been undertaking a much-needed renovation of its Palestinian Gallery.

During the past year, we have been fortunate in having Peggy Grant assume the chairmanship of the volunteers; her dedicated work and spirit of community have made this the most successful year yet for the docents. Georgianna Maynard has kindly served as Acting Manager of the Suq, in the absence of Ruth Marcanti. We owe a special debt of gratitude to them both.

It is a pleasure to thank the Visiting Committee and its chairman, Margaret B. Cameron, for their splendid support and especially for sponsoring the "Demotic Dinner" earlier this spring. We are also pleased to acknowledge once again the continuing support of our many members and friends, whose interest and help have made possible many of the projects described in the following pages.

June 12, 1979

JOHN A. BRINKMAN  
*Director*