

ANKARA, CIRCA 14 AD

THE EMPEROR AUGUSTUS CONSTRUCTS THE 'MONUMENTUM ANCYRANUM.' THIS MONUMENT IS INSCRIBED IN BOTH LATIN AND GREEK WITH THE RES GESTAE DIVI AUGUSTI, AUGUSTUS' ACCOUNT OF THE MOST IMPORTANT EVENTS OF HIS REIGN.

1907 AD

CORNELL PROFESSOR J.R.S. STERRETT ORGANIZES AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXPEDITION TO THE ASSYRO-BABYLONIAN ORIENT. THE OBJECTIVE: TO CAPTURE INSCRIPTIONS FROM ANCIENT MONUMENTS, AND RE-MAP THE GEOGRAPHY OF ANCIENT LANDS.

1920'S-2014

AFTER SCHOLARLY USE BY PROFESSOR STERRETT, THE SQUEEZE COLLECTION WAS STORED IN THE ATTIC OF THE GOLDWIN SMITH BUILDING ON CORNELL'S CAMPUS. 2012-THE CLASSICS DEPARTMENT RECEIVED A GRANT TO HAVE THE 'MONUMENTUM ANCYRANUM' SQUEEZES DIGITIZED. 2014-THE SQUEEZES ARE BROUGHT TO THE CONSERVATION LAB FOR TREATMENT AND STABILIZATION IN PREPARATION FOR DIGITIZATION.

"SQUEEZES" & "SQUEEZING"

"SQUEEZING" IS A METHOD USED IN THE FIELD BY ARCHAEOLOGISTS TO COLLECT INSCRIPTIONS FROM ANCIENT MONUMENTS. A DAMPENED PAPER IS PLACED OVER THE INSCRIBED SURFACE, BEATEN WITH A BRUSH, AND DRIED ON THE SURFACE.

ACCESSIBILITY

LIGHTWEIGHT AND PORTABLE, SQUEEZES OFFER AN ALTERNATIVE TO EXPENSIVE AND TIME INTENSIVE TRAVEL TO DISTANT LOCATIONS.

CONGRUITY

THE CONGRUITY OF A TEXT WAS OFTEN DISRUPTED IN TIMES OF CONQUEST OR POLITICAL CHANGES AS IT WAS COMMON FOR MONUMENTS TO BE MOVED FROM THEIR ORIGINAL LOCATIONS AND RE-PURPOSED FOR BUILDING MATERIALS. THE SQUEEZE ALSO ALLOWS FOR COMPARISON TO AND REVISION OF EXISTING INTERPRETATIONS, AS WELL AS POTENTIAL FOR FRAGMENTARY INSCRIPTIONS TO BE PIECED TOGETHER.

IMPERMANENCE & ACCURACY

AS A RESULT OF TIME, MAN-MADE AND NATURAL DISASTERS, MANY MONUMENTS ARE IN POORER CONDITION TODAY THAN THEY WERE AT THE TIME THE SQUEEZE WAS COLLECTED. BECAUSE THE ACCURACY OF PHOTOGRAPHS DEPENDS HEAVILY UPON THE LIGHT SOURCE, A SQUEEZE OFTEN PROVIDES THE MOST COMPLETE, ACCURATE, AND ACCESSIBLE COPY OF THE TEXT AVAILABLE TO DATE.

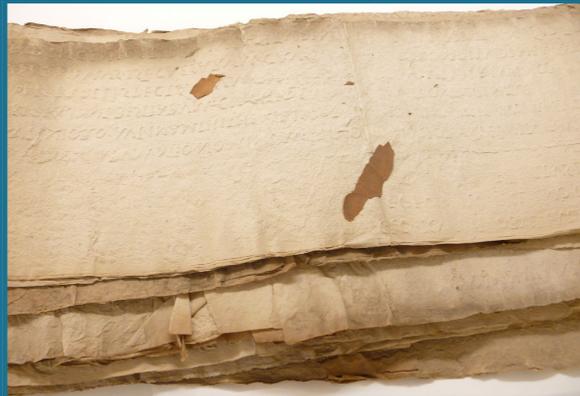
'MONUMENTUM ANCYRANUM.' ARTSTOR; PHOTOGRAPH PROVIDED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO



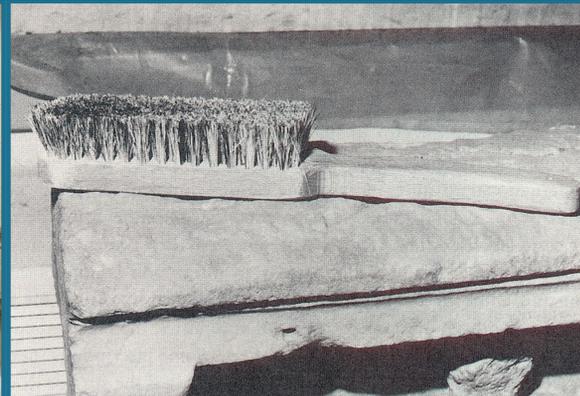
1907 CORNELL EXPEDITION TEAM TAKING A SQUEEZE AT QIRU BEL, ARSLAN TASH



THE SQUEEZES AS THEY ARRIVED TO THE CONSERVATION LAB



BRUSH USED TO BEAT THE DAMPENED PAPER INTO THE INCISED SURFACE



EPIGRAPHIC SQUEEZES

Modern Impressions of Ancient History

CONSERVATION TREATMENT

THE SQUEEZES ARRIVED TO THE LAB HEAVILY COATED WITH SURFACE SOIL - DUST, DIRT, AND INACTIVE MOLD. DUE TO THE TOPOGRAPHY OF THE SQUEEZES THE SURFACE SOIL IS HEAVILY INGRAINED, ESPECIALLY IN THE CURVES AND ANGLES OF THE RAISED IMPRESSIONS.

OBJECTIVE

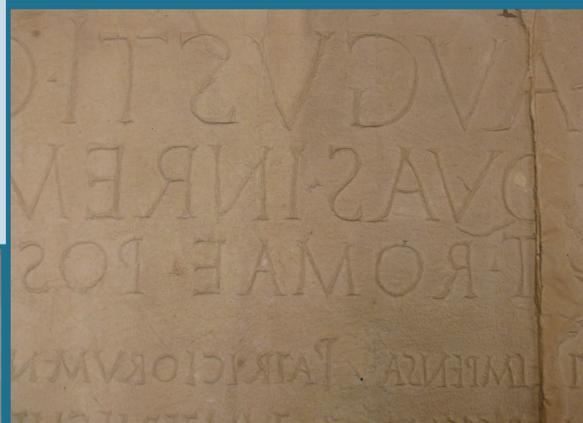
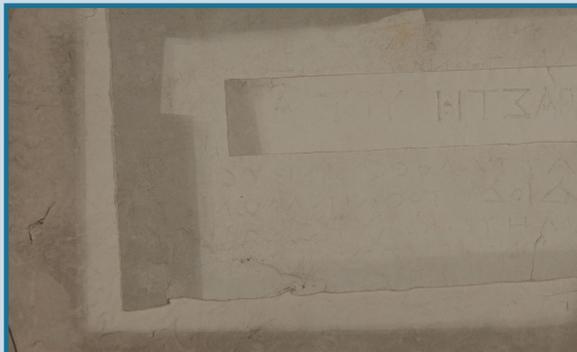
- 1) TO CLEAN AND STABILIZE PRIOR TO DIGITIZATION
- 2) TO PROVIDE A PERMANENT STORAGE SOLUTION TO ACCOMMODATE SIZE, QUANTITY, TOPOGRAPHY, AND STORAGE SPACE LIMITATIONS

CLEANING

A THREE TIERED TREATMENT SEQUENCE REDUCED THE BUILDUP OF DIRT AND DUST THAT HAD BECOME INGRAINED IN THE SURFACE:

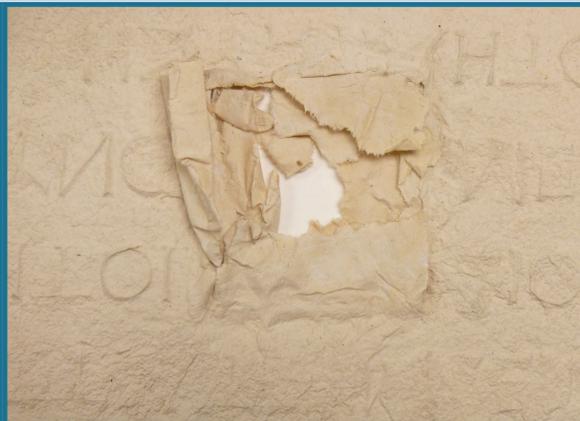
- 1) VACUUMING WITH A NILFISK HEPA VACUUM TO REMOVE LOOSE SURFACE SOIL
- 2) A SURFACE CLEANING WITH ABSORENE SPONGE ERASERS
- 3) A SECOND SURFACE CLEANING WITH LATEX FREE COSMETIC SPONGES

ACCUMULATED SURFACE SOIL ON THE SQUEEZES



ABOVE: VACUUMING IN PROGRESS
BELOW: CLEANING PROGRESSION FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: VACUUMED, SPONGE CLEANED, UNTREATED

THE MAIN PRIORITY IN CLEANING WAS NOT TO MAKE THE SQUEEZES PRISTINE, BUT TO REMOVE THE LOOSE SURFACE SOIL THAT WOULD CAUSE FURTHER DETERIORATION, INHIBIT THE DIGITIZATION PROCESS, OR BE A CONCERN FOR STORAGE AMONG THE UNIVERSITY'S COLLECTIONS.



DETAIL OF SURFACE TOPOGRAPHY

STABILIZATION

EPIGRAPHISTS STUDY BOTH THE INCISED IMPRESSIONS, BUT ALSO THE SURFACE OF THE MONUMENT. THE SQUEEZES CAPTURE CRACKS AND DENTS, AS WELL AS AREAS WHERE THE STONE WAS NOT CARVED OR PERHAPS SMOOTHED OVER FOR CORRECTION OR REUSE.

LOCAL HUMIDIFICATION REDUCED FOLDS AND CREASES THAT WERE NOT PART OF THE INHERENT NATURE OF THE ITEM'S TOPOGRAPHY. AREAS THAT HAD BEGUN TO DELAMINATE WERE GENERALLY LEFT ALONE UNLESS THEY WERE AT RISK OF BECOMING TORN OR PRESENTED POTENTIAL FOR LOSS. THESE AREAS WERE STABILIZED WITH JAPANESE TISSUE AND WHEAT STARCH PASTE.

STORAGE

THE SQUEEZES WILL BE PROTECTED IN ARCHIVAL FOLDERS, FIVE TO A FOLDER, AND SAFELY STORED WITHIN FLAT FILE STORAGE CABINETS IN RMC. THIS STORAGE SOLUTION ALLOWS FOR SECURE CARE AND HANDLING WITHIN THE ESTABLISHED PRESERVATION PRACTICES AS WELL AS AIDS IN THE EFFICIENCY OF WORK-FLOW FOR DIGITIZATION.



SEPARATING FIBERS UNDER MAGNIFICATION. DETAIL: FLAX FIBER MAGNIFIED UNDER POLARIZED LIGHT

FIBER ANALYSIS

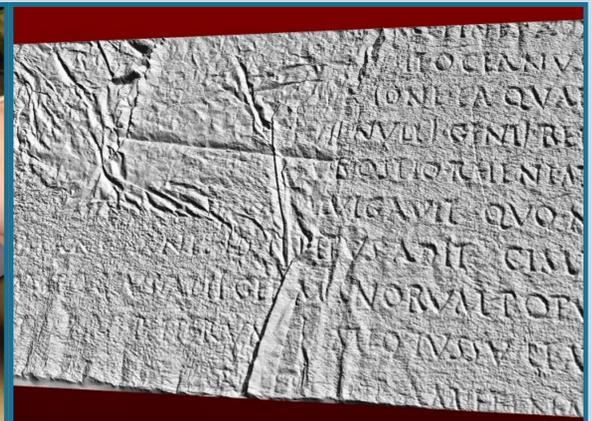
WHAT WERE THE SQUEEZES MADE OF THAT GAVE THEM THE QUALITIES TO WITHSTAND THE SQUEEZE MAKING PROCESS AND RETAIN THEIR STRENGTH AND FLEXIBILITY FOR THE PAST 107 YEARS?

EACH PLANT FIBER HAS ITS OWN UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS. A STUDY OF THE FIBER MORPHOLOGY WOULD REVEAL THE IDENTITY OF THOSE USED TO MAKE THE SQUEEZE PAPER.

THE PAPER HAD TO BE COMPOSED OF A FIBER OR FIBERS THAT WERE:

- 1) STRONG ENOUGH TO WITHSTAND THE BEATING DURING SQUEEZING
- 2) ABLE TO RETAIN THEIR STRENGTH UNDER APPLICATION OF MOISTURE
- 3) ABLE TO READILY ACCEPT AN IMPRESSION
- 4) DURABLE ENOUGH TO RETAIN THEIR STRENGTH OVER TIME

THE MOST PLAUSIBLE CANDIDATES USED TO MAKE THE SQUEEZE PAPER AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY WERE CHEMICAL SOFTWOOD PULP, FLAX, COTTON AND/OR ESPARTO. EACH OF THESE FIBERS WOULD GIVE THE SQUEEZES CERTAIN CHARACTERISTICS AND QUALITIES.



3-D RECONSTRUCTION OF A SQUEEZE

THE CHEMICALS AND PROCESSES ASSOCIATED WITH WOOD PULP MANUFACTURE COULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BRITTLE AREAS AND DISCOLORATION. ESPARTO WAS OFTEN ADDED TO CHEMICAL WOOD PULP TO PROVIDE STRENGTH. FLAX PAPER IS DURABLE AND STRONG. COTTON WOULD GIVE A PAPER THAT WAS READILY ABLE TO ACCEPT MOISTURE AND TAKE AN IMPRESSION.

THE J.R.S. STERRETT SQUEEZES APPEAR TO BE COMPOSED OF BAST FIBERS, MOST RESEMBLING FLAX. IN LIGHT OF THEIR STRENGTH AND RESILIENCE, THIS DOES MAKE SENSE. THE FLAX FIBERS WOULD GIVE THE SQUEEZES THE QUALITIES THAT THEY DO POSSESS: FLEXIBILITY, STRENGTH, ACCEPTANCE OF MOISTURE.

THIS PROJECT IS PART OF A LARGER INITIATIVE FUNDED BY THE GRANTS PROGRAM FOR DIGITAL COLLECTIONS IN ARTS AND SCIENCES. AFTER TREATMENT THE SQUEEZES WILL BE DIGITALLY IMAGED AND THEN RECONSTRUCTED IN 3-D. THESE IMAGES WILL BE PART OF AN ON-LINE RESOURCE FOR SCHOLARS OF ROMAN HISTORY AND EPIGRAPHY, AS WELL AS INCLUDED AS PART OF A COMPREHENSIVE ONLINE RESOURCE OF THE CORNELL COLLECTIONS OF ANTIQUITIES.