

Addendum

By Jim Dengate

Yesterday when describing the WHM as it was when I arrived at the UI in 1975, I forgot that there was originally an office between the Classical Museum and the Oriental Museum that had been turned into the Minoan-Mycenaean room filled with mostly replicas and some actual pots and terracotta figurines. It included the Vaphio cups and gold masks from the Shaft Graves at Mycenae. Unfortunately, Oscar Dodson had a habit when leading tours of not informing his audience that the gold items were indeed replicas. So, I had students turning up in my classes when I was first taught here saying how fortunate the UI was to have the gold mask of Agamemnon in its WHM! Sadly, under Georgette Merideth van Buitenen this room was subject to a robbery while the museum was open and some of the gold replicas were stolen and never recovered. The National Museum in Athens which sold these gold replicas no longer sold them after the robbery so they could not be replaced although there is still some the robber left in the collection of the Spurlock.

The parallel office space at the east end of the European Museum was the director's office where Oscar Dodson remained still doing his Athletic fundraising long after Georgette become Director. She finally was able to convince the Dean that he should be removed and turned the room into a changing exhibit space. I remember a Burmese one she put up there. I suspect the Minoan-Mycenaean room was originally the office of the Director of the Classical and Oriental Museums and that both of these offices probably helped to control access to the museums when the doors were open. (The NW corner elevator could be set not to open on the fourth floor and there was an elevator opening to the hall between the Classical and Oriental museums across from the Minoan-Mycenaean room. This elevator was later taken out and the closet where it had been was used to store plaster casts.)

Another addendum: Oscar's office, was transformed by Barbara Bohen into a diorama room when she was able to obtain a set of them loaned by the Illinois State Museum when they removed them from the exhibition concerning the development of human cultures. She interspaced these with the very fanciable artist studio dioramas as well as a number of ancient theater models from the Classical and European Museum (I had fun with my classes first showing them Phidias' studio diorama and then showing them slides of the excavated remains of his workplace studio at Olympia for the construction of the gold and ivory Zeus where a black-gloss cup inscribed Phidias eimi was found as well as fragments of ivory, molds, tools with some made of obsidian. Later the dioramas were returned to the ISM and maybe some of the WHM ones survived the move to the Spurlock.

When I arrived, Georgette had made the area off the NW elevator into the museum office and staff space and later carving out a niche at the SE corner of the European gallery behind where the doors opened into her office since Oscar had the prime real estate

I remember only that Georgette was very happy when the Dean finally allowed her to reclaim the office as well as have Oscar's phone line removed from her budget and no longer have him making expensive long distance calls the museum had to pay for from its limited budget. But she put up the Burma exhibit as soon as she could thereafter. There is likely to be a record of that event's date still kept in the Spurlock.