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THE NINTH ANNUAL FOCH TOUR

By Numerous Members of the Epigraphic Survey

The 1994 Friends of Chicago House archaeological tour began on Thanksgiving Day with a visit to Luxor Temple, where the Survey has completed its documentation of the Colonnade Hall (volume 1 appeared in September 1994; volume 2 is in the press). Epigraphic Survey Director Peter Dorman gave a tour of the whole temple complex for newcomers, ranging from the processional avenue of sphinxes to the secluded apartments of Amun-of-Opet, while Survey Artist Ray Johnson gave a specialized tour for FOCH tour veterans, concentrating on later reuse of various earlier elements of the temple, and the serious conservation problems of the resulting fragments. Tour members then traveled to Chicago House, for a reception in the courtyard of the main residence building. After an all-too-brief introduction to the mysterious Chicago House Method and its implementation in the on-going projects of the Epigraphic Survey, it was off to the ruin fields of Karnak.

This year epigraphers Richard Jasnow and John Darnell had decided to concentrate on two sections of the Karnak Temple complex: the Festival Temple of Thutmosis III and the Open Air Museum. Epigrapher / Librarian Debbie Darnell and artist Christina Di Cerbo helped to lead the groups between the two areas, a walk which also gave new-comers a good impression of Karnak Temple as a whole.

Richard led the tour members through the Akh-menu, the festival temple of Thutmosis III located behind the now almost wholly vanished Middle Kingdom core of Karnak. Despite its much ruined state, the festival temple displays a number of unique architectural features, such as the tent-pole shaped pillars in its central hall. The Franco-Egyptian Center is currently engaged in the documentation and reconstruction of the temple, and therefore portions are not accessible to the public. Nevertheless, FOCH tour members were able to see most of the structure. They admired, for example, the series of reliefs showing scenes from the heb-sed jubilee, as well as the historically significant reconstruction of the Chapel of the

Ancestors. They also had a chance to inspect the shrine of Thutmosis III, which Phillip Arrhidaios renovated. The tour of the Akh-menu concluded with the rather mysterious Botanical Garden, rooms decorated with outlandish representations of plants "which Thutmosis III brought back from Syria"—but clearly never seen by the artists who had to carve them on the walls.

John gave a tour of the Open Air Museum. This area contains many of the surviving jewels of pre-New Kingdom Karnak, many of them pulled from the interior of the Third Pylon. John spent perhaps too much time at the beginning of each of his two tours discussing the small pillar of Antef-Aa, the earliest thus far attested mention of the god Amun at Karnak. Following a lengthy digression on the personification of "Victorious Thebes," and a discussion of smiting scenes and the mummies of the soldiers of Mentuhotep Nebhepetre, the tour sped past the White Chapel of Sesostris I, through the Medamud gate of Sesostris III—the interior decoration of which led to a discussion of the pugnacious Seventeenth Dynasty—past other important monuments, and out to the blocks of the Chapelle Rouge of Hatshepsut. The text of a doorjamb of Hatshepsut gave impetus to a final hurried discussion of "god's land," incense, and the *odor suavis*. Thus ended a bewildering romp through 500 years of Karnak's formative history.

For returning members of the FOCH Tour, nothing could be more traditional than a Thanksgiving Day banquet at the Jolie-Ville. Turkey was plentiful, conversation lively, and the Chicago House photographer Jerry Kobylecky took those charmingly *de rigeur* table photographs.

Early in the morning of the second day of the tour, insomniacs and other early risers were treated to a stirring spectacle: the rising of the sun, seen from atop the First Pylon at Karnak Temple. Philologists take note: the sun actually does illumine the sky before it rises. Non-Egyptologists may be surprised to hear that much ink has been spilled over apparent

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contradictions in verb tense occurring in sun hymns which seem to imply that the sky is brightened before the sun rises. Pylon climbers learned today that such is in fact the case, as the ancient Egyptians observed long ago.

After breakfast, the FOCH tour buses departed the Isis hotel for ElKab, ancient Nekheb, cult center of the goddess Nekhbet, whose vulture so often hovers protectively over the image of the king of Egypt. After an hour accompanied by a band of jovial security police, the buses stopped across the road from the massive mud brick walls of the ancient city of Nekheb. The first part of the visit consisted of tours of two tombs of the early Eighteenth Dynasty. Richard Jasnow guided the FOCH tour members in the tomb of Paheri, the grandson of Ahmose, son of Ibana—who built the tomb which John showed. While no military hero like Ahmose, Paheri was an important man in the royal bureaucracy during the reign of Thutmosis III and Paheri's tomb contains elaborate scenes of the official supervising all sorts of agricultural activities.

The visitor first entering the doorway of Ahmose's tomb may perhaps be a bit disappointed by its unfinished state and dull coloring. The hieroglyphs of the lengthy text on the right-hand wall are quite nice, however, and those who are acquainted with Kurt Sethe's *Urkunden* copies of Egyptian monumental texts will feel as if one of his pages has come to solid, three-dimensional life. The inscription is the autobiography of Ahmose, son of Ibana, a man who rose from lowly sailor to become an "admiral," and saw much of the known world of his day, accompanying the ever victorious Theban armies as they pushed out of the tiny area to which the Asiatic and Nubian hordes had confined them during the early Seventeenth Dynasty.

The FOCH tour then boarded the buses again and drove a short distance into the mouth of the nearby Wadi Hellal. Richard's group stopped here, to see the "Ptolemaic" temple, before walking to the Amenhotep III temple, stopping to visit graffiti along the way. John's group continued on to the temple built by Amenhotep III and made the tour of the monuments of the Wadi Hellal in reverse. The Ptolemaic hemispeos, dedicated to the goddess Smithis, and the temple of Amenhotep III, dedicated to the goddess Nekhbet as Hathor, both celebrate the wandering goddess, the eye of the sun, who wandered in anger into the far southeast, but who was annually enticed to come back to Egypt and her father Re. Her return was celebrated with

banqueting and religious inebriation, and one can imagine the happy throngs who once marched from Nekheb into the Wadi Hellal, visiting the various sacred precincts as they hurried to greet the returning goddess. As tour members examined some of the stunning raised-relief graffiti, and marveled at the ample broken pottery of four millennia ago, the wadi came to life with the echoes of voices. It was not difficult to imagine the hum of activity there in pharaonic times, caravans with military escort coming from the gold mines, couriers running or galloping in from Thebes, military units gathering for a campaign against "Wretched Kush," traders and adventurers off to the Red Sea and the incense land of Punt, and happy revelers accompanying the invisible goddess as she returned from her stay at the far southeastern rim of the world.

After the ElKab excursion and desert hike, the FOCH members suitably appreciated the relaxing boat trip from Esna back to Luxor. Ibrahim Sadek, ARCE deputy director, deserves the credit for the great success of this portion of the tour. Tour members had a leisurely lunch on the boat, and then watched the landscape slide by on the way to Luxor. At Armant, as the setting sun slipped into the crimson wake of the tour boat, the passengers had a good view of the new Nile bridge under construction. After the boat docked at the Isis Hotel there was just barely enough time for the hearty tour-goers to shower and slip into their party clothes for the famed FOCH gala dinner-dance. The dust of the desert was nowhere in evidence on the attractive crowd that walked through the front gate at Chicago House to partake of a buffet dinner, followed by a huge cake in honor of two shared birthdays: Lena Hull (12) and the Epigraphic Survey (70). The mood of the evening was set by sophisticated tangos and other vintage music, tastefully complementing the black-tie finery on display and harking back to that time of refined elegance when Chicago House was first inaugurated on the west bank of the Nile. The dance floor continued to hop with lively jitterbugging to the classically tuneful rock 'n roll of Buddy Holly, until, alas, it was time for the guests to depart, Chicago House T-shirts in hand.

The final day of the tour began with a visit to the Valley of the Kings. Ray Johnson took the tour members down into the tomb of Horemhab, the soldier who became pharaoh at the end of the Amarna period. Just as his reforms and policies directly ushered in the Ramesside period, so his tomb, in plan

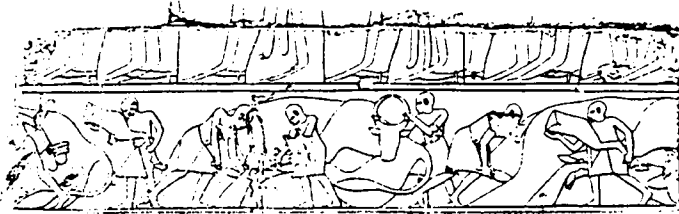
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The Epigraphic Survey Announces the Publication of *The Festival Procession of Opet in the Colonnade Hall, Reliefs and Inscriptions at Luxor Temple, Vol. 1*

Oriental Institute Publications 112. Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1994. Pp. xxiii + 60; 128 plates, 2 plans.

In this volume the Epigraphic Survey publishes the famous scenes depicting the annual Opet Procession in which the portable barks of the gods, Amun, Mut, and Khonsu, were conveyed from Karnak Temple to Luxor Temple and back again. These reliefs, which are located on the side walls of the Colonnade Hall in Luxor Temple, date to the reigns of Tutankhamun and Sety I. The documentation consists of 130 plans, large-scale facsimile drawings, and photographs. A volume of translations, commentaries, and a glossary supplements the plates. Cost: \$350 + shipping (\$11 domestic

via UPS; \$21 overseas). Illinois residents add 8% sales tax.



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and decoration may be said to be the first of the Ramesside royal tombs. Tour members could feel the dampness in the tomb, caused by partial flooding from the recent torrential rains. The so-called 'well,' a deep shaft in the tomb, caught much of the water, however, and prevented it from filling the lower levels of the tomb. Ray pointed out numerous stylistic peculiarities in the decoration, which show the adaptation of the Amarna styles and their transmission to the art of the Ramesside Period.

John Darnell gave a tour of the tomb of Ramesses IX. The tomb was unusually busy that day, but the FOCH tour formed up like a Roman *testudo* (military turtle) and forced its way inexorably down into the tomb, then back into the light of the upper day. The visit to the tomb of Ramesses IX, punctuated with expressive readings from various Egyptian Netherworld Books, was highlighted by a discussion of the "Enigmatic Wall," central to John's dissertation. Some time was spent describing the narrowly averted cosmic catastrophe when the bark of the sun runs aground on the sandy neck of Apep, the chaos-serpent. The concluding scene of the cryptographically annotated wall expresses the omnipresence of the united Re-Osiris in the bowels of the Eastern horizon, the place of the final punishment of the damned, and the union of yesterday and tomorrow in the prototype of the Egyptian hope for eternal life. The tour members bore up well under the weight of falling stars, flaming arrows, and sickle-wielding, fire-spitting demons and, breathing a collective sigh of relief, proceeded to the great open-air precinct of Medinet Habu.

Drew Baumann led FOCH participants through the

eastern High Gate, the better preserved of two three-story, fortress-like gateways providing entry to Ramesses III's temple, before ascending the modern stairs leading to the second floor. There, tour members could gaze on reliefs of Ramesses III enjoying the company of princesses (not necessarily harem girls, as has been assumed) while Drew related the scandalous tale of the "Harem Conspiracy," known from several judicial papyri, which is supposed by some to have unfolded in the rooms of the High Gate and involved the assassination of the last great pharaoh of the New Kingdom. From the High Gate the tour traipsed over to the palace, located to the south of the Great Temple, where tour participants could gaze at such mundane amenities as Ramesses III's bathroom and bed niche.

Peter Dorman gave a tour of the exterior of the Eighteenth Dynasty and the later architectural changes to the temple. Curiosities that were pointed out include the faint remains of the earlier Middle Kingdom structure that once stood on the site; decorated blocks of the Kushite rulers newly discovered in later temple foundations; and the central bark sanctuary, where the elegant Thutmose decoration was faithfully and accurately renewed by the successors of Alexander the Great a thousand years after it was first carved, but in the good-humored, seemingly well-fed, happily chunky idiom of the Ptolemaic dynasty—an idiom that belies the tumultuous and vicious history of that ruling family.

The group was also treated to a peek at the inner rooms of the Eighteenth Dynasty temple, an area currently off-limits to tourists. Lively colors preserved on many of the interior walls offered viewers some feeling for how ancient Egyptian

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temples appeared at the time of their use. The exquisitely fine painted details on display here are elsewhere often completely absent due to the ravages of time. Tantalizing hints at the intriguing history of the period were offered by the (not wholly successful) attempts to obliterate the name and image of Hatshepsut wherever it occurred; though she suffered the indignity of being turned into an offering pile here and there, Hatshepsut would no doubt be satisfied to know that her presence in the temple is still quite in evidence and is carefully being recorded for posterity, as was pointed out to FOCH members by Debbie Darnell.

The work of the Survey at Medinet Habu has been enlivened recently by the appearance of seven puppies, progeny of the local temple dogs (one of whom is the mother of

Nikon, the Epigraphic Survey's pet and highly vocal watchdog). These animals are of irresistible cuteness and exercised a great attraction to some of the younger FOCH members who were being shown around the Small Temple. The puppy Satis, now almost full-grown, is becoming the tyrant-queen of Medinet Habu.

The crowded weekend drew to a close over a final buffet feast at the Isis hotel, followed by farewells—some departing in casual clothes for the flight to Cairo, others stepping out in formal wear for the gala premier of Aida at Deir el Bahri—but all with a promise to return for Thanksgiving 1995. **END**

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