

News & Notes

The Oriental Institute

Issued confidentially to members and friends

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Not for publication

The Chinese Exhibition: April 27th, 1975

Arrangements have been made for a group of Oriental Institute members to visit the remarkable Chinese Exhibition on its last stop before returning to Peking. After London, Paris, Vienna, Stockholm, Toronto, and Washington, this collection of archeological finds from the People's Republic of China will be in Kansas City from April 20th through June 8th, 1975. Oriental Institute members will be received as a group on Sunday, April 27th. The cost of the excursion, including the chartered flight and luncheon, will be \$90. Please call Mrs. Jill Maher at 753-2573 or 753-2471 for details.

The Tour of Turkey: May 7-29, 1975

With members from such far-away states as Texas and Connecticut, the tour of Turkey promises a diversity of individuals to match the diversity of the experiences they will share. While there is still room on the tour, those who have not yet sent in their deposit are encouraged to do so without delay. Call or write the Oriental Institute today!

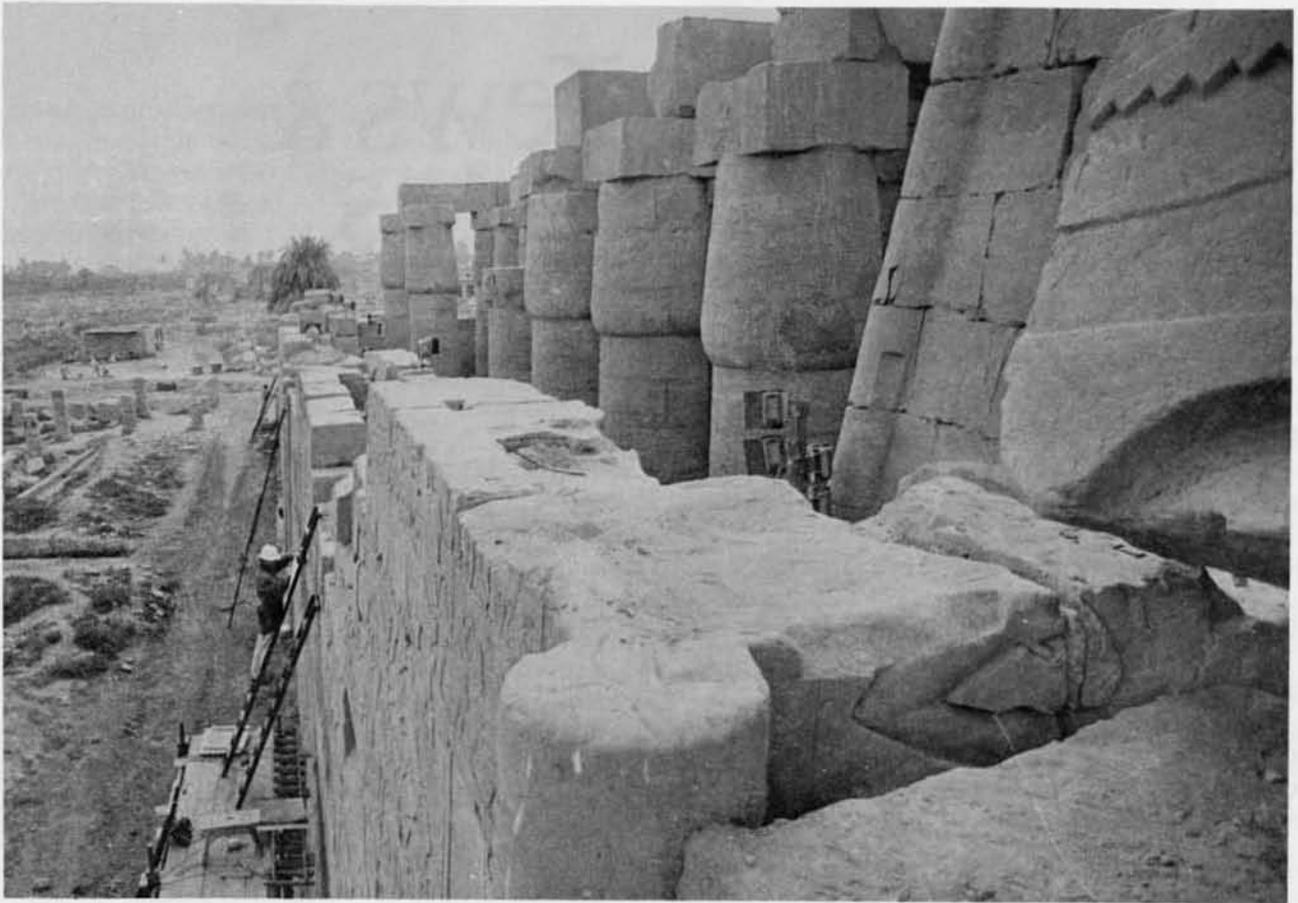
NEWSLETTER FROM THE EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY, LUXOR, EGYPT

Last September we had the good fortune to speak to members of the Institute about the fifty-year-long history of the Epigraphic Survey. We would like to take this opportunity to tell you of our current season's work and of our plans for the next few years.

Of all the temples in Egypt, none is better known than the Temple of Amon at Karnak. Yet only a few parts of its extensive reliefs—a major source for the study of New Kingdom history and religion—have ever been drawn or photographed. The need for such publication was a major reason the Survey last year chose to begin work on the famous XIXth Dynasty battle reliefs of Seti I, carved on the outer north wall of the Great Hypostyle Hall. These scenes depict Egypt's campaigns

The staff of Chicago House, 1974, standing before a scene of Ramesses III hunting wild bulls, carved on the rear of the First Pylon at Medinet Habu. Standing, left to right, Reg Coleman, Mr. and Mrs. Martyn Lack, Clara Semple, Beth Romer, Susan Allen, Kent R. Weeks, Frank Yurco, John Romer; in foreground, Marie Coleman, William Murnane, Andree Bichara, Susan and Christopher Weeks, James Allen, Diane Yurco. Our photographer, John Ross, was behind the camera.





A view of the Seti wall, looking west. The torus moulding in the foreground is the original corner of the wall. The newly-identified wall runs from that moulding to the Second Pylon at the right of the photograph. So far, we have identified the upper part of a figure of the King and, to his right, the beginning of a lengthy text.

against Palestinian towns, Lebanese villages, the Hittites, the Shashu, the Libyans, and the people of Kadesh; and from an artistic standpoint they are so fine that some have called them the most superbly done monumental reliefs in Egypt. There is no doubt that the composition and detail they show make them one of the high points of New Kingdom art. Historically, of course, they are of great importance, for they provide almost our only information about the early years of Seti's reign. These reliefs tie in closely with work of the Survey at Medinet Habu and other sites in Thebes, and the Seti wall will provide a useful companion to many of the Survey's publications.

It was exciting to begin the recording of such superb scenes, and we were particularly pleased to be able to deal with a number of perplexing questions of history and art and to discover that there are fragments to be found of more scenes than had formerly been thought. We have offered suggestions on the order in which the battles were fought (that against Shashu is one of the earliest), on the dates of the campaigns (probably in Seti's first and second years, i.e., about 1318 B.C.), and about the mass of geographic material and familial data these reliefs contain.

Several of our epigraphers made a thorough

examination of the huge Karnak complex searching for blocks that might have come from the destroyed upper registers of the wall. So far, about four highly likely candidates from the upper registers have been located and another dozen from the cornice. These blocks are important: they will enable us to define and more accurately describe the wall, and we hope they will contain enough inscribed material that we can identify the subjects of the upper registers.

An exciting discovery was the hitherto unnoticed fact that the Seti reliefs continued around the northwest corner, onto a wall that abuts the Second Pylon. This wall was hidden by a later courtyard wall of Shoshenk I and as a result they are both new discoveries and remarkably well-preserved ones. We cannot remove this later wall, of course, but we hope next season to move two loose stones lying atop the wall to read the traces of an inscription that may identify the battle carved there.

Progress is being made at Seti, and we now hope to have the project completed early next season.

With so much to be done in the Luxor area, it is essential that a solid set of criteria be used to select sites for future epigraphic study. Since its

inception, the Survey has always given priority to sites that are of special historical or cultural importance, to those endangered by natural or human agencies, or to those that could best profit from the unique combination of technique and interpretive ability our staff can bring to the wall.

The superb relief scenes of the religious Feast of Opet in the Colonnade of Luxor Temple will be the next major undertaking of the Survey. We estimate that this project, commencing this year, will occupy us for about three seasons. Begun during the reign of Amenhotep III, and added to by later kings, particularly Tutankhamon, the scenes—two parallel walls each over 90 feet long—depict the stages of a procession of the god Amon from Karnak to Luxor and back. Not only are they important for religious history, but they tie in well with other projects the survey has conducted, dealing with other scenes of the Opet Feast (as in the Temple of Khonsu), and with scenes of similar date. A description of the Feast has been included by Professor Nims in his *Thebes of the Pharaohs*, at page 121. This project, like our recording of the tomb described below, is among the most critical on our list; both monuments are badly in need of conservation and cleaning and both will see the Survey undertake such treatment as well as our more usual sequence of recording and publication.

This second project will have us returning to the West Bank (the first time in eight years) to clear and record the tomb (107) of Nefersekeru,

(continued on page 4)



Above, a detail of the superb carving of the reliefs of Seti I at Karnak. Here, as the King's army moves through the Lebanon, enemy soldiers tumble in all directions at his feet. Below, a detail of the Opet Feast scenes, here showing a group of musicians accompanying the sacred barks from Luxor on the return journey to Karnak. Note the fine quality of the carving; this is one of the few places on the wall not damaged by salt incrustations.



4 an official under Amenhotep III who, before he abandoned this tomb, saw to the carving of some exquisite raised relief. This is a critical project. The facade of the tomb is in dangerously bad condition, its scenes and texts are of great importance if we are to better understand a critical period of Egypt's history, the rise of the so-called "heretic king," Akhenaton.

We shall also begin next season on a badly-needed map of the archeological sites of the West Bank. No such map has been made since 1921, and our project will not only allow us to make more logical plans for work in the decades to come, but should play a major role in the supervision and protection of some of Egypt's most valuable monuments.

February 4, 1975

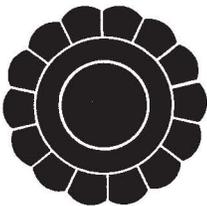
Dear Members

Considerable publicity, some of it misleading, has been given to the theft from the Oriental Institute Museum last month. The facts, in so far as presently ascertained, are as follows.

Some time between 10:00 A.M. and 2:30 P.M., Sunday, January 19, a thief or thieves jimmied or picked the locks on a display case in the Assyrian Hall of the Oriental Institute Museum and stole six of the pieces in the case. The pieces were purchased in 1950 for approximately \$8000 and consist of a Syro-Hittite gold disk, a cylinder seal mounted on a gold pin, two small gold sheathings, and two gold armlets. The items were first noticed missing by the university police on Tuesday, January 21, but were not reported then, since it was thought they had been removed by the staff for cleaning or restoration and since the locked case bore no obvious signs of entry. Other valuable items were still in the case (including five gold bull-head pendants and a large silver bowl). On the morning of January 23, a member of the curatorial staff noticed the items missing from the case; and it was determined that a theft had occurred.

The Chicago Police Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation are working on the case. Additional security precautions have been implemented in the Institute building, and the museum has been closed temporarily to all but previously scheduled guided tours until a thorough investigation of current security procedures has been completed and satisfactory solutions put into effect.

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FIRST CLASS