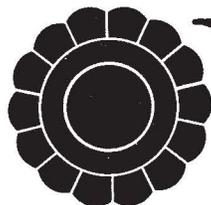


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News & Notes

APR 1 1974

The Oriental Institute
No. 6: March, 1974

Issued confidentially to members and friends
Not for publication

THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE

*cordially invites you to attend
our specially scheduled*

MEMBERS' DAY

Sunday, April 21, 1974

2:00-4:00 p.m.

The Oriental Institute
1155 East 58th Street

R.S.V.P. 753-2471 before Monday, April 15, 1974.

The Institute is more than a museum and field expeditions. Behind the scenes at the Chicago headquarters are conservationists working to preserve artifacts for study, scholars engaged in many research projects, and editors preparing manuscripts for publication. On Members' Day the staff of the Institute will be available in their offices and laboratories to explain their work to visiting members who wish to become better acquainted with the Institute.

THE EPIGRAPHIC AND ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY Semi-Annual Report, 1973-74

Luxor, February 5, 1974

Dear Friends,

This, the forty-ninth season of work for Chicago House in Luxor, has been a busy and eventful one. A new field director has assumed responsibility for its work, replacing Dr. Edward Wente who has returned to teaching obligations at the University. It has been a year of planning for the future, a year in which all of us have realized how great a debt is owed to the former members of Chicago House and to the foresight of James Henry Breasted for establishing a field headquarters whose duties were, in his words, "to save for posterity the enormous body of ancient records still surviving in Egypt." And, as November 17, 1974, the fiftieth anniversary of our work, nears, it has seemed an appropriate time to review the goals of our project and examine the techniques that have been used to achieve them.

We have devoted much of our time during the first half of the season to completing drawings and photographs for a second volume dealing with the Temple of Khonsu and, in spite of a war that prevented most of our staff from reaching Luxor until mid-November, that goal has now been achieved. Work to date has resulted in complete records of the courtyard, portico and hypostyle hall of the Temple, and it is planned that the second volume of plates will soon follow the first (being prepared by Dr. Wente) to the printers.

Many of the scenes copied this year have strengthened the picture of Temple construction outlined by Drs. Nims and Wente, and examples of re-used and re-cut blocks continue to appear in the walls. Scenes which had not been copied since the work of Lepsius in the 1840's have been studied again, and have provided more data for a reconstruction of the life of Makare, a woman of considerable power during the XXIst Dynasty, and for the extensive redecoration of the Temple undertaken in Ptolemaic times. The sequence of Ptolemaic rebuilding is a particularly thorny problem, and our epigraphers have devoted considerable time to it. The doorway leading from the hypostyle hall into the ambulatory, for example, claimed by Lepsius to have been restored by Ptolemy VII, was in fact executed by Ptolemy IX and his mother Cleopatra III. The exterior of the outer doorway, carved by Alexander the Great, has been identified as being largely a reflection of the architrave at the rear of the

courtyard. The varied techniques of the considerable reconstruction Khonsu underwent in Ptolemaic times, and the great number of re-used blocks in the Temple, have provided complex but interesting problems. Our work this year has shown that the Temple's construction is far less simple than had once been thought.

We have been anxious to establish closer relations with the various other foreign missions working in the Luxor area, and an excellent opportunity presented itself when the Centre Franco-Egyptien agreed to undertake a detailed architectural survey of Khonsu which hopefully will be ready for inclusion in our second volume. Such a study, with its accompanying plans, elevations, and sections, will go a long way toward furnishing a complete history of the building of an Egyptian temple.

Work also has begun on our newly acquired concession in the Temple of Amon at Karnak, the superb battle scenes of Seti I carved on the north outer wall of the Great Hypostyle Hall. These beautifully carved reliefs are so different in scale and quality from those at Khonsu that we have devoted considerable time to re-examining and refining the drawing and collating techniques of the Survey. The scenes are not only considered to be among the best-executed reliefs of the XIXth Dynasty (or even of the New Kingdom, for that matter) but contain a wealth of historical information about Seti's battles with Libyans, Hittites, Syrians and others, and about the names

WILLIAM WEINBERG
1885-1974

Will has worked with us as a volunteer for as long as there has been a Suq. He worked as a friend, advisor and "end man." His humor kept us all on our toes. Trying to keep up with him was a mental exercise we all needed. He never spoke an unkind word to anyone—he loved life with all of its challenges, and met each one with his chin up and smiling. We miss him, it's as though a light has gone out in all of our lives. The greatest tribute we can pay to him has already been put into words by his beloved grandchildren: "How incredibly lucky we were to have had him."

The Suq

and locations of Egypt's enemies. The scene, which covers nearly five thousand square feet, will be our major project for the next two seasons.

For the first time in many years, our library is in the care of a full-time professional librarian, Mrs. Andrée Bichara, and the year's work has included a complete inventory of the collection (eleven thousand volumes excluding journals), ordering of new books and the badly needed rebinding of old, and inquiries into the purchase of microfiche equipment which will enable us to acquire back issues of journals with considerable savings of money and space. We also have begun expanding the author catalogue to include all journal articles and are making plans for a subject catalogue of our holdings, something badly needed in Egyptological research.

In the darkroom, our photographer, Mr. John Ross, busy with the daily demands of work, nevertheless has begun a project to remodel our forty-year-old facilities and speed up the process of printing. We have acquired a new camera, and plan to sell a few of the old ones (some are museum pieces) and install a new copying process to replace the one that has been used since 1924 and for which supplies are no longer available.

Our engineer, Mr. Marwan Dewey, has seen to the installation of a new hot water system, to the renovation of the kitchen, and to plans for maintaining or replacing a collection of equipment that would be a joy to any collector of antique tools.

What of the future? As we begin our second fifty years in Luxor, we are looking at a number of possible new projects. One is a revival of the Architectural Survey (our formal name is the Epigraphic and Architectural Survey), and we are making plans to prepare a complete 1:1000 map of the West Bank showing the location

of all archeological remains. No such plan has been prepared since 1921 and it is an extremely important project to which the foreign missions in Luxor have agreed to contribute data. This project will not, of course, interfere with our primary objective of recording. In that area, too, we are looking to the future, and a number of sites on both banks are being examined by our staff.

In selecting future sites on which to work, one of our major criteria will be the need for first dealing with monuments in urgent need of conservation and recording. To this end, we hope soon to install a small laboratory in our plant in which basic chemical tests can be run to aid us in cleaning badly preserved reliefs. In doing so, we hope not only to be able to record such reliefs more accurately, but to help insure their continued existence.

Several of our staff have delivered lectures in a newly created series organized by the Department of Antiquities in Luxor, and we have had the pleasure of talking about our work with a number of friends and colleagues from Chicago. When he visited Luxor, it was most pleasant to discover that Dr. Henry Kissinger knew of Chicago House and of Breasted, and we were pleased to tell him more about our work.

One of the greatest joys a field director can experience is to work with a long-term project that has a pleasant and talented staff. Our epigraphers, William Murnane, James Allen, and Mark Ciccarello; our artists, Reg Coleman, Martyn Lack, Grace Huxtable, and John Romer; our housekeeper, Susan Weeks; and all the rest have made the forty-ninth year of Chicago House a most pleasant and promising beginning for the future.

Kent R. Weeks
Field Director

The staff at Chicago House, Luxor



INCANTATION BOWLS: PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE

by McGuire Gibson

In the last *News and Notes*, Dr. Biggs discussed ancient Babylonian medicine from a curative point of view. I would like to take you several centuries later and look at one type of Mesopotamian magic meant to prevent illness or other misfortune.

Every season at Nippur, workmen or members of the staff find on the surface of the site pottery bowls turned upside down. The inner surface of each bowl is covered with an incantation in Syriac, Mandaic, or the "Jewish" dialect of Aramaic, each language with its own distinctive script. The inscription is written from the center out, rising to the rim in a spiral. Often, a crude drawing of a chained demon or spirit is placed within the inscription.

Although most often the bowls are of a simple, round-bottomed shape, sometimes larger vessels are used, and these have features such as pronounced rims that allow a dating to a later part of the Sassanian period (c. 500-600 A.D.). Most of the several hundred examples published from Nippur and elsewhere were surface finds, showing up after rain had eroded the ancient earth from around them. At Nippur, however, some were discovered in the course of excavations. These were found buried under the earth floors of houses, in the corners of rooms. In some cases bowls with identical inscriptions were found in all four corners of a room. In other cases, different inscriptions could occur in the same room.

The use of the bowls was widespread among various religious and ethnic communities in Mesopotamia and Western Iran, but the bowls from Nippur make up the single largest group we know. The Nippur examples have many pronounced Jewish characteristics, leading one to conclude that this city had an exceptionally large Jewish population in the early first millennium A.D.

The purpose of the bowls was to protect the house and the people in it from evil spirits, often named. Liliths, she-demons, were very frequently the subject of the spell. They caused trouble for women by snatching away children, even from the womb, and causing death in childbirth. They might also come in the night and take possession of a husband, causing him to grow uninterested in or unfaithful to the wife. The woman would then have a bowl inscribed and bury it under the floor in order to bring about a divorce between her husband and the demon. The word "divorce" is used deliberately here, for the inscription mentioned a divorce decree. Given such inscriptions, and the large number of bowls dedicated by women for the protection of the household, one might suppose that incantation bowls were a predominantly female preoccupation. However, many bowls were commissioned by men or couples. Anyone could hire an exorcist to write and recite the incantation as the bowl was buried. Sometimes the "inscription" consisted of meaningless scribbles, indicating, perhaps, that the exorcist was illiterate or that his clients were and would not know the difference. Clearly, however, writing something was an essential part of the ritual.

The spells were often general in nature, binding and sealing and "pressing" (under the bowls) the demons and calling on angels to help in the work of protecting the named persons. In other cases, demons who caused specific illnesses were cursed. Two bowls found in one room in the 11th season at Nippur (1972-73) illustrate the types. A translation of one of them by Dr. Stephen Kaufman is as follows:

I swear upon you and adjure you evil deeds and evil doings, demons, plagues, headache demons, afflictors, eye diseases, evil spirits, charm spirit and sorcery spirit, pain, wretched Shibta spirit, scab, blood, and tears, scars and migraine and all spirits loosed by evil sorcery and by persecuting deeds and all painful pains and all deceivers; may you be cast down and all [unclear] may you die. I adjure you spirits of Babylon and Arab, spirits of Iraq and Mesene, spirits of the Euphrates and the River Tigris, may you depart, vanish, and die by means of the two hundred and fifty-two bans even from Dodo daughter of Dodo. Amen, Amen. Selah.

The second bowl, shown in the accompanying photo, has a standard incantation known from other bowls. It invokes the name of Bagdana, king of the demons and ruler of the Liliths, as an oath against the Lilith Hablas. The figure in the center of the bowl, a male, must be meant to depict Bagdana.

The origin of incantation bowls is not yet clear, but the use of them must, in part, be native to Mesopotamia. Some of the demons had Babylonian antecedents, and there was a lively practice of magic, as evidenced in cuneiform tablets. We have no clear proof of rituals connected with the burying of bowls, but in our excavations these last two seasons, we found numerous small, uninscribed bowls buried under floors of Old Babylonian (c. 1800 B.C.) and earlier houses. After consideration of more ordinary functions, we were forced to conclude that these bowls had originally contained offerings when the houses were built, or that they had been used for some other ritual purpose. It may be that worried householders, anxious mothers, and suspicious wives were burying their troubles in Mesopotamia from very ancient times.



AMARNA ART IN DETROIT
by Janet H. Johnson

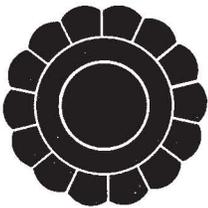
On Saturday, February 16, a group composed mostly of students in the Department of Near Eastern Languages chartered a bus and drove some 275 miles to see the marvelous exhibit of Amarna art at the Detroit Institute of Arts. The trip was organized by Peter Piccione, a graduate student in Egyptology, because of interest among students and faculty in the field. Faculty, staff, and students from other sections of the department and several docents joined the group for the all-day excursion. The arrangements went relatively smoothly, the trip was very pleasant, and we spent the whole afternoon seeing the special exhibit and then individually visiting other sections of the Detroit museum, including the permanent Egyptian and Near Eastern collections.

The special exhibit, entitled "Akhenaten and Nefertiti: The Age of Egypt's Sun King," features statuary and reliefs from the Amarna period drawn from several American and European museums and from private collections. The statuary includes numerous beautiful heads and torsos; among the reliefs are some of the famous stelae showing royal family life, several sculptor's trial pieces, and many "talatat" blocks. "Talatat" is a word used by Arab workmen to describe the rectangular blocks from which Amarna period temples and palaces were constructed and which were decorated with religious and secular scenes. A nice selection of both types appears in the exhibit, enabling the visitor to become familiar with the new style and subject matter so characteristic of the period. A few of the reliefs retain their original color, as do the few small glass and pottery objects which are displayed. One could wish for more small objects, but the amount of material displayed, and their quality, allow the viewer to comprehend the exhibit without becoming fatigued and to appreciate why Amarna art is so famous within the spectrum of Egyptian art and within the general scope of art history. Such a collection will probably never be duplicated.

But the manner of display was disappointing. Not only the flat reliefs but also the sculpture was lined up along the walls instead of being spaced around the room. This and the subdivision of the large special exhibit room into generally long and narrow sections led to crowding as people lined up and filed past the objects rather than moving about freely. In addition, the room was dark and each item was lit by a single light. This worked well for the flat objects, but parts of each three-dimensional piece were left invisible. In a few cases, even the label could not be read. However, this system, which was designed to highlight one aspect of each object, e.g., the modelling, did that quite effectively, leaving the viewer quite impressed with the skill of the Amarna sculptors. The quality and range of the objects more than made up for the drawbacks, and all who went felt that it had been an enjoyable and worthwhile excursion.

Dr. Johnson is Assistant Professor of Egyptology in the Oriental Institute.

—Dr. Biggs was in part mistakenly identified last month. He is the Associate Editor of the CAD.



The Oriental Institute

The University of Chicago

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