



## THE EPIGRAPHIC EXPEDITION

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Begun in 1924, the Epigraphic Expedition to Egypt is the oldest of the Institute's field enterprises. It was initiated to help relieve a situation distressing in two particulars. The first was that so many of the great monuments of Pharaonic Egypt had never been accurately drawn, rendered, and reproduced in print for scholarly study. The second was that the vast body of inscriptions with which the walls of the structures are covered was deteriorating visibly from year to year, after so many centuries of exposure, a great part without having ever been copied systematically and with full attention to accuracy of detail.

The work of copying and recording the reliefs and hieroglyphic inscriptions on the ancient Egyptian buildings is prosecuted from the Institute's Egyptian headquarters at Luxor, Chicago House. Here are provided facilities for the maintenance of the staff, an excellent library, photographic laboratories, and drafting rooms for the technical aspects of the copying procedure. To in-



*Hughes, Nims, and Champion  
at work at Medinet Habu*

sure the accuracy of the published result, the copies of the hieroglyphic texts made by artists on the basis of enlarged photographs are checked and corrected in succession by two scholars thoroughly familiar not only with the ancient Egyptian language but also with the subject matter of the reliefs on the walls. Only after such checking and correction are the artists' copies regarded as adequate for incorporation in the plates prepared for publication.

The Institute holds concessions to copy the inscriptions on two of the great Theban temples in the area of modern Luxor. It has already discharged most of its responsibilities in the Karnak Temple. Currently work is focused on the Mortuary Temple of

Ramses III across the Nile at Medinet Habu. Four large volumes recording the Ramessid texts have been published, a fifth is at the printer's, and others are in preparation. In 1956 the staff of the expedition will be enlarged in the expectation of finishing by 1961 the first and only complete architectural and epigraphic record ever made of a major Egyptian temple. New types of enterprises are planned for the succeeding years.