

THE EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY

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Begun in 1924, the Epigraphic Survey 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 reliefs and 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.

Sculptured hieroglyphs from the tomb of Kheruef in Egypt



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 insure the accuracy of the published result, the copies 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 reliefs and inscriptions on two of the great Theban temples in the area of modern Luxor. In the great Karnak complex, on other parts of which three volumes have already been issued, the Institute has still to finish its work on the Khonsu Temple. Currently, attention is focused on the Mortuary Temple of Ramses III across the Nile at Medinet Habu. Six large volumes of its scenes and inscrip-



An artist at work in the Mortuary Temple of Ramses III at Medinet Habu in Egypt

tions have been published, while the seventh and last is nearing completion. The staff of the expedition was enlarged in 1957 in the expectation of finishing in five years the first and only complete architectural and epigraphic record ever made of a major Egyptian temple. It currently consists, besides the Field Director, of Charles F. Nims and Edward F. Wente, Research Associates, epigraphers, and Alexander Floroff, Reginald Coleman, Leslie Greener, and Michael J. Barnwell, artists.

In the two seasons 1957-58 and 1958-59 the Institute also financed the complete clearance of an XVIIIth Dynasty tomb in the Theban Necropolis. The undertaking was carried out jointly with the Department of Antiquities of Egypt. The tomb is that of the Steward of Queen Tiy, wife of Amenophis III and mother of Akkenaton, named Kheruef. It contains some finely executed reliefs which will now be recorded and published.