

The Epigraphic Survey

CHARLES FRANCIS NIMS, *Field Director*

From 1960 into the past season the Epigraphic Survey has been engaged in four projects and has been forced to divide its efforts among them. *The Beit el-Wali Temple of Ramses II*, in which it cooperated with the Oriental Institute Nubian Expedition, has now been published. *Medinet Habu VIII, The Eastern High Gate*, is in press; this volume includes translations of the inscriptions reproduced within it. The field work on the Tomb of Kheruef has been completed and the editing of the results is in progress.

The Temple of Khonsu, north end of first court



For the first time in almost a decade the field staff is free to concentrate on a single monument. This is the nearly complete Karnak Temple of Khonsu, the local moon god who was the child in the Theban Triad, whose other members were Amon and Mut.

* The construction and decoration of this temple was begun at the rear of the structure in the later years of Ramses III. It stood on the site of an earlier building of which little is known. The wall reliefs executed in the time of Ramses III and his successor Ramses IV show a syncretism of Khonsu with other gods indicating his increasing importance. The decoration of the temple and perhaps the construction came to a stop with the death of Ramses IV and was not resumed until well into the reign of Ramses XI, about two-thirds of a century later.

The continuing work was under the supervision of the High Priest of Amon Heri-hor. He departed from tradition in a number of scenes in the first hypostyle hall by showing himself rather than the king officiating before the god. By the time the decoration of the court was begun, only a few years later, Heri-hor had proclaimed himself

The Temple of Khonsu, first hypostyle hall (David Larkin in foreground, Carl DeVries on ladder).



king (perhaps only in Thebes), though Ramses XI was still alive and, indeed, outlived Heri-hor.

In the 1930's and in the three seasons after the Second World War the Epigraphic Survey made records of a considerable area of the walls of the court and first hypostyle hall. With these drawings ready for publication it seemed best to complete the documentation of these two areas at the front of the temple. In the past three seasons, when we have been able to give only part of our time to this project, we have added extensively to our archive of drawings.

The walls of the court were obscured by mud, smoke, and the droppings of birds and bats. In February we were fortunate in being able to obtain the services of Abd-el-Karim Medhat who, until his recent retirement, was the expert in the Department of Antiquities in cleaning temple walls. His excellent work in Nubian temples such as Abu Simbel and Derr strongly recommended him to us. In a month and a half he cleaned the west wall and the west half of the north wall of the court, with unexpected results in revealing the great amount of color still preserved on the reliefs.

The great detail of the painted pattern warns us that the accurate recording of it will take care and time. But as a reward for our painstaking much new information will become available.

In our last report we mentioned that the evidence for the conclusion that the High Priest Piankh was the son of his predecessor Heri-hor is non-existent. We are now able to determine that at least six of the nineteen sons of Heri-hor had names of Libyan origin, a fact not apparent in existing publications. Other previously unnoticed records in the front part of the temple should give us a fuller picture of the last few years of the Twentieth Dynasty.

The staff of artists for the 1968/69 season was headed by the veteran Reginald Coleman, with Grace Huxtable joined by two new members, Martyn Lack and Richard Turner. Alexander Floroff, who retired several years ago, spent a number of weeks working on drawings left uncompleted when the expedition turned its full attention to Medinet Habu. Carl DeVries, David Larkin, and the Field Director were the Egyptologists. John Healey, who must retire at the end of the next season, continued his long and greatly appreciated service as Superintendent in charge of maintenance. Myrtle Nims was, as she has been for several years, in charge of household affairs. Labib Habachi served as part-time consultant. Our local staff members, with faithful Hagg Ibrahim Mohammed as foreman, were will-

ing and cheerful in the performance of their multitudinous duties.

Again the expenses of operation and maintenance in the field and the greater part of the expense of travel of the staff were met by a grant from the Smithsonian Institution through the American Research Center in Egypt. The latter organization, with John Dorman as director of the office in Cairo, gave assistance in many other ways. Members of the Oriental Institute were most encouraging in their support.

While the work of the Epigraphic Survey is the documentation and publication of the ancient records, the facilities of Chicago House, the headquarters of the Oriental Institute in Egypt, serve international scholarship in many ways. Its unsurpassed library on Pharaonic Egypt is the center of study for both Egyptian and foreign scholars and was extensively used during the past season. A number of expeditions have borrowed equipment and left their own in our storerooms. Where our facilities have permitted, we have had as guests both members of the Oriental Institute and others with an interest in ancient Egypt.

We urge all members of the Oriental Institute to visit Egypt and, when in Luxor, stop at Chicago House to see our work and meet our staff.