

The Epigraphic Survey

CHARLES FRANCIS NIMS, *Field Director*

The Epigraphic Survey is not a tidy operation. At the end of each season there are many loose ends. Though Chicago House is closed, the work continues in other places. The artists take home collated drawings on which corrections must be made and additional drawings on which they have only penciled in the lines which they must go over in ink. On the opening of the expedition in the autumn the epigraphers check the corrections which have been made and begin to collate the drawings completed during the summer. In the off-season the Egyptologist-epigraphers do editorial work on the text of the next volume to be published, which entails much research.



Temple of Khonsu from the southeast. *Photo by Carolyn Livingood*

No drawing is considered complete until it has been turned over to the editor, and research may send both the Egyptologist and the artist back to the wall to check the original scenes and inscriptions for the improvement of our facsimile copies. One difficult and damaged

text in the Temple of Khonsu was drawn twice in the late 1930's but was never finally approved because the Egyptologists were not satisfied that every possible trace of the inscription had been recovered from the wall.

Our 1969/70 season, as usual, went from 15 October to 15 April. To start earlier or continue later might bring us into heat which would make work impossible. The past season was quite temperate, but just before the close of our work we had a week in which the temperatures reached 108° F. each day.

This was the first season in almost a decade in which we were able to concentrate our efforts on one monument. Khonsu was the third god of the Theban triad; he is often shown as a child with the sidelock of youth. Sometimes he was considered the son of the other two chief Theban deities, Amon and Mut. As a moon god he was frequently linked with Thoth, the earlier moon god. We are trying to finish a unit of the temple consisting of the court and first hypostyle hall, most of which was decorated under Herihor, the general and high priest of Amon who became pharaoh in the later years of Ramses XI, though the legitimate ruler was living.

As a result of his accident at the beginning of the season the field director was able to undertake little more than his administrative duties. The burden of the epigraphy fell on Carl DeVries and David Larkin, the other Egyptologists. They spent extra hours at the temple and forwent their own research, for which otherwise they would have had time. Carl also photographed all of the tracings of the 35 scenes on the round columns of the court. These were made by Reginald Coleman, our senior artist, who traced the outline of the relief on clear plastic sheets with a lithographic crayon. Once the photos were made, the tracing was erased by vigorously rubbing the plastic with a cloth so that the sheet could be reused. This task was performed by Yousef Mohammed, the darkroom assistant.

At the end of the season we had completed about 25 drawings, with 30 more being collated or corrected, and 30 others penciled in and taken home by the artists for completion of the first stage during the summer. The other artists were the same as in the previous season, Grace Huxtable, Martyn Lack, and Richard Turner.



Thanksgiving, 1969. *Clockwise from left:* Labib Habachi, Grace Huxtable, Carl DeVries, John Healey, Carlota Fliege, Myrtle Nims, Reginald Coleman, Marie Coleman, Martyn Lack, Werner Fliege, Catherine Turner, Richard Turner, and Charles Nims, who is holding Christopher Turner. *Photo by David Larkin*

Myrtle Nims continued to serve as supervisor of the household. The three male artists were accompanied by their wives, and the junior member of our household, Christopher Turner, celebrated his first birthday the latter part of January. Labib Habachi spent four months at Chicago House engaged in research with the help of our library and helping in local matters where we non-Egyptians needed some assistance in understanding. George and Maurine Hughes were with us for about two weeks in November, and John and Mary Wilson stayed with us for two months, in February and March.

This was the final year for John Healey, who for 38 years has taken care of the maintenance and assured that Chicago House would run smoothly. There were two farewell dinners for him, one at the Savoy Hotel given by the staff of the Epigraphic Survey and another at Chicago House given by our *reis*, Hagg Ibrahim Mohammed.

To replace him we have added to the staff Werner Fliege, who began his work this season. He has lived in Egypt for almost forty years and has held various responsible positions as a technician. For the years 1967-69 he and his wife Carlota were in Izmir, Turkey, serving at the Ege University in the technical section of the School of Agriculture. Before their departure in 1967 Carlota held a license as guide for the ancient monuments. She has an excellent knowledge of the antiquities.

A continuing grant from the Smithsonian Institution, through the American Research Center in Egypt, financed the costs of operation and maintenance (except for capital improvements) and most of the costs of staff travel. Mr. John Dorman, director of the A.R.C.E. office in Cairo, continued to give his gracious assistance wherever needed.

Despite increasing tension between the United Arab Republic and the United States, our relations with our Egyptian colleagues have never been more amicable. We who come from Chicago feel safer on the streets of Luxor and Cairo than at home. Egypt seeks after and welcomes American visitors. We wish that more members of the Oriental Institute might be among these.