

The Epigraphic Survey

EDWARD F. WENTE, *Field Director*

During the past seven years the work of the Epigraphic Survey has been generously assisted by grants awarded by the Foreign Currency Program, Office of International Activities, of the Smithsonian Institution through the American Research Center in Egypt, Inc. These substantial grants, which cover practically all expenditures made in Egypt as well as international travel, have permitted the Epigraphic Survey to maintain the size of its staff and consequently a level of production which might otherwise have been curtailed during these years of tight budgets. At the time of writing this report the Field Director has just been gratified to learn that a new Smithsonian—American Research Center grant has been awarded to support the continued operation of Chicago House and its epigraphic work at the Temple of Khonsu in Karnak for the season 1972/73.

If there is a focus underlying the past season's activity in the Temple of Khonsu, it might be said to be the major portals in the court and first hypostyle hall. While the recording of numerous scenes on the rear of the pylon represents a continuation of the expedition's preoccupation with documentation from the time of the high priest and king Herihor, the doorways themselves present problems of their own. All the portals on the main axis of the temple have been repaired in antiquity as is evident from the replacement of lintels and ceiling blocks and the frequent recarving of scenes framing the doorways.

The rear face of the gateway of the pylon has provided the expedition with some of the most tantalizing material to record and interpret that it has encountered in recent years. The scenes in question are the work of the high priest Painutem I of the Twenty-first Dynasty, who at a certain stage in his career seems to have relinquished the pontificate to his son and himself adopted the titulary and insignia of kingship. Material from the burial of Painutem I in the famous cache of royal mummies at Deir el-Bahri indicates that at the time of his death he was regarded as king and no longer as high priest of Amon. Thus his career appears to have differed from that of Herihor, who retained his high priestly title in his cartouche when he became king.

However, with the recording of scenes adjoining the gateway of the pylon, some very puzzling evidence has emerged. By carefully sorting out the often minute traces of two versions of scenes, members of the expedition have discovered that the earlier version of several of these scenes depicts Painutem I in the guise of king and that subsequently the high priestly garb was substituted for the royal dress. But the titles in both versions remained those of the high priest and not the king! It thus appears that Painutem I's claim to kingship was a rather complicated affair. At an early stage in his priestly career he assumed certain iconographic features of kingship (but not a royal titulary) which he subsequently abrogated, but then toward the end of his career he discarded the high priestly garb and titles and declared himself king in a more positive fashion, adopting a genuine royal titulary.

In order to elucidate the complexities of Painutem I's career, we have just recently initiated the recording of several scenes in the passageway of the pylon. Although it had not been planned to tackle this portion of the temple until a later date,

the importance of one of these scenes in which Painutem I is shown with two leading ladies of the time, his wife Henuttawi and their daughter the God's Wife of Amon Makare, was long ago recognized by Maspero in his publication on the royal mummies from the Deir el-Bahri cache, and it is hoped that by careful scrutiny of the carving of these scenes and study of the iconography some light may be shed on the problems posed by the inner faces of the portal. Incidentally, the mummies of Henuttawi and Makare have proved to be especially interesting to Professor James Harris of the University of Michigan, with whom among other scholars the writer of this report has been collaborating in the preparation of a study of the royal mummies in the Cairo Museum.



Greco-Roman relief in the second hypostyle hall in the Temple of Khonsu. Photo by Charles Van Siclen

The second and third major doorways of the Khonsu temple were reworked at a considerably later date. Some of the scenes on the jambs of the third portal actually display King Herihor, whose figure, however, is carved in the bulbous raised relief characteristic of the last pharaonic dynasty. Other scenes and texts are entirely the work of the Ptolemaic period. Here the problems faced by the expedition are not so much the detection of traces of earlier scenes but the interpretation of often grotesquely carved hieroglyphs of the Ptolemaic period. Since the Ptolemaic system of hieroglyphic writing tended toward the enigmatic, it frequently requires considerable research in the

Chicago House Library to determine how what may appear as a crudely carved blob on the wall is actually to be interpreted and rendered in a facsimile copy. In the recording of these Ptolemaic scenes and texts especial attention is given to locating possible parallels in other temples of the period. This has proved particularly valuable in enabling us to interpret the crudely carved lintel of the doorway leading into the ambulatory. On this lintel, decorated under Ptolemy IX, the theme is the moon, the symbol of Khonsu, and the lunar feast days. In addition, improved readings have been obtained for the expanded titulary of Ptolemy IX.

Aside from work on the rear of the pylon and on the three major portals, two important oracular inscriptions, one from the time of Herihor and the other from the Twenty-first Dynasty, have received the expedition's attention. The important dedicatory inscriptions of King Herihor on the lofty architraves spanning the columns of the court are in the process of being recorded and should provide significant information about Herihor's building activities. Since documentation concerning Herihor's kingship is almost exclusively limited to the court of the Khonsu temple, effort is being made to provide facsimile copies of even short minor inscriptions and iconographic devices, which often are located in spots difficult of access.

For the past six seasons the work of the Epigraphic Survey at the Khonsu temple has been supervised by Professor Charles Francis Nims, the expedition's Field Director for nine years. His enthusiasm for the monuments of Thebes and interest in understanding the historical and religious significance of the scenes and inscriptions that the expedition records have served to inspire those who have worked with him. Mrs. Myrtle Nims has managed the household at Chicago House, a task that has required considerable time and devotion on her part. Their retirement signifies a loss to Chicago House, but in the not too distant future we expect to see them back in Luxor for an extended visit.

We shall also miss Mr. David Larkin, who after five seasons of arduous work as an epigrapher will be returning to Chicago to complete his doctoral dissertation on the end of the Twentieth Dynasty, utilizing material from the Temple of Khonsu. Mr. Charles Van Siclen of the University of Chicago completed a very successful first year as an epigrapher while also taking

charge of the Chicago House Library. Our veteran artists, Mr. Reginald Coleman, Mrs. Grace Huxtable, Mr. Martyn Lack, and Mr. Richard Turner, have admirably met the challenge of recording scenes such as we have described above. In addition, Mr. Turner, who also serves as photographer, spent many hours in tracing and photographing material that was very difficult to reach. As Chicago House ages with the passage of time, our engineer, Mr. Werner Fliege, has ably coped with the mechanical crises that inevitably occur. For his constant assistance and devotion to Chicago House our Rais Hagg Ibrahim Mohammed Abd-el-Rahman deserves commendation.