

THE EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY

LANNY • BELL

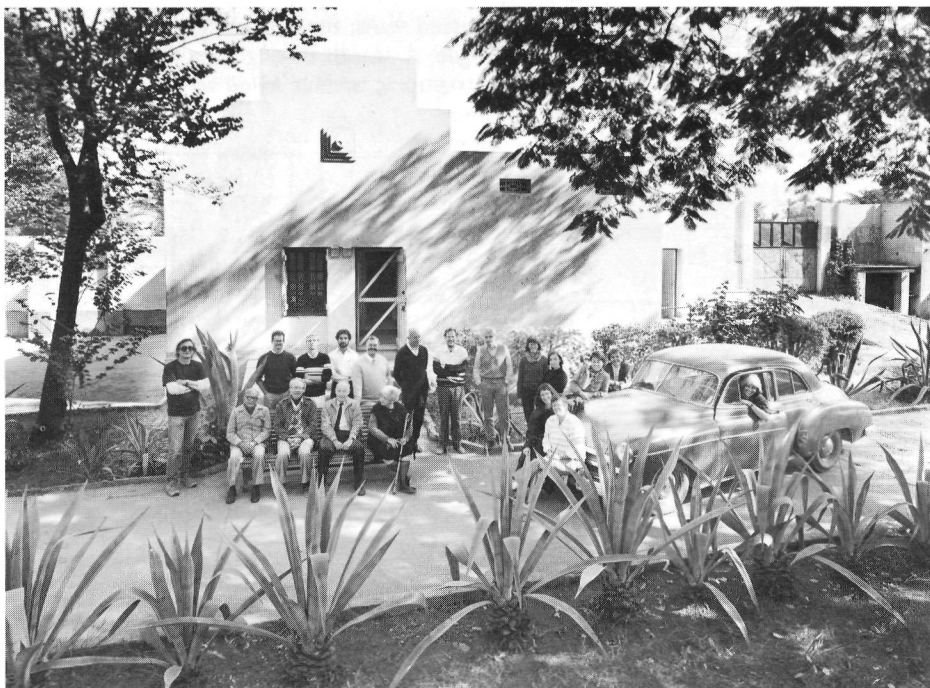
The 1986–87 season of the Epigraphic Survey was our sixty-third. The major field work of Egyptologist-epigraphers Lorelei Corcoran and Eddie Walker consisted of continuing the
 ●●●●● checking of preliminary hand-copies of the decoration of the Small Temple at Medinet Habu, in addition to assisting the artists in making final corrections to drawings of the reliefs on the standing walls of the Colonnade at Luxor Temple. The hand-copies will be used to help guide the artists in the production of facsimile drawings at Medinet Habu (once we have finished our recording at Luxor), as well as providing the basis for completing a dictionary file on all the inscriptions at this site. The epigraphers also made considerable progress in identifying the mysterious piles of old prints which continue to haunt the photographic archives.

A specialized project which was undertaken and completed by Heinz Thissen of the University of Cologne was the collation of the published facsimiles of some 340 Demotic graffiti at Medinet Habu. Arranged in two groups dating to 313–242 B.C. and 77–37 B.C., these inscriptions were assembled in 1937 by the late William F. Edgerton in volume 36 of the Oriental Institute Publications series. In 1984 Dr. Thissen presented his “Habilitationsschrift” (post-doctoral thesis) on them, consisting of transliterations, translations, and commentaries based on Edgerton’s work. The opportunity to examine the texts themselves, against the full background of his prior ten-year study, has permitted him to confirm the overall accuracy of Edgerton’s copies, while making a few of his own additions and corrections at the same time. Not surprisingly, he has observed that the condition of the ink graffiti, in contrast to those which are incised, seems to have deteriorated noticeably in the last fifty years. Dr. Thissen will now be able to publish his results as a complement to our original facsimile edition.

Progress in the checking and completion of facsimile drawings in the Luxor Colonnade (mostly decorated by Tutankhamun, 1334–1325 B.C.) was particularly marked this season, due in large part to the return of all five artists who had served on our 1985–86 staff, and the devel-

opment of a labor-saving technique, pioneered by Carol Meyer, for transferring corrections from 1:3 scale drawings to 1:6 scale redrawings. In all, 9 drawings were completely finished, work on 11 was substantially done, and 19 await final collation and correction. In addition, a total of 19 more should be ready for collation at the beginning of the 1987–88 season. Housekeeping in the artists' quarters included the washing of all studio windows and the reinstallation of a sink for washing rapidograph pens. During January we had the pleasure of a visit by Paul Hoffman, artist with the Survey in 1982–83. Paul had later served as editorial assistant for our publication of *The Battle Reliefs of King Sety I*, shepherding this large volume through the press, and actually developing some of the techniques required for the production of its plates. While he was staying at Chicago House, he very generously applied his expertise, uniquely gained from both the drawing and printing angles of our work, to help plan the layout of our forthcoming Luxor volume. He is currently conducting experiments in preparing negatives for the various reductions which will be needed for the process of joining up the individual drawings of some of the most complicated scenes in the Colonnade.

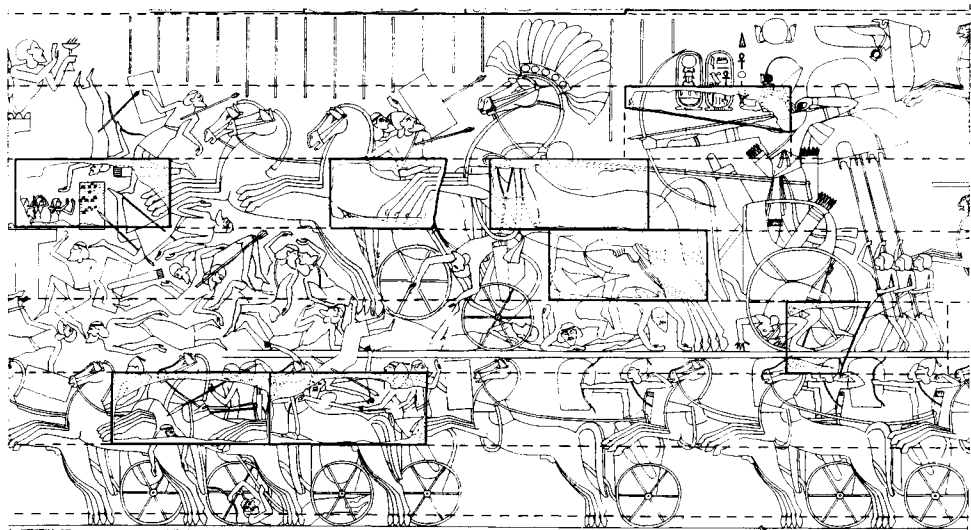
● *Epigraphic Survey staff members and 1950 Chevrolet posed outside Chicago House darkroom, with guests Jan Johnson, Don Whitcomb, and Gerhard Haeny. Photo by Tom Van Eynde.*



The primary field work accomplished by photographer Tom Van Eynde was the production of most of the large-format (8" × 10") black-and-white negatives of the recently cleaned and consolidated inner walls of the six roofed chapels decorated by Queen Hatshepsut and Thutmose III (1504–1450 B.C.) at the Small Temple of Medinet Habu. The preservation of considerable color remains in this early New Kingdom temple will permit us to record many of the delicate color details which have normally already disappeared from the great bulk of relief materials with which we work. These new negatives will serve as the basis for our facsimile drawings of this part of the monument. A plan was also devised this season to complete our photographic dossier on the hundreds of decorated fragments built into later additions to the Eighteenth Dynasty Temple, many of which have not been photographed until now.

In spite of the 660 plates in the eight folio volumes produced by us between 1930 and 1970, the site of Medinet Habu contains a few scattered constructions associated with the Great Temple of Ramesses III (1182–1151 B.C.) which still remain unpublished. These include the two decorated subterranean staircase wells located one each to the north and south of the main building. My inspection of the southern well revealed the perilous condition of its damp, salt-encrusted walls; the northern one was found to be nearly as fragile. A search through the Chicago House library and photographic archive failed to identify any

● *Detail of Tutankhamun pursuing foreign chariotry in newly reconstructed talataat battle scene. Drawing by Ray Johnson.*

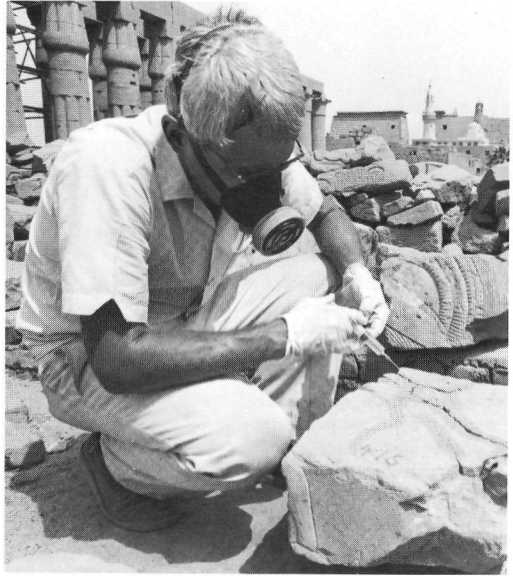


comprehensive record of the decoration of these wells. Permission was immediately sought and granted by the re-sponsible local Egyptian Antiquities Organization officials to enter and make an emergency photographic record, as a safeguard against further imminent damage, possibly even collapse, due to the increasing salinization. Inasmuch as the lower reaches of the staircases leading to the bottoms of the wells are now permanently flooded beneath the current high level of the standing groundwater, a portable wooden "bridge" was required to carry out this task. Designed by me and constructed in house by our chief engineer and carpenter, this device permitted examination of the staircases even beyond their right-angle turns. Since space is extremely tight within these passages, however, our large-format cameras could not be employed here; even the securing of a special 20mm wide-angle lens (kindly carried out by Gretel Braidwood) for one of Tom's 35mm cameras did not permit the making of parallel, distortion-free negatives of the interiors. Nevertheless, the best possible photographic record has now been made of as much decoration as could be reached under these circumstances. Next season we shall attempt to improve on both the quality and extent of this coverage. In the meanwhile, Eddie Walker has begun to investigate the symbolic role of these wells in New Kingdom theology.

For three weeks in January we enjoyed the visit of Susan Lezon, photographer with the Survey for the three seasons of 1982–85, while she was in Luxor awaiting the beginning of her field season in the upper tomb of Senenmut with Peter Dorman of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. (Peter, who completed his Ph.D. at the University of Chicago in 1985, had himself served as "guest epigrapher" with the Survey for a month during the 1984–85 season.) Sue spent most of her time with us continuing to monitor the condition of our deteriorating nitrate negatives. In 1984–85, she and I had gone to examine a photographic archive of nearly 900 glass plate negatives (about half of which are large-format, 8" × 10" or bigger) which was being offered for sale in Luxor. At that time we had been unable to afford to purchase this collection, and I was afraid that it might be dispersed or destroyed. Then on the 10th of May this year, as Martha and I were once again alone closing down Chicago House, while waiting for the final two performances of *Aida* at Luxor Temple, we had a sudden windfall: the official US dollar/Egyptian pound exchange rate was effectively floated, leaping overnight from LE 1.353 per US 1.00 to LE 2.165, an increase

of more than 60%! Since our friends in the Cairo business community had kept us informed on the impending repeal of artificially low bank rates, I had delayed exchanging the money necessary for the conduct of Epigraphic Survey business during my absence in the summer. As a result, we gained enough at our first transaction after the currency reforms to be able to offer a reasonable price to the owner of these negatives; a little more than a day before our departure from Luxor, we had them safely stored in the Chicago House library. Most of these images are views of monuments in the Luxor area, taken by the Egyptian photographer Seif Taudros Ibrahim around the turn of this century. He died in the 1920's, and his photographic plates have been in storage for a long time. The primary value of this collection to the Epigraphic Survey lies in the fact that it provides nearly contemporary coverage of the architecture and setting of many of the monuments whose decoration is documented so meticulously in our own detailed negatives, which date primarily to the mid-1920's and '30's.

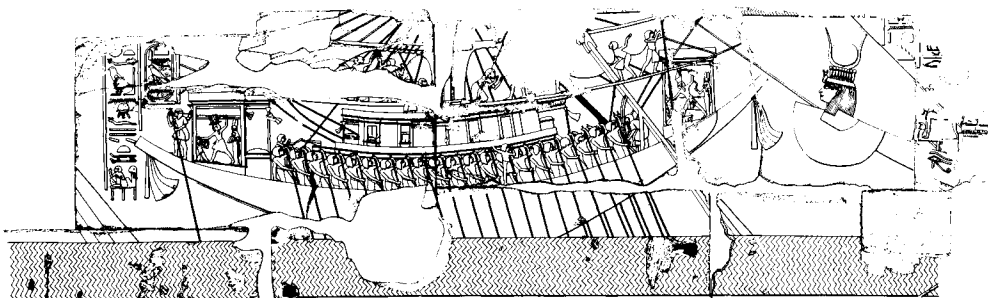
As the study of the Luxor stone piles continued, our chief artist Ray Johnson identified 108 new Tutankhamun fragments from the Colonnade (including 2 from the Opet Festival registers and an *ished*-tree scene, where the god inscribes the king's name for eternity on the leaves of the sacred "persea"), 8 pieces from the Eighteenth Dynasty facade of the Colonnade (with decoration by King Eye, 1324–1321 B.C.), and 3 additional fragments from the offering scenes associated with the representation of the barque of Amun-Re in the northeast corner of the Court of Amenhotep III (1386–1349 B.C.). With the identification of 131 more raised relief sandstone *talatat* (the small blocks characteristic of the reign of Akhenaton, 1350–1334 B.C.), the total of this category of Tutankhamun material now known stands at 202, including 67 found at Luxor last season, 5 from this season, 126 at Karnak, and 4 from the nearby site of Medamoud—all reused from the Akhenaton temples at Karnak, and employed secondarily in an otherwise unknown dismantled Karnak monument of Tutankhamun. A major battle, with chariotry, the fall of a foreign bastion, and the triumph of the Egyptian ruler, is represented on 33 of these blocks; other subjects include processions and divine barques and barges. The battle scenes were executed on a large scale, and contain some unique elements; although their study has yet to be completed, according to Ray's preliminary findings they appear to be the direct antecedent of the Karnak battle reliefs of Sety I, recently published by the Epigraphic Survey.



● *John Stewart consolidating fissured sandstone fragments at Luxor Temple. Photos by Tom Van Eynde.*

Ray also assisted the Luxor Inspectors in the transfer of fragments to new *mastabas* (fired brick “benches”) built along the Avenue of Sphinxes at the north of Luxor Temple, in preparation for the staging of the opera *Aida*. In addition to new Tutankhamun and Amenhotep III pieces, many incised-relief fragments from the exterior wall flanking the western gateway to the Court of Ramesses II (1279–1212 B.C.) were recovered. These are currently being registered by the Luxor Inspectors, and Ray is acting as advisor for their reconstruction; some of these have already been temporarily reassembled.

Our conservation efforts at Luxor Temple revolved around the initial stages of returning some fragmentary sandstone blocks to the walls from which they were removed between the 7th and 19th centuries A.D. to provide building material for the growing medieval and modern town of Luxor. Over the years we have been able to demonstrate the association of these pieces with Luxor Temple; and most of them had already been collected by us on *mastabas* in our own blockyard at the southeast of the temple precinct, to protect them from further damage by the continued penetration of groundwater. In anticipation of their restoration, Ray supervised the arrangement of many of the more than 1000 fragments stored here into the 24 major groupings to which they belong. For this purpose, one of the stone *mastabas*



● *Queen Ankhnesenamun's barge and prow of the Mut barge, from Opet procession on west wall of Luxor Colonnade: as depicted in three preliminarily joined facsimile drawings by Carol Meyer, Thad Rasche, and Ray Johnson.*

constructed in this area by the Luxor Inspectorate was most generously put at our disposal. As a test of the special system developed on site by our conservator John Stewart, the ten surviving fragments of a single original block have now been reconstructed in place just to the south of the Colonnade, in the northeast corner of the Court of Amenhotep III, where the king is depicted offering before the barque of Amun-Re.

As part of a general survey preceding the actual replacement, the condition of each of the 103 fragments belonging to this scene (measuring approximately 12 meters long by 6 meters high) was analyzed, and their physical consolidation was undertaken. The most common problem encountered in these stones is the fissuring of their surfaces, with 55 of them requiring treatment before their reerection. These cracks are being filled with a thermosetting polyester resin (SEBRALIT), which is injected into them after their edges have been strengthened with ester of silicic acid (WACKER OH). Since these materials are highly toxic, protective gear must be worn during the treatment, and special precautions must be taken to prevent accidental exposure by workmen and visitors. In addition, the surfaces of 14 stones were found to be particularly friable (powdery), with the loss of the natural binder between the quartz grains of the sandstone attributable to contact with salty groundwater. These are also being consolidated by repeated spraying with light coats of the ester of silicic acid.

All the fragments can be expected to have been contaminated with varying concentrations of salts; and further infiltration of water, which would activate the salt crystals, would increase their instability. With this in mind, a damp course of polyethylene sheets was laid on top of the standing wall, and the fragments were essentially molded into position in a dried mortar matrix. Wrapped individ-

ually in polyethylene as they were layered one-by-one into position in a bed of wet white cement, they were carefully removed when the mortar had set, freed of their plastic sheaths, and reinserted for final adjustment in the hollows of the framework thus prepared to encase them. Structural stability is assured by backing the stonework with a red brick core wall. Eventually the visible surfaces will be cleaned in situ, and the gaps between them will be rendered with a superficial coating to enhance the final appearance of the construction. Provision is thus also made for the insertion of additional fragments as they emerge in the course of future excavations.

Conservation work in the Small Temple at Medinet Habu continued our 1982–85 restoration program, with the laying of a new floor in a second chapel (Room N), and preparation of the foundations for a third (in Room P). The purpose of these floors is to reduce air-borne dust, facilitate the safe evaporation of groundwater, and provide a level working and walking surface. In each case, the surviving ancient flooring blocks, which had subsided well below the original floor level, were cleaned and carefully planned before being covered over. The recovery of small scraps of gold foil from between some of the blocks in Room N necessarily slowed the cleaning process. In all,

● *Ray Johnson assembling Luxor Colonnade fragments on blockyard mastaba. Photo by Tom Van Eynde*





• *Ten fragments from single original sandstone block reconstructed in place atop standing wall in northeast corner of the Court of Amenhotep III at Luxor Temple. Photo by John Stewart.*

perhaps two grams of alloyed gold were found, and this was immediately deposited in the safe of the Qurna Inspectorate. The major problem faced in the cramped space of Room P was to avoid undermining the heavy red granite naos, or shrine, which had been reconstructed on top of loose debris against the western wall of this room around the turn of this century. Among the fragments which were identified in the course of this work was an inscribed black granite offering table which was firmly wedged between the naos and a large flooring block. Probably originating in one of the adjacent Chapels of the Saite Princesses, the surface of the stone was completely salt-saturated and crumbled to the touch. Unfortunately, it could not be consolidated in situ, nor could it be extracted without endangering the precarious balance of the naos itself, so there was no alternative to repacking it in the damp earth where it seems to have lain since it was deposited here in antiquity.

Due to the generosity of two private donors, we were presented with two Macintosh computers for our offices in Luxor. Their presence in the field has greatly facilitated record-keeping and improved the overall efficiency of our whole administrative setup. With the printer happily cranking out documents to my specification, while I am already engaged in another chore, I have finally discovered the secret of being in two places at one time! In addition to simple word-processing of letters, reports, and memos, budgets, accounts, and monthly pay sheets can all be gen-



● *John Stewart and Ray Johnson show Friends of Chicago House group their work in the Luxor blockyard. Photo by Tom van Eynde.*

erated on the computer. Because of the sophistication of various graphics programs, research projects, even hieroglyphic dictionary cards, can also be prepared on it. One result of a most felicitous visit to Chicago House during the course of the season was the promise of another two Macintoshes, presented over the present summer, and given for the purpose of establishing a small computer center at Chicago House. With more and more people working on computers, we can expect a great proliferation in the uses to which they will be successfully applied.

In the library 344 items have been accessioned since last year's report. The treatment of old leather-bound books with neat's-foot oil and lanolin dressing was continued, and some small repairs were made. A start has now been made in the computerization of our library files, beginning with the journals, periodicals, and series; it is anticipated that a computerized card-index will eventually be available for readers' use. This system will be of enormous assistance in book ordering in general, and particularly in the transfer of information back to Chicago for processing summer orders. Multiple record-keeping and cross-referencing for the research libraries (and the photographic archives, as well) of both Chicago House and the Oriental Institute will permit us to coordinate the two collections and find and fill gaps in either. In the Labib Habachi archives, meanwhile, 3269 slides were preliminarily sorted; and the appearance of "Ein Friedhof der Maadikultur bei es-Saff", edited and completed by Werner Kaiser, marked the first posthumous appearance of a manuscript from Labib's unpublished papers.

Major renovation at Chicago House was limited to the restoration of our small greenhouse, which will now be put into service in starting seedlings for transplant to our vegetable and flower plots. Gifts by Ingeborg Aeschlimann and Hourig Sourouzian resulted in our acquisition of a genuine Nile papyrus plant and several persea tree seedlings (the latter originating from a specimen brought back from North Yemen by Georg Schweinfurth and planted in the garden of the Cairo Museum in 1889). An experiment conducted by Carol Meyer also left us with two tiny avocado trees. The tragedy in our garden was the death of our faithful and playful watchdog Barghuta, "Flea," known to all Chicago House visitors since 1982. She was run over by a taxi she was chasing in our own driveway one night in early February. Soon friends had brought two puppies, Fulla and Fuzzy, for us to begin training before the summer.

● *Atteiya Habachi and Henri Riad with Santa Claus at Chicago House. Photo by Tom Van Eynde.*



We have two major grant applications pending at this time, designed to provide funds for both our negative preservation project and our architectural conservation activities at Medinet Habu and Luxor temples. Fund-raising activities necessitated my presence in Cairo on five different occasions during our six-month season, for a total of 18 days away from Luxor. At a reception held at the Nile Hilton in December, where Their Excellencies United States Ambassador to Egypt Frank Wisner and former Egyptian Ambassador to the United States Ashraf Ghorbal served as Distinguished Patrons, the Friends of Chicago House in Egypt were hosted by Ron and Ann Wolfe of Professional Business Services, generously assisted by Dick Undeland and Reda Affi. After a slide presentation on the dangers confronting the ancient Egyptian monuments, plans were announced for a second Upper Egyptian tour for the Friends of Chicago House. Then we watched a video of the first Chicago House tour (held in May of 1986). By the end of the evening, 65 persons had indicated their intention to accompany us on the new trip.

With the planning and hard work of Ron and Ann Wolfe, our Cairo coordinator Saad Riad, Fachi Salib of American Express in Luxor, and Ingeborg Aeschlimann, our Oriental Institute member in Luxor, this excursion took place on the weekend of March 12–15. The group of 60 participants from Cairo was augmented by David and Jill Carlotta Maher, Oriental Institute Visiting Committee member Bill Roberts, University of Chicago Development Officer David Gillingham and his wife Paula Harbage, and Gretel Braidwood from the Oriental Institute's Member-

ship Office, all of whom flew in from Chicago just for the tour. We had the additional pleasure of hosting several executives from corporate donor Amoco, and their families, who had scheduled their trip from America to the Gulf to permit them to spend as much time as possible with us. Besides a reception at Chicago House, where the Epigraphic Survey staff explained all aspects of our life and work, the tour members visited our special sites in the Luxor area, saw several other expeditions up close and behind the scenes, and went 85 km into the desert east of Luxor, halfway to the Red Sea. Local press coverage was very good. Although we were caught in a raging sandstorm at the ancient gold-mining camp of Bir Fawakhir near the Wadi Hammamat, the only accident associated with the expedition was the demise of our 1950 Chevrolet, which threw a rod, blowing its engine on the trial run for the trip the previous Sunday. Our chief engineer Saleh, however, has promised to prepare a new motor for installing in the Chevy over the summer. The Chicago House Cairo calendar concluded in late April with a gala reception for tour members and their guests, elegantly hosted by H. E. Frank Wisner and Mrs. Wisner at the Ambassador's Residence. The summer began in America with another sumptuous reception on June 2 at the Park Avenue apartment of Chicago House Friends Tom and Francesca Bennett.

The major international social event in Luxor was the performance of Verdi's *Aida*, grandly staged by the Arena di

- Ray Johnson and Peter Der Manuelian present jubilee symbols at celebration of Lanny Bell's twentieth anniversary in Egypt. Photo by Tom Van Eynde.



- *Epigraphic Survey staff at Chicago House Halloween party.*



Verona at Luxor Temple on ten nights in early May. Due to the generosity of an Oriental Institute donor who had come to Luxor for the opening night, Martha and I were treated to the spectacle of Placido Domingo singing the role of Radames. During these days I was interviewed by numerous newspapers and television networks. More than a little concerned about the possible adverse effects on the monument of so many artists and spectators gathered at one time in such a restricted space, I was most pleased that every eventuality seemed to have been taken care of, and no damage appears to have occurred. With the beginning of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan nearly coinciding with the final preparations for the opera, it was stunning to see Luxor in festival, even the center of world attention, much as it must have been during the great celebrations of the time of the pharaohs.

Because of the size of our staff this year, the space available for overnight guests at Chicago House was practically limited to two rooms in the small house at the back of the garden (variously known as the Healy or Quseir House). Nevertheless, 57 scholars, friends and staff members' relatives spent a total of 332 guest-nights with us, for an average of 1.8 residents per night over the whole season. This year 25 Oriental Institute members were among the 850 visitors who signed our library guestbook, in addition to the hundreds of others who came in with tour groups, which always include many persons who do not sign in. As an example of the activities of our kitchen

staff on special occasions, 29 people were seated at our dining room table for Thanksgiving, including 14 staff members, 2 in-house guests, and 13 guests who were living outside the house. Let me extend once more our invitation to Oriental Institute members and friends to visit Chicago House as part of any tour you might be planning to Egypt. Only please let us know as far ahead as possible when you expect to be in Luxor, and contact us as soon as you arrive in town to confirm your arrangements or schedule the best possible time for your visit. Our address is very simple: Chicago House, Luxor, Egypt; telephone 82525. Just remember that our season opens on October 15 and ends on April 15.

The professional staff of the Epigraphic Survey this season consisted of myself as field director; Martha Bell as Chicago House librarian; Dr. Heinz Thissen, Lorelei Corcoran, and Edward Walker, epigraphers; W. Raymond Johnson, Peter Der Manuelian, Dr. Carol Meyer, Barbara Arnold, and Susan Osgood, artists; Thomas Van Eynde, photographer; John Stewart, conservator; Jill Carlotta Maher, assistant to the field director for development, and Chicago House photo archivist; Christian Loeben, administrative assistant; and Saleh Shehat Suleiman, chief engineer. Our thanks go to Mrs. Atteiya Habachi and Dr. Henri Riad for their progress in organizing the Labib Habachi archives, and for continuing efforts on our behalf in the areas of public relations, official liaison, and translation. In addition to those already cited in connection with their specific contributions toward the successes of this season, we would like to mention the following friends: Jean-Claude Golvin, Robert Vernieux, Daniel Le Fur, and Alain Bellod of the Franco-Egyptian Center at Karnak; Robert Betts, Amira Khattab, and Albert Abdel Ahad of the American Research Center in Egypt; Dick Undeland of the United States Embassy in Cairo; Jack Britain and Richard Weinberger of Trans World Airlines; Charles Carr and Aziz el-Aguizy of Amoco Egypt; May Trad, Gretel Braidwood, Katherine Rosich, and Emily Teeter. The members of the Egyptian Antiquities Organization to whom we owe a special debt of gratitude include Dr. Ahmed Qadry, Chairman; Mutawia Balboush, Supervisor of Antiquities for Upper Egypt; Dr. Mohammed el-Sogheir, Director of Antiquities for Southern Upper Egypt; Sayid el-Higazy, Chief Inspector of Karnak and Luxor; Abd el-Hamid Marouf, Inspector of Karnak; and Mohammed Nasr, Chief Inspector of Qurna. Finally, we wish to express our great sadness at the untimely death of our long-time colleague and friend Sayid Abd el-Hamid, former Chief Inspector of Karnak and Luxor.