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*The Epigraphic
Survey*

Lanny Bell



he 1987-88 season of the Epigraphic Survey was our sixty-fourth. The artists were engaged once more primarily in checking and completing

facsimile drawings in the Luxor Colonnade. Chief artist Ray Johnson pursued his reconstructions of our fragment material and used the knowledge he has gained during this extensive study to establish a chronology for the various distinctive art styles of the reign of Amenhotep III. This framework has provided him with much of the data he has recently employed in coming to some rather far-reaching conclusions about both the art and the theology of Akhenaten. ▼ The major field work of the epigraphers again consisted of the checking and correcting of our preliminary hand-copies of the decoration of the Small Temple at Medinet Habu. These hand-copies will be used to help guide the artists in the production of facsimile drawings, as well as forming the basis for a dictionary of the remaining unpublished inscriptions at this site. We were very pleased at the award of a grant from the Ford Foundation in support of our student epigrapher, Steve Parker. One of Steve's special tasks was to sort through the master dictionary cards, filling gaps by preparing prints of old negatives and replacing faded or illegible positives. In doing this he kept in close contact with John Larson, Museum archivist, to be sure that a copy of each of these cards is actually preserved at the Oriental Institute. He further checked, corrected, duplicated, and prepared for filing a whole series of supplemental cards for inscriptions already published in our previous eight *Medinet Habu* folios. In conjunction with our computer-oriented administrative assistant Rita Joyce (herself an Egyptology student), he began experimenting with the creation of a computerized data base for our dictionary files, using the Macintosh's graphic capabilities to the fullest in combining texts, transliterations, and translations with cross-reference to our drawings. We hope to be able to include a computer dictionary disk with one of our Luxor Temple volumes. ▼ The field work accomplished by our photographers was focused on the documentation of architectural and epigraphic details at Luxor and the production of general views of the setting of the Colonnade and its placement within the temple as a whole. All of the photographic field work undertaken

this season was facilitated tremendously by the gift of a modern 8"x10" camera most generously donated to us by Calumet Photographic Inc. During the course of this season we were unexpectedly presented with the exciting possibility of publishing color pho-

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Institute
1987-1988
Annual Report*



Photographer Tom Van Eynde using new camera at Medinet Habu. Photo by Sue Lezon.

tographs of all of the delicately painted reliefs which we have cleaned in the closed Eighteenth Dynasty chapels at Medinet Habu. The preliminary color test shots which Tom Van Eynde made with this new camera were quite promising. Meanwhile, in our photo archives, Sue Lezon began the process of cleaning, consolidating, printing, and identifying the collection of nearly 1,000 early 20th century glass plate negatives which I had managed to buy in Luxor at the very end of last season. During the month of February, we were most fortunate to enjoy the presence at Chicago House of Diana Grodzins, who served us admirably in the capacity of photo archivist.

Our architectural conservation program (initiated in 1982) was resumed in both Medinet Habu and

Luxor Temple. This season our work was underwritten by a generous grant from the American Express Foundation. This allowed conservator John Stewart to buy sufficient quantities of the expensive conservation chemicals he needed, as well as to hire local craftsmen (a mason and a tile-layer) to free him from some of the more labor-intensive and non-technical aspects of his job. At the Small Temple of Medinet Habu protective working floors were completed in two more rooms (O and P). Clearing away of the loose modern debris from the surface of the ancient floor of room M revealed the sadly eroded and very friable condition of its remaining ancient flooring stones. Consolidation was begun,¹ with one particularly bad stone requiring

¹*with ester of silicic acid (WACKER OH)*

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 cleaning and reassembly of its fractured planes.² A final treatment will be undertaken during the next season, before laying the protective cover here.

At Luxor Temple, the reassembly of the sandstone fragments which we have identified as coming from the wall of the northeast corner of the Court of Amenhotep III was continued. As expected, their most common problem was the fissuring of surfaces. This season, however, cracks were filled³ and a hardener⁴ injected into them after their edges had been strengthened with epoxy.⁵ In fissures wide enough to permit, a filler⁶ was added⁷ to reduce the adhesive's coefficients of expansion and contraction. Three fragments were newly treated this year. The epoxy system was adopted because of the advantage of a longer curing time, giving greater work flexibility and enhanced porosity. In assessing the stability of the most friable stones in the interval since their preliminary surface consolidation last

season, it was decided to re-treat nine fragments; four additional ones were also treated.

In the actual reassembly of fragments, limited application of a sealer⁸ was successfully tested on those exterior undecorated surfaces most likely to come into even the most limited contact with wet mortar. The desired water repellency was achieved without decreasing the stone's vapor permeability. The blocks were then mortared together.⁹ A second original block was reconstructed, with a third substantially completed. Our skilled mason also laid the foundations for another waterproofed stone mastaba or "bench" for the safe storage of fragments in our Luxor Temple stoneyard. A tent was set up there to provide the minimum shelter and shade necessary for the effective treatment of stones in the field, and a small lab was established in the Healy House (one of the out-buildings in the back garden on the Chicago House grounds) for the preparation of chemicals and the conducting of analyses and preliminary tests.

In my capacity as Field Director of the Epigraphic Survey, I was pleased to serve on an Egyptian Antiquities Organization commission sent in February to inspect the

²with polyvinyl acetate (MOWILITH 50 in acetone)

³with ARALDITE AY 103

⁴Hardener HY 956 (Ciba-Geigy)

⁵through applications of preconsolidant epoxy in a solution of toluene and acetone (50/50), in concentrations increasing from 5% to 90%

⁶of silica (40-50 microns)

⁷to epoxy solutions above 5%

⁸Paraloid B-72 acrylic co-polymer (10% solution in acetone)

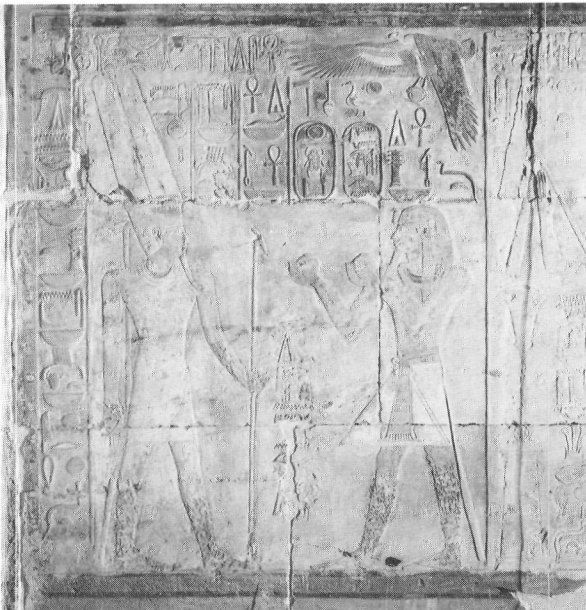
⁹A supply of low-alkali Cypriote white cement was found in Luxor, so this became the material of choice in the mortar matrix used this year (= white cement: sand: crushed red brick, in proportions of 1:4:1 by volume).

condition of several of the most important monuments of Upper Egypt (Edfu Temple, Medinet Habu, the Tomb of Sety I, and Luxor Temple). In conjunction with that committee's findings, submitted in a report to the Minister of Culture, I turned over copies of the relevant photographic documentation from the Chicago House Archives pertaining especially to the columns in the Luxor Colonnade. We have been monitoring the shockingly rapid progress in the decay of the bases of these enormous columns for the past three years, submitting periodic reports to Dr. Mohammed el-Sogheir, the Director for Antiquities in Southern Upper Egypt. A new aspect of this watch is the preparation of a dossier on the present state of each column base, to be updated annually, so that the priorities in this area can be established quickly.

In the Chicago House library, 327 books, journals, and pamphlets were accessioned, bringing the total of our holdings to more than 15,000. The very first entry in our original three volume set of leather-bound accession books was made on November 16, 1926; the books were filled and closed on April 9, 1988, when the final hand-written record, number 15,000, had been entered into the last volume. The end of an era has surely been reached. The remaining sixty entries registered this season were processed into an electronic system, which will be used henceforth. Once again, many authors presented us with copies of their new books and offprints of their articles,



Photograph of newly cleaned painted relief decoration in one of the closed chapels (N) in the Hatshepsut Temple at Medinet Habu. Photo by Tom Van Eynde.



especially those from “non-Egyptological” journals. Among the duplicates we received from the collection of the late Labib Habachi was the hard-to-find volume 1 of the *Bulletin de la Société Archéologique d’Alexandrie*, published in Alexandria in 1898.

Several more antiquarian volumes were identified and removed from open shelving to the librarian’s office for special handling, in an attempt to balance their availability for immediate use against the need to protect them and prolong their life for future generations of scholars. These include Zoëga, *Numi Aegypti Imperatorii*, published in Rome in 1787 (and still

in nearly perfect condition), as well as Fontana and Hammer, *Copie figurée d’un rouleau de papyrus trouvé en Égypte*, a facsimile edition published in Vienna in 1822 (the year of Champollion’s decipherment of the hieroglyphics) and formerly kept in a pamphlet drawer. A reform undertaken in the card catalogue is the color coding of the main entries to facilitate the locating of books which are necessarily shelved with special collections (e.g., rare, oversized, folio).

Conservation and restoration activities in the library included improving the storage conditions of such heavily used loose-leaf publications as volumes 1-6 of *Hieroglyphic Texts in the British Museum* (1911-1918). Our solution has been to wrap



Conservator John Stewart during replacement of decorated sandstone fragments on wall in Courtyard of Amenhotep III at Luxor Temple. Photo by Tom Van Eynde.

the page bundles in polyethylene film closed with velcro spots; the binders are then “tied” on using two-inch polyethylene strips held in place by velcro. The effect alerts the reader that special handling is required, while the system promotes the easiest access with the maximum protection. Polyethylene “ties” or covers have also been employed to hold delicate or damaged books together. We encapsulated two much used large-scale plans of Karnak which had been printed on very poor paper, folded up, and sewn into the *Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte*, volume 36 (1936). Long detached but stuck precariously back into their original places, they were in danger of becoming completely tattered; they are now safely stored flat in the map cabinet. The usual minor repairs and maintenance were carried on throughout the season, including tipping in loose pages, tightening bindings, sealing tears with archival tape, and oiling leather bindings. At the very end of the season we acquired ultraviolet-absorbing shields for our fluorescent light fixtures. We were ably assisted for three months in the library by Melinda Parker, and for ten days by May Trad. In addition, 123 volumes were sent to Cairo for binding during the summer under May's careful supervision.

The installation of the two Macintosh SE computers which we were given last summer brought the total of computers at Chicago House to four. With another generous gift of a Macintosh Plus for use in our

Chicago office during the summer, and a considerable amount of software, we were solidly established in the computer age. Even black-outs, brown-outs, and electrical surges in Luxor no longer present the spectre they once did, since the connection of a Topaz Powermaker Micro UPS voltage regulator and battery back-up system, also contributed in conjunction with the two new field computers. The donation of printed paper and envelopes, along with numerous other computer accessories presented by McGregor Paper & Computer Supplies, will now mean the nearly complete modernization of our office facilities. This season marked the first time that I had a computer available and fully functioning at Chicago House right from the very day of my arrival in Luxor. Our computers have been made available to all staff members for personal work during off hours, on a time sharing basis; Rita Joyce gladly initiated all interested beginners into the computerized world and assisted others in expanding their skills or trying out new programs.

Any of our scientific and administrative tasks have been made immeasurably simpler by access to a Xerox machine at Chicago House, kindly made available to us gratis on a long-term lease basis by Xerox Egypt. As a full measure of its usefulness, let me just note that we have so far made

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*Condition of cleared
 ancient flooring stones,
 bases of walls, and
 foundation under re-
 constructed red granite
 naos in chapel P of
 Hatshepsut Temple at
 Medinet Habu. Photo
 by John Stewart.*



some 8,700 copies in house. This season was also the first in which I finally had adequate administrative assistance in Luxor, with both an office manager (Rita Joyce) and household manager (Roxanne Gordon) to handle full-time the many complex duties of running the various institute functions of Chicago House. Once more, our computers permitted us continually to update our constantly changing calendar and bulletin board. Another advance toward state-of-the-art electronics was our purchase of a color television set and a VCR player to replace our in-house series of 16 mm rental films transported monthly from Cairo.

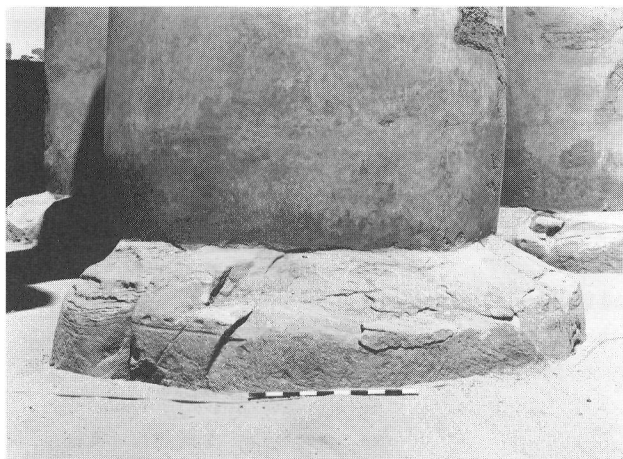
Significant repairs and improvements completed at Chicago House include the replacement or refurbishing of the water heaters in both the library and residence wings. The horrifying discovery of water dripping down the cord of a ceiling light in the main reading room of the library after a heavy ten-minute rainfall in mid-October sent us scrambling to sweep its three-story-high roof. Before leaving Luxor in May, I supervised the regrouting of the library roof tiles. In April, a 20 meter high palm tree beside the front driveway suddenly creaked and fell toward the library, fortunately inflicting no injury and doing only minor damage in the garden. Strong wind storms after the end of the season took the tops out of a ficus and a eucalyptus tree and brought down many large branches, again with only minimal damage. Our recording thermometer in the library revealed that the inside temperature at floor level had reached 101° F

during the summer of 1987; and in the week of April 5-11 of this year outdoor highs in the shade of the Chicago House garden never registered below 101-102° — our aluminum scaffolding at Luxor Temple was too hot for artist Carol Meyer to touch in the afternoons of those days. In the last week Martha and I spent at Chicago House during the month of Ramadan which fell in April-May this year, our dogs located a meter-long cobra outside the kitchen. It got away from us in the morning, and when it reappeared in the late afternoon, all the workmen, who had been fasting all day, were far away. Fearing it would escape again, there was nothing to do but grab a long broom handle and bludgeon it, as I had seen them do several times before.

Our chief engineer Saleh gave me a most pleasant surprise after the end of the season by locating in Cairo and having sent to Luxor, without even a word from me, two vintage replacement glass water bottles for our 1924 Frigidaire water cooler. The original bottle had been broken during cleaning late in the previous season, and we had really missed the refreshing pause which it afforded after a hot stint at the temple wall. Finally, Saleh had the motor of our 1950 Chevrolet (which had blown in the Eastern Desert last spring) rebuilt in Luxor, reboring the engine block of a junker 1950 Chevy which we bought just for this purpose and refitting it with genuine factory replacement parts still



*Condition of deteriorating column base in Colonnade of Tutankhamun at Luxor Temple.
Photo by Tom Van Eynde.*





available very inexpensively from the shelves of an old automobile store hidden somewhere in the back streets of Cairo. A trip to the body shop and repainting with the original metallic blue completed the resurrection. With the pride of the Chicago House fleet once more touring about town, Saleh took the opportunity to recondition the motor of our 1978 Land Rover in anticipation of the increasingly stringent vehicle inspection it must pass in the coming season.

This season I spent 25 days in Cairo on eight different occasions, from October to June, on fund-raising business. Our major fund-raising activities included a marvellous reception in December for the Friends of Chicago House in Egypt hosted by the United States Ambassador to Egypt, His Excellency Frank Wisner and Mrs. Christine Wisner at their Residence. In January we were presented with our American Express Foundation conservation grant at an enormous reception in Cairo lavishly prepared by American Express of Egypt; John Stewart and Ray Johnson were able to join Carlotta Maher and me at this gala. In early February we conducted our third annual Friends of Chicago House archaeological tour to Upper Egypt, introducing the work of Chicago House to more people from

the Cairo business community, visiting especially the monuments at which the Epigraphic Survey has worked in Luxor and some of the less easily seen sites of the Abydos area. Once more all travel arrangements were made by Saad Riad in Cairo and Fathi Salib of American Express in Luxor. The great success of this tour, and of our whole Egyptian fund-raising program in general, is due in large part to the tireless enthusiasm and efforts of Ann and Ron Wolfe of Professional Business Services in Cairo. I was also very happy to be able to introduce Secretary of State George Shultz, a former University of Chicago faculty member, and Energy Secretary John Herrington to the Epigraphic Survey in the context of their tours of the ancient wonders of the Luxor area.

We were pleased to be able to entertain a number of Oriental Institute members (traveling alone or with the Oriental Institute's Egypt tour conducted by Robert Ritner), as well as representatives of Amoco and the American Express Foundation at Chicago House, getting to know them a little better and showing them our work close-up. We wish to thank here all of our faithful Friends of Chicago House, our Friends of Chicago House in Egypt, and our major corporate donors, especially Amoco Egypt (our earliest contributor in Egypt) and the Amoco

Foundation, the American Express Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and many others for the most gratifying success which we have achieved in the initial stages of our fund-raising campaign on behalf of the future of Chicago House.

Our professional staff this season consisted of myself as Field Director; Martha R. Bell as Chicago House librarian; Stephen Parker, epigrapher; W. Raymond Johnson, Dr. Carol Meyer, Barbara Arnold, and Kathleen Baker, artists; Thomas Van Eynde and Susan Lezon, photographers; John Stewart, conservator; Jill Carlotta Maher, assistant to the field director for development; Rita Joyce and Roxanne Gordon, administrative assistants; and Saleh Shehat Suleiman, chief engineer. Our thanks go to Dr. Henri Riad for his progress in organizing and managing the Labib Habachi Archives (whose rich

materials scholars now consult regularly) and for his continuing efforts in the areas of public relations, official liaison, and translation. We all enjoyed the presence of Ben Parker who lived with us for nearly three months and celebrated his second birthday at Chicago House just as he and his mother were returning to Chicago. The members of the Egyptian Antiquities Organization to whom we owe a special debt of gratitude include Dr. Ahmed Qadry, former Chairman; Mutawia Balboush, Supervisor of Antiquities



Remains of the town mound of Medieval Luxor and structures in the Courtyard of Ramesses II at Luxor Temple as seen from the roof of the portico before the clearance of the Pylon entrance and Avenue of Sphinxes in 1956-60. Print produced by Sue Lezon from glass plate negative of Luxor photographer Seif Taudros Ibrahim in the Chicago House archive.





View across the Nile toward Luxor Temple and the Winter Palace Hotel at around the time of the founding of the Epigraphic Survey. Seif photo in Chicago House archive.

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.

In addition to those already mentioned for their specific contributions to the successes of our field season, we would further like to

acknowledge Jean-Claude Golvin, Robert Vergnieux, and Daniel Le Fur of the Franco-Egyptian Center at Karnak; Jadwiga Lipinska of the Polish Mission to the Temple of Thutmose III at Deir el-Bahari; Terry Walz, Robert Betts, Amira Khattab, and Albert Abdel Ahad of the American Research Center in Egypt; the United States Ambassador to Egypt, His Excellency Frank Wisner; Dick Undeland, Ken Robinson, and Jim Phillips of the United States Embassy in Cairo; Shafik Gabr of the



American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt; Steve Halsey of the American Express Foundation; Ken Fleming and Adel Akladios of American Express of Egypt; Lee Travers of the Ford Foundation; Richard Weinberger and Jack Britain of Trans World Airlines; Norm Rubash of Amoco; Oswaldo Liang of Xerox Egypt; Gerry Vincent, our special computer angel; Lou Byron of McGregor Paper & Computer Supplies; Kathy Houde and David Grempe of Calumet Photgraphic; David O'Connor of the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania; Jane Ayer Scott of the Harvard Sardis Expedition; Carlie Cleveland of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York; Linda Noe Laine and Christel Noe Laine; May Trad, Gretel Braidwood, Ann Roth, and Gerry Quinn.

Let me once more remind Oriental Institute members and other friends that we welcome visitors to Chicago House during our season, from October 15 through April 15. Please only let us know, as far ahead as you can, when you expect to be in Luxor; and contact us immediately upon your arrival to reconfirm your visit, so that we can arrange the best possible and most convenient tour for you. Our address is: Chicago House, Luxor, Arab Republic of Egypt; our telephone (which can even be direct-dialed from the United States {011-20-95-38- 2525}) is Luxor 38-2525.

Finally, we all wish to express here our grief at the death in Alexandria of our long-time colleague and friend, Atteiya Habachi. My brief obituary notice on her, incorporating an article written by her on her first impressions of the Oriental Institute, has already appeared in the Newsletter of the American Research Center in Egypt.