
John Coleman Darnell's personal research has continued to concentrate on the completion of his dissertation, a study of Egyptian enigmatic hieroglyphic inscriptions through the end of the Ramesside period. These texts, the bulk of which are religious treatises—or portions thereof—in the royal tombs of the New Kingdom, are hieroglyphic texts which employ standard signs with non-standard values, along with some abnormal signs, foreshadowing the Ptolemaic hieroglyphic syllabary. In general, their manner of presentation, not their contents, may be termed cryptic; these texts almost always have good parallels in non-enigmatic religious texts. The ways in which these parallels are organized within the cryptic treatises are often novel and informative, however, and the cryptic annotations in the tombs often provide a grounding and explanation for accompanying depictions which alone, without their enigmatic labels, would appear bewildering and inexplicable. In one treatise there is depicted and described the pharaonic predecessor of the Graeco-Roman magical entity Abrasax/ Abraxas; another enigmatic text describes the accompanying depictions which illustrate harrowing events related over a millennium later in a description attributed to Jesus Christ in the Coptic *Pistis Sophia*.

During the last year several of Darnell's articles have appeared: "Articular *Km.t/Kmy* and Partitive KHME," and "A Note on *'rb.t* (and *3rb /ðPHB*)," both of which appeared in *Enchoria* 17 (1990); and "The Chief Baker," in *JEA* 75 (1989). He has also completed and submitted a number of other articles, which are now at some stage of "in press": "The *Kbn.wt* Vessels of the Late Period," to appear in *Life in a Multi-Cultural Society: Egypt from Cambyses to Constantine (and Beyond)* (SAOC 51), the publication of a colloquium on Late Period Egypt held at the Oriental Institute, where he delivered this paper in a very abbreviated form in September 1990; "Two Notes on Marginal Inscriptions at Medinet Habu," to appear in the *Festschrift* for Hans Goedicke; "Two Sieges in the Æthiopic Stelae," to appear in the *Gedenkschrift* for Peter Behrens, a special issue of the University of Cologne's *AAP-Afrikanische Arbeitspapiere*, to appear in Summer 1992;

“Supposed Depictions of Hittites from the Amarna Period,” to appear in *Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur* 18 (1991).

The past year was Darnell’s third season as epigrapher with the Epigraphic Survey, and in the occasional moments of time for personal work, he collated enigmatic texts in the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings. On the exterior east wall of the Ramesside forecourt of Luxor Temple, he worked with Richard Jasnow on an inscription of Ramesses II. This small but interesting inscription records the accusation which Ramesses II leveled against the bound and presumably chagrined Moabite ruler dragged before the awful pharaonic presence after his disastrous war with Egypt. In his short blast at the Moabite (relayed by a prince to the Asiatic ruler—even though the prisoner is a few feet from the divine presence, Ramesses II would certainly not speak to him directly), the king says: “You are a bad man, just like that other bad man, the chief of the Hittites.”
